

ForestFocus

News from the Great Western Community Forest



Summer/Autumn 06

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*Photo on front cover:
Forest Festival 2005*

Your Forest

Welcome to the Summer/Autumn edition of Forest Focus. This issue is packed full of up-to-date information, events and ways for you to get involved, including details of key new projects and feedback on projects which are nearing completion.

Check out details of our forthcoming Forest Festival and autumn event, see how our website is being updated and have a go at completing our Active Swindon survey on page seven – you could win a superb organic fruit and vegetable box!

As the Great Western Community Forest project develops and diversifies, our vision is the same now as it was eleven years ago. The team and our partners are determined that we will fulfil our long-term aims and we appreciate your support in enabling us to achieve this.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue and, as always, look forward to hearing your views and suggestions for future editions.



Forest Events

Forest Festival 2006

Saturday 2nd September,
10am-5pm
The Lawn, Old Town,
Swindon.



Swindon's biggest 'green' family event returns to The Lawn, Old Town for its eighth year thanks to Thames Water, celebrating trees and their products, promoting a greener lifestyle and providing information about the Great Western Community Forest.

Since 1999, this FREE one day event has provided a packed programme of musicians and performers, children's workshops, woodcraft demonstrations, displays and local organic food. Its unique 'access for all' philosophy means literally everyone can come and join in – absolutely free!



'Basket making at Forest Festival 2005!'



Forest Festival 2006 is all about **Climate Change** - helping to raise awareness of the environmental issues that affect us all and promoting ways in which we can change our lifestyles. Globally, there is recognition that we need to work together as a community with a common purpose to safeguard our environment, finding ways to make it a better place for future generations to enjoy. Come and sign up for our climate pledge to show how you can really make a difference.

We have developed new links with local schools and businesses to bring lots of original ideas and performance to Forest Festival 2006. It's your Festival and your Community Forest so come and find out how you can get involved!

There is no parking at the Festival site itself but a FREE Park and Ride bus service will operate from the Nationwide Building Society car park on Pipers Way. It's better for you and the environment if you walk, cycle or catch the bus to Forest Festival.

Family Forest Fun Day

**Shaw Forest Park
Sunday 22nd October 2006
11 am-3pm**

This event is about making use of this fantastic forest park to learn new skills, try new activities, meet new friends, have fun and come and show your support for the Shaw Forest Protection Group and Great Western Community Forest team.

Planned activities include a hidden animal scavenger hunt, willow halo and dream catcher making, bird feeder making, leaf rubbing, collage making, den building, coppicing, a small amount of tree planting, walking stick making, guided walks and pole lathe turning.



Shaw Community Tree Plant, March 2006



Nest Box Making

All materials will be provided and light refreshments will also be available. There will be plenty of displays and information from our partner organisations too.

All these fun and educational environmental activities will be based in and around Phase 1 of the developing Forest Park, the new car park and the existing footpaths.

As with our tree plant events, please wrap up warm and wear suitable footwear - Shaw Forest Park can be quite muddy!

Dogs on leads are more than welcome but due to the nature of the site, please ensure that all children are accompanied by a responsible adult.

Shaping the Future



Upper River Thames Heritage Project

A big 'thank you' from the team

Over the past year literally hundreds of people who live, work and visit along the Upper River Thames area have been helping the Great Western Community Forest team to piece together a picture of life there in the past and the present.

We want to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all the businesses, organisations and individuals who have given their time. So if you came to our initial forum in Buscot or second forum in Lechlade, were interviewed in the streets, answered questions on your doorstep, came along to the community workshops, have chatted on the telephone, attended meetings or sent us information, ideas, reports.....a very big thank you!

Everyone's comments, ideas and thoughts have been recorded to inform us for the next phase of the project which will be to prepare the Phase 1 application to submit to the Heritage Lottery Fund. If successful, this application will provide funding for up to 18 months to develop detailed programmes of work in the area which will bring real benefits to all those who live, work beside or visit this beautiful river.

Website update

After six years the Great Western Community Forest website will finally see a bit of a face lift and update to bring it in line with the changes that have taken place within the GWCF project over recent years. Essentially the site will look the same with most headings remaining unchanged but we will also include new pages for different users that will give a better picture of the activities and projects the Great Western Community Forest is involved with.



We will make the navigation of the site as easy as possible creating links between pages as well as links to partner organisations and other useful websites. There will always be room to add more so please let us know if there is a link you think would be useful.

Obviously we will be keeping an eye on the comments we receive about the site, easily made via the contact page and comment form on the website. We will welcome any new ideas, suggestions or criticisms you might have and look forward to receiving them.

Forest Learning



Active Swindon

Active Swindon is now well under way with five team members working across the town and beyond to encourage and promote healthier lifestyles via physical activity. April saw their first major event taking place in the Town Centre and the Active Swindon project will be holding a showcase on Wednesday 13th September to coincide with Get Active Day.

New activities?

A new booklet called 'Spring into Action' is available as a downloadable PDF from the Active Swindon website or via the Tourist Information Centre, leisure centres and libraries. The booklet promotes ways in which you can become more physically active by walking, running, cycling, orienteering and mountaineering and equips you with all the information you need to get started.

Walking for Fitness?

The 'Walking Challenge for Fitness' is Active Swindon's way of challenging you to be active and walk the equivalent of the Swindon Millennium Trail - 50km (30 miles) and the Thames from source to sea - 300km (180 miles). There will

be rewards to choose from and all you have to do is make a log of the distance you walk regularly whether it's to school, work, walking the dog or visiting the shops. We'll even give you a special record card to keep track of your miles which you just send in via a FREEPOST address when complete in order to receive your reward. What could be easier?

Conservation?

If you are interested in conservation work, there are volunteering opportunities available helping the environment in and around Swindon. You could help with the Swindon Ranger Service, B.T.C.V., the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, the Great Western Community Forest and Sustrans on outdoor environmental projects including, path clearance and maintenance, tree planting events, groundwork, planting and pond building, to name but a few.

Dates for your diary

Fun Run. Wednesday 6th September, Nightingale Wood.

Social Bike Ride. Saturday 16th September, 11am, Lydiard Park to Coate Water and back.

Woodland for Learning Network meeting. Tuesday 26th September, 4:15pm, Pinehurst Infants School.

For further details contact Nan Pratt on 01793 466202 or Rob Reeve on 01793 617782 or go to the Active Swindon website at www.swindon.gov.uk/activeswindon



Active Swindon Survey

We would be grateful if you would take a few minutes to complete this form. All forms will be entered into a free draw. One lucky winner will receive an organic fruit and vegetable box from a local source, worth £10. Thank you.

Personal details

Title: Mr Mrs Miss Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode _____

Gender: M F Age: Under 16 16-45 45+

Are you registered as disabled? Yes No Do you have a long-term illness? Yes No

Does this limit your activity in any way? Yes No

If yes, please describe how _____

Email address _____ Telephone number _____

Physical details

Have you taken part in any sport or physical activity in the last 12 months? Yes No

If yes,

1. How many days per week on average do you take part in moderate exercise? _____

2. On average, what type of activity do you take part in?

	Days per week					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Active travel (cycling, walking)						
Sport/active recreation						
Work as part of paid employment						
Domestic housework/gardening						
PE in school						
Voluntary activity						

Other, please specify

3. If your physical activity includes walking for recreation, where do you like to walk?

Local parks Yes No

Woodlands Yes No

Urban footpaths Yes No

Other, please specify _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
If you would like to be entered in to our draw, please return this form to;

Great Western Community Forest, Premier House, Station Road,
Swindon, Wiltshire. SN1 1TZ. Closing date: 31st August 2006



Data Protection: The information you disclose in this questionnaire will be held by GWCF and Active Swindon for evaluation and marketing purposes only. It will not be passed on to a third party.

Out & About



Highworth Rambles

Those of you who enjoy walking and especially those living in the Highworth area will be happy to know that the Highworth Rambles leaflet which promotes eight walks around the town and has been out of print for a little while, is now available once again thanks to Highworth Town Council and Swindon Borough Council. The leaflets are available from libraries, leisure centres, council offices and other public buildings and can also be downloaded from the GWCF website under the 'Get Stuff' heading. Happy rambling!

New 'Forests on your Doorstep' leaflet

After the success of our first 'Forests on you Doorstep' leaflet, we will shortly be bringing you a second edition which will be useful in accessing woodland in the Great Western Community Forest. There are so many woodlands in the 168 square miles covered by GWCF, some well known and others still hidden gems waiting to be discovered.

In this second leaflet we will be promoting woodlands to the north east of Swindon, most still easily accessible by car and public transport and all equally worth a visit. Again, this leaflet will be downloadable from the GWCF website under the 'Get Stuff' heading.

Perfect Partners



Tree Dedication Scheme

A new scheme to promote renewable energy in the Great Western Community Forest is creating a tree dedication service for its customers. Good Energy and Westmill Wind Farm Co-operative have established an affinity partnership and have engaged GWCF to identify sites suitable for tree planting. Each new Co-operative customer will receive a certificate stating that a tree has been planted on their behalf in the Great Western Community Forest.

Living Landmark Lottery Bid – ‘Cricklade Country Way’

The Cricklade Country Way Project aims to create a recreational corridor linking urban Swindon with Cricklade, the Cotswold Water Park and the River Thames. The project is lead by North Wiltshire District Council and supported by a broad partnership of organisations including Swindon Borough Council, the Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership, the Swindon & Cricklade Railway, Sustrans, Great Western Community Forest, Cricklade Town Council, Cotswold Water Park, Cotswold Canal Trust and Wiltshire County Council.



As part of the project, the Great Western Community Forest team will encourage schools and community groups to use the countryside alongside the Cricklade Country Way on a regular basis for educational and practical activities such as informal physical activities, conservation management, art and crafts and games. Project activities will also include accredited training which will be available to the local community to become Forest School leaders. Trained leaders will be able to take their Forest School forward once the project funding ends and groups participating in Forest School initiatives will also be invited to join the ‘Woodland for Learning’ network which provides support and advice.

In the Cricklade Country Way, the Community Forest will be developed in accordance with a Green Infrastructure Plan. The Plan will map existing green space provision and identify opportunities for a range of community forestry activities that will enhance the provision of ‘green infrastructure’ for public use and enjoyment. Project activities will provide the following benefits to local communities and the environment:

- The Great Western Community Forest project will foster good woodland and habitat management practices and a min. of 30 ha of new woodland will be created.

- The project will include educational opportunities
- Capacity building within participating communities/groups through the provision of training and employment opportunities
- The concept of Green Infrastructure promotes sustainability
- Healthier communities providing infrastructure to underpin measures to improve health and encourage healthy lifestyles.
- Children and younger people will have improved access, understanding, enjoyment and management of places for play, education and healthy activities.
- Greater community involvement and ownership, improving the accessibility of local woodlands, green spaces and country parks.
- Encourage lifelong learning through new skills acquired from participation in courses.
- Improve family cohesiveness and strengthen communities/groups to choose and deliver activities within Community Forestry programmes

Local Agenda 21 - Quality of Life Awards

Every year the Sustainable Development hosts the Quality of Life Awards and Eco-Bash to promote sustainable lifestyles. If you know of a group or are carrying out a project that improves the environment and / or quality of life awards then why not apply. Winners of each category can receive up to £500, a certificate and plaque. The overall winner will receive the Quality of Life Award Trophy for a year.



Winners of the 2006 Quality of Life Award Trophy

The categories for the award are local businesses, schools, and community / voluntary groups. The criteria for the award are outlined below.

How to apply

Simply fill in an application form and return it to us no later than Monday 12th December 2006. Winners will be notified March 2007 and awards will be presented at the annual 'Eco-Bash' in April.

Judging Criteria

Projects will be judged against the following criteria: -

- Does the project enhance the quality of life of the local community/school (visual, amenity value etc.)?
- Does the project improve the environment (direct, indirect, local/global)?
- Does the project attempt to encourage the involvement of the wider community and promote best practice?
- Does the project demonstrate the principles of sustainability?
- Does the application demonstrate how the project will be managed and include clear aims, objectives and monitoring arrangements?
- Note: Only the information submitted on the Quality of Life application form will be considered.
- For further information and an application form please contact the Sustainable Development Team on (01793) 463197.

Forest Literature

The following literature can be obtained from the Great Western Community Forest as either a hard copy or via the website www.forestweb.org.uk. They are also available from libraries, tourist information centres, local authority offices and leisure outlets.

- **Forest Plan Summary**
- **Forest Review**
(available in November annually)
- **Forest Focus**
(available twice yearly in Summer/Winter)
- **Forests on your Doorstep series**
- **Timberland Trails**
(Purton, Wroughton and Chiseldon)
- **Highworth Rambles**
- **Nightingale Wood**



In addition to these leaflets, GWCF produce literature for events and they are currently working on projects which will generate their own leaflets in the future. Please contact us for further details.



Who's Who?

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www.forestweb.org.uk

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