Vital funding will improve Mardyke Woods for people and wildlife

04/01/2013

This partnership scheme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Veolia Mardyke Trust and the Forestry Commission will seek to work closely with the local community to improve Mardyke Woods, with a focus on community engagement, access, biodiversity, and heritage. Community volunteering is a key aspect of this project and will increase local skills, build self-confidence and enhance communication.

The Forestry Commission's Community Ranger, Clare Rowley, will be running various activities and events as part of the project, to engage with local people and to share stories of its rich history. With so much to do and see in the woods, this funding will provide more opportunities for local people, schools and youth groups to access and enjoy this ancient woodland right on their doorstep.

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said: "We at HLF are delighted to support the Forestry Commission in protecting and managing this important woodland, which will provide a heritage legacy for present and future generations of the local community to enjoy."

Charlie Curtis, the Chair of the Veolia Mardyke Trust and a local ward councillor, said "This is a really lovely wood and I hope that the project will encourage many more people in South Ockendon to enjoy using it."

Clare will be leading a guided walk through the woods on Friday 18th January, leaving from Cherwell Grove at 11am (until approx 12.30pm). There will also be a 'Have a Go' practical conservation training day on Tuesday 22nd January for anyone interested in becoming a volunteer.

Please contact Clare on 01708 642964 or at thameschase@forestry.gsi.gov.uk for more information about these activities or about the project in general. You can also visit The Thames Chase page on the Forestry Commission website.

Notes to editors

Mardyke Woods is one of ten Forestry Commission community woodlands in the Thames Chase Community Forest. The Community Forest was created to increase the cover of woodland to 30% by 2020 in the Thames Gateway area, to create greenspace within easy reach of local communities. The first site was created in 2001.

The Forestry Commission is the government department responsible for the protection and expansion of Britain's forests and woodlands.

The Veolia Mardyke Trust distributes money received from Veolia Environmental Services through the Landfill Communities Fund, and has helped over 300 separate projects in Thurrock.

Further information

Andy Furze, The Veolia Mardyke Trust Secretary on 01279 84 3675. The Veolia Mardyke Trust website.

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