

# Millions of funding for projects in England to plant hundreds of thousands of trees

Hundreds of thousands of trees will be planted in communities across England thanks to funding through the Nature for Climate Fund, announced by Defra and the Forestry Commission as National Tree Week launched today (Saturday 27 November).

Over £12 million will be allocated to the successful applicants to four funds supporting tree planting efforts for future generations.

260,000 trees will be planted outside of woodlands as part of the Local Authority Treescapes Fund with 139 local authorities awarded a share of the now £4.4 million pot across 42 projects. Projects will support a variety of ways to get trees in the ground, from natural regeneration and traditional planting to community engagement.

Local residents, schools and environmental groups will come together to plant trees in shared spaces, with training provided to support community groups. These initiatives will restore trees to non-wooded areas such as riverbanks, along hedgerows, beside roads and footpaths, and within vacant community spaces – areas where treescapes are often highly degraded due to neglect, disease or historical decline.

Urban forests make our towns and cities safer, healthier and more pleasant places to be, helping boost people's wellbeing as well as contributing towards efforts to tackle climate change. 46 projects in England planting almost 25,000 trees will be supported through the third round of the Urban Tree Challenge Fund, building upon the 134,000 trees already planted through this fund in deprived urban areas.

Also announced today, the Woods into Management Forestry Innovation Funds will distribute almost £700,000 to 17 projects restoring biodiversity in vulnerable natural habitats, helping woodlands adapt to a changing climate and aiding their recovery from the impacts of pests and diseases.

Projects will develop new business models and supply chains for ash timber, helping to restore woodlands damaged by ash dieback. Projects will also improve access to woodlands to allow for active management where previously not possible, whilst engaging with forestry businesses and conservation organisations on woodland management.

In addition, the Tree Production Innovation Fund will make over £1 million available to 16 innovative projects striving to increase and diversify our domestic tree production. Those selected include collaborations from researchers, nurseries, seed suppliers and industry, such as the Future Trees Trust, the University of Oxford and Maelor Forest Nurseries.

These projects will explore a range of novel production methods including the establishment of clonal seed orchards for oak, use of AI in advanced propagation systems and DNA finger-printing technologies for the genetic tracing of Forest Reproductive Materials (FRM), respectively.

Forestry Minister, Lord Goldsmith, said:

This targeted package of funding will help us to build back greener and regenerate natural spaces across the country for the benefit of all.

Trees are at the heart of our ambitious environmental programme, as we work to deliver on the promises we made at COP26 and treble tree planting rates by the end of this Parliament. But at the local level, trees and woodlands are the lifeblood of communities, essential to supporting wellbeing, reducing pollution and improving people's quality of life.

Forestry Commission Chair, Sir William Worsley said:

These inspiring initiatives will help to stem the tide of biodiversity loss and promote resilient tree growth and management across the UK, whilst helping to futureproof our natural world amidst a changing climate.

Today's funding allocation also comes alongside [the launch of a third national community forest which will be created in Cumbria](#), marking the fulfilment of the Government's commitment in the England Trees Action Plan to create three new community forests, and helping to deliver on the Government's commitment to treble tree planting rates by the end of this Parliament.

The new forest planted will comprise of up to 150 hectares (or around 210 football pitches) of trees, woodlands and forests created along the west coast of Cumbria from Barrow to Carlisle which will better connect 65 miles of coastal communities to nature.

Defra and the Forestry Commission have a variety of flexible grants which offer strong financial incentives for planting trees where they are most needed. The grants cover different areas – from support to plan new woodlands, making urban areas greener, developing carbon markets, and to increase domestic planting stock – and are targeted at different audiences – including farmers and landowners, communities, eNGOs, local authorities, and individuals.

A [summary of all Defra and Forestry Commission grants and support available for tree planting can be found here](#).

- The England Trees Action Plan committed to treble tree planting rates in England by the end of this Parliament, supported by an intended £500m from the Nature for Climate Fund. In the recently launched Net Zero Strategy (Oct 21), the Government has also announced that it will boost the Nature for Climate Fund with a further £124 million of new money, ensuring total spend of more than £750 million by 2025 on peat restoration, woodland creation and management – above and beyond what was promised in the manifesto. This will enable more opportunities for farmers and landowners to support growing trees and woodland creation.

### **Case study: Local Authority Treescapes Fund**

- Blackburn and Darwen Borough Council, working with Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, and Rossendale Borough Councils, plan to plant 39,400 trees across 135 sites, thanks to almost £160,000 in funding from the Local Authority Treescapes Fund. This is supported via match funding from Ribble Rivers Trust who are offering training to tree planting volunteers, and a financial contribution to help with tree costs.
- This will combat historic and ongoing losses of trees due to issues including pests and diseases.
- The project will include areas of traditional planting as well natural colonisation, whilst engaging with local schools, environment and community groups close to where the trees will be planted.
- In line with the aims of the scheme, this project will help to combat air pollution, bolster flood protections, and connect fragmented habitats.

### **Case studies: Urban Tree Challenge Fund**

- Durham County Council will plant approximately 800 street trees over two years, as well as cover the first three years of their care, thanks to their latest bid to the UTCF. They have been successful in gaining over £334,000 of total funding over four years from the fund.
- Many of the planting sites are in neighbourhoods located in the top 10% of deprived areas nationally – others are within the top 10-30% most deprived.
- In addition, the Green Eastbourne project will plant 1000 trees across the town, specifically in areas of low canopy cover and deprivation. Local community volunteers will be involved in the planting and maintenance of the trees. The project team are creating a tree health and maintenance app for all monitoring and to record the success of the new planting.