

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Local trust helps ancient woodland

Date

Norfolk Wildlife Trust has just received a grant for £20,000 from The Geoffrey Watling Charity to support work at NWT Foxley Wood National Nature Reserve.

This generous grant will be used to purchase a timber crane and trailer to undertake essential coppicing and scrub clearance in Foxley Wood, the largest ancient woodland in the county and a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

At 123 hectares, Foxley Wood features an exceptionally wide range of trees including several which are nationally scarce. Many of the rich ground flora are relics of the ancient 'wildwood' that stood on this site and require light, open rides, which also encourage several species of butterfly. Without active management, the over-storey would become dense and rides would quickly develop into scrub. This would have a subsequent loss of tree and ground flora diversity, as well as impacting upon insect and mammal communities.

The Geoffrey Watling Charity was established in 1993. Mr Watling was a well known and much-admired Norfolk entrepreneur who also became Chairman and then President of Norwich City Football Club. When Mr Watling died in 2004, he bequeathed a large part of his estate to the Charity, which distributes grants to a wide range of projects across Norfolk.

NWT Woodlands Warden John Milton said: "We are very grateful for this funding from the Geoffrey Watling Charity. It will enable us to ensure the right habitats are maintained for a variety of birds, insects and plants such as early purple orchid and bluebell, which covers the woodland floor during spring in a spectacular display. These plants in turn encourage large numbers of butterflies and moths including white admiral, purple hairstreak and orange underwing."

NOTES TO EDITORS

- 1 Norfolk Wildlife Trust was established in 1926. We care for 40 nature reserves and other protected sites around the county including ten kilometres of coastline, nine Norfolk broads, nine National Nature Reserves and five ancient woodlands and have a positive influence over a great deal of the Norfolk countryside through our planning and advisory functions.
- 2 Further details from Rebecca Wells at Norfolk Wildlife Trust on 01603 598330.

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