

Broomfield Community Woodland Park

A 50 year lease has been secured from the Kent County Council, for the former land-fill site at Ford Road, Broomfield and the Parish Council is due to sign contracts, with Deacon Landscapes who will import the soil needed for planting and carry out the planting and landscaping works.

The majority of funding for the scheme will be sourced from outside grants, fundraising events and income from importation of the necessary planting medium required for healthy plant growth.

Subject to contract, work should begin soon. Currently (*May 2006*) monitoring of the wildlife is being carried out, to avoid as much disturbance as possible. The site will need to be closed for safety reason while work progresses, which is anticipated to take 12 to 18 months.

The aims of the project are to:

- * provide a much needed place for recreation for local people of all ages. There are no public open spaces or play facilities for children in Broomfield, apart from door-step play areas for the under fives. A Community Woodland Park would help address this.
- * provide a BMX track that will encourage physical activity and skills training, especially for young people. BMX is now an Olympic Sport and facilities for training are scarce.
- * encourage local people, schools and others to visit and enjoy the park by providing a picnic area and other facilities.
- * create an 'outdoor classroom', for environmental projects within the school curriculum.
- * improve existing habitats for wildlife and create new ones.
- * promote wildlife to local people, with interpretation boards.
- * construct entrance gates and hard surface paths to give easy access for all users.

The parish appraisal and a more recent questionnaire identified a need for recreational facilities; the Parish Plan published in July 2004

showed 66% of respondents rated recreational facilities in the parish as poor. The City Council's Open Spaces Strategy highlights the deficiency of open space in Broomfield.

There are no recreational facilities at all in Broomfield and youngsters have specifically requested BMX facilities. There is a group of young people who are keen to set up and help run a club.

The aim is to provide a racing track of regional competition standard as the nearest is at Hayes, near Heathrow airport. BMX is a sport enjoyed by all ages and riders can start at age 4 and some continue until over 50. As BMX is to be included in the next Olympic Games, it is hoped that some local people will become stars of the future.

There is currently unofficial public use of the site demonstrating considerable potential for education, interpretation and recreation. There are no other opportunities for countryside recreation in the area other than public footpaths. The site has become more attractive as vegetation has colonised it and will be further improved by appropriate landscaping, planting and maintenance. A wild flower meadow, quiet areas for wildlife, a picnic area, a woodhenge with seating, windbreaks and shady areas will be created.

For safety reasons the site will be closed for 12 - 18 months, while the landscaping work is being carried out.

end