

Let's off road!

PEOPLE with disabilities will soon be Outwoods bound thanks to a unique mobility scooter capable of covering all terrains.

Charnwood Borough Council is purchasing a Trampler so the popular beauty spot on the outskirts of Loughborough can be enjoyed by even more residents.

The outdoor activity buggy, which has a top speed of four miles per hour, has been given the thumbs up following a 'road test' in front of the Outwoods Management Committee.

Charnwood is purchasing one Trampler, which costs between £5,000 and £7,000, and is seeking sponsors to pay for a second vehicle.

People will be able to book the use of the Trampler later this year so they can finally appreciate the Outwoods, which is difficult to access in a manual wheelchair due to the surfaces and incline of paths.

Chris Emmet, who suffers from Multiple Sclerosis, put the Trampler through its paces and was impressed by the mobility scooter.

The 61-year-old from Loughborough said: "Very few powered wheelchairs would be capable of doing what the Trampler does - it's a great piece of kit."

"They are very easy to use and will be a great advantage to people in wheelchairs."

"The Outwoods was lovely. It's the first time I'd seen it properly and I'm looking forward to having the chance to go again."

Cllr Peter Lewis, Charnwood's Cabinet member for Leisure, destroyed the tendons in both legs in a fall last year and his mobility is still restricted.

But he is also a big fan of the Trampler saying: "Initially, I was scared these machines might be too technical or too noisy for the Outwoods - neither was true."

"They are so balanced that any fear of falling off, which I had when climbing on board, proved to be groundless."

"I know only too well that



sense of frustration, despair and sometimes real anger which can overwhelm you at not being able to go places which people take for granted.

"I am proud Charnwood is prepared to face these issues imaginatively and

constructively."

Cllr David Snartt, the chairperson of the Outwoods Management Committee, added: "The Outwoods should be enjoyed by everyone but due to the terrain, it's very difficult for people with

OUT AND ABOUT: Chris Emmet (left) and Cllr Peter Lewis test out the Trampers in the Outwoods. Below: The Outwoods Management Committee check out the all-terrain vehicles.

Pictures by Mark Emmet.



Very few powered wheelchairs would be capable of doing what the Trampler does - it's a great piece of kit - Multiple Sclerosis sufferer Chris Emmet who road-tested the Trampler

disabilities to get around and appreciate its natural beauty.

"These magnificent little buggies will open the woods up to even more people and we're delighted to be able to make them available I'm sure they will be well used."

Mark Graham, Charnwood Borough Council's Wildlife Officer, said: "We are always looking to improve disabled access to the Outwoods and we were able to take the Trampler into difficult areas where no ordinary wheelchair or scooter would have had any chance of reaching."

"It means we can improve access to the Woods without having to detract from the area's natural appearance by putting in formal paths."

Anyone interested in sponsoring the purchase of a second Trampler should call Mark Graham on (01509) 634 976 or email mark.graham@charnwood.gov.uk

To find out more about the Outwoods, visit www.charnwood.gov.uk/leisure/outwoodsinformation.html

Charnwood's hidden jewels

THERE are many beauty spots across Charnwood but very few are as spectacular as Morley Quarry.

The Shepshed nature reserve, off Morley Lane, is home to hundreds of species of plants and animals and offers stunning views of the Borough.

It is just one of 27 wildlife sites that are maintained by Charnwood Borough Council and is home to a variety of birds, reptiles and insects including kestrels, reed warblers, slow worms, common lizards and toads.

Mark Graham, Charnwood Borough Council's Wildlife Officer, said: "The Outwoods on the edge of Loughborough is probably the best-known of the sites we are responsible for managing but all of our wildlife sites make a valuable contribution to local biodiversity."

"Many residents are not aware of these less formal sites so you could say they are Charnwood's hidden jewels!"

"Morley Quarry is the perfect example. It is well-used by residents of Shepshed but not many people outside the town know of its existence."

"It is a wonderful attraction which offers some stunning views of wildlife and the surrounding area."

Rare grassland is also being restored at Morley Quarry in a unique project aimed at halting its disappearance.

The Acid Grassland and Lowland Heath Restoration Scheme is taking place at the 13-acre site in an attempt to slow down the drastic decline of the once widespread vegetation.

More than 100 years ago, there were around 10,000 acres of the heathland in Charnwood Forest but today there are only 250 acres.

The scheme is part of an overall project to create an additional 20 hectares of acid grassland in Charnwood Forest.



STUNNING SCENERY: Morley Quarry in Shepshed (above) is home to a number of different forms of wildlife and offers some spectacular views of the Borough (below).

Cllr Peter Lewis, Charnwood's Cabinet member for Leisure, encouraged more people to visit Morley Quarry and other beauty spots in the Borough.

He said: "It's so often the case that when you live with places of real interest on your own doorstep, you take them for granted."

"When we want to go on a family trip, our mindset makes us think beyond where we live and drive off for miles, rather than seek out

what is on hand just around the corner.

"Fact is, if we don't relish and cherish the beauty around us, then we cease to value where we live, we stop minding what happens to it, and tomorrow it will surely be gone."

"The solution rests with each of us to enjoy, learn and value."

To find out more about Morley Quarry, and other wildlife sites in Charnwood, call (01509) 634 976.

