

Charnwood Forest Regional Park Stakeholder Event

12th October 2016

Council Chamber, Leicestershire County Hall

See Appendix 1 for attendance list.

The presentation slides from the meeting are available on request.

1. Purpose of the event

The main purpose of the event was to engage stakeholders in the development of a new bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund's Landscape Partnerships scheme for Charnwood Forest.

It also provided the opportunity to update people on the work of the regional park partnership's steering group and delivery boards since the last stakeholder event on 26th November 2015.

2. Welcome and introduction

Anna Low, Team Manager - Strategic Partnering, Environment and Waste Management, opened proceedings by outlining housekeeping, the key themes for the day, encouraging participation and engagement during the planned workshop tasks, before handing over to Cllr Vardy.

3. Progress Update - Cllr Vardy

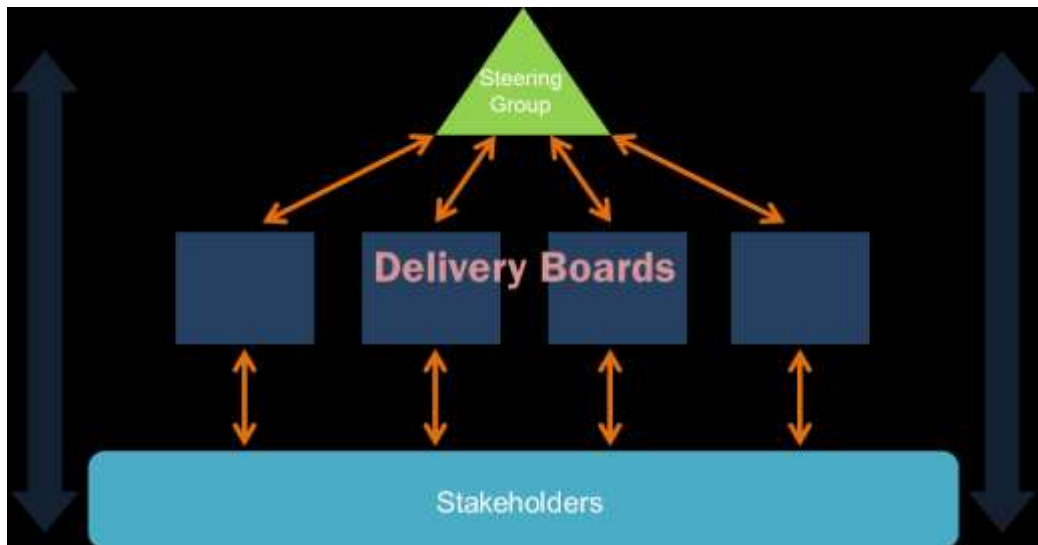
Cllr Eric Vardy, the chair of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park Steering Group, welcomed all to the 2016 Stakeholder Forum. The forum is very important and has met since 2007. Since then it has worked to an agreed vision:

“The unique natural and cultural heritage features of Charnwood Forest will be managed and promoted through the Charnwood Forest Regional Park. The Regional Park will be recognised as an essential part of the growing communities in the Derby, Leicester and Nottingham area, now and in the future.”

It has also developed an action plan, which has been agreed and endorsed by partners and is a central document to steer the Charnwood Forest Regional Park Partnership. This forum is a mechanism for stakeholders to meet up, network and reconnect, supported by the new structure.

At the 2015 stakeholder event the group endorsed the new model shown below, emphasising the use and importance of delivery boards.

These individual boards will look at specific tasks and focus on delivering outcomes. The intention of the delivery boards is for them to act as a conduit between the steering group and stakeholders and in the past 12 months there has been great progress setting up the delivery boards and coordinating project ideas, in addition to holding a steering group meeting on the 8th July.



Charnwood Forest Regional Park Partnership Structure

It was agreed that the best way of delivering many of the things we want to achieve was to develop a new Landscape Partnership bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The National Forest Company agreed to lead the bid and the local authority partners all contributed funds towards creating a Development Officer post. Matt Croney started in that post at the end of June and the Development Delivery Board is helping Matt to develop the bid.

Matt will be leading the main part of the meeting, but first there was an update from each delivery board.

4. Delivery Boards Progress Updates

a) Social and Historic - Dr Julie Attard (University of Leicester, Charnwood Roots Project):

- Their remit is to “support the development and running of education and community engagement programmes to increase and improve the appreciation, enhancement and management of the area’s culture and heritage”

Key activities so far have included:

- Discussed the Landscape Partnership bid and tried to identify how we can best support it
- Discussed current threats to heritage in the Charnwood Forest area
- Reviewed current initiatives and active heritage projects
- Began to think about project ideas in broad terms
- Began to think about the resources and infrastructure needed

Further, the board has been considering many questions and exploring new avenues such as how they can build upon the existing positive work, engaging a broader range of people and highlighting the USP’s of the Charnwood Forest.

b) Tourism and Economy- Peter Tyldesley (Bradgate Park Trust):

The board is still information gathering at this stage and is actively working with the other boards. The key themes from this board are:

- How to market the social and heritage aspects of Charnwood Forest including the building of the Charnwood 'brand'.
- A desire to develop tourism infrastructure within Charnwood Forest, identifying any existing gaps and spreading demand away from honey pot sites (maintaining honey pots but developing surrounding, less renowned sites)
- Plans to develop a new strategy to diversify the audience of the Charnwood Forest to include all demographics
- Highlighting Charnwood's geology as a potential USP and the wish to emphasise this going forward

c) Environment - Claire Install (Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust):

Key progress to date:

- 2 meetings to date including representation from Charnwood Forest, National Forest, LCC, Natural England and Leicester and Rutland Wildlife Trust amongst others
- Review of the previous bid, identification of positives and further development points
- Key outcomes so far: geology a theme, timeline to pin events to show history of the Forest and project ideas including geology/heritage/species specific

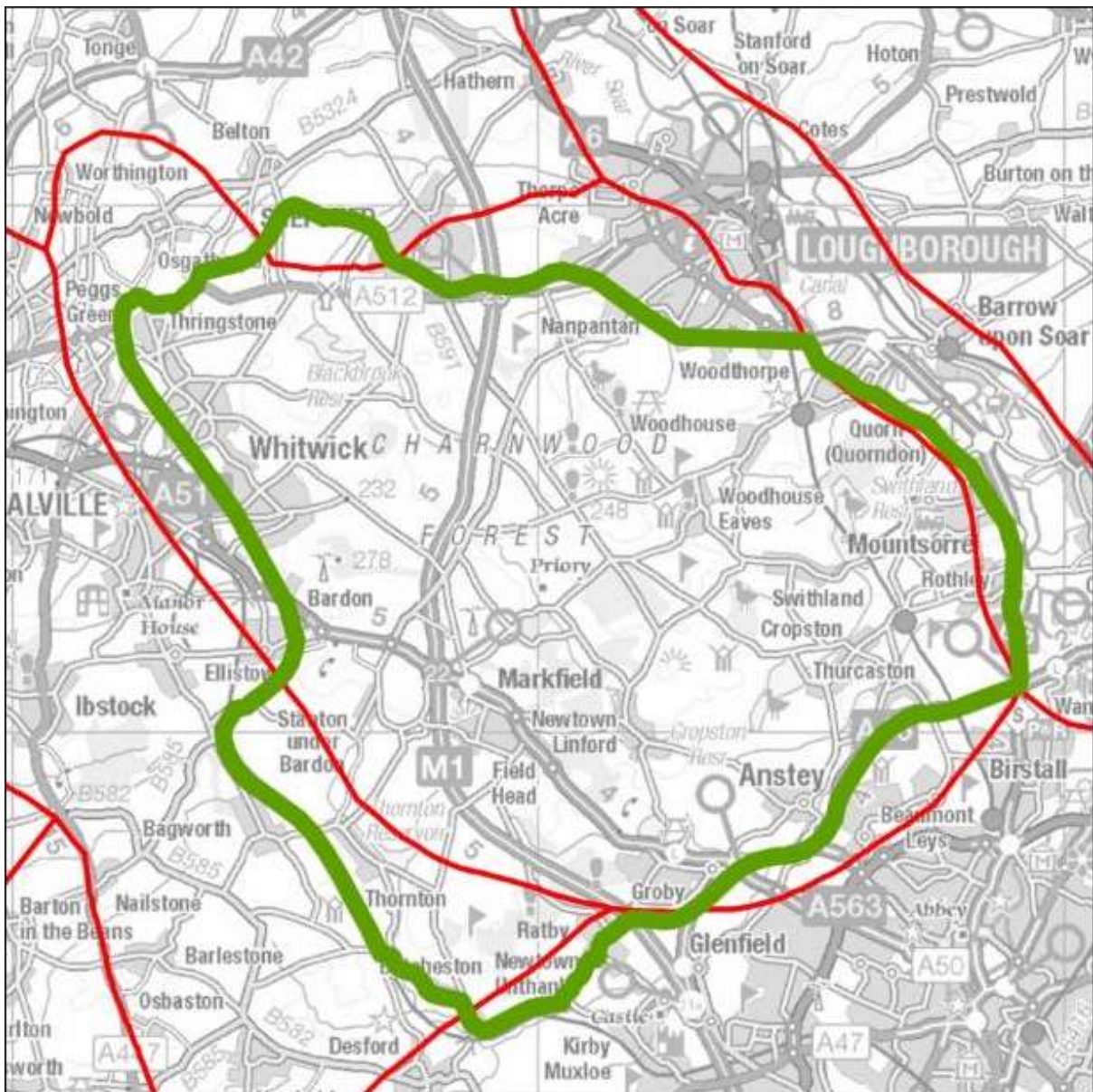
5. HLF Landscape Partnership Presentation - Matt Croney – Development Officer

Key Charnwood Forest Info

Matt briefly introduced the Landscape Partnership Bid before outlining the key heritage features of Charnwood Forest:

- Wildlife: Charnwood covers 8% of Leicestershire but contains 55% of its SSSI area
- Archaeology: Bronze age fort at Beacon Hill & evidence of England's first settlement at Bradgate Park
- Social history: Norman priories, Lady Jane Grey and Beaumanor Hall
- Industry: Charnwood granite built much of London
- Transport: The Great Central Railway, Mountsorrel
- Geology: Charnia fossils are first evidence of multicellular life

The area covered by the application (the regional park boundary)



About HLF Landscape Partnerships

Key aspects:

- £100k to £3million. We anticipate bidding for around £3million.
- They typically fund about 75%. The 25% match funding can be a mixture of cash; in-kind time and services; and volunteer time (usually roughly one third each)
- Need a unifying idea/theme
- A genuine partnership, strategically enhancing at a landscape scale
- 5 years

Timescale

1st round application	Now – 1st June 2017
Development Phase	Late 2017 – Late 2019
DELIVERY PHASE	1 April 2020 – 31 March 2025

HLF Outcomes

Matt outlined the outcomes set by HLF for Landscape Partnerships. There are 9 outcomes across three key themes: heritage, people and communities. The scheme must meet all 9 of the outcomes but they are not weighted and can be achieved to differing degrees, depending on the particular needs and opportunities of your landscape:

Outcomes for heritage:

1. better managed
2. in better condition
3. identified/recorded

Outcomes for people:

4. developed skills
5. learnt about heritage
6. volunteered time

Outcomes for communities:

7. negative environmental impacts will be reduced
8. more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage
9. your local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit

What is 'Heritage'?

HLF defines what it means by heritage as follows:

“Heritage includes many different things from the past that we value and want to pass on to future generations, for example:

- natural heritage including habitats, species and geology;
- surviving or lost historic features and buildings;
- archaeological sites, earthworks, features and deposits;
- cultural traditions such as stories, festivals, crafts, music, dance and costumes;
- histories of people and communities (including people who have migrated to the UK);
- histories of places and events and features created to commemorate them;
- traditional and local heritage skills and industries;
- the heritage of languages and dialects;
- semi-natural and designed landscapes and gardens;
- people's memories and experiences (often recorded as 'oral history' or spoken history);
- collections of objects, books or documents in museums, libraries or archives; and
- places and objects linked to our industrial, maritime and transport history”

Process for developing the first round bid

Matt quickly outlined the process for developing the bid by 1 June 2017, which is attached at Appendix 2.

Central theme/idea for the bid

Matt reported that the development delivery board, who are leading on the co-ordination of the HLF bid, had done some initial work about the central idea/theme of the bid. They have the working strapline:

“Made by volcanoes, shaped by people”

The wording may change but this reflects two key themes:

- geology: the volcanic past and 600 million year old rock is the most obvious unique feature of this landscape and everything else can be directly traced back to it: the fact that it was not easy to cultivate leading to its rule by 4 priories, the number of historic parks, the abundance of wildlife habitats and undisturbed archaeological features, the quarries and related settlements etc.

- people: what is believed to be the first settlement in England, which has recently been discovered in the grounds of Bradgate Park, the manor houses, Lady Jane Grey, the late enclosure of fields, the communities in the past and the fact that people now have the opportunity to shape its future

HLF love projects which focus on people and engaging them with heritage. Geology is suggested as a hook to gain people's interest and on the back of that to explain all the many reasons why Charnwood Forest is so special. We want to interest people in Charnwood's wonderful heritage so that they will care about and help to protect it. Matt referred to the quote by Sir David Attenborough, which is particularly relevant:

“No-one will protect what they don't care about, and no-one will care about what they have never experienced”

Sir David supported the previous bid and it is hoped that he might support this one as it develops as well.

6. Workshop 1: Needs and Opportunities Analysis

HLF guidance suggests that a landscape partnership bid should address the local needs and opportunities for heritage in the Charnwood Forest area. The attendees were asked to engage in a workshop designed to identify the key needs and opportunities of Charnwood Forest as it is now and to pick out what they felt were the most important ones. All of the needs and opportunities identified are attached in Appendix 3. The facilitators then picked out and summarised the top three in each category:

Needs:

1. improvement of recreational access in the forest: strengthening diversity of transport, opening hours, activities, as well as development of currently closed areas of the forest
2. better branding and marketing: development of existing marketing to touch a wider audience with specific messages to increase visitors' knowledge of the forest and what it can offer
3. habitat connectivity and protection of the natural environment

Opportunities:

1. co-ordination of sites: maintaining the attraction of honey pot sites whilst emphasising others and improving linkages between all attractions
2. to address habitat fragmentation
3. training and education: becoming more involved with stakeholders to train and educate and thus stimulate interest

Question- stimulating discussion:

A question was asked regarding the boundaries of the Charnwood Forest bid and whether they should be expanded to include a much wider area and linkages to other attractions such as the Space Centre.

Responses:

That the boundary must be drawn somewhere and is designed to reflect a distinct landscape character area plus the communities immediately adjoining. It is the same as the regional park boundary. However, activities are by no means confined to only the inner Charnwood area and it will be important to engage surrounding communities including Loughborough, Coalville, Shepshed and Leicester.

A suggestion was made that a fuzzy boundary might be used but this would still have to end somewhere! Matt is happy to receive suggestions for minor boundary changes where there is good justification.

7. Workshop 2: Generating Project Ideas

Attendees were required to think of and write down project ideas for each of the three key themes: heritage, people and communities. Coloured dots were then used to indicate the popularity of the project ideas. All of the project ideas suggested and details about them are attached in Appendix 4. The most popular projects under each theme were presented as follows:

Heritage:

1. Heritage led walks and cycle rides: a series of led walks or cycle rides incorporating heritage sites with all informed guides, funding would be required for a co-ordinator post and volunteer expenses and marketing material (5 dots) [*This was missed out by mistake in the summary presented on the day, although it is actually a people or a communities project rather than a heritage one*]
2. Watercourse Projects: focusing upon the key issues of pollution and natural flood management, through using the Soar Catchment Partnership and the EA (4 dots)
3. Interpretation of Heritage: key themes linked to walks in the forest are geology, wildlife, people, buildings and important architecture working alongside consultant designers (4 dots)
4. Reconnecting Fragmented Habitats: bigger, better and more joined up habitats involving the EA/LRWT/TNF/LROS as well as all other stakeholders (4 dots)

People:

1. Rural Heritage Centre: a training and research centre to demonstrate to and train the local population with further knowledge of the land management profession and include students/graduates/members of the public linked to other universities, conservation specialists and local authorities (8 dots)

