



DUCHY of LANCASTER

Tenant Newsletter - Staffordshire Survey

Welcome to the 2024 edition of our newsletter for tenants across the Staffordshire Survey. We hope that you will find this a useful and informative read, and an opportunity to learn more about members of the wider Duchy family and community. Recent years have proved challenging for many, with first the Covid-19 pandemic and attendant lockdowns, then the extreme weather brought about as a result of climate change and now ongoing concerns around the spiralling cost of essentials such as food, fuel and fertiliser. However, by working together and supporting each other, we believe that can continue to make positive progress in critical areas, such as our physical and mental health, emotional wellbeing and personal productivity.

HIS MAJESTY THE KING, DUKE OF LANCASTER



In September 2022, on His accession to the throne, His Majesty King Charles III also became Duke of Lancaster. As a lifelong advocate of environmental sustainability and caring for the land, the Duke is not only hugely knowledgeable about the theory of sustainability, but also has practical, first-hand experience of regenerative farming methodologies.

He believes wholeheartedly that we have a duty of care both towards both the preservation of the planet and to the generations of people who will succeed us.

In June last year, on His first estate visit since the coronation, His Majesty met a number of His Duchy farming tenants from across The Duchy's Yorkshire estates. During the visit, He toured a number of farms and explored the surrounding woodland.

The Duke takes an active interest in the lives of His Duchy tenants and receives regular reports of your activities, ambitions and achievements. Many of you will remember His Majesty's visit to Needwood in 2019 while He was still The Prince of Wales and will be delighted to hear that He continues to care passionately about the environment and actively encourages the introduction of sustainable farming practices to protect and improve the land for the long-term benefit of us all.

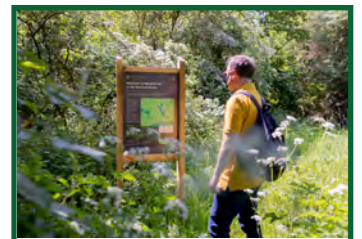


The Ancient Forest of Needwood



The Ancient Forest of Needwood was originally a popular Royal hunting forest, with significant stocks of deer and wild boar. It was gifted to Edmund, first Duke of Lancaster by his father King Henry III in 1266 and forms part of the ancient inheritance which became the Duchy of Lancaster. Today, the Duchy woodland is enjoyed by many, with footpaths and permissive routes in Bolingbroke Wood, Crossplain Wood, Eland Wood, Jackson's Bank and Dolefoot Lane Wood.

In partnership with The National Forest, the Duchy of Lancaster has recently installed new pathfinder signage and information boards across the woodlands on its Needwood Estate in Staffordshire. The new pathfinder totems, way-markers and interpretation boards are made from oak and include aluminium panels. The boards contain a mix of historical facts about the Duchy of Lancaster, details of the different species of trees that make up the woodland and notes of the types of flora and fauna present. The new signage has been placed at strategic points on key access routes and public walkways.



As many of you know, Nathan Thompson CVO, has decided to stand down as CEO of the Duchy of Lancaster after 11 years at the helm. Nathan will hand over the reins to Alastair Martin, CVO in July 2024. Alastair is extremely knowledgeable, having served as Secretary and Keeper of the Records for the Duchy of Cornwall since 2013. In 2023, he joined the Duchy Council and currently chairs our Rural Committee. He is looking forward to meeting you all!





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Your Duchy Team

Estate Director Katie Warden leads on the management of our Staffordshire Survey, supported by Senior Estates Surveyor Naomi Brown and of course our Administrator Robyn Bebbington, Head of Rural Mark Coombs and the wider Duchy team based at Lancaster Castle. Both Katie and Naomi will already be known to many of you. Please contact either of them if you have any queries or concerns regarding your tenancy or your property at any time.



The Duchy Farming Family: Making Farming More Sustainable



As part of our ongoing drive to encourage knowledge-sharing and awareness of regenerative farming methodologies, we are organising a series of 'A Pie and A Pint' nights across our estates. These evenings are designed to provide tenants with a relaxed and convivial atmosphere where they spend an evening among friends and listen to some first-hand experience from invited speakers on subjects relevant to their business.

We have also introduced a regular email group 'The Duchy Farming Family' and invited our farmers to submit any suggestions on topics they would like to see included. We continue to offer membership of the BASE UK information network free of charge and are actively encouraging our farming tenants to partner with organisations such as Pastures for Life (Pfli) and Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) to co-host events of mutual interest on their farms. This is all part of sharing both knowledge and first-hand

experience of the practicalities of adopting more sustainable farming models.

Uptake of new environmental schemes, including SFI and Countryside Stewardship, has been high at Needwood, with sixty-five per cent of farms across the estate either already in an environmental scheme or planning to be so within the next six months.

In addition, of the 900 farms in England accepted onto the Sustainable Farm Incentive Pilot scheme, three are on the Needwood Estate (Castle Hayes Park Farm, Hanbury Park Farm and Daisy Bank Farm). A further four farms have entered the main Sustainable Farming Initiative (SFI) scheme, with another application currently underway.



Creativity And Talent Across The Estate



We have an extraordinarily diverse breadth of talent on the Needwood estate, with many of our tenants finding new and creative ways to add to their business. These include Shaun Gadsby's bespoke bird boxes (made from teapots) at Sowley Farmhouse, Claire Peach's 'Hens for Hire' service at Brakenhurst Farmhouse and Sarah Barrett's bespoke wedding gowns at Upper Linbrook Farm. We also have a number of first-class equestrian facilities on the estate, including coaching in dressage and eventing at Woodhouse Farm and the performance arena, event space and riding school at Eland Lodge. Our farming tenants Charlie and Lesley Prince at Agardsley Cottage Farm have developed a first-class farm shop and woodland education centre at The Deer Park in Hoar Cross and Claire Major from Castle Hayes Park Farm has built up a thriving private catering company over recent years. We encourage all our tenants to diversify and explore new business opportunities.

If you have a good local cause that you think deserves additional financial support, please consider making an application to the Duchy of Lancaster Benevolent Fund. You will find an application form on our website and your Duchy team can help and advise.