

Robin Hood and Sherwood Forest – the next chapter: Plans for new £13m visitor attraction announced

On 17th October, the County Council's policy committee agreed to enter into legal agreements with Discovery Attractions to manage the design, funding and operation of a new visitor centre/attraction at Sherwood Forest.

A £13m investment plan to create a world class Robin Hood experience and protect historic Sherwood Forest will provide a major boost for the local economy, says Nottinghamshire County Council.

Around 100 people could be employed through plans for a new Sherwood Forest Visitor attraction which will also generate huge visitor spend for the local economy and vital investment for the Forest itself. The first phase of the project which includes a brand new visitor centre, café and shop to replace the existing facilities will open in summer 2014 and the new Discover Robin Hood attraction will welcome its first visitors in spring 2015.

Nottinghamshire County Council has announced its intention to work with tourism experts from Discovery Attractions to take the legend of Robin Hood onto its next exciting chapter, while also guaranteeing continued free public access to Sherwood Forest and its ancient oaks, and preserving its unique ecology and natural surroundings.

The new attraction will be built on land acquired by the county council in 2008 opposite the existing nature reserve and visitor centre (known locally as Naish's Field), restoring the current visitor centre site and car park to the forest.

The Discovery Attractions team has a combined experience of over 100 years and an impressive track record for their contributions and involvement in world class visitor attractions in the UK.

The **Discover Robin Hood** proposal promises:

- A world-class visitor attraction to promote the legend, life and times of Robin Hood and his band of merry men.
- Interactive, futuristic tourist features amid the settings of a medieval castle complete with fortified ramparts made from local materials.
- Free access to a courtyard offering a taster of medieval activities and a gateway to Sherwood Forest which retains its free public access.

Comprehensive plans to promote the natural habitats and natural history of Sherwood Forest – led by the existing county council ranger team.

Coun John Cottee, Chairman for the Culture Committee at Nottinghamshire County Council said: *"This will put Sherwood Forest, Robin Hood's legendary home back on the map. The County Council is committed to raising the profile of Robin and Sherwood locally, nationally and internationally whilst at the same time protecting ancient Sherwood Forest for future generations. This exciting venture will also create and sustain jobs for Nottinghamshire people. We hope to excite and educate visitors from all over the world. We're delighted to be working with Discovery Attractions to build a world class attraction*

befitting our legendary hero and his forest home.”

Rob Gray, Marketing Director of Discovery Attractions said: “Robin Hood is a global brand that deserves to be celebrated, and where better to do this than at his spiritual home of Sherwood Forest. Discover Robin Hood will be the first in a series of World Class visitor attractions from Discovery Attractions, based on Britain’s rich heritage of myths and legends. It will bring to life the story of Robin Hood in a way that is both entertaining and educational for kids and adults alike.

“We are absolutely delighted to be working alongside Nottinghamshire County Council and Experience Nottinghamshire to develop and operate this iconic property which will provide a real ‘wow’ factor and focus for tourism and leisure in the Nottinghamshire area.”

Jennifer Spencer, Chief Executive of Experience Nottinghamshire, said: “*Sherwood Forest is a place which captures the imagination of visitors in the UK and around the world. The development of this new visitor centre has the potential not only to increase visitor numbers, but also to increase the amount of time they then spend in Nottinghamshire. We welcome this investment, which will make the most of this much-loved attraction.*”

Bob White, Chairman, World Wide Robin Hood Society, said: “*These are exciting times for everyone who loves Robin Hood and it is wonderful to hear of these plans which will bring benefits to all – and in Robin’s heartland of Sherwood Forest. Robin Hood is a powerful iconic brand and the outlaw himself would I am sure be extremely excited about what is being planned by Nottinghamshire County Council and other agencies working together on these proposals.*”

Celia Brooks, Chairman of Edwinstowe Parish Council said: “*We welcome investment plans at Sherwood which promote the area, but at the same time protect the forest and are sympathetic to the local environment, as well as anything which can benefit the village of Edwinstowe.*”

