



Southend Environmental Projects' Update: February 2010

Dear All,

It has been a while since the last update, but I have left it this long because I wanted to give you the full feedback from The Heritage Lottery and Key Project Partners, regarding how we progress our Heritage Lottery Funding bid for Belfairs Park Woodland Resource Centre. Furthermore I thought it would be worth waiting so that I could give some news on the Two Tree Island project.

The September 09 - February 2010 Update:

Belfairs Park Woodland Resource Centre Project

- Belfairs Park Fun Day last September was a huge success with a range of activities; from wildlife exploration, a live novelty dog show, bouncy castles, an 8m climbing wall, local woodland demonstrations and walks. Mike Bryant from Southend was the lucky raffle winner of a brand new bike sponsored by the Cycle Southend team.
- The event received a great deal of valuable feedback with over 300 questionnaires completed, and many local people leaving comments expressing their support and enthusiasm for the project - which was fantastic news! An evaluation of the consultation can be found on Southend Council's website: <http://www.southend.gov.uk/content.asp?section=207&content=12262>
- The Project's Steering Group met in October to discuss the outcomes of the Belfairs Park Fun Day and review the fundraising situation.
- In November the Heritage Lottery announced that our bid for 75% match funding towards the Belfairs Park Woodland Centre had been turned down. This was unfortunate news to all involved in preparing the funding bid.
- After postponing our original meeting date due to the snow, we met with the Lottery people in January to discuss why the bid was turned down and how we could move forward. The Lottery said that the application was of a very high standard, but Lottery funding is extremely competitive, and funds for more than £1million are oversubscribed by 5 times. Therefore we could increase our chances of funding, if we reduced the amount we were asking for.
- We plan to re-submit to the Lottery, but will have to change the bid and the budget to take into consideration the Lottery's comments and give the project good value for money. I have been researching how to progress the plans, which will be discussed with the Project Steering Group at the March meeting.

- Progress with Match Funding continues, and we are still awaiting feedback from smaller grant giving organisations.

Plans for the coming months:

- Progress new business case for the Woodland Resource Centre to re-submit to the Heritage Lottery Fund this June.

Gunners Park Heritage-Visitor Centre Project

- Still a requirement for monies to carry out contaminated land investigations at the site where the centre is planned to be located.

Two Tree Island

- We were very pleased to receive final confirmation that we have been awarded a £71,000 funding grant to carry out the project that will improve the western side of Two Tree Island for both wildlife and people.
- A new management plan had been drawn up that identified a series of one-off works that could improve the Nature Reserve, including a package of wildlife surveys, new information boards, footpath improvements, scrub management works, enhancing the lagoon for wading birds, stabilisation works to the eroding mud flats and new field trail guides.
- The grant to carry out the work was received from CORY Environmental Trust in Southend and Cleanaway Pitsea Marshes Trust, with contributions from Essex Biodiversity Partnership and The Molly Drake Legacy.
- Works will commence in the coming weeks, following the completion of the lease between Southend Council and Essex Wildlife Trust for the western half of the island. Works will be ongoing throughout the year, and should not disrupt use of the nature reserve. A press release will follow, once the lease has been agreed.
- A lot of people put a lot of work into preparing the fundraising bids for the Two Tree Island Project, a special thanks to Michele Farrant from Essex Wildlife Trust for all her tireless efforts.

If you would no longer like to receive these updates then please reply to this e-newsletter and I will remove you from the database.

I have over 200 people on the project update database, if you would like someone to be added to the list, please ask them to send me their name, email address and why they are interested in the project.

Keep an eye out for the next update in April!

Point of Contact: Mick Holland 464199 or southendnhw@aol.com

