Trees for Climate Impact Report

Year 4, 2023-24

England's Community Forests

Funded by

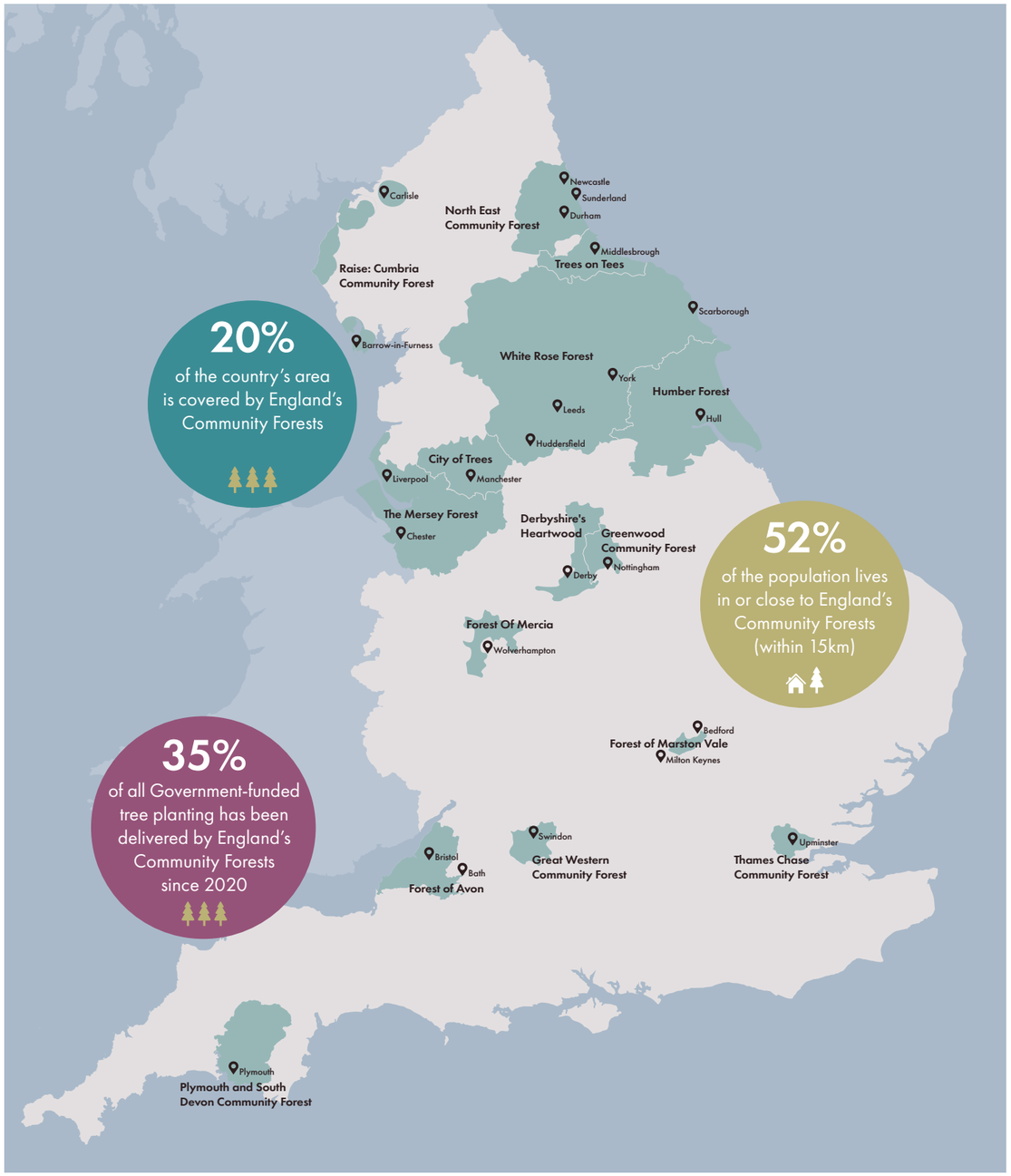
Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Supported by

Community Forest Trust

England's Community Forests

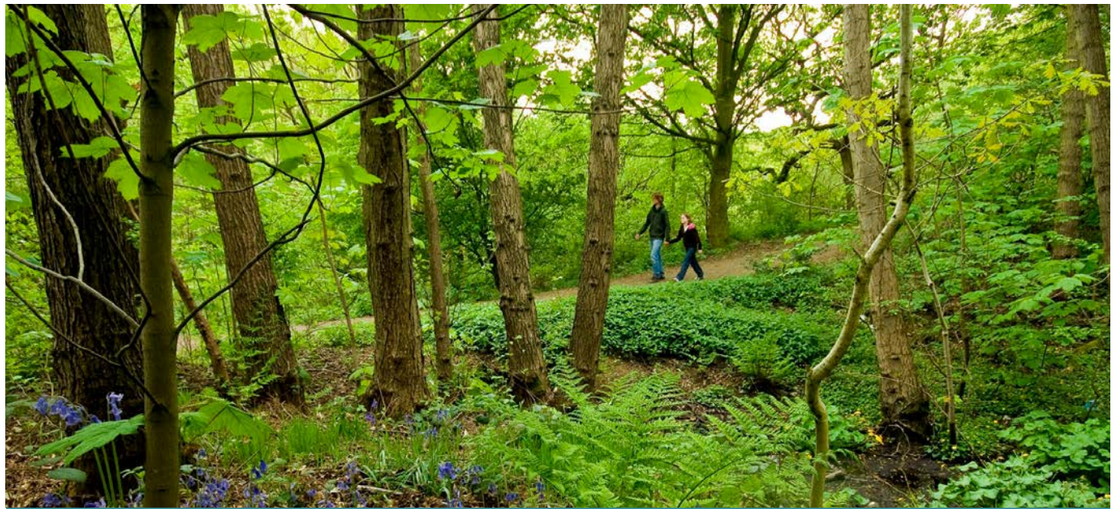
A flourishing network of 15 Community Forests, leading the country's largest environmental regeneration initiative.



England's Community Forests are the leading woodland creation force in the country

Founded over 30 years ago and working where we're needed most, the Community Forest movement has given rise to the largest environmental transformation in England.

Through expertise, innovation, and a long-term commitment to the regions in which we work, we are ensuring that trees and woodlands are at the very heart of communities up and down the country, bringing countless benefits to both people and planet.



Now a flourishing network of **15 Community Forests**, we cover **20%** of England, where more than **50%** of the population live. We work in areas of low tree cover and high deprivation and have a mission to connect trees with people to bring about lasting change. The impact of our work on community access, nature recovery, flood prevention, and carbon sequestration has been significant, profound, and enduring.

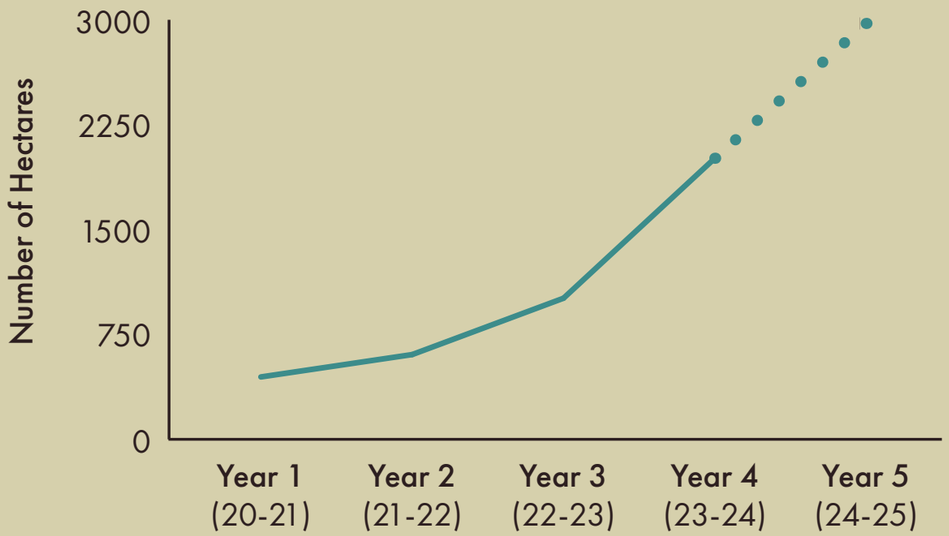
Trees For Climate

Trees for Climate represents one of the most significant joint programmes of delivery across the Community Forest network since the first Forests were launched three decades ago.

Since the programme's inception in 2020, woodland creation has increased 100% year on year and our network proudly delivered the largest share of all tree planting funded by the Government's Nature for Climate Fund during the 2023/24 season.

Our work complements other nationally funded schemes, and is able to reach those smaller and harder to deliver opportunities that have the biggest impacts for both people and planet.

Tree planting has doubled across England's Community Forests year on year.



Benefiting people and planet

Through the planting of millions of trees, Trees for Climate is delivering on action to reduce the impacts of climate change, capture carbon and protect communities from flooding. What's more, the Community Forest approach has the power to connect more people and nature, bringing about much wider social, economic, and environmental transformation.

Engagement, Health, and Wellbeing

Our work engages tens of thousands of people in tree planting, connecting more people with nature and providing a wealth of health and wellbeing impacts. Many of our projects take place in the most deprived areas of the country, meaning we can benefit those that need it most.

Enhancing Wildlife

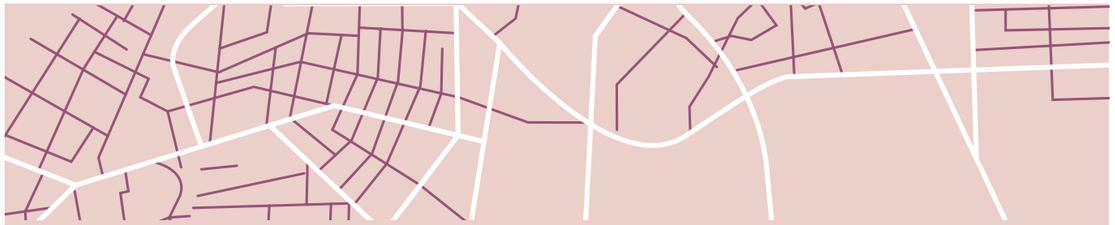
All our new woodland sites are designed to contribute to local ecological frameworks. We've already provided thousands of additional hectares of usable space for woodland species, greatly enhancing biodiversity.

Public Access and Value

Most new woodlands planted by us have either full or partial public access and once established, these woodlands could welcome millions of annual visitors.

Education, employment, and skills

Our work creates and supports a range of green jobs, including those employed in the wider tree supply chain. We work with partners to support training and employment in green skills, as well as with schools and education providers, helping to inspire the next generation.



Trees for Climate is committed to:

- Mitigating carbon through tree planting, and making a significant contribution to net zero
- Improving climate resilience, by supporting natural flood management, providing shade and reducing the heat island effect
- Improving water and air quality
- Supporting increased public access to woodland, especially for those in areas of greatest need
- Enhancing habitats for wildlife and biodiversity
- Increasing opportunities for community engagement, supporting better levels of health and wellbeing, especially in areas of greatest health inequality
- Taking innovative approaches and delivery practices, and sharing learning to advance the whole sector
- Supporting employment and skills development (including aiding a reduction in reoffending through targeted schemes)

Trees For Climate 2020-2024

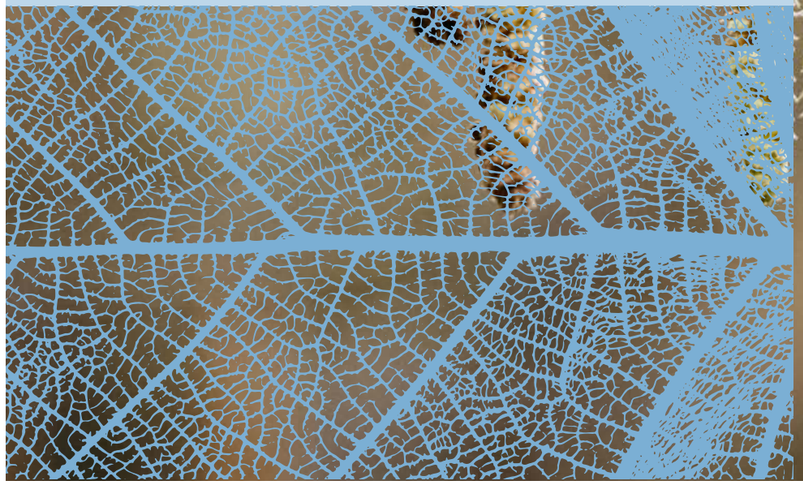
Since Trees for Climate was launched in 2020, we have delivered:

- **5,052,277** trees
- **4,074** hectares
- **1,834** unique projects
- **209,802** metres of new hedgerows
- **5** new Community Forests
- **47,673** people engaged in tree planting
- **641,833** more households now pass the Woodland Access Standard and live within 500m of an area of accessible woodland at least 2 hectares in size.
- **35%** of all new government-funded trees planted in England since 2020.

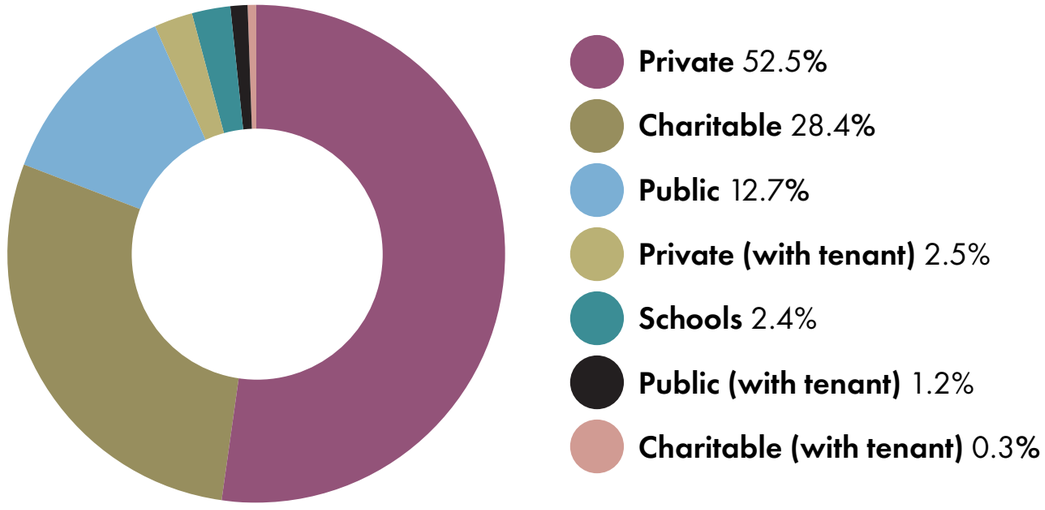
Year 4 Impacts And Achievements

In Year 4 alone (2023-2024), Trees for Climate has delivered:

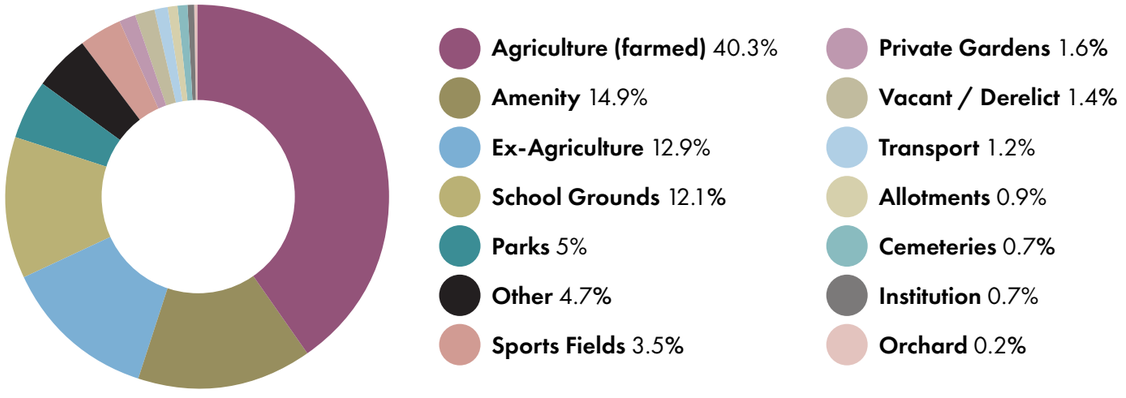
- **1,986** hectares of woodland creation
- **2,424,697** trees planted
- **621** individual sites and projects
- **130,249m** of hedgerows
- **17,597** people engaged in tree planting activity
- **60%** of woodlands planted in Year 4 have full or partial public access
- **7%** of Year 4 schemes are within the most deprived areas of the country
- More than **34%** of all new government-funded tree planting in England was carried out through Trees for Climate in Year 4.



Land ownership in Year 4



Prior land type in Year 4



Natural Flood Management And Water Quality

The Environment Agency has produced a prioritisation map identifying where nature-based solutions such as tree planting are likely to be most effective in slowing the flow of water and reducing flood risk.

- In Year 4 of Trees for Climate, England's Community Forests planted **317 sites (1,092 hectares)** on land identified as having high suitability for Natural Flood Management
- It is estimated that Trees for Climate planting in Year 4 provided an additional **335,440 cublic meters** of water storage capacity.

Case Study

Highfield House
Preston, East Yorkshire
Humber Forest

Paul Wingham and his neighbour Matt Blood, from Preston, near Hull in East Yorkshire, have created a haven for wildlife over their combined land.

Both neighbours wanted to create an area where wildlife could thrive in the outskirts of Hull, a post-industrial landscape that's one of the most flood-prone parts of the UK.

This scheme, funded through Trees for Climate and Northern Forest grant Grow Back Greener, consists of planting of 774 trees including 451 meters of hedgerow and 17 standards to extend an existing fruit and nut orchard. In total 3283 tree saplings were put in across the two sites.

The design was complex to fit around the overhead powerlines, flooding, and public rights of way. In addition, Paul and his wife from Highfield House wanted to keep the view of church from their back door and so a glade with a shrub layer was used to partition the woodland. Glades encourage the movement of wildlife across the site, including deer and foxes that have been seen on the site.

A hedgerow was planted alongside the Public Right of Way which runs along the southern end of both properties, the new hedgerow will enhance the walk for local residents, while also creating a corridor for wildlife.

The southern sections of the fields for both properties were prone to flooding, especially in the last couple of years where unprecedented levels of water have been recorded locally. Flood resistant tree species such as Willow Osiers were planted in the southern parcels to help alleviate the impact of this flooding.

> **"My wife Maria and I feel it's a real opportunity to give back to nature, protecting local wildlife for decades to come"**
>
> **Paul Wingham,**
> **landowner at Highfield House**

Public Access And Value

We operate where the need is greatest; the footprint of England's Community Forests collectively contains an estimated 1.8 million households in the top 10% most deprived nationally. More trees and accessible woodlands contribute to healthier, more liveable and more economically rewarding places.

- In year 4 of Trees for Climate, **77%** of the woodlands planted have full or partial access, including school grounds.
- **159,388** more households across the country now pass the Woodland Access Standard are within 500m of a woodland thanks to Trees for Climate.
- Once established the woodlands creation could generate **2,634,796** annual visits with an estimated total value of **£7,838,044** per year

Case Study

Town Moor
North East Community Forest

Around 12,000 new trees have been planted on Newcastle's Town Moor as part of plans to tackle climate change and make the city a greener, healthier and more attractive place to live and visit.

The North East Community Forest, along with the Freemen of Newcastle upon Tyne and other partners, were joined by hundreds of volunteers to plant 5.6 hectares of new woodland and biodiversity habitats, the equivalent to seven football pitches, on eight Town Moor sites across the city.

The Town Moor is the largest green space in Newcastle city centre and is much loved by residents and visitors. Planting more trees on these sites brings people closer to nature and has a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing.

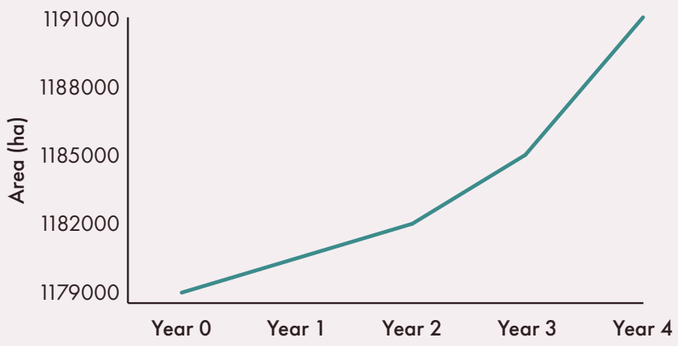
> "We know how incredibly important trees and woodlands are to people in our communities. Through this exciting project, we will create more green spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy which will have a lasting and positive impact on the environment and our city."
>
> **Cllr Marion Williams**

Enhancing Wildlife

The Local Nature Recovery Strategies and the Nature Recovery Network aim to create more joined up habitats to promote biodiversity. An ecological network is a system of habitat patches connected via surrounding parts of the landscape (e.g. corridors) within which a species or group of species can disperse.

- Planting in Year 4 provided an additional **3,994 hectares** of usable space for woodland species, for a total area of **1,187,172 hectares** of woodland network over the footprint of all Community Forests.

Increase in woodland ecological network



Expansion of woodland ecological networks attributable to Trees for Climate planting.

Case Study

Coxmoor Golf Club , Nottinghamshire
Greenwood Community Forest

Ben Cumberland, head greenkeeper at Coxmoor Golf Club, Nottinghamshire, had a vision to increase the biodiversity habitat on 14 hectares on unproductive grassland owned by the club and adjoining the main course.

The idea was to create a design that would extend the mosaic of acid grassland, heather, mature individual trees and woodland copses outward from the playing boundary onto the former grassland. It would then eventually turn from low density planting into areas of high forest complete with woody shrubs blending into its surroundings.

Connecting with existing trees and hedgerows an additional 14 hectares of deciduous native woodland and essential new habitat has been created. A once species poor area will soon offer a home to woodland birds, bats, small mammals and invertebrates. Within the scheme, the additional creation of 7 hectares of acid grassland and lowland heathland combined with low density planting will bolster the remaining remnants of this habitat that was once widespread over most of Nottinghamshire and in time support rare species such as woodlark and nightjar.

9,229 new native trees were planted by staff and over 175 volunteers between November 2023 and February 2024. The new woodland provides essential habitat and a wildlife corridor in otherwise arable Nottinghamshire farmland.

> **"Thank you to all involved for helping to create such a rich and varied habitat next to the golf course, I look forward to seeing it develop and flourish over the coming years"**
>
> **Volunteer**

Contributing To Net Zero

- **23,976** tonnes of carbon will be sequestered per year over the lifetime of the trees planted in the Year 4 of Trees for Climate. This has been valued at **£6,137,761**.*

*using the non-traded price of carbon

Case Study

Denton Park Estate, Ilkley, North Yorkshire

White Rose Forest

Denton Park Estate has existed as a country estate in rural North Yorkshire for over 1000 years. Nick Bailey, the new owner of the estate has put woodland creation at the heart of his vision for the land, with the goal of maximising carbon capture and maintaining food production as key aims.

The new woodland and hedgerow planting has been designed to connect and expand existing woodland that borders the northern edge of the Estate and create biodiversity corridors. In all, 52,000 native broadleaf trees have been planted across 42 hectares of marginal ex-grazing land.

The landowner chose Trees for Climate funding for this project because it offered the flexibility and the high level of ground preparation needed for this site. The funding paid for this work as well as the labour, planting, access improvements and tree protection, including all fencing. To support sustainability and reduce environmental impact, many of the tree guards used on the site have been reused from a previous White Rose Forest project at Broughton Sanctuary. The owners also engaged local volunteers to help plant the trees, including Wharfedale Naturalists.

> **"Denton Park Estate is a long-term conservation project on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales. The vision is to help contribute to the reversal of climate change and the national decline in biodiversity. All whilst producing great local food for local consumption. In short, we want to restore our part of Yorkshire's land and estates to their former natural splendour."**
>
> **Nick Bailey, Denton Park Estate.**

Engagment, Health and Wellbeing

60% of the most health-deprived neighbourhoods are within a Community Forest catchment. By improving the quality of both our environment, and our daily lives, England's Community Forests are reducing the burden on NHS resources and empowering people to maintain or regain employment, which in turn supports families and the economy.

- In year 4, **17,597 members** of the community were actively engaged in tree planting

Case Study

Union Close, Hattersley

City of Trees

Manchester's City of Trees worked with social housing provider, Onward Homes, to plant new woodlands at three of their sites in Tameside and Bolton, including at Union Close in Hattersley.

On 22nd March, 11 volunteers spent 34 hours planting the site together – these were residents from the housing association and volunteers from 'The Hattersley Project'. Staff from Onward Homes also joined in, and further community engagement will occur at tree maintenance events down the line.

540 whips in total were planted in a diverse planting scheme, which will significantly increase the greenery in these areas, benefiting both residents and the local wildlife. The scheme includes a native mix of Aspen, Crab apple, Elder, Guelder rose, Hawthorn, Holly, Hornbeam, Pedunculate Oak, Rowan, Sessile Oak, Silver birch.

Education, Employment And Skills

- **14.2%** of the overall Year 4 projects were with schools, allowing opportunities to support wider working with educational partners through projects such as Forest School and Woodland Outreach which help to connect children to nature.
- Over **145 posts** were directly employed in Year 4 of Trees for Climate and even more roles are supported through the programme, including land agents, woodland contractors, and those employed in the tree supply chain.

Case Study

Whitehaven Academy, Cumbria
Raise: Cumbria Community Forest

The Whitehaven Academy, a local secondary school, wanted to develop its vast outdoor spaces in to enhance pupils' health, well-being and learning outcomes. The 18-month project has seen Raise foresters work with the school's eco-committee to co-design a multipurpose planting scheme. The scheme includes the creation of 7 hectares of woodland with 526 trees planted and an estimated 590 – 6500 trees naturally regenerated over the next 15 years. It also includes amenity tree planting to develop spaces for creative engagement, the establishment of a fruit orchard and a naturally recolonising 'Cumbrian Savannah'.

Students also worked with The Knotted Project to create a short performance piece in response to their surroundings and their feelings about the environment.

The project has also been supported by internet broadband provider Fibrus, who donated trail cameras that will allow students to study the changing ecology of the site and contributed volunteer hours towards helping with the planting.

Looking To The Future

Funding for Year 5 of Trees for Climate has been confirmed through to March 2025 and we're already developing plans for England's Community Forests through to 2030 and beyond.

Would you like to know more?

Whether you are a landowner keen to plant trees, or an organisation eager to establish partnership opportunities with your nearest Community Forest, we'd love to hear from you.

www.englandscommunityforests.org.uk

@CommForests #EnglandsCommunityForests #TreesforClimate

England's 15 Community Forests are:

City of Trees

Derbyshire's Heartwood

Forest of Avon

Forest of Marston Vale

Forest of Mercia

Great Western

Greenwood Community Forest

Humber Forest

North East Community Forest

Plymouth and South Devon

Raise: Cumbria Community Forest

Thames Chase

The Mersey Forest

Trees on Tees

White Rose Forest

Thank You

England's Community Forests

The success of Trees for Climate is thanks to the partnership approach we take, working with our many local communities, and alongside colleagues including at Forestry Commission, Natural England, National Trust, and Woodland Trust, and of course, the ongoing support from Defra. We'd like to thank all our partners for making the programme the success it is.

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