

Woodland Trust £2.9 million to fund trees and green spaces for local communities



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The Woodland Trust has delivered a major green boost for communities across the UK by providing much needed funding for cash strapped local authorities to plant trees and create green spaces.

The money is being delivered from the charity's new Emergency Tree Fund which aims to make up for a current lack of investment to help local authorities break through barriers to get more trees and woods in the ground. It will give more local communities the green spaces on their doorsteps that are desperately needed, and which have shown to be so important for people during the current pandemic.

The Trust is working with 11 authorities across the UK in the first phase of the project and aims to expand the scheme further in 2022.

It is a key part of the charity's recently announced ambitious aim to establish 50 million more trees by 2025 to help tackle both the nature and climate crises.

In June 2019 the UK Parliament made a commitment to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Many local authorities across the UK have also declared climate and nature emergencies and set out ambitious tree planting targets. Unfortunately, as with so many areas of life, finances are tight and due to Covid 19, progress has been significantly impacted.

John Tucker, the Woodland Trust's director of woodland outreach said:

"The Woodland Trust has launched an Emergency Tree Fund to provide vital funding to help make these green projects a reality.

"The Trust's Emergency Tree Fund has the power to inspire tree planting and woodland creation and galvanise the need to treasure trees and green spaces in neighbourhoods across the UK. What the country's fight against Covid has shown is how communities have come together in a time of crisis. As the pandemic hopefully abates, getting outside and planting, maintaining and enjoying trees will be a way for this spirit to be harnessed once again in a different but very important way - to tackle the climate and nature crises which also affect us all."

Among the aims of the Emergency Tree Fund, which has come from Trust supporters, including businesses, is boosting green spaces to help with people's health and wellbeing and to work with communities to plant trees and create woodland soaking up harmful carbon, combating pollution and create detailed tree strategies to meet carbon zero targets.

Glasgow City Region, which will host the COP26 international climate change conference later this year, is one of those receiving funding (£400,000), following a rigorous application process. Here eight councils are coming together to boost urban tree cover.

Sheffield City Council is another to be receiving funding (£183,319). Its aim to plant and protect trees in the city is a far cry from three years ago when the Trust joined local residents in a battle to stop it felling street trees. Now it has transformed its policies and is looking to use the fund to involve its many diverse communities in planting new trees and protecting others for the future.

Meanwhile Wolverhampton Council is looking to plant pockets of trees in a range of locations across the city, again benefiting people and wildlife by improving air quality and increasing green spaces.

Mr Tucker added:

"Our overall goal is to be the architect of inspiring local authorities across the UK to help their residents become tree champions - and make trees a key part of their policies. We want to stimulate green activity and help them to become exemplars of green innovation and inspiration that can be applied in other local authority areas. And we would love to hear from any other local authority who want to be involved in future Emergency Tree Fund allocations."

Funding allocation

Here is a full list of councils receiving the funding (an initial £2.86 million) so far:

Edinburgh Council: £298,055. Edinburgh Council is looking for the city to become a “one million tree” city by 2030.

- Glasgow City Region: £400,003. Eight Councils have come together to create the Clyde Climate Forest which will see urban tree cover increase from 16% to 20%.
- Sheffield City Council: £183,319. Sheffield's 'Treevitalise' project will look to engage communities in protecting and restoring woodland, increasing capacity in the community forestry team, and protecting trees outside woods.
- Belfast City Council: £289,585. Belfast has a very ambitious aim to plant one million trees over the next 15 years.
- Wokingham Council: £300,000. Wokingham Borough Council is looking to plant more than 250,000 trees across the borough.
- Cornwall Council: £293,965. Cornwall Council has already launched its Forest of Cornwall and the fund will help with its aim to create 8,000 hectares of woodland over the coming years.
- Devon County Council: £297,349. Devon Council is looking to create a 'Devon net zero' by, among other things, planting trees on their land, creating a tree strategy for the county and tackling tree disease.
- Cardiff Council: £228,862. Cardiff Council is looking to plant over 800 hectares of tree cover over the next decade.
- Bolsover District Council: £269,160. The council is looking to plant over 27,000 trees and create and inspire a series of community woodlands.
- Wolverhampton Council: £129,500. A real urban tree planting initiative, Wolverhampton is looking to plant pockets of woodland on a range of open spaces in the city.
- Black Country Consortium: £175,000. In the Black Country the money will go towards a comprehensive assessment of the area's tree stock.

To achieve its 50 million tree aim the Trust is aiming to create new woods as well as work with the likes of landowners, the Government, businesses and the public. Its Emergency Tree Fund may be expanded should this prove a success.

Read more on the Trust's [50 million tree plan](#).

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