

Discover Perry Wood

This is a project funded by Heritage Lottery Fund which is being run by Swale Borough Council and the Mid Kent Downs Project Countryside Partnership. It is a project which has been developed to provide a better understanding of Perry Wood, and its value in the Kent Downs landscape. The project is working with the local community, running various events and activities up to the end of 2010.

Main objectives

- 1) To carry out historical research with professional archaeologists from the Trust for Thanet Archaeology, with community involvement.
- 2) To use the outcomes of the historical research with wildlife data to feed into a new Kent Wildlife Trust management plan for the woods, upon which the local community will be consulted.
- 3) To hold at least 2 events for locals & visitors per year, exploring the wildlife, landscape and historical value of the site.
- 4) To use the research findings to provide new interpretation for the woods - for example a new leaflet, website information and on-site interpretive features.
- 5) To provide a nature trail and education pack for local school use.
- 7) To carry out some footpath and bridleway restoration.

The role of the Mid Kent Downs Countryside Partnership

The Mid Kent Downs Countryside Partnership is a 'Countryside Management Partnership' covering areas of Swale and Maidstone Boroughs, within the Kent Downs AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). It is able to offer help, advice and often grant money for conservation and enhancement of landscape and wildlife in this special area, with a strap line of 'Linking People, Land and Nature'.

The Mid Kent Downs Partnership is helping to oversee implementation of the main objectives of the Discover Perry Wood project, and is taking a 'facilitating' role as regards the community aspects. For the duration of the historical research stage, the Trust for Thanet Archaeology can also offer plenty of guidance. If you'd like to offer any ideas or get involved, please contact:

Sally Evans, Mid Kent Downs Partnership Manager. 01303815170 sally.evans@kent-downs.org.uk. West Barn, Penstock Hall Farm, Brabourne, Ashford, Kent TN25 5LL

Upcoming events and opportunities

As we near the end of 2010 we mark the end of the 'research' stage of the project. Whilst there is much more that could be discovered on Windmill Hill, what we have learned will contribute to a new Management Plan for the woods and new visitor information.

A **Management Plan Consultation** is being planned, where maps and pictures will be used to enable you to share a vision for the future of the Woods and to make comments and suggestions. A date for this event is to be confirmed once all the historical information has been summarised and included.

A **visit to Blean** is planned for late April, again date to be confirmed. This will enable interested local people to visit a site similar in nature to Perry Wood where heathland restoration is underway. Whilst these areas are similar in nature, they also share a linked history and the visit will include a visit to the Bigbury archaeological site.

Two **school projects** will be encouraging pupils at Selling Primary School to learn more about the nature of Perry Wood and the surrounding landscape. The Mid Kent Downs Countryside Partnership will also be putting together an 'education pack' summarising the educational resources that the Woods have to offer.

An **Interpretation and Access Plan** will form part of the management plan consultation. Later in the year, work will be done to improve on-site signage and visitor information. All 'signage' will be in-keeping with the woodland environment and will encourage visitors to learn about and have respect for Perry Woods.

The Discover Perry Wood Working Group

There is still time to join the working group for this project... the group meets quarterly to review progress of the project and to fully engage in the work. If you would like to join the group or simply join a 'keep me updated' list for the project, please contact:

Sally Evans, Mid Kent Downs Officer. 01303815170 sally.evans@kentdowns.org.uk. West Barn Penstock Hall Farm, Brabourne, Ashford, Kent TN25 5LL

