

Welcome to the 7th Edition of the Forest of Mercia E-newsletter.

The autumn and winter are always busy months for the Forest of Mercia team and this year has been no exception so far! The forestry team have been working hard on a variety of sites. Exciting progress has been made with our Valuing Volunteer programme and the half term holidays and National Tree Week were packed full of activities! Within the last few months we have also marked the end of the five year Education Inclusion Project. It remains a superb example of inclusive environmental education and will help inform future activity.

Valuing Volunteering



Following on from the Forestry Commission funded project in 2008-2009, 'Valuing Volunteering', the team have been working hard to extend volunteering opportunities within the Community Forestry. Not only has Dave Knowles, the Community Liaison Officer put together a monthly programme of conservation volunteering, but other opportunities are now also being promoted, particularly supporting the community and education themes.

Two committed volunteers now support the Twiglets programme, running from Norton Canes Children's Centre, dedicating around one day per week each to develop and deliver these activities.

To find out more about volunteering opportunities, please see the website www.forestofmercia.org.uk and go to the 'Get involved' page. Volunteer application forms can be downloaded and the monthly conservation volunteering activities are promoted there. Kathryn Sharratt (pictured) aged 22, who volunteers regularly with the Forest of Mercia explains why volunteering is important for her personal and professional development.

"Volunteering with the Forest of Mercia has enabled me to broaden my experiences both with environmental education and practical conservation. Hopefully this will support me when looking for jobs in the future."



Beacon Park

The Foresters have spent some of the autumn at Beacon Park in Lichfield, undertaking woodland management and thinning works. The work is part of a larger project being carried out on site, implementing many enhancements to this public park. The team have been working to generally thin the woodland areas to improve the quality of the woodland to develop the biodiversity on the site. The thinning work also helps improve access around the site and improves safety through increasing the lines of visibility throughout the woodland area. It is clear that this work is making a real difference to the local area.



Half Term and National Tree Week activities



Over 100 adults and children were directly involved with the half term Twiglets activities at various locations throughout the Forest of Mercia. Twiglets ran in Norton Canes, Hednesford and at Chasewater Innovation Centre over the half term holidays, offering families the chance to get involved with activities based around autumn and Halloween. All of the activities had an environmental theme and used recycled and natural materials where possible. National Tree Week saw an exciting planting project based in Brinsford Village, in partnership with Featherstone prison. Around fifty people joined forces to plant around 200 trees on site, as a contribution to the national attempt to beat the world record for the most amount of trees planted in one hour. The BBC was present at this community event and it was covered on the news throughout the day.

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