

Welcome to the newsletter for the House of Wessex project.

2019 is the year that the project lifts off, and in this bumper edition, we are delighted to share the good news that planning permission has been secured! We also have a great range of opportunities for people to get involved, in fact, we really need your help in helping fulfill the ambition of the House of Wessex project.

Progress to date



- Grant awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund
- Project Officer Lesley Best appointed
- Contractors selected and contracts awarded
- Blenheim Estate agree to donate timber, and first trees felled and delivered for October public event
- Successful timber framing event and sample section built
- Fantastic public open weekend in October (despite the rain!)
- 6 tonnes of heritage straw secured (rare!)
- Several talks delivered to local history groups
- School visits delivered to local primary schools in conjunction with Dorchester Abbey Education Officer
- Wulfheodenas deliver interactive educational open days
- Courses planned with University of Oxford Department for Continuing Education
- Patron scheme launched to help complete fundraising
- Practical courses agreed in tree wrighting, hurdle making, and thatching
- And, Planning Permission secured



Planning Permission Secured

We were delighted to receive planning permission for the House of Wessex reconstruction. On 10th January we received confirmation and since then, we have been able to implement the next stages of the project in earnest.

The sample timber frame section, built during our first open weekend, is still standing and has passed a 'racking test' (see photo above) which means we can be confident that it will withstand a stormforce wind. Building regulations have also been secured.

Everything is in now in place to begin the live build from March onwards.

Latest news

Joint Steering Group

All our contractors and key volunteer groups - timber-framers, treewrighters, archaeologists, Anglo-Saxon experts, educators, historical reenactors, local history groups - attended a Joint Steering Group meeting on Friday 11th January. It was great to all be together and start the detailed planning for the build and educational activities. We toasted the exciting year ahead!



2019 course programme

We are pleased to offer a wide range of courses during the year. These will not only help us complete the building work, but contribute towards the meeting the costs of the project. Please consider signing up to a course, and please do mention them to your friends and family.

All proceeds from these courses will go to the House of Wessex project. Find out more at: www.sylva.org.uk/courses



Timber-Framing: Wednesday 20th – Sunday 24th March 2019
Come and start the timber construction by hewing, cleaving and making treenails as part of the main build. Come for one day or more. It is a physical demanding work but great fun, learning Anglo-Saxon techniques and building the timber frame for House of Wessex. Cost £100 per day.

Hurdle Making: Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th March
Simon Farndon will be holding a hurdle making course on site ready for use on the roof of the building. Cost £200.

Treewrighting: Saturday 23rd March 2019
Saxon Building Woodwork, or 'Treewrighting' – led by Led by Damian Goodburn BA PhD, a leading archaeological woodwork specialist, this workshop will be held in our new purpose-built Education Barn at the Sylva Wood Centre. Cost £75.

Thatching: Saturday 10th – Wednesday 14th August
A series of five one-day courses. Come for one, or all five! Details soon to be announced on our courses page.

Find out more at: www.sylva.org.uk/courses



House of Wessex Patrons Scheme

The House of Wessex is a unique reconstruction of an Anglo-Saxon house of significant importance in English history. The faithful reconstruction of the building, working with dozens of volunteers, and an associated programme of learning, is part-funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Sylva Foundation needs help to raise funds to realise the project's full potential, and establish a legacy fund. For this reason we've launched a Patrons Scheme, whereby people who are excited about this project can support it. We offer a range of options - Bronze, Silver, and Gold.

Read more at: www.sylva.org.uk/wessexpatron

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Every pound we raise will go directly to the House of Wessex project. Thank you. If you would prefer to talk with someone in the Sylva team, please call 01865 408018.

Find out more about the project.

BRONZE * £250

Your donation will help us create and manage a unique historical reconstructed building - thank you.

- We will write to you personally to thank you, recognising your significant contribution.
- A personalised certificate recognising your contribution.
- Your name will be appear in an online Patrons Board.

SILVER * £500

Your support will mean we can build a better future for the House of Wessex, and our education programme.

Everything in BRONZE, plus ...

- Your name will be displayed in the building on a Patrons Board.
- An invitation to a unique evening of Anglo-Saxon activities.

GOLD * £1,000

In recognition of your significant support, we offer some very special perks.

Everything in BRONZE and SILVER, plus ...

- Your name hand-carved in a beam or post. You can even learn to carve some of your own letters with a master craftsman.
- Invitation to a VIP opening of the building in autumn 2019.
- Limited edition print of the building and reconstructed scene by a leading archaeological reconstruction artist.

Pledge your support via Charity Checkout



Some important dates

Wed 20th – Sun 24th March: Timber Framing Course by Carpenters' Fellowship

Saturday 23rd March: Treewrighting Course led by Damian Goodburn

Sat 23rd & Sun 24th March: Hurdle Making Course

Saturday 11th May: Launch of Kingdom of Wessex Trail

Wed 3rd -7th July: Event framing and installation

Sat 6th – 7th July: Public Open Weekend

Sat 10th – Wed 14th August: Intensive thatching course

Thursday 15th August: Thatching continues

Sunday 29th August: FORMAL OPENING EVENT

Spread the word

We'd keen to reach as many people as possible, and to find more people interested in taking part in a course, volunteering, or coming to our living history open days. Please share this newsletter with family and friends.

Check out our webpage: www.sylva.org.uk/wessex