

Update from Staffordshire County Council – July 2020

Chase Road Reopens

Chase Road is the tarmacked bridleway which runs across part of Cannock Chase Country Park, with permissive access to vehicles. Following two significant fires on the Chase, on 30th May Staffordshire County Council took the decision to temporarily close Chase Road to vehicles, closing access to car parks on this area of the country park. With thousands of people flocking to the site following easing of lockdown, the decision was taken to protect people, nearby properties and fragile and irreplaceable wildlife habitats from the risk of fire.

After such a long spell of dry weather and with high numbers of visitors, even after some rainfall, there were ongoing concerns that disposable barbecues, campfire etc could damage the site and put people and wildlife at risk.

Following discussions with the police and fire service, given further rainfall, and as more hospitality facilities such as pubs open up and offer more options for people, the risks have reduced, though remain present. Chase Road was therefore reopened on Monday 13th July. There will be patrols by the Ranger Service, Fire Service and Police to monitor the situation.

Should the situation change and the risk level increase, it may be necessary to close the road again temporarily.

We would ask everyone to help us care for Cannock Chase by:

- Not using barbecues or lighting fires
- Parking carefully to avoid blocking roads and access points – make sure fire appliances can always get through if they need to
- Staying on the paths to protect wildlife habitats
- Taking litter home with you
- Following guidelines in relation to coronavirus

Works have also been undertaken at Old Acre Lane to address concerns about unauthorised parking blocking access for residents and emergency services, with signage to follow. This may also help address some of the antisocial behaviour experienced in the area following easing of lockdown.

Great oaks from little acorns grow...

As part of our conservation management work on the Chase, the ranger service collected about 270 acorns from Brocton Coppice last Autumn. Of these 235 successfully germinated and are being carefully grown on to be eventually planted back in the coppice. This adds to 80 small oaks germinated the previous year. The acorns are first tested for their viability by placing them in a bowl of water and rejecting the ones that float. The ones that pass this test are planted individually in root trainers to promote healthy root growth. Once they are well established in the root trainers, they will be transferred to larger pots to continue growing until they are large enough (in about four or five years) to be planted back into the beautiful ancient woodland. We hope to continue this practice every year to provide a nursery for Brocton oak trees to restock the woodland.

New homes for bats

Great news - the recently vandalised bat boxes around Brocton will be replaced shortly thanks to a kind and very generous donation from a member of the public. These will be installed soon by the ranger service and volunteers.