

2 July 2009

Chichester Harbour Trust completes purchase of Maybush Copse, Chidham

A year after its initial bid, the Chichester Harbour Trust has successfully completed the purchase of an important 8-acre area of woodland and open space in Chidham which will be opened for enjoyment by the local community.

The project has been strongly supported by near-by residents who raised over £90,000 towards the cost, and both the Trust and Harbour Conservancy have made major contributions.

The mature trees on the site form part of the wider harbour landscape and can be seen from as far away as Pilsey and East Head, so the Harbour Trust – a charity pledged to protect the natural beauty and wildlife of the Chichester Harbour area – was particularly keen to safeguard the site.

In due course the open space and woodland will be made available for the enjoyment of the public and will provide a valuable recreational amenity in an area where the local Parish Plan specifically identified a lack of open spaces where families could enjoy an unspoilt natural environment.

The site lies on the parish boundary between Southbourne and Chidham & Hambrook and both Parish Councils have warmly welcomed the project and contributed to the purchase.

The local community will take responsibility for the day-to-day management of Maybush Copse, guided by the environmental expertise of the Conservancy. The plan is to enhance the woodland by planting more trees while leaving about 40% of the area open for the enjoyment of children and adults alike, including occasional community events.

One of the first tasks will be to ensure the area is safe. In the past the land has been used as a brickyard, a caravan site and, at one stage, a municipal rubbish dump. A contamination survey has revealed some hazards that will have to be dealt with, and a number of the trees are in urgent need attention. However, local residents, the Conservancy and the Trust are all confident that the Copse can be conserved and improved to provide not only an important contribution to the harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but also a valuable amenity to the local community.

Sir Jeremy Thomas, Chairman of the Chichester Harbour Trust said: “This charity is delighted that we’ve been able to provide the mechanism by which all the interested parties have come together to protect this important piece of land. In the Trust’s hands it will be safe for the long term, to be enjoyed both now and by generations to come”.

For more information about the Chichester Harbour Trust see: www.chichesterharbourtrust.co.uk

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