

WAYMARKER

Northamptonshire

For all who enjoy the peace and beauty of the Northamptonshire countryside

JUNE 2007

Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of Waymarker News; here we hope to bring you information on what is happening around the county that will affect your enjoyment of the many green spaces – one way or the other!

Waymarker isn't a commercial operation, though we aim to be professional; no one gets paid, so we need all the help we can get sourcing material for the web site and this newsletter.

Whilst we are out searching for stories we also need people to either write up stories themselves, which would be excellent, or to point us in the direction of something of interest which would also be good. So, whether your village has just created a new pocket park, or there are plans to drive a dual carriageway through it please let us know.

If you have a favourite walk then let us know about it – route, photos and in particular notes on the history geography and nature of the area; we will add the walk to those already on the web site.

All contributions can be sent to northants@waymarker.co.uk

Up to 3000 new homes on Towcester green field site

Persimmon and Bloor Homes are proposing a scheme to develop land to the south of Towcester which in addition to housing will include schools, local centre, employment area, open spaces and road improvements. The

192.2 hectare site (over 250 football pitches) is crossed by a number of public rights of way.

Because Towcester falls within the Government's 'growth' area, the planning application will be submitted to West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC) which has been set up to make decisions on major planning applications such as this one.

It is likely that the planning application will be submitted this summer. For further information and the opportunity to comment go to www.futuretowcester.info

The Lings Local Nature Reserve makes progress

Following the successful launch of the Lings Local Nature Reserve project in November of last year, a meeting on 25 May revealed the progress that it had made and future plans.

The evening started with a guided tour of the reserve and a slide show in the Environmental Centre highlighting all the work that has been completed in the past six months including footpath improvement, and heathland regeneration work to improve the overall structure of the woodland. Three wood sculptures and a magnification post had been erected.

With a variety of habitats including scrub, ponds, woodland and acid grassland, supporting a wide range of wildlife including varieties of butterflies, wild plants and birds; the Reserve is an important component in the network of green spaces being developed by the

River Nene Regional Park, who provided funding for the project.

An Environmental Centre also forms part of the Reserve and is used for a wide range of educational and community group activities led by experienced Wildlife Trust staff throughout the year.

Funding helps grassland wild life

Thanks to a £23,000 grant from SITA Trust, through the Landfill Communities Fund, three of Northamptonshire limestone grassland reserves are able the focus on improvements for wildlife.

Collyweston Quarries SSSI and Old Sulehay are two of the most important limestone sites in Northamptonshire, while Yarwell Dingle has an important limestone spring with several uncommon species.

The Wildlife Trust and willing volunteer teams carried out improvements on the three nature reserves in north Northamptonshire within the Rockingham Forest, a 'Biodiversity Conservation Area' and an English Nature 'Natural Area'. Between them the three reserves make up 8% of the rare limestone grassland in the county, so they and their inhabitants are very special.

The 12-month 'North Northants Limestone Grassland' project involved local people in the management of their local environments. Volunteers recruited from the surrounding communities took part in many of the conservation tasks. The Trust's flocks of rare-breed sheep and cattle were introduced to graze Collyweston and Old Sulehay reserves after fencing was upgraded and a new water supply installed.

On a wider horizon, funding has also enabled the Trust to investigate the possibility of expanding and linking the reserves to create larger protected

areas in the Rockingham Forest area, as well as work with road verge managers and landowners advising them on the best ways of managing their land.

This month pink pyramidal orchids will put on a fabulous display at Collyweston. Common lizards will also be seen basking in the sun and yellowhammers and bullfinches putting on a great display.

Delapre Abbey

Northampton Borough Council is proposing to make Delapre Abbey an officially designated conservation area and would like you to have your say on the plans. The plans centre on the abbey but also include the historic walled gardens and some of the surrounding parkland.

The main objective of declaring a conservation area is to: preserve or enhance those aspects of character or appearance that defines the areas special interest.

Closing date for your opinion is 15 June, a link to the feed back form can be found on the Borough Councils Home Page. www.northampton.gov.uk

A Brighter Future for Butterflies & Moths

Forestry Commission England in conjunction with Butterfly Conservation have announced its plan entitled 'The Lepidoptera on Forestry Commission Land in England Conservation Strategy 2007-2017', to tackle the decline in rare woodland butterflies and moths and helping them to thrive once again.

Of the 140 woods that have been identified as key sites for woodland butterflies and moths, 77 have been given an A grade priority with 8 of these being in Northamptonshire; these woods being home to over 15 species of butterfly, including the rare Wood White. The success of the strategy will be reviewed in 2012 and 2017 to assess

how many of these sites have maintained or increased populations of the priority species.

The fall in woodland butterflies and moths are many and complex but have been linked to a decline in regular woodland management and the loss of traditional skills, such as coppicing, which create the sunny, open paths and glades favoured by the insects. Few woodland butterflies can cope with the well-shaded habitat offered by unmanaged or neglected woodland.

The joint project by Forestry Commission England and Butterfly Conservation will involve teams of local volunteers who carry out weekly butterfly counts in the summer. As well as helping butterflies and moths the strategy will also benefit other woodland wildlife as well as supporting work such as restoring ancient woodland.

Nene Valley vision

Four Nene Valley nature reserves will become even more desirable for wildlife, thanks to a new project launched by the Wildlife Trust.

The Wildlife Trust was awarded a superb grant of £43,785 from Biffaward, a multi-million pound environment fund managed by the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts, which uses landfill tax credits donated by Biffa Waste Services.

Wetland habitats in the Nene Valley face many challenges from our expanding population. This project offers opportunities to protect and restore these thriving ecosystems for the benefit of people and wildlife.

The Nene Valley project will improve ex-gravel pits, Storton's Pits and Summer Leys, and fantastic wetlands Barnes Meadow and Kingsthorpe Meadow. These wetland havens support a number of nationally

important species, including otter, water vole and great crested newt.

The Wildlife Trust's committed volunteer teams will help with physical improvements including mowing, pollarding willows, repairing and installing fences, improving access, and producing species lists for visitors. Volunteers will also help monitor the reserves. Contractors will be brought in for the major tasks such as clearing ditches and digging scrapes.

Recycling Centre Invites Public Behind the Scenes

Answers to all your recycling questions can be found at Daventry District Council's Recycling Centre this June as they celebrate Recycle Now Week with a public open evening.

Daventry's Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) will be throwing open its doors to members of the public on the evening of Tuesday, June 5th, from 5.30pm to 8.30pm.

Anything you've ever wanted to know about Daventry's recycling service can be discussed during the behind the scenes tour of the facility, from how recycling is collected and what the MRF does, to the effects landfill has on the environment and how individuals can help reduce that impact.

Anyone who is interested in attending the event is asked to register with the recycling team as soon as possible. Places will be limited so please ensure you call early to register on 01327 302513 or 01327 300001

Remember – send any news stories to northants@waymarker.co.uk

If you have outdoor friends without access to the Internet then why not print them off a copy of this newsletter.