

Charnwood Forest Landscape Partnership Project

Explore, Understand, Care For
...and Create!



A plan for participation through combined arts,
heritage and cultural activities

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Grandparents from Scotland who visit Loughborough to look after grandchildren during holiday periods. Enjoy using Bradgate Park for open space for children to run around in and like having a cafe stop to feed kids and for comfort breaks. Also visit Mountsorrel Heritage Centre and Stonehurst Farm as they are both easy to access, easy parking and cater for children. Would like to leave car behind and walk to places that are cater for children. They look forward to visiting the new 'Outwoods Park'.



The Green, Mountsorrel, 2nd July 2017

Phend 17



The Anchor Public House
(Now a care home)

Mountsorrel
(Loughborough Road)

Phend 17

1. Introduction

This report is very much a starting point for a process that we see growing in much the same way as our forest area itself has grown.

In relation to the area of the forest there are clearly planned developments that marry human intervention with a natural environment as well as a process of organic growth that has a complexity that goes far beyond any single plan. This marriage is and has been supportive, productive and destructive, shaping the area from wilderness, through history, to a complex environment of multiple uses and facets. The blend of these facets to form and define the area of the Landscape Partnership Scheme is extraordinarily rich - in terms of the natural environment, human histories, heritage and enterprise, the geological and paleontological record and in terms of what this place means to so many people.

The Landscape Partnership Project has clearly defined goals for many interlocking aspects of its development over a five year period but this is really a much longer term initiative. It is about developing a partnership and an approach that will extend far into the future to sustain a regard and practical respect for this site of national and world significance.

The development of engagement, participation and awareness, involvement, knowledge, support and commitment from a widening range of people - park dwellers, surrounding communities and visitors from further afield is, vital for the future of the area. Equally important is raising the priority of these things with the multiplicity of corporate bodies, authorities, agencies, private owners and groups that contribute to or impact on the Regional Park area.

That's all an enormous canvas to work with in terms of a heritage focused participatory arts

process. So where do we start? Through definitions or dialogue? Through research or developing relationships? Through a focus on definite plans or an elucidation of process?

Of course all these factors are important but perhaps the first place to begin is with the specific focus of the brief for this aspect of the overall plan. What role can participative creativity play?

Creative projects can be used to define the forest area and bring hidden histories to the fore and/or re-present them to wider audiences in new and interesting ways. Creativity can also be used to guide people around the forest or pull together disparate groupings of assets within the forest to form contiguous areas for people to explore. By engaging people through creative projects in forest centered or focused learning, their relationship can become deeper as it is embedded in participative memories and feelings. This learning can be developed into more active engagement and passed on through generations to form new or reclaim lost traditions.

A participatory arts approach engages people in new activity but a longer term embedded community arts based approach adds another layer, developing new organisational skills and commitment to longer term goals. Art in this context, whilst having outputs and aesthetic qualities of its own, is a vehicle for a whole range of other outcomes.

Knowing who the participants, audiences and collaborators are is as important as knowing what to focus on as subjects to explore, activities and projects to run. Understanding and working within the contextual realities of the area and local urban environments is central to the approach we recommend.

Mother, early 30s, LE11. Daughter – 5 and Son – 2 Visits Bradgate Park often as it is a familiar place which is easier to visit with two children, easy parking though not too happy with the one rate of payment. Also visits Mountsorrel Heritage Trail because it is easy to access, free parking, indoor and outdoor and also a short route for kids to easily complete. Does not attempt to visit other sights as they are not familiar and does not want to face difficulties when venturing out with two young kids. Would like the landscape to remain untouched. She enjoys undirected play where her children discover, ask questions and use imagination. Though does not always have answers so would like easy access to information eg: information panels at Bradgate Park.





2. Process

This report, its ideas, research, findings, suggestions and recommendations were led by Kevin Ryan, Khyati Koria-Green, Ashok Mistry and James Chantry and developed through a wide range of conversations with people from diverse backgrounds living or working within the forest area and its satellite communities.

Clearly this whole Landscape Partnership programme has not come out of a vacuum of pre-existing activity but rather sits within an active matrix of existing and potential relationships working towards forming a coherent network of collaboration and support. In developing our thinking it was impossible to separate the existing and historical project and programme connections Charnwood Arts has with the area and we make no apology for including such references and the potential of what we can contribute to the partnership

Charnwood Arts pre-existing programmes such as Where We Live and What We Know, Drawing on Age and its parent project of People Making Places are all highly relevant. Equally our experience of working on local heritage projects and our core group role within the Leicester(shire) Cultural Education Partnership are all significant in relation to this report. But of course we must look well beyond this to consider an approach which brings many other players into focus, creative and community, corporate and individual.

In terms of ways of creatively fulfilling the three core themes of the Landscape Partnership project (Understand, Explore and Care For) we can divide activity into three main types: passive projects, active projects and knowledge centred projects. It is important to stratify the types of projects in order to understand and control the impact of projects on the forest environment.

We can use this model to shape and create a balance between the three core aims to form the modalities of programme development.

This is important as funding usually relies on engaging people as audience members or participants. However, the impact of 'audience' activity needs to be understood and kept in check to avoid adverse impacts on the forest environment.

None of the answers rests within a single report - and everything we write about here should be considered in terms of its impact on the environment of the forest. Increases in road use, social impacts, impacts on flora and fauna, pollution. We cannot consider any creative project in isolation from its effects, both desired and undesired outcomes.

Equally, we come to this work in an already knowledge rich environment - natural and human history, the geology and fossil record, local heritage knowledge and preservation, mapping and interpretation by scores of groups, organisations and individuals including the remarkable Charnwood Roots project.

How this knowledge can be better connected, transmitted, engaged with and brought to life is at the core of this call for creative solutions. If it can be made more accessible, become known and valued, through active and informed engagement with the environment by a wider range of people, we join our partners in believing that this landscape will be better protected for future generations.

"No one will protect what they don't care about and no one will care about something they have never experienced"

David Attenborough

Male and Female, 70ish, LE12 This couple have never owned a car and use bikes or walking to get around. They regularly go for walks through easily accessible woodland areas and use country roads for bike rides. Not especially interested in visiting unknown sites that cannot easily be reached by foot or bike, tend to avoid crowded places. Familiar with some of Charnwood's heritage, lived in Shepshed all their lives so familiar with the changing landscape within their lifetime.

3. What is the Forest? - Exploring Multiple Perspectives

Charnwood Forest is a space...it is our relationships with it that make it a place.

The word Forest is, for most people, a concept that describes or brings to imagination an area of geographical integrity and related flora and fauna that has a tangible presence.

Where a forest begins and ends is a question that lines on maps might seek to define but the deeper we dig the bluntness of this tool becomes problematic. We also need to factor in time...the ancient forests that now exist as coalfields beneath our feet, the shaping of the forest by human endeavour, the reach of a historic forest into the areas we have built over and the impacts of reductions in continuous tree cover for farming and other activities.

Beyond this we need to consider what that word means to each of us individually, about forests or a particular forest, about the forest that is external and the internalised knowledge, feelings, philosophies, and creative ideas that this word conjures up.

We relate to forests on a series of continuums from - those who are deeply invested in and know the forest in great detail to those who have never yet visited one in their lifetime. Those who are moved to create remarkable things inspired by the forest to those who have never created anything from it or about it all.

What happens when people identify with it as a place they live and which in turn identifies them?

Ashok writes "The project offers a unique opportunity to re-root people by bringing them closer to where they live and to associated history on a natural and emotional level rather than through political ideology.

What does it mean to be a Midlander, British, English or European in the context of the forest and all of the people that historically might have lived there. We can generate awareness of the tribes, settlers, landowners, smallholders and peasants that would have lived in and around the forest presenting an organic narrative of human presence there. This would counter nationalistic narratives of place by exploring the reality of the connections between past and present rather than a glorified, idealised fictitious past."

I think of forests that I've travelled in, Europe, Amazonia, cloud forests in the Andes, jungly hard wood and bamboo forests in India, mountain forests in Thailand and Taiwan, Pacific rainforests in Canada yet, it is the forests I grew up with in the West Country and Hampshire and where I brought my own children up, here in Charnwood, that excite and intrigue me most.

Ashok reflected on people he had spoken to about the project "Some of the people who had migrated to Britain but had lived in rural settings in the country of their origin experienced a flood of memories relating to forests. When we started to explain Charnwood Forest, they spoke of stories relating to forests and trees and also spoke of direct memories of interacting and living off the forest. In particular people who came from villages in India who worked in craft based trades such as pottery or carpentry spoke of their relationship to the environment and coexistence with trees, plants and animals of the forest."

This is not just a project about the forest - it's geology, flora, fauna and history but also about people, what we have created, our heritage, our lives and our legacy.

Female, Early 40's, LE12 Regularly uses Bradgate Park for long walks with her mother who prefers easy walking routes with '2' cafe stops, her mother prefers familiarity 'along the way'. She is vaguely aware of sites of historic significance and would not mind learning more about them along the route as a point of conversation but would not go out of her way to research it. Also uses Outwoods, Beacon Hill and Swithland Wood for walks with her husband.





4. What Will it Mean to ‘Understand’?

“Ninety percent of everything we know has been passed along through story.”

Laurens van der Post

van der Post is an interesting character to begin this with. Someone who had both a real life of extraordinary proportions and accumulation of knowledge on the one hand but someone who also made many of his advances in life through appropriating stories collected by others or inventing stories about himself.

When we discover things through the knowledge of others it may inspire us to dream, to question and to act - to move beyond a passive response and to take a more active role and ultimately to develop our own understanding of things.

van der Post did just that - and as a result inspired millions through his books about the African Bushmen as he placed his own feet upon the ground through his travels. He decried superficiality but was in the end exposed and decried for his own.

When a single person writes about a place and that is all we have exposure to we can be little more than passive consumers of that knowledge. We might ask questions but who is there to answer them?

van der Post recounts many conversations with the people he encountered and his accounts add something to the richness of those who collected the stories he sometimes claims. The heritage comes alive through his journeying and conversations as well as through the stories that may have been previously collected by others. So, how does this connect with, and what does it mean to ‘discover’ and ‘understand’ a forest, Charnwood Forest?

I have chosen van der Post as an example of a ‘discoverer’ in part because he invariably looked at both dimensions of the inner and the outer world in considering the environments that he was in and the people he was with.

Artistic works rely heavily, in many forms at least, on this balance of objective engagement and inner response. An arts based heritage focused programme in relation to the Forest needs to bear this in mind if it is not to be reduced to heritage or creative ‘entertainment’. Beyond the superficial, there is such richness to be discovered in this forest sited as it is between three cities with a multiplicity of ‘story-tellers’ willing to share their knowledge.

Discovery may be about finding something new but through our researches, both individual and collective, it may be more about connecting things in new ways, to deepen or spread appreciation of the things we already know, to advance our discovery into deeper understanding. In a heritage context the arts can act as an ally in both engaging people initially and inspiring them to search more comprehensively. They may open up or enhance a pre-existing journey that looks to paint accurate pictures of the past in the present. Or, create new ways of representing things that are not entirely ‘factual’ but based on engagement through the use of facts. Art also help us point imaginatively to the future.

Imperfect as he was this was ultimately what Laurens van der Post did with his later life...his discoveries were factually based and in truth came out of his direct engagement with the environments he explored but often omitting to tell the world the depth of knowledge he owed to others. This was true of both his inner and outer journeying. Here, we differ, our shared discoveries are our shared heritage and begin from a collective commitment to better understand and protect the place we love.

Mother, early 30s, LE11. Boy – 8, Boy – 6, Girl – 2. Came to live in Britain from Uzbekistan 10 years ago, Very unfamiliar with the Forest. Uses local parks but scared to venture into the unfamiliar forest area. Would potentially visit with others to discover the area. Was interested to learn about what Charnwood currently has to offer. Would like activities to interest kids, child friendly picnic area and would like to feel safe. Interested to learn about the site's history to share with children.

5. On-line and Off-line Approaches to Future Engagement

We cannot escape from the fact that social media has become a major form of communication between people and a major tool of advertising. More and more organisations are also utilising it to share and promote non-commercial links, including arts and heritage focused groups and individuals.

Stories and images are passed around, links are made to on-line assets such as e-books, image galleries, films, research materials and instructive presentations about how to engage with practical skills... and of course we share our thoughts, our creations and just about every other aspect of our experiences in life!

Yet still, things can be very fragmented, divided into silos of interest. The journey into where we live and what connects us with where we live is either individualistic on the one hand or relatively focused on specific group interests on the other...we largely talk to and share with those we know or have common interests with.

We also consume far more than we give.

Creating a website, developing web interactivity, web promotion and marketing strategies are all valid for first points of contact and selling things and experiences to be consumed but how do we keep a level of web engagement once that activity, event or thing is consumed?

We think that the Web offers lots of opportunities to discover and explore and can contribute to the theme of care for but it also has enormous capacity to encourage people to more actively create both on-line and off-line.

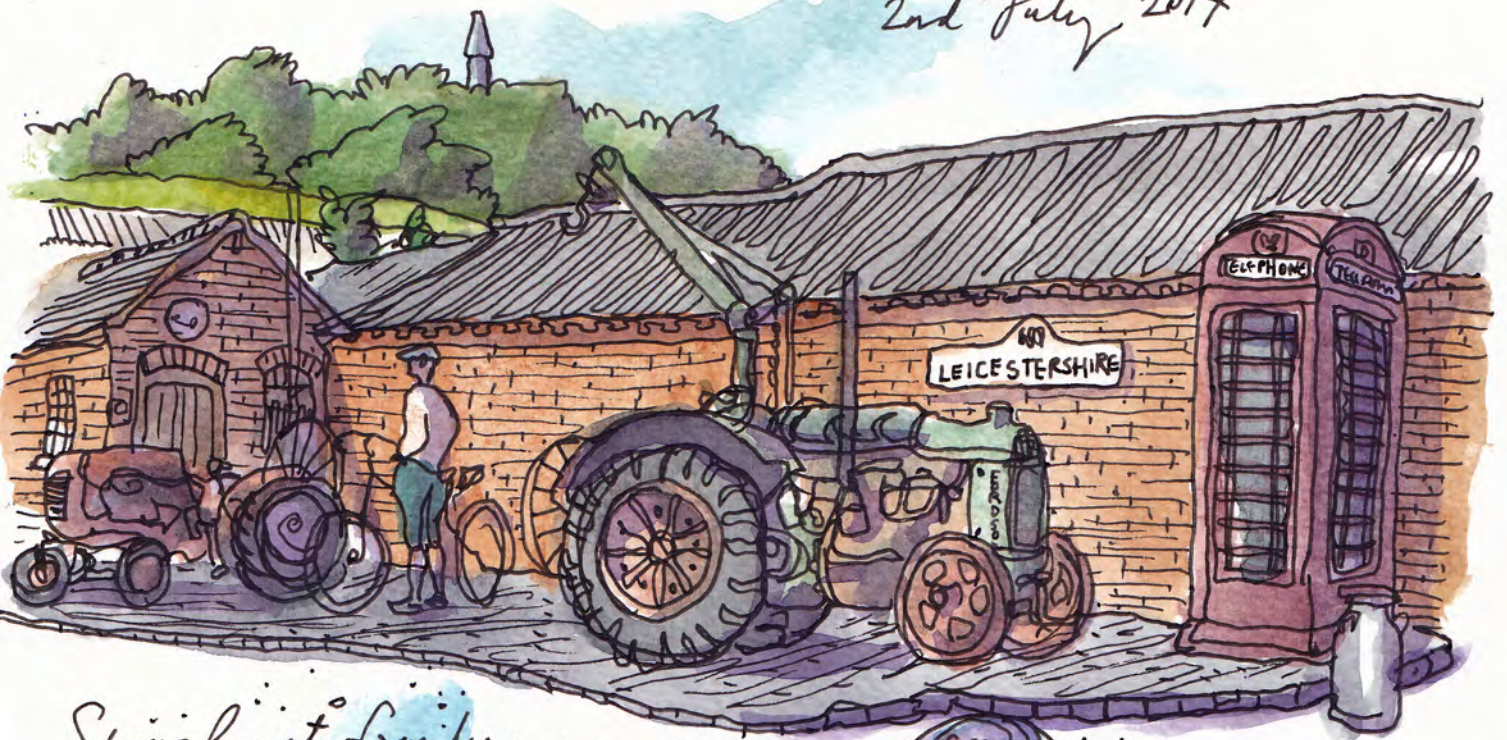
Charnwood Arts were an early pioneer of off-line/on-line combined approaches in the late 1990s and in 2001 our work was celebrated at an international community informatics conference in the UK. It was the day after 9/11 and the keynote speaker was unable to leave New York, a historic moment that gave us an unexpected platform. That project was called People Making Places and through it's many hundreds of web pages, e-books, films and interactive galleries and projects one thing was salient - it was all based on collective forms of research and face to face activity on the ground.

The Web has moved on a lot from 2001 and so have the possibilities of utilising a vast range of on-line tools to increase active engagement and develop and promote outputs from community based projects. Current web strategies are moving away from silo based mentalities of production in many ways - the competition for web attention between web sites is still there but new forms of partnership and sharing have made it a much more fluid space.

Our belief is that People Making Places type approaches have much to offer the project in its initial five years and beyond and will create a multiplicity of interactive projects and a published legacy on-line and in other forms. Rather than form something new to compete it would seem sensible to marry this approach through a multiplicity of local partnerships to join the dots between the Regional Park area and local, regional, national and international communities. An on-line publishing strategy aimed at different levels of interest could readily draw in local to international audiences and participants.

38, Male, DE11, LE12 now LE11 and father of 5 & 3 year old girls. Visited Bradgate Park and Grace Dieu woods as a teenager for bike rides. He avoided busy areas, scoped out routes that were not signposted to avoid walkers. Now often takes kids to bike ride around Bradgate Park and shares his memories. Unaware yet fascinated by historic and scientific significance of Charnwood site, would be keen to learn more to share info with daughters. He would like to find more time to venture further into other Charnwood areas, special sites - specific one off events would encourage visits to different sites. Also very interested in traditional forest activities and wood crafts, would like to get involved in workshops, wood craft days, or to participate in developing a site while learning traditional crafts.

2nd July 2017



Stonehurst family
farm
Est. 1951



Mountsorrel



6. Locations Within the Forest - Temporal and Spatial

To locate ourselves in the 15th Century Forest or the 17th Century Forest or the 19th Century is to transport ourselves imaginatively into the stories of preserved heritage and our own imaginations.

Is this 'unreality' something that, paradoxically makes the Forest even more 'real' to us?

What if we transport ourselves to the 3rd Century BC?

Or to a time 65 million years ago?

Or 570 million years ago?

How real is the 'forest' now?

What is the experience of doing this at home whilst reading about it from a book or on screen?

What if we are sitting in front of a multi-media, interactive digital projection or immersive experience in the classroom?

How about walking alone in the forest with images and information in mind?

What's the experience of encountering this information on interpretive boards?

Is it easier to join with others and access a different period of time with informed, guided walks that touch real locations of significance?



Mother of toddler, LE11. Originally from South Africa and moved to Loughborough for the University, Is not aware of the site's significance. Now, as a mother she enjoys walks through Bradgate Park for easy walks and open space to see her toddler run around, get some exercise and stimulate some sense of adventure in nature. Would like an area to build sculptures using natural objects such as logs, stones, sticks, etc



To really 'feel' a location we may need to spend more time there than we may have first intended. We may need to visit it with our imaginative intention, from what we previously know of the place, already activated. We may have to suspend the chatter of our own minds or the chatter of others.

Locating ourselves physically within the Forest is difficult for some and just second nature to others. For some a regular part of their everyday lives and for others, impossible for a whole range of reasons.

Balancing the needs of different users on the ground is mirrored by the needs of people in remote forms of connection too.

As new physical sites develop we might conceptualise them as venues, managed in the same way as buildings, although they would be semi-wild areas with infrastructure built in to enable access and activities to take place in a sustainable way. However, we will always need to ask how much that is wild or of intrinsic value is lost the more that we make them accessible to more people.

Can we open more 'bookable' sites to be used by local groups to put on creative activities? In doing so we can contain activity that is vital for generating interest in the Forest but also ensure that this activity does not encroach on or adversely affect the broader ecosystem of the Forest.

Male, 70, DE11, walker around Charnwood area - uses an App to identify initial routes then takes any opportunity to divert off route to explore and discover what else the area has to offer. Likes to research area after he gets back to realise and learn more about what he has seen. He avoids all main routes as he likes to walk alone. Uses honeypot sites to take wife and grandchildren (7 & 4) out. Likes to show grandchildren how to play with the landscape by encouraging them to climb trees and rocks, wade through streams, use landmarks as picnic spots where he can tell stories about the area. Would like time to take grandchildren to alternative sites to share his knowledge and experiences of places he has discovered. Though he would be keen to take grandchildren to the alternative sites, worries about their safety and then gets stressed about 'too much health and safety these days.....'

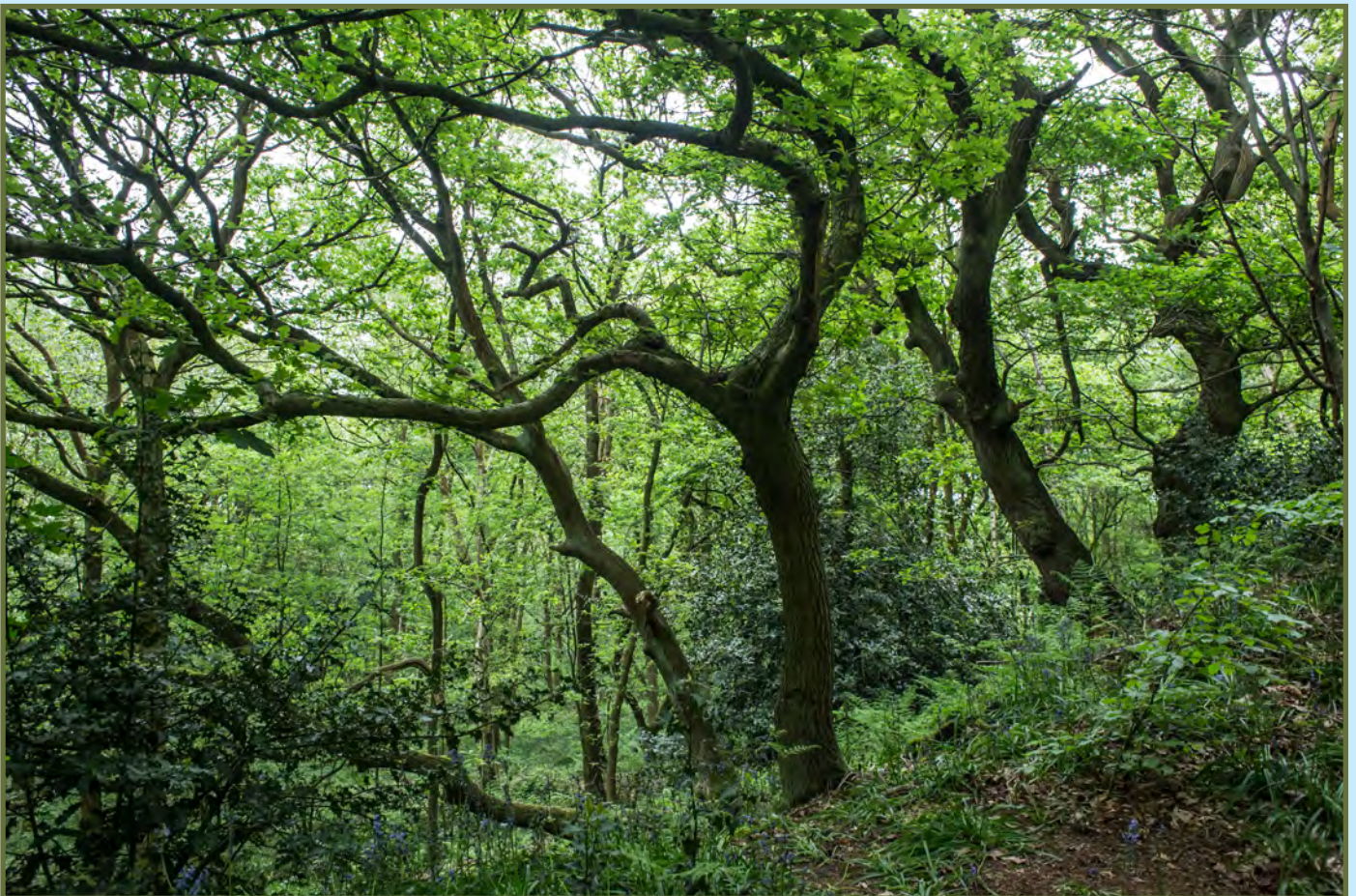
Knowledge centered projects can be peripatetic and focus on enabling the exploration of an aspect or asset of the Forest without people needing to be directly present in the forest area. Knowledge centered projects are a great tool for active learning and lend themselves to groups such as social/special interest groups or schools.

Projects can be developed to engage large groups of people either in person or on-line over time to capture longitudinal data on the evolution of perceptions of the Forest or to engage people to create related artworks that inspire people to discover, explore and care for its environs.

Through these projects, academics, specialists and artists can collaborate on designing and leading workshops that enable the creation of forest related outputs. These can be toured to bring further awareness around aspects of the Forest without impacting the environment.

Temporal location can also be conceived in terms of the time of life that activities are engaged with. So targeted creative and awareness building work at primary levels might be followed up in a structured way through practical environmental studies at secondary level and follow up work as adults.

What will differentiate decision making on the development of new heritage projects for the area?



Male Biker, Early 40s, LE12 Uses Grace Dieu Woods to go on bike. He and a group of friends have used the site since their teens. Likes the site as it is, would not want it to become popular with walkers, families or schools as site would lose its natural attraction, not allow freedom for bike riders and change a landscape that is ideal for bikers, not many suitable sites are nearby. Says he has discovered a stone circle and what looks like a ritual pagan site. Would not like signposts or interpretation to interrupt the area as he prefers to discover, imagine and research points of interest. Would like honey pot sites to remain attractive for families to keep the surrounding landscape as it is.



A participant's sketch from the 4th Where We Live and What We Know - Community Sketch Walk from Loughborough Market Place to the Outwoods.

Mother, Early 30's. Daughter 5 and Son 9 – Son is autistic. She also has 3 dogs and uses the Outwoods, Swithland Woods and Charnwood Water for dog walking, uses car to reach sites then walks through. Likes to take her kids with her but they avoid joining her complaining that it is 'boring'. Site is predominantly used by dog walkers who dispose of doggy poo bags in the forest as there are not enough bins. This concerns her when taking kids to walk with her. Suggests, paths are 'boggy' and need improving. Charnwood Water has become very rundown and not suitable for families, feels unsafe using the site because of groups of people using site for 'other activities'. Always walks with friends or relatives because she does not feel safe walking dogs alone. She worries about larger dogs running around without leads and recommends that dogs remain on leads for safety for other dogs, children and walkers.



7. What Does 'Explore' Mean?

The word 'explore' literally means 'to investigate' or 'to find out'. We can easily understand that someone with a specialist interest or knowledge may be highly motivated to explore and find out about something in great detail. We might also easily recognise the natural instinct that most of us have for the inquisitive exploration of new environments or for attaining a basic knowledge of something that interests us. But what is the contribution, in between these two things, that creative, community based arts and heritage focused projects can make? We think the project must consider a multiplicity of ways in which the Forest has meaning for people and of how community arts approaches and projects can begin to explore both simple and complex ways in which people from different backgrounds and interests might relate to it.

The arts may begin the question of exploration differently from other approaches. Perhaps one of the first questions it may ask is how people feel about something? Emotional responses are a key to: confidence, affiliation, a sense of being and belonging and a commitment to what things may become. It's an important starting point in understanding de-motivation and what might be needed to motivate people to move on and try new things or ask new questions; a prerequisite of exploration.

Broadening an understanding of and encouraging a more engaged approach to the unique heritage of Charnwood Forest can be heightened through opportunities to build memories and associations that have a positive emotional impact. Events, enhanced school visits, interactive walks, workshops, ceremony, ritual and activities that creatively explore our relationship to trees and forest environments in the abstract linked to experience of actual woodland areas can all

be utilised to address and build a person's emotional connection, understanding and confidence to explore more deeply.

People begin from both negative and positive associations with the Forest with reasons as many and as varied as there are individuals. Understanding what people's core concerns, worries, fears and 'turn offs' are is as important as finding out what their own aspirations and visions in relation to the Forest might be. Art can bring representation of the abstract and imagination to this in a variety of ways and through different media.

Of course this exploration of human responses, internalisations and creative expression is only a starting point. Charnwood Forest exists in a material form, as do all the factors, the day to day realities, that affect the lives of those who live within and beyond its boundaries. Perhaps the largest part of the Landscape Partnership project is concerned with this materiality and the hard facts of what exists and how it can be better managed and preserved. However, perception of these things is equally important when engaging with people to explore what Charnwood Forest has to offer.

An arts programme can add new ideas and pathways that address many aspects related to concrete realities that determine peoples' experience of the Forest. Beyond some of the activities mentioned above more sustained community projects, perhaps multi-art form, inter-generational, locality based or mass engagement orientated can be utilised to both connect people with the heritage and long term development and sustainability issues of the area. Participatory community, collective or interest group focused projects can also be utilised to address other material issues that affect people's ability to access sites around

Father of two boys, LE11 Visits once or twice a month - "sometimes more when I run". Until recently wasn't aware of the amount of locations that are included in the 'Charnwood Forest' area. For example Swithland Wood and Bradgate Park. Accesses the area by car and on foot. Would you have any suggestions to improve your visits? "Our family visits are always made with specific ideas in mind based on what is available and we always have a very enjoyable time. We like to enjoy the natural areas as they are as much as possible although we do like to use cafes and playground areas sometimes." What more would you like to receive from the forest area? "Perhaps more nature trail activities. Natural musical instrument areas (like at Rushcliffe Park) or more natural sculptures (like those in the Beacon Hill area)."

the Forest, be they physical access, financial or psychological impediments that limit their engagement.

We will build another layer of experience and knowledge through this project around these issues...but we are not only talking about the need to explore human needs but also those of the environment itself. We cannot afford for people to take this area for granted and an important, perhaps the most important goal, is to communicate the significance and value of the Forest area, both as it stands, and for what it can become.

We need to ask questions of what prevents exploration and what gives it licence? What is it inside us as individuals and what external factors come to play in allowing or denying our exploration of this environment and how we can interact with it? This points us to the possibilities for transformation and change.

There are immediate and obvious answers, exclusive private land ownership perhaps being the biggest external factor to limit licence to explore. Permissive ownership, by trusts, local authorities and private landowners being the other side of the coin. For some the external limiting factors are more immediately related to their experience on the ground, for example families with young children intimidated by the numbers of dogs off lead in areas like the Outwoods. For others, horse riders for instance, the availability of safe bridleways is a licence. An external factor can also be a social factor...it may relate to age, religion, finance, social group, transport etc. and as these things become internalised the likelihood of breaking them becomes harder to contradict...obversely the very same things may be licencing factors for other people.

Fully internalised limitations are harder to change and may require the longer term commitments and strategies that creative engagement may offer.

The majority of people may simply not have the inclination to choose to explore the Forest over other activities. For these people, how the Forest is marketed as offering something for them may be the significant turning point in giving themselves licence to explore it over other things. There is much for us to explore in how this interest can be generated to encourage greater understanding and capture them as advocates for the long term care of Charnwood Forest.

This may seem like a long journey through a forest of words, questions and ideas but it all underpins the change this aspect of the project seeks to bring about. A change in thinking, feeling and connecting, in aspiration and commitment...and a determination to sustain that change over time.

How can we influence people's feelings towards Charnwood Forest? How can we shift our concerns into actions? How can we address barriers and build bridges to engage people more and what means can we use to tell the stories that will draw them in?

What ideas or new thinking can we bring to the table? What combinations of old ideas might lead to innovation?

There will of course be many answers to these questions over a five year period as different groups and communities are engaged in the process. A prioritisation of audiences and participants might develop a series of interlocking themes which reach out to schools in Leicester and North Leicestershire, ethnic minority groups, people with specific needs and communities in the Forest itself. A prioritisation of heritage might dovetail this with themes such as the exploitation of natural resources over the centuries, major historical events, the Forest's natural history, geology and fossil record. Activities may be created on the ground or developed to enable greater virtual access, local to global.

Retired Indian lady - carer for spouse from LE11 would like to join a regular walking group, with women of similar age. Routes should be easy to access. Would ideally like to be taken as a group in a minibus for exercise, social life and to visit new places and have guided tours.





What could this mean - to explore Charnwood Forest virtually, through knowledge, history, on the ground, in depth, through a particular focus in responsive and creative ways? Not one way but many, organised to support each other through a coherent approach that gives people multiple ways of engaging, building their relationship with and feelings towards something that they can come to know and value more fully as a place.

A virtual reality (VR) project could tour both the Forest area and its urban hinterland and bring to life its social, political, industrial and geological history. VR can be used to engage people and encourage them to explore the Forest further. A passive VR film can be used to tell a historic story in an engaging way while an interactive VR environment can be used to bring the Forest to people that have limited access. Why not combine the VR approach with conventional explorations on film and creative, hands on workshops that engage people creatively in their own right or as a stimulus to conduct their own research.

Locative applications on mobile devices can be used to guide people around or to define areas of the Forest using an audio soundtrack. A mixture of sounds from Forest locations can be mixed with either historical information, verse or fiction to form a soundtrack that guides people around an area. Audio can be triggered by GPS signals so the soundtrack only plays when one is within a specified area. Local information can also be provided to enable people to navigate the area. The development of projects such as these can come out of direct engagement with people in their development through community arts based approaches. There are many opportunities to build partnerships through such projects and to build new on-line resources as well as promote those that already exist. This is not to take away visits on the ground but to stimulate them

and enhance them. There is already an enormous amount of knowledge about Charnwood Forest but it is locked behind the doors of our ignorance as a general public. There are extraordinary stories to tell and we must use as many means as we can to tell them.

The act of walking, the acts of making or repairing, the telling of a story to a live audience, the recreation of an event, the creation of a community play and research through local and other resources, the collective making of a film, book or magazine can all be enhanced through on-line/off-line approaches.

Passive ways of engaging people could be built into the landscape such as climbable structures or more landmark sculptures that people either individually or in groups (including school groups) can visit without prior permission.

Passive projects could present a potentially negative impact on the environment in the short term while they are constructed in the landscape. Through very careful consideration of siting this impact would dissipate as time goes by. Curatorial work would involve a multi-skilled team. Such a project might offer a way of directing or containing human movement. It could be used to introduce the Forest to people in a guided or supported way. Passive projects might work well to fulfil the aim of discovering and exploring the forest for new visitors. The popularity of a passive project site or trail would need to be carefully managed in order to monitor the impact of visitors on the surrounding environment but it might answer the twin needs of relieving pressure on existing honeypot sites whilst connecting them to other exploratory routes. Can we build something from the history and heritage itself?

Mother, early 40, LE11. Daughters – 5 and 3. Enjoys bike riding with husband and two daughters. Access sites by car or bike. As a family they visit Bradgate Park, Outwoods, Mountsorrel Heritage Trail and Swithland Wood. Prefers mapped routes to plan her time and make for an easy visit. Often uses same sites for running or bike riding alone.. Uses made paths to feel safer and easier to run. Would like ideas along the trail to spark imagination, encourage children to investigate from one place to another... fairy door trails, seasonal edible forest. Makes comparisons to Hicks Lodge. Also as a runner/biker would like signs to suggest how far you have run, encourage exercise for adults and kids with suggestions using natural space along routes... running from a - b will burn x cals / x number of steps from sites a – g. Would also enjoy adult challenges ie pull up bars, adult monkey bars and rope climbing, though would not want to disturb the landscape.

For instance, could we identify say 5 -10 sites, and create a 'Charnwood Creative Heritage Pilgrimage' to celebrate what Charnwood Forest has to offer. These could include the honeypot sites too. Each site would identify and build potential partnerships with local businesses and organisations and focus participatory research projects on selected areas. They would provide an insight into historic attributes and create opportunities to collect contemporary stories through live projects and social media. Like any pilgrimage it could offer different lengths of passage for different users between 'stations'.

The Charnwood Heritage Pilgrimage could incorporate ideas and the revealing of places related to the themes of Being, Becoming and Belonging to fit with both schools agendas, and how these can roll out to family engagement and to embrace the heritage of the area.

A list might include the following: Castle Hill in Mountsorrel, Windmill Hill and St Paul's Church in Woodhouse Eaves, Beacon Hill, the Dragons Back on the Permissive Path, Bradgate Park, Mount St Bernards Abbey, Gracedieu Woods and Priory, Bardon Hill and Stoneywell. A trail mixing history, natural environment and heritage, creativity, industrial heritage through interpretation and activity. It might be a linear 'pilgrimage' or a 'collecting card' approach with each location being developed and located through an initial public project. This could build, through a range of site specific and wider partnerships such as People Making Places and other local initiatives and be developed in relation to the existing programme of creative walks through Where We Live and What We Know.

There are many ways in which people could route themselves through these stations and we could collect stories and other things produced by people (sketches, reflections,

poetry, photographs and film) as their responses. A project or programme of work that encourages both exploration and discovery and creates that emotional link that leads to 'Care For'.

Maybe we can turn 'Explore' on its head - we can explore ways of thinking about the Forest in entirely different ways, considering ways through which we can bring the Forest and representations or engagement with its heritage from its physical environment into other environments. Marrying the importance of this environment to wider, and growing concerns, about environmental degradation. The impacts and landscape changes wrought by quarrying and the longer term thinking about reinstatement are concerns that might get many more people thinking about the value of this area of Leicestershire.

The Forest is data rich - how can we better and more graphically represent this data to the public? Can we do it through a mixture of graphics, performance, interaction and film in creative ways that both inform, excite and entice people to take a more active role in valuing and supporting the future of Charnwood Forest?

New thinking and new ideas are important for transforming our concerns into plans for action. Plans that ameliorate negative concerns and actualise our positive ones for change. There are a thousand ways and means that we can suggest ideas for change, but out of this myriad of answers we need to see what combines best and is most viable to satisfy our goals for learning, effect, progression and impact. In community arts practice we might term this the role of visualising and frameworking, starting points for collective and participatory dialogue through to action.

There are multiple perspectives related to the overall needs of the Forest as different

Grandfather to 7 & 10 yr old girls, car enthusiast, antiques seller. Aware of some of the site's historic facts from taking grandchildren to the museum. Uses site for bike rides with his wife and drives through to enjoy the scenery. Would like the landscape untouched but would like children to learn more about their area in schools to inspire more informed site specific visits.



viewpoints are taken into account in respect of the environment, wildlife, different social and community groups etc. Engaging people in the heritage of the Forest needs to be mindful of the crossover opportunities as well as seeking to increase overall access.

We would argue at this point that the framework should contain five elements:

1. Identifiable targets which highlight specific areas of the Forest and/or particular target groups of audiences/participants in the first 18 months to two years.
2. Medium to long term aspirations that involve substantial efforts to raise additional finance and take longer to organise. This should have some level of flexibility to allow for variance in timescale and the availability of resources.
3. An allowance for responsive project and new partnership developments.
4. Projects that tie into or build on existing initiatives.
5. Aspirations that reach beyond the initial five year period.

We will argue that a key component of the plan will be the creation of a development post.

Beyond the establishment of a framework and the formulation of a creative post to forward heritage related activities through participatory arts and media there are three other stages that we think are essential to project delivery.

Firstly, to ensure change at the concrete level we need to be assured of the levels of commitment to activities and the overall plan. It is clear from the fantastic levels of attendance at stakeholder and steering group meetings, and key partner engagement that commitment

levels are high and communications between and potentials for further partnership working are becoming well developed.

Secondly, we need to assess the level of determination - how much energy are people actually going to put into this project. This can be gauged to some degree by how closely targets and plans fit with the core business, knowledge, expertise and resource ability of lead and partner organisations. What we have, in respect of Charnwood Forest, is an incredibly well motivated and informed group of organisations with extensive experience of partnership working and engaging people in multi-faceted projects. But determination is more than this, it comes back to a sense of ownership and an engagement with the process that recognises a real sense of the value of what it is we are trying to convey, encourage and preserve. Determination brings a level of emotional engagement into line with our cerebral commitments.

Lastly, in order to really bring our commitments into play and fire them with a determination to effect change it's really useful to gather knowledge, resources, contacts and all those other things that allow us to move into action. These things have many sources and mapping them can be met through making both simple and complex sets of connections.

The accumulated knowledge base in relation to the Forest is extremely large and well formed in many respects yet there are gaps and perhaps one of the largest is to do with general public awareness. In this respect much of this knowledge is specialised or rests with specific interest groups and as the Charnwood Roots project showed, when this information is pooled and made more available, alongside active engagement, something very special happens! We are convinced that this initiative will result in something extra special too!

Retired Indian Lady, LE4. 5 young grandchildren, 8 & 3 year old boys, 6, 5 & 3 year old girls Visited Bradgate Park many years ago when own children were young. Now walks around Watermead Park, Thurmaston on a short mapped route with grandchildren. Places outdoors, familiar for families and feels safe with free parking. Would not venture further into other areas, as they are unfamiliar, further away and unknown. She is unaware of area's significance and would be curious to learn more to teach grandchildren. Interested in free local events for children during holidays.



8. Barriers and Bridges - What People Said

Responses from people in Leicester, Loughborough, Coalville and central Charnwood and Forest villages.

- Many people felt they didn't know if the Forest was a place they would be welcome.
- The closest to the Forest many people had gone was Bradgate Park and they did not feel that any other places would be accessible for them.
- In terms of discovering and exploring the Forest, this would take people out of their comfort zone. As for caring for the Forest, there was a willingness to do this, however, they felt they needed guidance.
- People asked about attractions in the Forest. "What would we go to do/see", as if to ask how would they be entertained once there.
- In terms of creative activities again, the key word was access. The community groups consulted were careful to reiterate access issues as a major reason for not engaging with the Forest.
- People in schools spoke of taking the Forest to the children through projects. It was difficult and costly to take a large group of children out to the Forest unless it fitted within curriculum requirements. Children could be eased into the knowledge of the Forest by taking things that represent the Forest to them.
- People wanted to experience creative things in the Forest they could visit any time. e.g. visiting constructions within the Forest such as treehouses and large sculptures seemed to be of interest as these things represented a focal point for a journey that encouraged a sense of adventure.
- Cost was also a major issue for many people and groups as they saw being in the Forest as a 'luxury'. When this sentiment was picked apart, people opened up about issues around transport and leisure time.
- People living in Leicester City who had a car said they needed to plan where to go and also plan where to put the car once they got there.
- People without cars spoke of the cost and complicated nature of planning how to get to and around the Forest and back home safely.
- Concerns from residents about increased traffic to and through the Forest and bad/dangerous parking on through roads.
- School visits needed to incorporate a mix of meaningful activities and specialist knowledge and where possible some pre-activity or follow up back in school related to the curriculum would make it more valuable.
- Better and safer cycling routes into and through the Forest and better information about how to get around.
- When we talked about the heritage of the Forest people either had a good grasp of some of the main stories or very little knowledge at all. The latter were excited to 're-locate' themselves in such an interesting and important place and the former were most often interested to want to learn more.
- Some people expressed concern about the Forest becoming more of a playground that just attracted lots of leisure users, noise, cars and rubbish and that it was important to preserve quiet places and walks.
- Toilets!

Deputy Head at Mountfields Primary School, LE11 - the Charnwood Forest area has been used as a learning resource for the school as an inspiration for units of work - usually a trip first to provide a context and then using this to base work on. Year 3/4 have visited the Outwoods as part of a geography unit of work about physical and man-made features. Bradgate Park has been visited on occasion too in Year 5/6. We asked "Would the school be interested in a programme of events and resources designed to encourage young people to visit, explore and learn from Charnwood Forest site?" The DH replied "As we become more geared towards outdoor learning this sort of opportunity will be more appealing to staff. I personally would be very interested. It is after all right on our doorstep and some of the sites are even accessible by foot from school."

9. Common Ground on Common Ground

Active projects can be festivals and special events that celebrate an aspect or asset of the Forest in situ. Active projects would be great for focused activity related to a theme, a specific site or links between sites. In terms of attaining the core aims, active projects would be very effective for attracting new people to the Forest by sparking people's imagination and spreading messages relating to ways to better care for the Forest and to become involved in some way. They are also a way of focusing peoples' visits. Such projects can be drop in or as pre-organised groups, such as the workshops conducted through the Artspace Sculpture Trail and the Charnwood Arts organised visits by the Leicester city based South Asian community group 'MARG'. We also organised international student, refugee and open sketch walks for local residents across the Forest during the consultation.

The numbers of people attending active project events would need to be carefully planned to ensure that the environment is not adversely affected and there are ways in which mass participation projects might spread the load on overburdened areas and open up the environment to people beyond the usual honeypot sites.

Events which combine and balance knowledge acquisition, creative exploration and expression, some aspect of entertainment and perhaps the development of a practical skill, within a context of developing a sense of ownership and belonging, offers one route. The model of the Timber Festival is one such focal point that meets many of these criteria but smaller, more focused events such as the series of Fruit Routes harvest events in Loughborough are also good for developing this mix of engagement that leads to a deeper sense of involvement.

There are numerous 'venues' - both indoor and outdoor, that offer interesting and feasible possibilities for more active projects. Larger scale events such as Timber, the fair on Beacon Hill and GCR events as well as urban based events offer opportunities to develop linked activities and presentations of work.

Beyond this more intimate 'events' might be developed along the lines of this following example from a partnership project between Common Ground, Beaumanor Hall, Charnwood Tree Trust and Charnwood Arts.

Tree Dressing in Loughborough and events at Beaumanor Hall.

The project took place over two years combining workshops with schools, community groups and work by individual artists to decorate trees in Loughborough - to get people to think more about urban trees, recruit people to the Trust and explore the traditions of Tree Dressing around the world. Around 25 trees were decorated each year in an array of creative ways involving around 200 adults and children.

To complete the project night-time events were held at Beaumanor Hall on National Tree Dressing Days in December. These events combined a mixture of music, dance, circus and fire acts in the main courtyard followed by a procession to the yew trees to the left of the Hall. This fantastic natural venue was sculpturally decorated and lit by candles as a back-drop to an evening of folk music and storytelling. The nights ended with food and more stories in the cellars of Beaumanor. These intimate events were compellingly memorable and perfect for introducing heritage focused work.

Professional Lady, with dog and 11 year old son, LE12 Works full time and uses Swithland Woods to walk dog daily with her son. Enjoys the wildness of the space. Likes her boy to explore, splash puddles, climb trees and build dens. Enjoys photographing the unusual and unexpected. Would not want to change or interrupt the landscape. Avoids busy sites as she likes the space, quietness, freedom for dog and likes her son to appreciate nature. Aware of some of the site's history from visits to the Museum when her son was younger. Would be interested in learning more to inspire her son and would visit sites to learn about and experience significant sites.

10. Contributing to Care For

Many areas of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park are areas of great beauty, some are of international importance. As a source of quarrystone the area is still a significant contributor to national needs, some parts of it are semi-urbanised and the whole is bisected by one of the UK's most significant motorways. The area sits between three regional cities, directly bordering one of them to the South and is edged by two significant towns to the North. It is an area that is not only under pressure but one which has been undervalued and pressured by external forces and internal exploitation of natural resources which have reshaped the landscape.

Quarrying will not stop tomorrow and the M1 is not going away! Land ownership will not change quickly and the pressures of urban encroachment and leisure use will need to be carefully managed. The area also has a significant population of its own and their involvement and say in what this area becomes is a critical factor in both its protection and their futures.

Areas of the Forest are parts of a dynamic and changing environment but there also a multiplicity of landscapes that have a perennial and relatively unchanging presence, although some are under increasing scales of visitor pressure. Caring for and communicating the pressures on local ecosystems, care of the geological/paleontological record, wildlife preservation and enabling more connected sites between habitats are vital tasks of the ongoing partnership.

The area has many interesting buildings and other features of historical interest which although often locally known are not more widely promoted. Equally, the importance of the area in terms of the story of England is not so widely appreciated. Bringing these more to the fore will greatly aid the sense of identity

for local people and build respect for moves to build a better appreciation of the value and importance of the area. Caring for will mean balancing access and development with the preservation of more natural or wilder areas and possibly the wilding of new ones. In the long term recovery from mineral extraction will present major opportunities and challenges.

We need to think carefully about future uses and multiple desires for use of the Forest - what does care for mean in terms of farming, forestry, reclaiming quarries, industry, economy, needs of local people, usage by different groups, land management, pollution, future housing needs? How do we influence the hard edges of land use management, profit making and development with the softer determinants of coming to decisions based on a love and respect for the area?

Clearly beyond the history, stories and heritage of the area we need to support a sustained vision that brings forward imagined possibilities well into the future. This will not always be easy as different bodies will care for that future with different ideas in mind - so, building relationships for the long term between local players through this project and partnership is essential to negotiate those future directions - both internally and in advocating them to external bodies.

How can heritage focused community arts approaches contribute to caring for and contributing to the future of the area?

There are many ways in which a community arts programme can add value to the work of other organisations and engage more people through activities that invite and address the need for future involvement, potentially as volunteers, future advocates, leaders and practical contributors to specific work that needs to be undertaken at ground level.

"I like the idea of walking in the forest but wouldn't know what to do. You know, how to get there and stuff. That's not the sort of thing our people do". My mum used to live in a village in India and she talked about picking fruit in the forest and playing hide and seek. That was a long time ago and when they moved here they just wanted to get a job and that. We'd go to the park and have a picnic but I wouldn't have thought it was part of the forest (speaking about Bradgate Park)" Asian female aged 22

At one level community arts projects are a proven way of bringing people together who might not always share the same networks or interests. There are multiple studies related to positive benefits to health and well being; improved levels of communication, confidence and creativity; increased capacity to collect, organise and analyse information; develop leadership qualities and organisational ability. Many projects have contributed to new and enhanced connections and networking

embrace a wide range of issues and approaches of interest to local authorities, statutory agencies, professionally staffed Third Sector and community organisations.

In all of this, as with participatory based heritage projects, a care and concern for the development of benefits to others is essential for good practice in this field. Transmitting these values builds social capital and the connectivity to enhance the



between organisations, improvements in creating more coherent local identities, a stronger sense of place and engagement with local heritage.

Community arts are increasingly seen as a means of tackling difficult policy issues such as social exclusion. Place-based arts interventions range beyond increasing civic participation and the promotion/celebration of local history, heritage and cultures to also

early stages of building new communities of interest and involvement. Partnership, awareness, sharing skills and perspectives, and building longer term commitments with a determination to protect our environment and communicating that across generations and between communities is essential to the project. We believe that a sustained community arts and heritage approach can add significant value to this process.

Cafe Lady, Quorn, late 50's Lives in the area. Marriage took her to Scotland, though she loved the scenery she found Scotland lonely. Returned with husband and son to Quorn and appreciates the lively community environment. Has visited Bradgate Park, Beacon, Outwoods, Swithland and many other sites. Aware of some of the area's scientific/historic relevance. Enjoys canal walks, pub stops and the occasional festivals. Would like to see more community events that will help community businesses and people who are lonely in the community



11. Honey Pots, Hidden Assets and Heritage

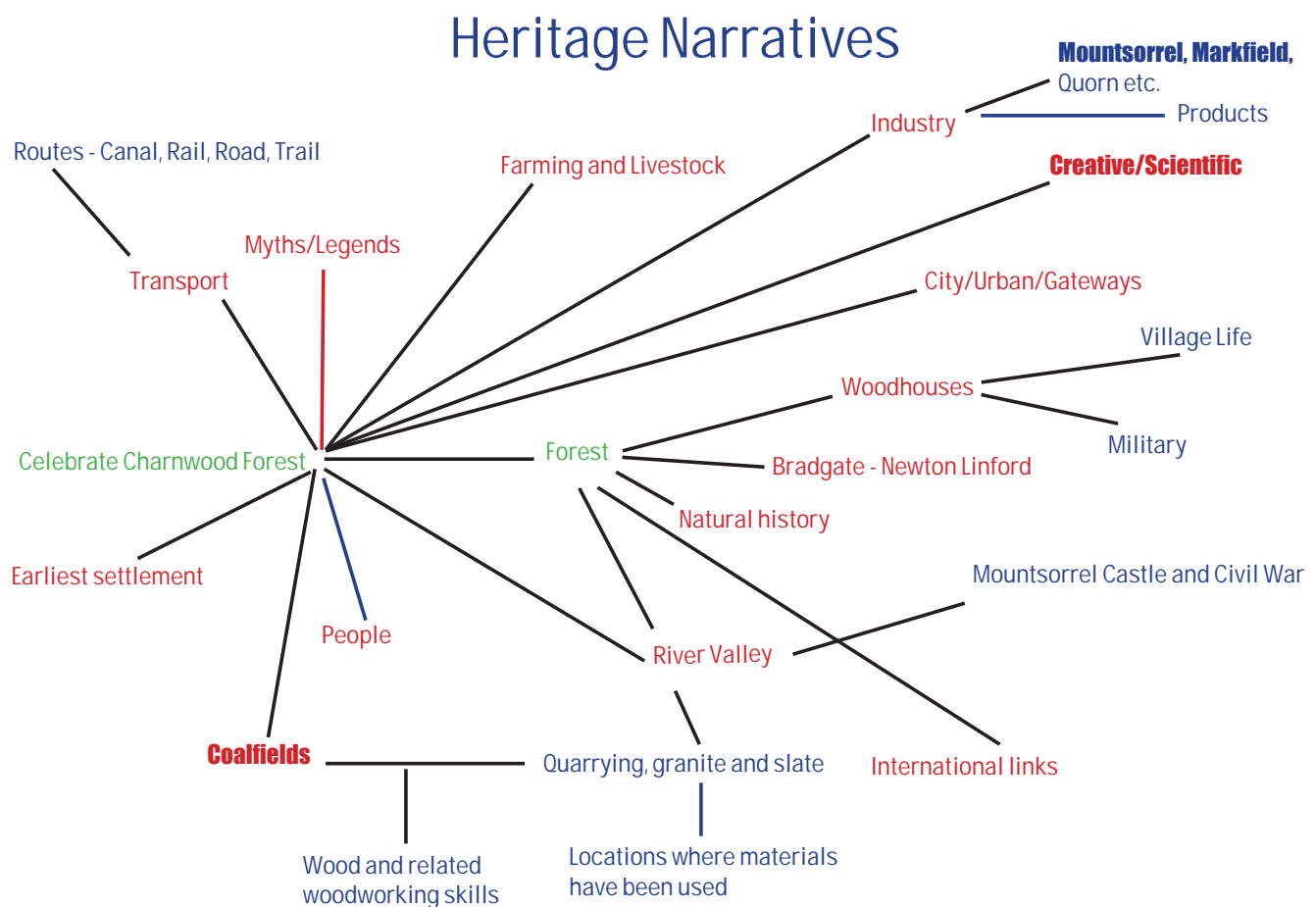
A lot has been said about alleviating some of the pressures on the 'honeypot' sites of Beacon Hill, Bradgate Park and the Outwoods. Of the latter more and more people are coming to see it as an environment that has become more and more like a semi-urban park. Bradgate Park is a major leisure resource for Leicester and surrounding communities and Beacon Hill a popular venue for families and walkers. The balance between providing facilities and maintaining wilder or protected areas is increasingly difficult to balance against demand.

Against this are areas that other people may regard as quieter and more natural getaway environments that they enjoy for the fact that they are less used.

These may also be areas where wildlife concerns or heritage preservation run paramount over extending public access.

In terms of encouraging and then managing exploration of the Forest on the ground a comprehensive assessment of viability and appropriate forms of promotion needs to take place. There will be the needs of 'static' visitors who arrive at one place for a fixed period of time and those who may move around different assets during the course of a day. Longer term visitors may expect significant levels of information to enrich their experience of visiting the area.

Arts partnered heritage programmes may contribute to these needs in different ways.



Church volunteer, horse rider and foster carer. Used Bradgate Park and Beacon Hill as a place to take her children when they were younger, now uses the walks between sites to access areas within Charnwood. Takes fostered children to Mountsorrel Heritage site, "This site is brilliant, they have got it just right, they have all the right elements and enough of it to make it suitable for young people. It should be used as an example for other sites like Bradgate Park." She uses bridle paths for horse riding and enjoys the safe environment for herself and her horse. Would like these paths to remain untouched and protected for horse riders as there are very few available. "Bridle pathways are our secret spaces."

11. Honey Pots, Hidden Assets and Heritage continued...

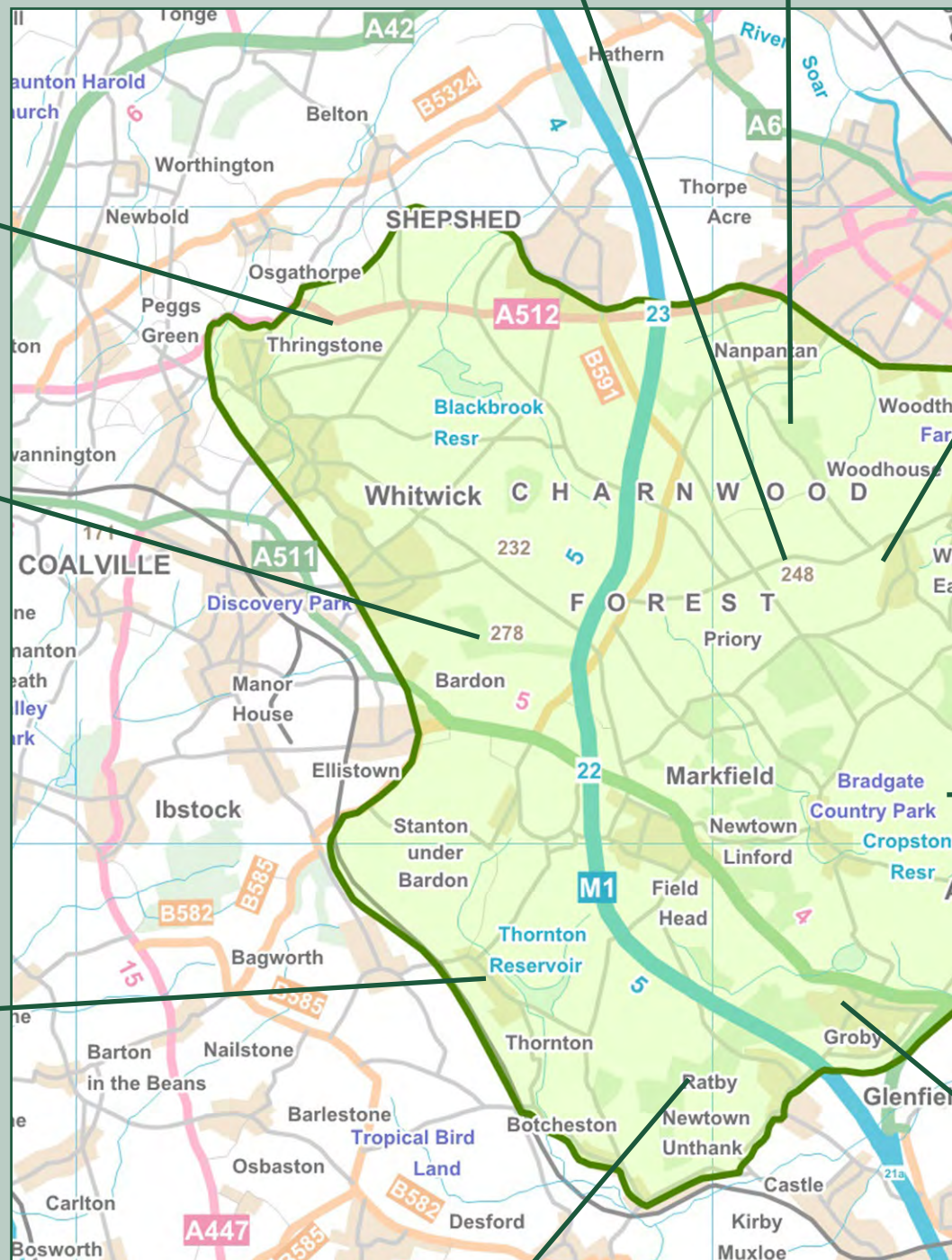
The Outwoods is an ancient wood overlooking Loughborough and the Soar Valley. It has rare rock outcrops and is part of Beacon Hill, Hangingstone and Outwoods Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Outwoods stands on some of the oldest exposed rocks in Britain, being formed in the Precambrian era.

Beacon Hill was the site of a Bronze Age hill fort. Today a toposcope indicates landmarks which can be seen from the summit. These include Lincoln Cathedral and the hills of the Peak District.

The Grace Dieu Priory was an independent Augustinian priory near Thringstone. It was founded around 1235 by Roesia de Verdon and dissolved in October 1538. There are woodland walks adjacent to the site and it is a short drive away from Mount Saint Bernards Abbey

Bardon Hill - it has been claimed that the hill "commands a greater extent of surface than any other point of view in the island ... like an ocean view from a ship out of sight of land". You can see the Sugar Loaf in South Wales, the Shropshire Hills, and summits in N. Wales and Derbyshire.

Thornton Reservoir - supply from the reservoir began in 1853, with Thomas Cook's Temperance Hall the first building to receive water from it. The reservoir was thought sufficient to serve Leicester's population of 58,000 at the time, delivering 1.6 million gallons per day, and was the main source of water for the city until the opening of Bradgate Reservoir in 1871.



The oldest known human settlement in Ratby was at the Bury Camp on the edge of Ratby, an Iron Age encampment dating back approximately 3,000 years. Later, the Roman army adapted the camp for use as a temporary fort in around 50 AD.

Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves - the latter once housed the former Bradgate Nursing Home, previously The Zachary Merton Convalescence Home to house injured war veterans. The home also contained a mental hospital wing known as Beacon Lodge. The smaller and neighbouring village of Woodhouse played a significant role in WWII through its role as the location of a Y Station at Beaumanor Hall.

Quarrying of stone in Quorn began with Granite millstones quarried in the early Iron Age, and under the Romans stone was quarried for building in Leicester. It also has some fascinating WWII connections.

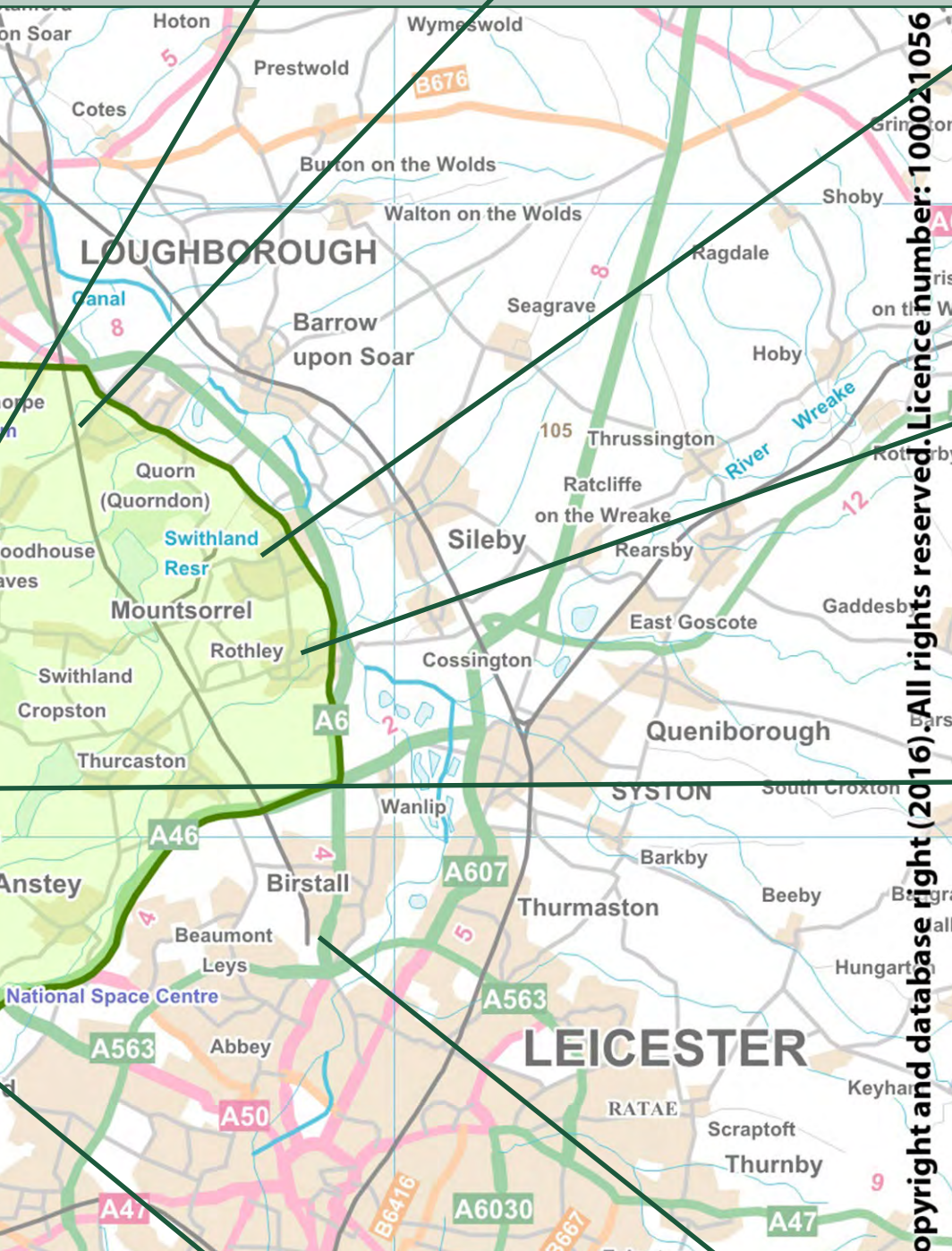
Mountsorrel has a rich history of trade, travel, industry, conflict and mineral extraction going back to Roman times and an active local history group - there are many stories big and small to be told about this fascinating community.

Historic links to the Knights Templar, Thomas Babington Macaulay, William Wilberforce and his Anti-Slavery Bill and Rothley Court and Temple make this a fascinating place of national and international significance.

Bradgate Park is a key honey-pot site with an existing programme to inform people which could be greatly enhanced to encourage and point people to further exploration of the Forest. It's both a key leisure site bordering the city of Leicester and a focal point for educational activity related to the Forest.

The expanded village of Groby has many historic connections from its Time Team discovered castle remains and medieval manor house to links with two English Queens.

The Great Central Railway can be a fantastic 'jumping off point' for exploring the Forest landscape and heritage with Leicester and Loughborough daytrippers and visitors from further afield - offers could include schools visits, vintage bus rides, wider heritage connections and cycle hire.



Bryan Page



AFTER THE NORMAN INVASION MUCH OF WHAT IS NOW CHARNWOOD WAS GRANTED TO **HUGH D'AVRANCHES** WHO HAD SUPPLIED WILLIAM'S INVASION FLEET WITH SIXTY VESSELS. HUGH (AS EARL OF CHESTER) WAS ALSO KNOWN AS HUGH THE FOX AS LATER IN HIS LIFE HE BECAME SO BIG HE COULD HARDLY WALK. THE WELSH HAD ANOTHER NAME FOR HIM "FLAIDD" - IN LATIN THIS BECAME HUGH LUPUS (THE WOLF) - AWARDED HIM FOR HIS BRUTALITY IN FIGHTING HIS NEIGHBOURS TO THE WEST.

New mum from LE11 - Is not aware of Charnwood Forest area borders. Uses Jubilee Wood and Bradgate Park for walks with baby and husband. Non-cafe user and avoids busy periods, not interested in events, likes the peaceful walks. Appreciates the landscape as it is and would like it to remain untouched, this may change in the future when her little one is a little older.

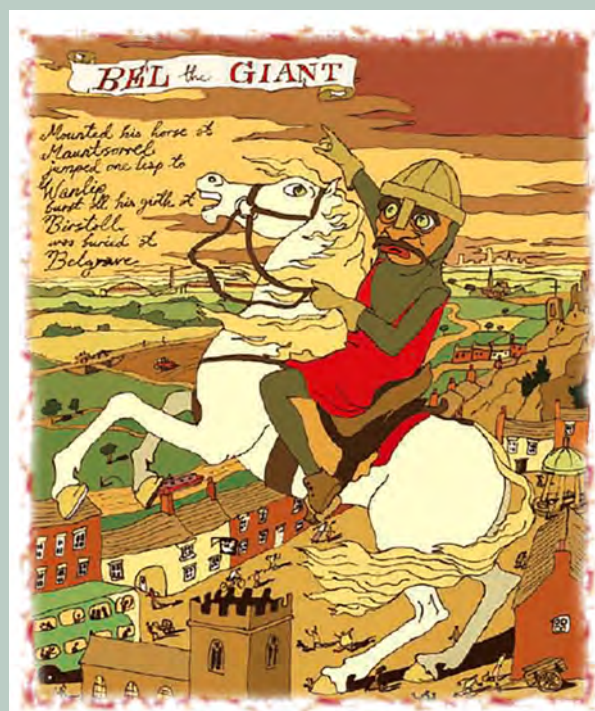
12. Case Study - Mountsorrel

Mountsorrel is of great historical interest and has rightly been the focus of many past studies and heritage activities. Pre-Roman and Roman activity in the area, its medieval history, its history as a significant coaching stop, large scale quarrying and wartime re-location of war industry from Coventry all point to rich seams of stories, historical artefacts and opportunities to broaden public understanding. Its local history and heritage group has brought together a fantastic exhibition at the new heritage centre and there was some fantastic work on the engagement of the Mountsorrel quarrymen in World War I.

Arts led engagement with the heritage of the village has involved many varied projects over the years. The illustrations by Bryan Page of Mountsorrel Castle originated through his involvement in Charnwood Arts' first People Making Places millennium programme and now form part of the Heritage Centre exhibition and information boards in the village. They also formed the basis of an exhibition at Charnwood Museum and a booklet produced by Leicestershire County Council. People Making Places also promoted an on-line history of the village with an extensive photo album.

The image to the right comes from the front cover of a newspaper produced by Charnwood Arts in 2009 based on the theme of Charnwood's history, legends and myths. The cover tells the story of Mountsorrel's mythical giant and is associated, as is the name of the village itself with various stories as source points. In 1990 this myth formed the basis of a community play in the village which was a year long project exploring its history and heritage through involving people in the creation of scripts, vignettes and folk songs.

Other longer term projects focused around these themes included two extensive projects



with children and young people - one to create a 'village history scrapbook' with younger children and the other to make a paper based 'tapestry' of the village with young people working with unattached youth workers.

Perhaps the most visible artistic references to the past in the village are two of the three stone sculptures created by (then) local artist Mike Grevatte. The knight on the former A6 and the cross near the Buttermarket.

More recently a second iteration of People Making Places has begun to engage with Mountsorrel through the locally funded Where We Live and What We Know programme from Charnwood Arts.

The inclusion of Mountsorrel within the boundaries of the new Regional Park creates a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the fascinating history of this village and its role in national life. We haven't even mentioned 'Beauty Bowler' and the Nine Days Fair or the street procession of gigantes yet...

Retired Grandma, LE11. Looks after a small church. Uses forest area for walks. Would like dedicated walks to take grandchildren to Bradgate, Outwoods and Swithland Woods, would like trails and signs to encourage children to get involved to follow and learn from. She was very interested to learn about some facts, figures and information. She would like more interpretation panels on sites to learn more about history, geological value and scientific significance.

13. The City Classroom - Leicestershire's Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP)

Imagine, during the course of this consultation walking into a school just a few miles away over the Soar Valley and encountering walls full of information and work produced across the school on the subject of volcanoes. Imagine the excitement for the project that this school was already engaging the children in the formation of the landscape of the area

between schools and cultural and heritage sites for community based learning. There is currently a major project engaging seven local schools in more intensive projects with the 1620s House (Donnington le Heath Manor House) at the edge of the Regional Park. Other initiatives have worked with schools from Loughborough and Leicester in Charnwood Forest locations. We believe that the LCEP will be a key contributor to the project's targets to engage both urban and rural communities, including



and the resultant shaping of it in part by volcanic forces. Imagine the surprise when talking to teachers and the head about the links to the Landscape Partnership project that not a single one of them was aware of what once existed across the valley from them!

The City Classroom was originally based on an RSA project to encourage relationships

direct work with schools and extending this further to family involvement. Charnwood Arts is a key component in this relationship, being both a founder member and the only active County based partner on the current leadership group. We are particularly encouraged by the existing relationship with Newtown Linford School in the Forest area and others around Coalville and Loughborough.

Father of four children who grew to adulthood with regular walks in the Forest. They lived in Mountsorrel for 15 years but now live in Loughborough. Is concerned about traffic and roadside parking but also what happens about increased visits and places already very busy as key leisure sites. Public access to a wider range of the Forest is important and wants better public transport offers. Thinks it could be a great place for cycling, family cycling etc. but needs to be safe and more joined up for off road and more protected road routes. Knows about some of the history and heritage of Charnwood but is aware that there is so much more to find out. "I'm amazed each time something else reveals itself about this area, it's just so rich, incredible really that more people don't know about it - I think the idea of a regional park is a great idea."



14. Community Arts and Heritage Programme - Options

Before coming to our conclusions and the recommendation of the value of deploying a longer term development approach we considered the relative merits of other options at length.

Basically we looked at five different scenarios of how the arts, heritage, cultural programme of the scheme could be run.

1. Highlighting 'one off' projects that have impact for a specific area of the Forest.
2. Establishing an annual events programme that acts to engage Forest and non-Forest residents.
3. Administering a grants or commissioning programme to artists and community groups interested in working with the Forest.
4. Targeting a specific area of need or interest for an integrated programme e.g. health and wellbeing, young people - possibly run from a non-arts, heritage or cultural organisation.
5. Building on and promoting existing programmes and maintaining a wider partnership approach led by an arts, heritage, cultural organisation through a longer term and sustainable development plan.

All of the above approaches are feasible but differ in terms of projected levels of involvement, outputs, reach, impact, cost, sustainability and integration with other parts of the Landscape Partnership approach. Our analysis of these options showed that none of the first four scenarios are excluded from the fifth but can also combine in different ways with each other. So why would we favour the last option over the others?

Option One: All projects involving community participation and engagement come with a host of other requirements that an individual artist or small arts group may not manage on

their own. Each project would require additional expert/experienced back up and administration to effect an outcome. On a relatively small budget with no development work and further fundraising support we think that one off projects will quickly eat up what is a relatively small starter budget and lack coherence and identity as a programme.

Option Two: As the focus is involvement of communities through the arts to engage with the heritage and longer term appreciation of what is on our doorstep, rather than foster new events per se, we think that more benefit would come from linking activities with existing events through community based or visitor activity. This will require coherent planning, marketing and pre-event support and production to bring things to these events - both within and beyond the Forest area itself.

Option Three: This option has a lot going for it but not very sustainable on a relatively low starter budget and suffers many of the same deficiencies as Option One. A developmental approach would provide the resource and support to seek additional funding from external sources for a programme element operating in this way.

Option Four: For the purpose of community engagement having an interest group/needs based approach provides a strong hook to bring people in and would meet many objectives in terms of learning about what people from different groups in society might need to engage with and understand more about the Forest area.

Option Five: From both our analysis and our experience we conclude that the most effective way of delivering Option Four and engaging with the other approaches is to continue to build on the partnership work and connections already established and effect delivery through the channels and organisations best placed to undertake a sustained development role.

Mother of 3 and church volunteer - Visits Bradgate Park and Beacon Hill with her large extended family. Uses it as a space to meet and spend the day. Uses the landscape to play games – creates treasure hunts for children using sticks to create arrows and hides sweets along the route. Enjoys kids play areas, would like to keep landscape as natural for as long as possible and encourage imaginative play for kids. Would like... more cafes en route at Beacon Hill. Also a weekend regular bus ride to sites reaching places would encourage more visits/visitors. 'Most adults love it anyway, we just need teach kids to appreciate it'.

15. Recommendations

For an area of the size and scale of the proposed Regional Park and number of potential target areas for projects within the Park, and with substantial target populations beyond, we would argue that a longer term development approach is required. We would also advocate a community arts approach which is based on building relationships and dialogue with a multiplicity of partners that follows both structured and more organic (responsive) pathways.

We should build on what is already there to create new links between existing projects and organisations, building on Charnwood Roots, People Making Places and Where We Live and What We Know, Timber Festival, the work of Bradgate Park Trust, The City Classroom, Loughborough Library Local Studies Volunteers and other fantastic local heritage and arts groups and organisations.

We think that there should be three core elements of programme development:

1. More in depth research to identify and bring together a map of the cultural, arts and heritage ecology of the area. This will not be a static exercise but a dynamic exploration of possibilities and interconnections that will gather its own momentum in developing new projects and perspectives on working within the Regional Park area or taking up its themes.

2. Identified projects and targets that will contribute to the portfolio of work from the outset. These may use or work with existing initiatives to extend and connect these programmes to the overall aims of the Landscape Partnership scheme. This programme will evolve and grow through annual targets with more ambitious target setting being planned in for the later years of the scheme and beyond.

3. A commitment to a responsive element that allows for opportunities to engage new groups

and communities as they become interested in and ready for deeper engagement with programmes and activities. This type of developmental approach and a contextual sensitivity is essential to good community arts practice, especially when working with more marginalised or harder to reach groups. Ownership of the project and developing sustaining interest and empowerment for progression is at the core of the work.

The mantra of development is simple:

Enter into dialogue, build relationships and create benefits as a virtuous, expanding circle.

The approach we suggest will be an extension and development of the existing ecology (which includes non arts, cultural and heritage partners). Dialogue will lead to new networks, working relationships for practical outputs and outcomes, support work or referrals. Relationships aim for longer term sustainability, progression within, between and beyond projects, groups and partners. Benefits are coherent and shared - this is about the mutual and balanced benefit to all parties - participants, practitioners, structural partners and funders, audiences and other interested groups...and of course the leading organisations themselves.

The arts, through social application, bring forward expertise in community, group and individual development. They can offer a range of creative strategies, knowledge and practical skills encouraging engagement in innovative ways. What we are advocating is an approach that may contain but goes far beyond discrete and unconnected interventions to foster and develop an active, interconnected identity for creative engagement with the Forest. This will not only be of greater longer term benefit but will, as a strategy, realise much greater levels of support in the long run and greatly enhance our heritage focused outcomes.

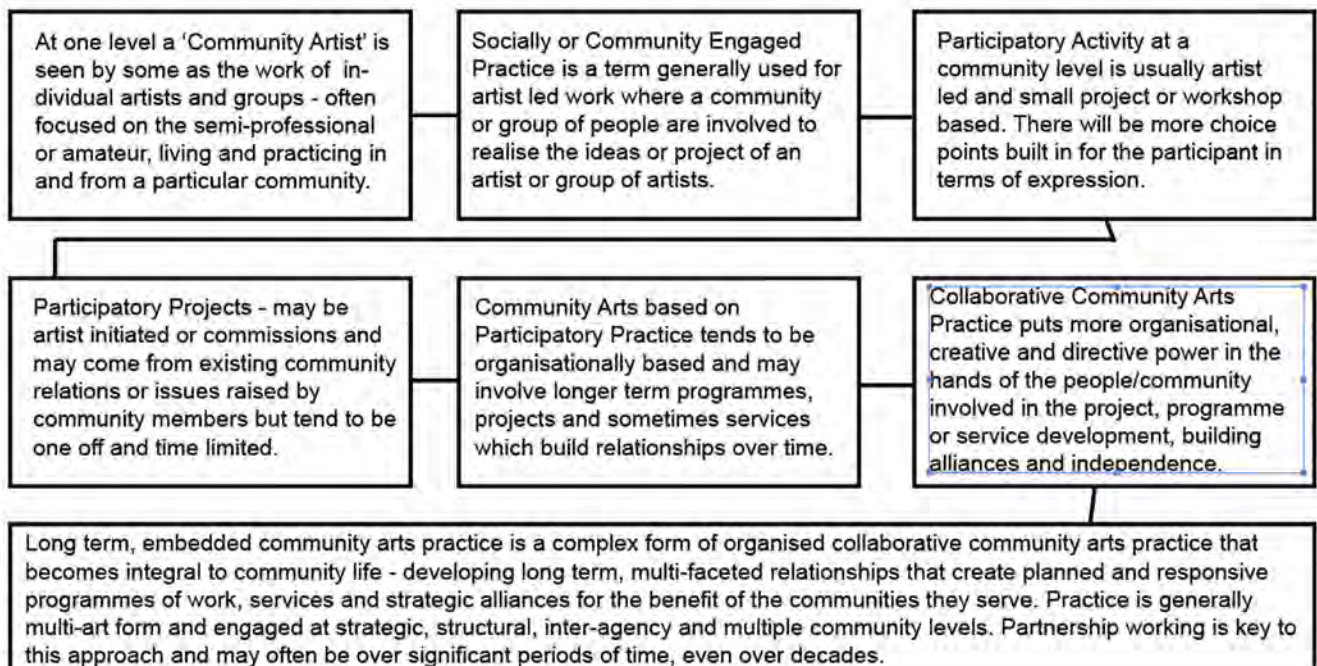
Grandmother, 70, DE11 Uses an app to find walking routes for herself and a friend or husband. Pre plans walks to include picnic spots and pubs. Enjoys walks with grandchildren in forest area to discover things of interest. Would like to learn more about sites - audio guides on apps to listen to on routes, encouraging kids to follow trails, what to look for and to explore from own curiosity and a sense of discovery. Choose routes with cafes to attend to kids needs. Would attend day festival for kids where they teach traditional crafts like corn dollies. Would like dedicated routes, routes that did not allow for bike riders and dogs without leads.



What do we mean by the term community arts ?

There is no unified definition of this term but from time to time groups of practitioners have set down principles of practice in relation to it. These might include terms such as community or participant empowerment, collaboration, equality of access, community led, skill sharing and development, long term commitment, locality based work, embedded practice, multi-art-form or combined art form, people led, artist facilitated, issues based, relevant and authentic. Perhaps the one thing that is agreed upon by most professional community artists is that each organisation or project is unique in its approach.

However, the term has been used to mean a range of other things including practices that are akin to community arts innovations in practice but have been cloaked in other terms. These mostly concern involving people, to various degrees, in participating in the realisation of an artists ideas, often termed community, participant or socially engaged arts. When we use the terms outlined below in different contexts throughout this report we will use them within the context of an overall approach coming from a commitment to locality based, embedded practice. All other approaches can be seen as tools of or facets of that approach.



Male, runner, dog owner - uses Jubilee Woods to go running with his dog. Believes there should be sites for dog walkers as he struggles to keep dog on lead when families are approaching. Can there be routes for dog walkers only? When running alone, likes to go off the beaten track to find routes that are not so populated and does not have bike riders. Would like routes identified for specific activities so will not be bothered by or bother others.

The Benefits of a Flexible Plan

There are a number of ways in which we would argue for a mix of flexible and fixed planning objectives in terms of the development of a programme.

- Firstly, a programme that loads too much activity and expenditure in the initial period is more likely to be imposed rather than developing through shared ownership. Planning for but keeping a portion of ideas and targets fluid in succeeding years allows both realistic time periods to build partnerships, raise resources and modify if support is not forthcoming.
- Secondly, within the programme itself, each specific community focused activity can be built around frameworks that allow for adaptive outputs. Sometimes this may mean a lesser output than envisaged but our experience tells us that the opposite is true in most cases.
- Thirdly, by building a range of possibilities around fixed delivery points we can be ready to take up unexpected opportunities or work with new groups.

An Example

The Burder Street Community project in Loughborough was an urban engagement project that began with an idea to commission a mural with children and young people that would explore ideas about and represent a planned new development for the area.

The idea was challenged from the outset by the community as was the planned development ideas for the area.

The idea developed into a wider project engaging both children and adults to represent their views in graphic ways which were presented to the local authority as books and a large laminated mural. It was based around weeks of street based work and a giant consultation model built of the area that was used to bring the community together through closing a street for a consultation weekend. This was only phase one of a project whose legacy saw the area transformed over the next ten years through follow up projects and the galvanising of community led engagement and representation.

Evaluation Plan

	VISUALISER	ARTIST	DESIGNER/EDITOR	MAKER	DISTRIBUTOR
Commission	Top down Funded/supported Targeted demographic Output orientated Proof of outcomes Contracted Structural partner Strategic links Defined distribution	Commissioner may only want or support service delivery to this point but with an OUTCOME focus. Commissioner values this as a means of engagement	May want role in decision making or set parameters for outputs of any production. May want more than one design or edited output	May want a particular standard of production for effect. May want something in addition to participants production.	Standard of production assessed for audience effect and may insist on particular audience. Telling the story/findings may be more important than the product - may want something more than participant's product.
Charnwood Arts	May initiate proposals Mediation role Develop and plan Agree framework Assess/access Creative skill and resource requirements	Apply Framework for work/project Develop creative thinking, process, skill share and development Organisational input Practical facilitation	Support editing and design process. Assess realism of decision making. Guide where appropriate Ensure access	Enable and support participant production Be directed to produce something Use of professional skills Commission	Market Promote Negotiate and agree final distribution strategy Ensure handover Maintain relationships
Community Grassroots	Bottom up Unfunded/looking for support Issue based or Aspirational May be output and outcome focused Recruitment tasks Seek experience Individual/collective	Creative experience Research Play Develop skills Collect Innovate Develop ideas Experiment Collaborate	Personal and collective decision making Negotiate Edit Design options and ideas Balance of desire and realism Flexibility	Achievement Craft experience Dealing with success and failure Collective acts Directing a skilled other Decision making	Outcomes Recognition Sharing Confidence Pride New connections and skills Organisation Process Experience Distribution choices

Reflective Practice/Discussion

16. Collaborations and Partnerships

The success of this initial five year period and the sustainability and progression of the gains made to convey the value of and protect this landscape is dependent upon high levels of collaboration and active partnerships. These need to operate at all levels. Between local authorities, statutory agencies, private landowners and businesses, the professionally staffed and community run voluntary sectors. It is also about working with and enabling the participation of individuals.

At the core of collaboration and partnership is the strength and commitment of the Landscape Partnership and other stakeholders.

From a community arts programme that seeks to operate across the modalities of that approach to become an embedded facet of the project and the forward projection of the Forest collaboration and contextual awareness and rigour are essential.

We know from our work in Charnwood for over 40 years that this can give rise to a phenomenal range of connections and partnerships. In one five year development period this amounted to over 500 different organisations, groups, schools and businesses.

Just from initial conversations and meetings with some of the stakeholders in the Landscape Partnership and identification of other groups in local communities we can identify a wide range of potential project partnerships and wider thematic collaborations. The extension of these to embrace diverse urban communities around the Forest to increase awareness and access is a key target of the early development of the programme. We are particularly keen to emphasise that working with other Landscape Project partners is essential for success.

As a matter of principle for this form of community based work it is not only difficult to predetermine the shape of a project in any detail but also counterproductive should the funding support applied for not be successful. As a pioneering approach to co-design principles over the last 50 years community arts projects with 'entry' groups have to employ careful consideration of impact from the beginning. Expectation building that may not be met is considered to be extremely poor practice in the context of community arts work but this may run counter to funder's expectations of a defined programme from the beginning.

Experience gained and shared locally and through both national and regional community arts forums support the view that length and strength of engagement and support of longer term initiatives comes from building relationships which balance trust with empowerment in decision making. The promised forms of delivery that come from that developing relationship create an incremental boost in confidence and competence to encounter and be active in new things.

Of the 50 strong group of South Asian families we took to the Outwoods from Leicester as part of our consultation process only a handful had ever ventured as far as Bradgate Park. They didn't know the Forest existed! The group were fascinated by the history we shared and enlivened by the day we spent with them and suggested many other ways they would like to engage in future.

Thus, a conversation has begun, a relationship established and the means to begin to explore the benefits of that relationship now lay before us. Collaboration with this group could well be a bidding relationship in its own right - but for some groups greater vulnerability requires a more careful approach.

The children enjoyed learning more about the background of this place as it really contrasted with what they are used to and they found learning about the history really interesting and would now like to know more. This was great and it would be good if there were more activities targeted at adults as well.



"The forest isn't somewhere I would consider going because it seems dangerous. It's where bad things happen in stories". "It might be nice but, how do you get there and what would you do?" 21 year old Asian male

17. Contributory Income and Income Generation Strategy

Based on our recommendation of a developmental approach built on a mixture of projects, partnership working and building strategic and delivery relationships throughout the period we also believe this to be the most effective approach to maximising possibilities for contributory income, additional organisational funding and in kind opportunities.

For instance, as an example, from 2020 onwards a project contribution could be written into an organisation like Charnwood Arts programme targets. An art delivery organisation could be elected to be a key or even lead partner on the community arts/heritage delivery programme with the potential for an application for a contributory uplift from local authorities. The organisation could partner and support bids to other Lottery funded sources from a range of other organisations including working with The National Forest Company as well as smaller scale arts and community or specific interest based stakeholders.

As a partner from 2022 onwards - the project could be a substantial part of the Charnwood Arts, or another arts organisation's, NPO programme bid and business plan until 2026 with a contributory uplift bid associated to the work on the Forest project.

The benefits of this approach alone could more than double the contributory resource income to the project even before specific project bids are put in place with a mixture of strategic, developmental, delivery and production work taking place from the outset.

We believe that the potential of the project to contribute to and enhance outcomes desired by other agencies, by acting as a vehicle through which to deliver a range of community benefits, is something that should be built on from the outset. This is not to dilute the outputs

and outcomes for the Forest and heritage outcomes but rather to deliver a more accessible, diverse and more effective reach for the Landscape Partnership approach overall.

We predict there would be enormous in kind benefits and a significant development of practically based networking relationships.

These and other organisational relationships open up a range of data driven opportunities to shape projects around social and environmental benefits with different organisations being best placed to lead on different income generation approaches. Local and national trusts with specific interests in the arts, heritage and service engagement with different target groups may offer significant opportunities to fund specific programme outputs and impact outcomes. Avoiding duplication and local competition for these funds in respect of the overall aims of the project will be key considerations.

As a strategy we would suggest the following:

That from the Year One programme there is a coherent identity for project and programme delivery that enables consistent event and project marketing as well as developing an institutional marketing programme to draw people into longer term support and relationships with delivery agents.

Early development work will seek to build a family of support at a dual level of the general public and individual and structural relationships with a family of more influential and supportive backers and potential backers of our objectives. We will seek to inform, cultivate and offer opportunities for people to engage with and support the Landscape Partnership arts and heritage based work in return for levels of benefits which cement interest in our outcomes.

Practically would like access to more parking areas to be able to stop with kids. Activities for children to stumble upon along route to keep them entertained, such as tyres, windchimes, lady bird trails, natural material sculptures for kids to climb on, spot the....., colour trails, minibeast hunts, water tilts, themed cafe trails, fairy and elf doors and information panels to keep them informed. Dedicated dog parks Shares and recommends examples from Rushcliffe Park, Nottingham, especially sensory play area, an ideal spot for her son. Believes that if routes were more family friendly dog walkers would keep dogs on leads and dispose of poo bags correctly. Along route leaf/ insect rubbings like Charnwood Museum.

Sketch, write, record, film, photograph !

SKETCHCRAWL 4



Starts from the Forest Gate - Toby Carvery at 10.30 am

SUNDAY 19TH MAY

Bring your own sketchbooks, notebooks, materials and cameras

Any questions please contact Paul: pablogent@outlook.com or Kev: kevr@charnwoodarts.com

18. Outline - Five Year Plan

2020-2021 is YEAR 1

• A key goal is to establish an early identity and promote the uniqueness of this landscape as well as it's social role in the making of Britain. This will form the basis of engagement with a wide range of groups and organisations to take programme development ideas forward and secure first levels of engagement with a wider range of audiences and participants.

Primary Expenditure: Employ a Community Arts and Heritage Development Worker.

Primary Focus:

1. Identify and build up relationships.
2. Engage in first level project developments and identify funding routes where necessary.
3. Deliver/begin delivery of achievable first level projects with target communities.
4. Work to promote the project through structural and community networks and to the general public.

Discover and UNDERSTAND 1

Emphasis on:

1. Aspects of the landscape and natural history to run through from year to year.

- a) Paleontology
- b) Volcanic, Maritime origins and Tectonic Drift
- c) Geology
- d) Flora and Fauna

2. Mapping of the landscape

- a) Actual maps that define and highlight the landscape in different ways
- b) Relational maps - locality, UK and world-wide
- c) Personal maps - associations with people, place, knowledge and activities
- d) Mapping/representing the volcano in different ways on the landscape.

EXPLORE 1

Activities:

- a) Sketch, haiku and photo walks
- b) Iconic images and other signifiers
- c) More static art based explorations
- d) Storytelling - guided walks -performative and instructive/informative - build up a local repertoire
- e) Capture projects - small group work - book in a day, play in a day, film in a day type approaches
- f) PMP stories focus - documentary, workshop and exhibition approaches - these can grow into longer term relationships and projects.

All activities to encourage research during and beyond engagement and as an integral element of longer term projects.

CARE FOR 1

Approach:

- a) Encourage and support voluntary efforts - recruit to and through arts/cultural/heritage projects and activities.
- b) Poss. reward element - Friends of the Forest membership benefits.
- c) Social volunteering around access issues.
- d) Creative planting schemes/adopt an acre, specific care for promotions
- e) Wider promotional marketing plans

The critical role of the community arts programme here is to act as a connector to other aspects of the programme and to carry information about opportunities to engage with the Landscape Partnership scheme in other ways.

It can also act, through longer projects, to form and initially support new groups to develop and organise projects of their own. Building the support mechanisms of the 'family' of future supporters, participants and volunteers.

2021 - 2022 is YEAR 2

- A key goal will be to build on and reinforce the identity of the Forest and actively promote to and involve a wider audience (including widening participation from schools) and finding a balance between work with park inhabitants and peripheral target communities.

Discover and UNDERSTAND 2

Emphasis on:

- a)** Map out deeper explorations and funding routes including specific partnership and support bids. School engagement begins with pilots and development work at all levels.
- b)** Engage in the development of a minimum of two targeted and multi-faceted community heritage projects. Perhaps top level stories like Mountsorrel and the role of Mountsorrel Castle; Rothley, anti-slavery and Macauley; or Lady Jane Grey and Bradgate; or Beaumanor, Quorn and the build up to D-Day.
- c)** Expand existing PMP, Drawing on Age and Where We Live and What We Know projects. In particular looking more deeply at quarrying, and the destinations and relationships that have come about as a result of extraction.

EXPLORE 2

- a)** Expand the 'explore' offer in the light of specific projects - develop more specific audience focused plans and opportunities and partner offers. Stimulate, develop and deliver in partnership and encourage and advise independent initiatives.
- b)** Continue walking programme in new areas - work towards e-publications coming from them.
- c)** Encourage and engage other artists to develop their own exploratory projects and commission at least one to follow an exploration through to production.

CARE FOR 2

Promotional and referral from project connections - poss. community made film or booklet. A forest at the heart of three cities...

2022 - 2023 is YEAR 3

Build on portfolio of work. We will have worked to create a full time post to take the project forward until year 5 - possibly aiming for a 1.5 + core staff time complement.

Discover and UNDERSTAND 3

- a)** Significant schools programme developed in relation to The City Classroom - targeting urban and rural areas.
- b)** Promote wider engagement of schools with arts organisations/artists and opportunities in relation to the Forest and environmental education - curriculum linked developments - STEM through arts approaches.
- c)** Continue wider participation projects and successfully embedded approaches.

EXPLORE 3

- a)** Encourage and support schools visits and where feasible/appropriate tie these into project delivery/workshops - curriculum based approaches.
- b)** Support touring of virtual production and projection events.
- c)** Engage in the development of a minimum of two targeted community heritage projects.

CARE FOR 3

Continue to support this on a promotional basis and to signpost people towards other activities and organisations as appropriate. Aim for first signpost public art or bookable arts and cultural places within the forest that deliver a mixed arts/heritage programme.

Female, 40. Was LE4 - mother of 2 boys age 8 and 2 and one girl age 5. Never realised Charnwood was an 'active' forest area or was it historically a forest? As a little girl who lived in Leicester, she enjoyed visits to Bradgate Park, had an overnight trip to Beaumanor Hall and travelled on bus to and from college between Leicester and Loughborough through Mountsorrel, Quorn and Rothley. Remembers the cross on the hill in Mountsorrel and used to wonder about its significance but never researched it. Now as an adult has re-visited Bradgate Park, walked up to the cross at Mountsorrel and researched some of its history at Mountsorrel Heritage Centre. Would like to have known about the site's history when she was younger but did not know the information even existed, only taught a little about Lady Jane Grey. Would like to learn more along routes or dedicated heritage days, to share stories and information with her children. Would attend specialist forester talks for older children, treasure hunts which encourage exploring beyond the usual trodden path. Also seasonal activities looking at tadpoles to frogs, nature trails and insect counts.

2023 - 2024 is YEAR 4

Deeper levels of embedded engagement, partnership projects and international links - planning for longer term funding and engagement goals and legacy projects.

Discover and UNDERSTAND 4

- a) Advance focus on international links e.g. in relation to geological twins or ideas, experiences of forest living in different places.
- b) Engage in the development of a minimum of two targeted community heritage projects with a focus on place/historic events.

EXPLORE 4

- a) Schools programme - aim by this stage is to have built more regular relationships between schools and other organisations and curriculum relevant links
- b) Virtual explorations - scanning/VR - off-line/on-line approaches.
- c) Access programme - network enabled programmes for people with specific needs.

CARE FOR 4

- a) Promotional support - advocacy, conference, support to develop investment, forward thinking, renewed push on volunteering.
- b) Campaigns to re-generate local organisations.



Asian Male, 73. LE11 Used to take children to Bradgate Park 20 years ago, now drives through the area to Leicester, when required. Not able to easily walk around site due to mobility issues, but fascinated with some of the historic and scientific information shared. Would love to learn more via a dedicated app or website that would include more information, landscape visuals, development updates and opportunities to research or participate in project online.



2023 - 2025 is YEAR 5

Discover and UNDERSTAND 5

Aspirations for a major event, production, programme of work including community based celebration.

EXPLORE 5

The future - future focus - landscape development. Links to forward focused evaluation and planning methodologies based on the philosophy and approach of 'Dreaming For Real'.

CARE FOR 5

Early year review of progress and further needs for sustaining engagement at all levels. Community Arts programme to be part of promoting and development of involvement beyond the NLHF programme.

Local Police Officer, LE11. Father of Daughter– 6 and Son – 2. Visits once or twice, every couple of months. Mainly visits Bradgate Park, uses car park and happy to pay because it maintains the park, uses cafe inside park. Also visits St Josephs Tea Rooms, a church run cafe, Swithland Wood, Outwoods and Beacon Hill. Often drives though the area for work or leisure. Identifies a real problem with lack of crossings, speeding cars and number of dangerous lay by parking along the surrounding country roads. Many scenic spots along the road have attracted dangerous makeshift parking areas. Would like more time and reasons to visit other sites. Better parking at scenic routes. Would like child safe alternative routes through Bradgate Park, would also appreciate some kids activities along main routes which are sympathetic to the landscape. Sheltered seated areas to escape bad weather. He would like to learn more about the history of the landscape in bite-size nuggets of information that can be shared with his kids. Encourage University students to tie in research projects with use of latest technology and equipment. Associate a famous person to the site, footballers Gary Linekar, David Attenborough or Parminder Nagra (actor, Bend It Like Beckham, ER) etc

Indian Pensioner, Visits Loughborough stroke club unaware of borders or what the Charnwood site is. Has visited Bradgate Park on trips with stroke club enjoys the landscape and seeing the deer. Does not know anything about history of site and would like to learn more, would like to read the information in Gujarati/Hindi. Would be interested in attending Gujarati talks on guided short walks to Bradgate and other sites that will teach him more. Would require transport to get there and back, prefers to go with a group.

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the control markers.



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