

# NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: 21 March 2022  
Issued by: Debby Morgan

Issue No: 73/22  
Version: 0.1

## **TREE PROJECT TAKING ROOT**

Since launching The Tree Project last year, Wokingham Borough Council has met several key milestones in its efforts to green the borough by planting 250,000 trees and developing a strategy for the planting and maintenance of trees. The council is also launching a new scheme, Greening the Borough Together, inviting landowners to dedicate space for woodland or hedgerow.

### **Garden Forest Scheme**

Throughout December and January, the council opened its Garden Forest Scheme, inviting residents to apply for one or more trees to plant in their own garden.

850 residents expressed an interest, with nearly 1,900 trees requested. Applicants will be contacted by the end of March, with 94% of requests approved as suitable for tree planting. The council will be contacting applicants soon.

Due to the popularity of the scheme, the council anticipates opening an additional round of applications later this year.

### **Greening the Borough Together**

Following on from the success of the Garden Forest Scheme, the council is also now opening a new planting scheme to those with land available for larger planting areas (half a hectare or more).

With funding from the Woodland Trust, the scheme will be open to individuals with their own available land, such as a paddock, woodland or farm, as well as organisations such as schools, community centres or business parks.

**- MORE -**

To learn more about Greening the Borough Together, visit [Engage Wokingham Borough](#).

## **250,000 Tree Project**

Planting of the 250,000 trees started in October 2021 and by the end of March, over 15,000 trees will have been planted.

Reaching this milestone was a collaborative effort with community groups, volunteers, town and parish councils, schools and private landowners helping to achieve this, with particular support from Freely Fruity who have co-ordinated volunteers across several planting projects.

Last week alone, trees and hedgerow have been planted at nine locations, with a new community orchard of 82 trees planted on Friday (18 March) taking place at Woosehill Meadows, led by the council and Freely Fruity and supported by Friends of the Emmbrook and Windmill Primary School and attended by councillor Gregor Murray and Wokingham Borough Council Mayor councillor Keith Baker.

Hurst Community Orchard saw 200m of new British native hedgerow being planted within their community orchard site. Our Countryside Service team helped carry out the planting and the trees and supplies have all been funded by the Woodland Trust Grant.

Visit the council's [Engage Wokingham Borough page](#) to learn more.

## **Tree Strategy**

In November 2021, the council asked for views on what should be included in a tree strategy. Feedback, touched on areas such as developer responsibilities, tree protection orders and tree maintenance.

The feedback, alongside council priorities and guidance from the Woodland Trust, will be used to create a tree strategy for the borough. The strategy is anticipated to be ready by the end of the year with further opportunities for public consultation planned before the final strategy is adopted.

**- MORE -**

Councillor Wayne Smith, executive member for planning and enforcement said: “The Tree Project is gaining real momentum, with several early key milestones now achieved.

“I want to thank everyone who has already taken part, whether lending a hand with planting or offering a space, as well as to the Woodland Trust, whose £300,000 grant has helped fund the project.”

Councillor Gregor Murray, executive member for residents, communications and emissions added: “We have ambitious aims to radically reduce our carbon emissions through our climate emergency action plan, and new tree planting plays a key role in this.

“We know some emissions are unavoidable, so are working to offset these through carbon sequestration, a process by which carbon dioxide is captured and stored through things such as trees and hedgerows. The more we plant, the better levels of carbon sequestration we can reach.”

- ENDS -

**Further information:**

1. More from Councillor Wayne Smith at [wayne.smith@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:wayne.smith@wokingham.gov.uk)
2. More from Councillor Gregor Murray at [gregor.murray@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:gregor.murray@wokingham.gov.uk)