

The Little Forest Longhedge Lane

An exciting project is taking shape on Longhedge Lane, the creation of an outdoor teaching area, open to all ages and abilities, in organised groups.

We often bemoan the couch potato/social media obsessed generation, well this area is designed to encourage young people to appreciate and enjoy the outdoors and what they have to offer, as genuine learning experiences.



The open day 2017 coincided with Fairtrade Fortnight; LF is a Fairtrade group

An open day 8th March 2017, enabled potential users to come along and see what was happening and how they could make use of the site.

Work was put on hold for the bird-nesting season, but planning continued, along with some infrastructure work, with teams of National Citizens Service Volunteers organised by Burton Albion, A team from Molson Coors and students from de Ferrers Academy.



Fairtrade refreshments being served at the open day



Dead branches used to protect sensitive areas, like these emerging bluebells



Some of the National Citizens Service volunteers mulching paths



Paths mulched and 'kerbed' with fallen branches



The team in the newly set out storytelling area



Justifiably proud of their achievements after 5 days work



Five silver birch seedlings had been grown at Burton & South Derbyshire College, and these were planted, along with a wooden dedication plaque, to remember students who have died. The introduction of birch trees will also improve the biodiversity of the site



A group of de Ferrers students recently re-mulched the paths



A composting toilet is being installed, to improve facilities for schools and groups, wishing to use the site. Due to the impervious clay substrate, a soakaway has been added, to keep the main chamber dry and stop it becoming anaerobic and smelly.

The soakaway was backfilled with gravel, to allow fluids to drain, and a 'wattle & daub' wall, and connecting drain built up, to keep the gravel in.

Gravel filled reed beds are a common way of cleaning waste water, a reed bed the size of a bath is considered adequate for a family of three.



Filling and levelling, ready for the toilet shed.



The soakaway backfilled and planted with osier willow and reed.

The site has an off road turning area, for minibuses bringing in groups, to avoid congestion on the lane. The toilet will be erected end on to the road, in a dense thicket of blackthorn, to shield it from the road. Apart from these, only temporary structures, like tarpaulin shelters, will be erected and then removed the same day. In this way we hope to avoid attracting antisocial use of the site, as we wish to be good neighbours.

Once the toilet is installed and the booking website is set up, we hope to have another open day and then the site can start to function as a proper teaching area, hopefully the prototype for many more.

Lawrence Oates, chair Little Forest group. 4-3-18