# **RFV Newsletter**



### December 2024

As the Building the Links project draws to an end, some of those closely involved came together to celebrate. Artist <u>Rebecca Osborne</u> was on hand to capture some highlights and ideas for what comes next.



#### Highlights of the Building the Links Project ...

Two years have flown by since the start of this National Heritage Lottery funded project and here, Sophie, the Project Officer provides some of her personal highlights.

Heritage

Fund

- Working with the many parishes and friends groups to develop Nature Recovery Plans for their green spaces. It's been a pleasure to meet these volunteers who have given up their time to protect and enhance nature on their doorstep. Thanks too for the numerous cups of tea and cake eaten at our regular monthly catchups – delicious!
- Seeing Forest School trainees set out on their year long journey to become Forest School Leaders. A great bunch who are now delivering Forest School to a host of local children.
- The opportunity to support and attend workshops to develop my own skills and the skills of others. Thank you to Hugh and Carolyn of Hazelwoodland Products for teaching me how to coppice and make charcoal. Adam Cade on how to set up a tree nursery and a community orchard. I'm using these new skills in my own community now!
- Organising workshops and events for Home Start families, Moulton College students, Corby library and events for the public, including of course our partnership event at Priors Hall. I am in my element here!
- The chance to get to know the hidden gems of the Rockingham Forest through the guided walks organised so wonderfully by Barrie and Trish Galpin. The latest fungi walk in Collyweston Great Wood was fabulous!
- And finally because I do like a party our celebration event at Coronation Park, Corby where we had an opportunity to chat about the current project and what next...

#### Couldn't see the wood for the trees?

Standing alone an ancient oak tree, Purple emperors dance in its canopy, An open glade where the adders bask, "Where's the forest?" you ask.

A scrubby patch where the nightingale sings, A voice full of colour with dull brown wings, A hazel shrub where the dormice feed, You couldn't see the wood for the trees.

An open ride with chequered skipper brought back, A sunny meadow with a winding track, Red kites, once terribly rare, But now their shrill cries fill the air.

Swathes of purple bells that never chime, Create a spring carpet that is truly sublime, A winding brook with a gentle flow, Where jewelled dragons and damsels grow.

This is a special place, Where once royals gave chase, Where iron was mined and forged, In places the land still pitted and scored.

Pretty stone villages bustling with life, Towns with parks where wildlife thrives, Where people play, work and rest,

This is Rockingham Forest.

A poem by Corinne Muir, the Senior Project Officer for Building the Links for the Rockingham Forest. Corinne in her free time attends creative writing classes and wrote this reflective poem for us.



#### Additional Community Grant Funding

Thanks to some additional funding from North Northants Council Rural Community Fund and from the Heritage Lottery existing funding we have been able to fund further community "green"projects including-

- Clearance of part of the churchyard in Cottingham as a great start to managing this beautiful site in the heart of the village for people and wildlife.
- All the equipment, tools and even a shed to develop and maintain a community orchard in Gretton. As well as first aid training for volunteers.
- Swift boxes, native spring bulbs and tools to support Oundle's Nature Recovery Plan.
- Equipment, tools, tarps and outdoor clothing to support Studfall Junior School, Corby in setting up their Forest School.
- Some wellies, loppers and secateurs for the Friends of West Glebe Park, Corby.
- Hard hats, ear defenders, scythes, rakes etc. for the volunteers in King's Wood Nature Reserve.
- Bird boxes, trees, spring bulbs, wildflower meadow seeds, tools, equipment to help Easton on the Hill put into action their Parish Nature Recovery Plan. Even included a couple of pairs of goloshes and chain saw training for volunteers.

#### **STOP PRESS...**

<u>North Northants Local Nature Recovery Strategy</u> North Northamptonshire Council have drawn up a draft strategy setting out the priorities for nature in the county. This strategy will inform the local planning process, agreeing priorities for nature recovery and mapping the most valuable areas. The strategy document and map are now open for public consultation <u>until 9th December 2024</u>. Don't miss the opportunity to have your say. To help you through the process we have produced a single page <u>step by step guide to taking part on the RFV</u> <u>website</u>.







Over the past two years the project partners have worked in collaboration to connect people to the landscape and the wildlife of the Rockingham Forest. This has been delivered through a myriad of ways including; guided walks, workshops, training opportunities, drop in fun days, talks, forest school, parish nature recovery plans, landowner engagement and a creative art competition...



Building the Links Numbers...

The diagram opposite gives a snapshot of the numbers of people the project has reached in just two years! impressive figures in such a short time. Our website has been at the heart of the project's success, providing a means of communicating far and wide all the opportunities for people to get involved. This is thanks to the fantastic work of Barrie Galpin who set up and keeps our website buzzing!



## Winter 2024 and beyond in Rockingham Forest ... What's to look forward to and how to get involved?

There is still plenty going on in the Rockingham Forest as the Rockingham Forest Vision moves onwards, maintaining all the links so successfully built so far. Ways you can stay or get involved include -

- Accessing and contributing to the Rockingham Forest website. The website is regularly updated with news, what's happening on the ground, events, workshops, blogs, volunteering opportunities and more. Please send us your news and photos. And how about writing a blog article yourself? To view the website click on the link -<u>Rockingham Forest Vision</u>
- Booking on one of our guided walks and/or workshops. Click the link to the RFV website for dates, detail and how to book - events
- A few free hours to help out ?- there is an array of volunteering opportunities available whether you are looking for something cerebral, physical or both! To find out more about volunteering opportunities click on the link to the RFV website - <u>volunteering</u>
- If social media is your thing then try following us on @rforestvision@bsky.social ,as we move away from X (formerly known as Twitter)



THE NEXT HERITAGE LOTTERY BID...

Just last week a host of organisations led by the Nene Rivers Trust got together at Stanwick Lakes to brainstorm the next National Heritage Lottery bid and what it would like. The bid is likely to be submitted in late Autumn 2025 and has potential to be far reaching but to include and build upon the work undertaken under the Building the Links for the Rockingham Forest. So watch this space...

#### And finally...

As we take our leave of the project, Corinne and I would like to say how much we have enjoyed the project, working collaboratively with partner organisations, volunteers, community groups, schools, colleges, landowners, parishes, friends of groups and of course many local residents of the Rockingham Forest Vision area.

On a practical note, if you have any further queries about the project then please email for general enquiries -<u>info@neneriverstrust.org</u> and for queries about the Rockingham Forest Vision website please email <u>Barrie Galpin.</u>

Wishing you all the very best and seasons greetings from Sophie, Corinne and the Rockingham Forest Vision team