

It's Your Woodland!

A WOW Special Edition : March 2017

A Message From The Parish Council

"A little over two years ago, the village first heard that the old railway embankment and riverside land were about to be sold. We were all worried that residents would lose access to it or that the land might be used for unwanted development, Luckily, with local support and the goodwill of the land owners, it has now been acquired for the benefit of the community. This special edition of "What's On In Woodford" (WOW) will bring you up to date with what's going on and what the future is for the land now."

Kay Coles: Chairman, Woodford cum Membris Parish Council

What's Been Going On?

"With ownership comes responsibility, and once the Council succeeded in buying the land there were a number of urgent tasks needed," says Bob Snedker, Chairman of the Management Committee. "For a start we have been concerned about public safety – we have had the woodland surveyed and diseased or dangerous trees identified for removal. A lot of litter has been cleared and so has old fencing and barbed wire, although there is more to do.

"We have a group of villagers that have come together as a management committee to help look after the land going forward and we've started to identify ways to raise the money we will need : we don't want this to cost local tax payers more than absolutely necessary.

"In one area, we have been lucky to find a local firm that is willing to manage the trees in the woodland in return for being able to use the site for training new foresters."

A Wood By Any Other Name

Parts of the land have local names that have been used for years: the Bank, the Embankment, the Woods are all used.

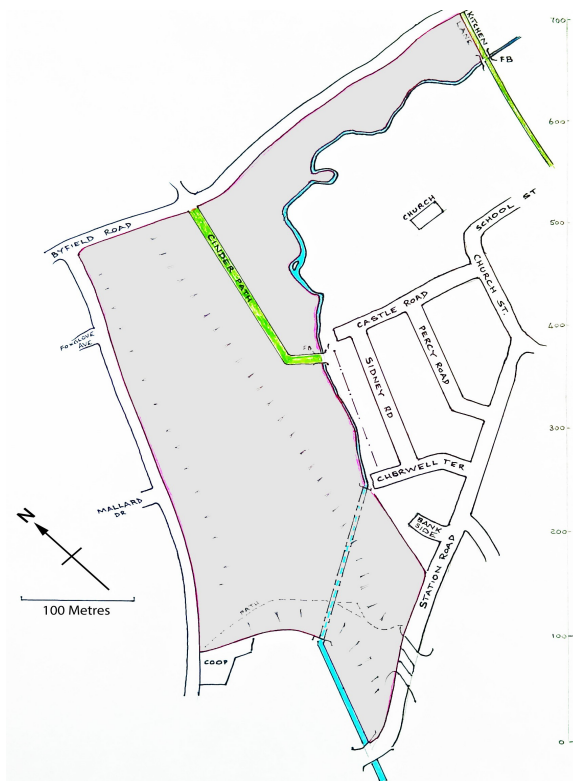
However, there isn't a name for the whole piece of land including the land beside the Cherwell. We felt that one was needed.

We received over 100 responses from village residents to our survey of possible names. The vast majority favoured a name that linked to the land's Great Central Railway origins.

Having considered a number of possibilities (and decided against some of the more jokey ideas!) we have chosen:

“Great Central Woodland”

This is the name that will be used when we want to talk about the entire piece of land bought by the Council for the village.



Great Central Woodland – A Map

Quick Q&A

What will happen to the land?

We need to manage the woodland and want to make it accessible all year round but beyond that, it will be up to the village to choose. Perhaps it could be more of a leisure resource or maybe it could be kept as a wild space and nature reserve in the heart of the village. These are the sort of decisions that will need to be made in the future.

How much will it cost tax payers?

The purchase price for the land was £192,000 but luckily the Council had just finished paying the mortgage on the Memorial Hall & Village Centre, allowing a new mortgage to be taken without additional costs. Maintenance and improvement works will cost money but grants can be found and funds can be raised. The Council is committed to minimising the cost to the precept.

Do we own the bridge over Station Road?

No, we only own the land up to the bridge, not the bridge itself. That remains the property of Northamptonshire County Council.

What can I do to help?

Everyone can do something, even if it's as little as making sure you keep the Woodland tidy when you use it. There will be opportunities for community projects and to help in fundraising. We will also want your views on how the land is to be used. Watch out for surveys in the future. If you are interested, please get in touch with the Committee.

Who is on the Committee?

The Management Committee is made up of parish councillors and local residents. Chairman is Robert Snedker, Vice Chair, Paul Blackwell together with Kay Coles, Ruth Curzon, Patricia Darby, Peter Deverill, Philippa Throssel and Christina Williams.

How can I stay in touch?

We want to keep everyone informed. You can follow our reports each month on the Village Signpost (Look for us under "Village Venues" or use the link at the bottom of this page) or on our Facebook page. You can also contact John Williams, the secretary to the Management Committee, by 'phone on 01327 260009 or by email : woodfordsignposteditor@gmail.com.

A Bit Of History...

Up On The Bank

The embankment was built as part of the works for an important railway depot on the Great Central Railway (later part of the LNER).

The bank was built in 1898, possibly from the spoil dug from the Catesby tunnel, or more likely from the cuttings dug between Woodford and Eydon. It held the marshalling yard for Woodford & Hinton station on the main line that ran from Sheffield to Marylebone Station in London. The sidings on the embankment could hold over a thousand wagons.

To the south of the Great Central Woodland bank was the station itself and its goods yard. To the north, on the other side of the Byfield Road, stood engine sheds and carriage and wagons works and (later, in 1941) more sidings stretching towards Charwelton.

In the station's heyday, over 30 passenger trains a day stopped or started here. From Woodford you could take the Great Central main line north to Nottingham and Sheffield or south to London Marylebone. There was also the branch line from Towcester via Woodford to Byfield and on to Stratford on Avon. A branch line from Culworth to Banbury connected with the GWR to London, Paddington.

From 1898 to 1966, when the railway closed, the bank was an important part of the railway's presence in the village. Soon after it closed the track bed, ballast and ash – all valuable building materials – were planed away reducing the height of the bank. Part of the bank alongside Phipps Road was also removed. 20 years after the railway closed the embankment was planted with the trees we see today.

Down By The River

About a quarter of the Great Central Woodland is actually riverside meadow, part of the flood plain of the River Cherwell

Running between the Byfield Road and the River Cherwell from the Cinder Path as far as Kitchen Lane, this part of the Woodland is an important nature area and wildlife habitat.



The Railway's Crest