

JESKYNsnews

December 2005

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Welcome to the very first edition of Jeskyns News!

We want to keep you, the local community, informed of progress every step of the way in this exciting project. We hope that in conjunction with our website, www.forestry.gov.uk/northkent, this newsletter will enable us to do this. It will be published at regular intervals and will be the place to find progress updates, points of contact, information about how you can get involved and hopefully much more besides! Also if you have an article or item that you would like to be included in a future edition of Jeskyns News then we would love to hear from you!

We will be distributing it directly to all individuals or groups who have already been involved in the project in some way, but if you would like to receive future copies direct through the post, then please contact us with your name and address and we will gladly add you to the distribution list. Copies will also be made available from local outlets such as shops and libraries.

What is the Jeskyns Farm project?

For many years the Forestry Commission has been bringing green spaces closer to people across Britain. To deliver green spaces like this to people across the country we regularly partner with a variety of groups. In this instance the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has generously provided the funding to allow us to deliver an additional green space within the North Kent area by purchasing and converting Jeskyns Farm.

At present we have no site plan and are consulting closely with the community, various stakeholders and local groups to find out what people like about the site, what people want it to look like and what features it might have.



Questionnaires, offering everybody the opportunity to have their say, were widely distributed and we would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete and return one. The deadline for returning these has now passed and we are in the process of drawing together the findings from these in a report which will feed into the design process.

However, the consultation process is by no means finished yet. See: **Next Steps** to find out how you can still have your say and ensure that your views are heard!

For more information please contact:

Denise Culley, Community Ranger, North Kent Project, Shorne Wood Country Park, Brewers Road, Shorne, Kent DA12 3HX
Tel: 01474 825 118 Email: denise.culley@forestry.gsi.gov.uk Web: www.forestry.gov.uk/northkent

Introducing the new Jeskyns Rangers

Many of you may already have met our two new staff members, Denise and Ian. Since they started they have been busy introducing themselves to direct neighbours, local residents and meeting with interested groups.



Above: Ian Thompson and Denise Culley

Ian Thompson is the new Operations Ranger and will be responsible for managing the contractual operations once physical works begin on site.

Denise Culley is the new Community Ranger and her role is to consult with and encourage the involvement of the local community in the project. Both are now based within Shorne Wood Country Park (contact details at bottom of page). Please feel free to contact them if you have any questions about the project or would like to discuss any issues. They would very much like to hear from you!

Progress Update

Though there may seem to be little happening on site at the present, the Forestry Commission team have been busy behind the scenes undertaking a number of essential tasks.

Site Surveys. A number of wildlife surveys have been completed and have shown that Jeskyns Farm is currently of limited ecological interest. However, the surveys have also included suggestions for increasing the bio-diversity of the site and these will form an integral part of the design process. The endearing but endangered Dormouse is one of the many species who may benefit from the implementation of these recommendations.

The Archaeological and building surveys are currently being completed. All of these reports help us to understand the present condition of the site and are an essential process in the development of a design plan which is sensitive to the bio-diversity and historical significance of the site.



Above: Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*)

Making the site safe and secure. You may have noticed the new fencing and ditches that have appeared around the site recently. These works were seen as urgent to minimise the opportunities for unauthorised vehicular access onto the site. Over the winter months they will be complemented by hedge planting, but no further physical works will be undertaken until after further community consultation with the draft design plan in the new year.

Meeting the neighbours. As previously mentioned, Ian and Denise are currently trying to meet with all direct neighbours (anyone whose house, garden or land adjoins the Jeskyns site). Notes made from discussions at these meetings will feed directly into the consultation process and will help to direct the creation of a site draft design.

Next Steps

Our next big milestone is to create and present a draft design to the public for further consultation.

We hope to have this ready by early in the New Year (Feb/March). This will be the next opportunity for everyone to have their say and to help make it happen at Jeskyns Farm. However, don't forget you can contact us any time with ideas and questions. Just call or email us on the details below, or log onto our website for up to the minute information.

For more information please contact:

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