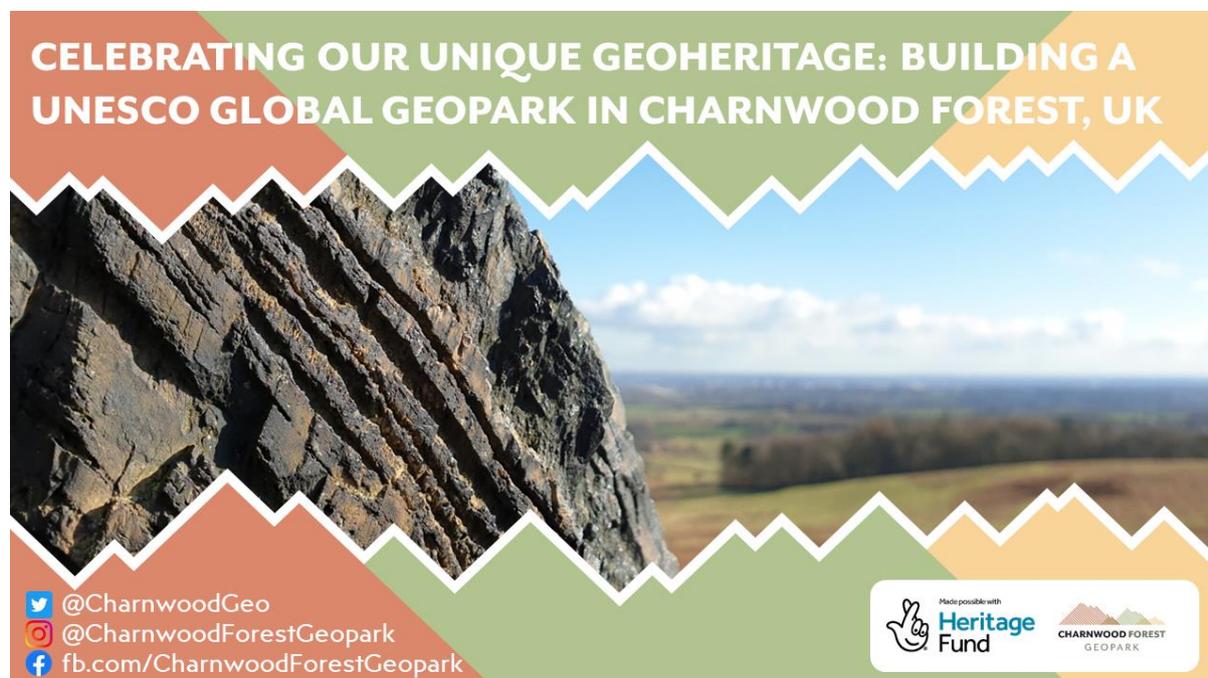


## FRIENDS OF CHARNWOOD FOREST

Next meeting on Wednesday February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2022, 7.30 pm, Woodhouse Eaves Village Hall.



**Dr Jack Matthews** is the Geoheritage Conservation and Interpretation Officer at the Charnwood Forest Geopark, being developed as part of the Landscape Partnership Scheme. He has a background in Precambrian geology & palaeontology, and research to inform the conservation of geological heritage. His previous work has informed the protection of the Mistaken Point UNESCO World Heritage Site, and he was Geoscience Advisor to the Discovery UNESCO Global Geopark application.

Charnwood Forest is host to some of the oldest animal fossils in the world, many of which have been key to developing our understanding of the rise of animals during the Ediacaran period. In addition to its internationally significant palaeontology, our area is also host to a number of working and historic quarries whose rocks have shaped the built environment of the United Kingdom for more than 2000 years. Charnwood Forest occupies just 10% of the area of Leicestershire, and yet contains more than 50% of the natural protect sites within the county: underlying both the broad geodiversity within the Geopark, and the way this geodiversity has underpinned the extensive biodiversity found here. As such the region provides a natural laboratory for highlighting the often-overlooked pivotal role of geodiversity in nature.

Following a successful funding application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, 18 partner organisations have joined to form the Charnwood Forest Landscape Partnership, and are now implementing programmes to celebrate the areas geoheritage, connect people with their history, and secure a sustainable future. The Charnwood Forest Regional Park, which oversees the project, has decided to develop the programmes within the framework of establishing a UNESCO Global Geopark.

This talk will outline the geoheritage of Charnwood Forest – including some famous sites of international prominence, and others whose stories have so far gone untold. I will outline the principles of a UNESCO Global Geopark, and explain how and why the region might benefit from such a designation. The talk will give examples of Geopark development projects already undertaken and also planned, including our interpretation, conservation, education, and arts programme

Marilyn Upstone, Chairman of the Friends of Charnwood Forest