

## Nottinghamshire to see thousands of trees planted as part of £12 million plan for 500 hectares of new woodland in 2021

**Greenwood Community Forest, hosted and supported by Nottinghamshire County Council, will be one of ten community forests across England planting 500 hectares of new woodland over the next five months, in a push to help deliver against the Government's target of up to 30,000 hectares of trees per year, across the UK.**

DEFRA have announced funding for this new *Trees for Climate* programme as part of the Government's *Nature for Climate Fund*, to deliver widespread woodland creation to help combat the climate emergency.

These 'climate combatting' woodlands across England will appear around towns and cities, and for the next five years a wider programme has been drawn up for over 6,000 hectares of new woodlands, one of the biggest environmental regeneration initiatives the UK has seen.

Nottinghamshire's community forestry initiative, Greenwood Community Forest, is a key partner in this new programme, which is being delivered by the partnership of ten community forest organisations that span the country, from Yorkshire to Somerset, collectively known as England's Community Forests, and supported by the national charity The Community Forest Trust. An initial £12m of grant funding for the first planting session in 2020/21 has been secured from the Government's *Nature for Climate* fund.

In total, the trees to be planted across winter 2020 and into 2021 will eventually store over 100,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide and will also help in making local landscapes more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

For Greenwood Community Forest the *Trees for Climate* programme in 2020/21 will deliver 17 hectares of new woodland, to be located across two County Council-owned Green Spaces sites, Rufford Colliery (near Mansfield), and Bentinck South (near Kirkby in Ashfield) and it is anticipated that planting will commence early in 2021.

**Forestry Minister, Lord Goldsmith, said:**

"Through this exciting new programme we will build back greener, as more communities - particularly those in urban environments – will have access to nature, with real benefits for health and wellbeing.

“Trees are the backbone of our urban and rural environments and essential in tackling the climate emergency. This vital programme will plant trees where they are most needed to stem flooding and provide more places for nature to thrive.”

Councillor John Cottee, Chair of the Communities and Place Committee at Nottinghamshire County Council said:

“The County Council has hosted and supported Greenwood Community Forest for 30 years, and we are delighted to be part of the *Trees for Climate* programme. As well as helping in the fight against climate change, woodlands and trees are of great local value, helping to improve air quality, acting as a habitat for wildlife, and providing spaces for people to relax and exercise in”.

The funding will also create new jobs and secure existing ones within the forestry sector and open up new opportunities for people seeking a career in the environment sector. The delivery programmes will offer a wide range of added benefits, unique to community forestry, including high levels of community engagement.

Councillor Kay Cutts MBE, Leader of Nottinghamshire County Council said:

“The Trees for Climate programme will support our local communities, providing them with opportunities to get involved in planting and with new areas of accessible woodland and green space to enjoy. This will also be a welcome contribution towards our post-COVID economic recovery, supporting local suppliers, tree nurseries and tree planting contractors, and making Nottinghamshire a more attractive place for people to live, work and visit.”

Working with a range of partners, including local conservation organisations such as the Sherwood Forest Trust, local authorities and private landowners, additional planting schemes will be developed later in 2021.

## **ENDS**

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### ***Notes to editor***

*Trees for Climate* will help deliver against the goals in the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan and support Nature Recovery Networks across England. It has been drawn up by England’s Community Forests and The Community Forest Trust, the national charity for community forestry and is being delivered through Cheshire West and Chester Council, the accountable body for the programme.

As well as funding the tree planting activity itself, the grant will enable each of the Community Forests to manage all aspects of the new woodland creation carefully, including community and landowner engagement as well as developing new approaches to long term woodland management, greater levels of sustainability, and finding innovative new models of woodland delivery that may help to shape the future of community forestry forever.

Extensive planning is already underway to ensure *Trees for Climate* starts to be delivered during the current tree planting season – which runs from November through to March. More than 8,000 hectares of land has already been identified as suitable for planting, over the next five planting seasons to March 2025.

There are still opportunities for landowners to get in touch with their local community forest to see if the land they have is suitable for the programme.

The new woodlands will store vast quantities of carbon playing an important role in our national mission to help the UK hit its target of net zero by 2050. The woods will also deliver natural flood management systems, improve air quality and create a more advantageous setting for economic recovery and growth. Through *Trees for Climate* more communities in towns and cities will get access to nature, proven to boost health and wellbeing and giving children living in urban areas a chance to explore the natural environment.

Greenwood Community Forest, which covers 417 square kilometres in the west of Nottinghamshire, was established in 1991, with the first tree planted at Dob Park, Hucknall. Since then, over 1300 hectares of new woodland have been created, equivalent to around 2 million trees. This figure includes over 9000 trees planted as part of the Community Tree Planting Grant scheme, which has supported 270 community group and school projects. Recently, the Trees for Learning programme has seen nearly 4,500 trees planted at 46 schools, engaging with over 4000 children.

The Community Forests that are part of *Trees for Climate* are:

- The Forest of Marston Vale
- Great Western Community Forest
- The Greenwood Community Forest
- The Mersey Forest
- Manchester City of Trees
- Forest of Avon Trust
- HEYwoods
- Thames Chase Community Forest
- The White Rose Forest
- Forest of Mercia

England's Community Forests are located in and around our largest towns and cities. Through the *Trees for Climate* programme work is also being carried out to establish new community forest programmes.

Collectively, the work of the Forests has formed the largest environmental regeneration initiative in England. For nearly thirty years they have delivered urban, economic and social regeneration, championing green infrastructure and creating high-quality environments for millions of people.

By planting trees and bringing woodlands back into use for both people and wildlife they provide new opportunities for leisure, recreation, and cultural activities, enhancing biodiversity, helping places become more resilient to climate change and improving education and healthy lives.

The programme will create new jobs and boost local economies as part of a green and inclusive recovery, it will also engage local people in the design, implementation and management of new woodlands and support wider public access to nature.