

Wychwoods Community Wood

There is still a chance that we can create a local Community Wood to celebrate the Millennium.

Readers will know that we are looking for a site for a Community Wood near the villages of Ascott, Milton and Shipton under Wychwood. The aim is to create a wood owned and managed by the Woodland Trust in perpetuity with public access for the local community. Such a site should be about ten acres in size, convenient for the three villages, with a public footpath adjacent. Access for off-road vehicles would be helpful, to assist maintenance. Proximity to existing trees and woodland would be a distinct environmental advantage.

We were most disappointed last Summer, when we reluctantly decided to abandon the proposed site at Dog Kennel Lane for which so many local people had worked so hard. Funding was in place, with a substantial grant offered from West Oxfordshire District Council, pledges of support locally and matched funding available from the Woodland Trust under their Woods on Your Doorstep scheme. Some local enthusiasts were even raising suitable wild flowers from seed for planting in the wood.

Last Autumn we actively identified over fifteen potential sites in the area. In some cases the owners were not willing to sell, and some other sites were not ideal, being in the environmentally sensitive area near the river. We have concentrated on a couple of sites, which have been visited by officers of the Woodland Trust and negotiations are now continuing.

These negotiations are taking place against deadlines. West Oxfordshire District Council understandably needs a decision in the next few months. Also, the Woodland Trust has funding for 200 woods nationwide, and we run the risk of losing our place in the queue – especially after the publicity created by Ambridge's Millennium Wood when it featured on The Archers last year!

We hope, after everybody's work and support, that our wood can still become a reality.

Charles Keighley 01993 831403.

Wychwood Project Web-site

A new web-site has been created to inform people about the objectives and scope of the Project, and to detail the latest developments in the many schemes that are under way throughout the area. It will also feature some of the area's history as well as information about its towns and villages, for the interest of visitors and locals alike. It has been designed by a Friend of Wychwood, the Project's support organisation, and will be updated regularly.

The address of the site is <http://www.wychwoodproject.org>

If you want any further information do give me a call.

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