

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**Trees for Cities**

### **A new community woodland takes root in Ealing**

**A team of over 250 volunteers plants 7,000 trees in Marnham Fields, creating a vibrant community woodland.**

**11 February 2017, London** – Ealing residents and community groups joined Trees for Cities volunteers from London and beyond in planting a new edible woodland that will benefit local people for generations to come.

Family friendly and free to all, the planting day on 11 February attracted hundreds of local and Trees for Cities volunteers. They learnt how to plant trees and discovered their importance to people and the environment. As well as bringing immediate benefits, their efforts have helped create a green legacy for future generations.

Marnham Fields spans 9 hectares across a historic landfill site. As a large green space in a built-up area, it has superb potential as a community resource.

Until now, the site has been dominated by scrubland, lacking in biodiversity and visual interest. The edible woodland will add character and beauty, create a haven for people and wildlife, and provide healthy food for foraging. It is the first major project to be delivered through a new, pioneering partnership between Trees for Cities and Ealing Council.

In total, the woodland will contain 20,000 trees, planted by over 600 volunteers. There are 34 species, chosen in consultation with residents. They include a wide variety of fruit and nut trees, plus evergreens and flowering shrubs. This mix will not only provide a plentiful harvest, but increase resistance to pests and disease, ensuring that the woodland thrives for many years. An innovative planting design promotes a rich array of habitats that will support a diverse range of species.

In addition to the 7,000 trees planted on 11 February, a further 13,000 will be planted by corporate volunteers and 250 local school children. Nine local primary schools will join Trees for Cities' educational tree-planting workshops in February. These will form part of the national Trees for Schools programme, funded by Defra and delivered in partnership with The Woodland Trust and Trees for Cities.

**David Elliott, Chief Executive of Tree for Cities, said:** "Our aim was not simply to install a new feature, but to inspire people of all ages and abilities to enjoy and care for the space – to foster a sense of ownership and pride."

Trees for Cities has been collaborating with Ealing Council since 2010, completing 10 projects that have united the local community in improving green spaces across the borough. Together these have engaged over 1,000 volunteers, with 40,000 trees planted.

Taking this work to the next level, Trees for Cities has now launched an innovative 3-year Strategic Partnership with the Council. The new alliance will focus on the social benefits of communal green spaces. This approach is already helping to strengthen relationships with and within the community, increase access for institutions like hospitals and schools, and maximise environmental benefits.

Two tree planting and greening projects will take place per year, along with a range of smaller projects, carried out with communities across Ealing, where the need and potential benefits are greatest. The green spaces created will include woodland trails, community orchards and Edible Playgrounds. The partnership will also enable the first borough-wide i-Tree Eco survey to quantify the benefits of urban trees. Trees for Cities is now looking to develop similar partnerships with other boroughs that will deliver community-oriented projects across the city.

**Cllr Bassam Mahfouz, the council's cabinet member for transport, environment and leisure said:** "Urban green spaces are so important for so many reasons. They enhance the look and atmosphere of an area and provide vital habitats for wildlife. This brilliant woodland project at Marnham Fields will no doubt provide a valuable area for local communities to enjoy.

Ealing is well known for its greenery and we boast a record number of prestigious Green Flags for eighteen of our parks and open spaces. The council will always support excellent greening projects such as this and I'd like to thank the 350 volunteers for all their hard work planting the trees for this woodland area."

**Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy, Shirley Rodrigues, said:** "It was a pleasure to join so many volunteers helping plant thousands of new trees today. The Mayor wants London to be one of the world's greenest cities and is introducing a wide range of measures to fulfil this ambition: a first step has been the commitment to provide £750,000 to plant more than 40,000 new London trees this winter, including helping create the new woodland at Marnham Fields."

As the trees in Marnham Fields grow, they will provide an attractive and inspiring space for people to play, exercise, socialise and relax. Foraging is encouraged: an interpretation board will tell visitors about the woodland's edible elements and their culinary uses. The board will also help people to learn about resident wildlife and the stag beetle loggery that will be installed in the spring. Loggeries are a feature of London's Biodiversity Action Plan, aimed at providing a much-needed habitat for this majestic insect.

The woodland at Marnham Fields is a wonderful example of how an urban space can be transformed, with and for the community.

This project has been kindly supported by Ealing Council, the Mayor's London Tree Programme 2016-17, Heathrow Community Fund's Communities for Tomorrow, Garfield Weston Foundation, Big Lottery Fund's Celebrate programme, Nineveh Charitable Trust, GoApe, Canopy & Stars and Tesco – Bags of Help.

**ENDS**

## **Notes to editors**

### **About Trees for Cities**

Trees for Cities is the only independent charity working on a global scale focussed entirely on planting urban trees, inspiring Children to grow and eat good food and providing volunteering opportunities to bring local people together. Originally established in 1993 as Trees for London, demand for our services has grown and we now plant trees in 25 cities across the UK and overseas.

Since our inception we have engaged over 70,000 people to plant 570,000 trees focussing on health, food security, environmental protection, and providing opportunities for education and learning through our Edible Playground and Urban Forest programmes.

Our vision to plant trees in cities is global. However, we know the importance of a local focus – we empower and work with local people to strengthen their community. We are a game-changing, ambitious organisation which sets the standard for urban tree planting worldwide. ([www.treesforcities.org](http://www.treesforcities.org))

### **About Ealing Council**

The council has six top priorities: making the borough prosperous, healthier, safer, cleaner, fairer and accessible.

For further information please contact Daniel Stephens on 020 8825 8990 or [stephensd@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:stephensd@ealing.gov.uk)

For up to date news and features from Ealing Council visit [www.ealingnewsextra.co.uk](http://www.ealingnewsextra.co.uk) Follow Ealing Council on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/ealingcouncil](http://www.twitter.com/ealingcouncil)

### **About Mayor of London**

The Mayor of London is committed to embarking on a major tree planting campaign. The Mayor has provided £750,000 of grant funding to support tree planting in London in 2016-17. This winter 26 projects across London will plant more than 40,000 trees. London boroughs and organisations including Trees for Cities and Groundwork London will plant trees with the help of thousands of volunteers.

The Mayor's tree planting grants have awarded £30,000 to support the Trees for Cities and Ealing project at Marnham Fields. Other projects include greening seven residential estates in Hammersmith & Fulham, a community orchard in Southwark, street trees in Brent, Croydon, Havering and Lewisham, parks in Tottenham, and woodland in Barking and Dagenham.

This is the first step in plans for a major tree-planting programme across London in partnership with businesses and boroughs, which will be announced later in 2017.

[www.london.gov.uk/WHAT-WE-DO/environment/parks-green-spaces-and-biodiversity/trees-and-woodlands/tree-planting-grants](http://www.london.gov.uk/WHAT-WE-DO/environment/parks-green-spaces-and-biodiversity/trees-and-woodlands/tree-planting-grants)

### **About Heathrow Community Fund**

Heathrow Community Fund is part of an independent grant-making charity set up by Heathrow's owners to support and strengthen local communities close to the airport. In the past two years it has donated more than £1 million through three grant programmes, funding projects which support young people, help protect the environment and support active local communities. Funds come from an annual donation from the airport, fines imposed on aircraft that breach noise limits, Heathrow colleagues who raise funds for us, and John Lewis. The fund also supports and encourages Heathrow staff to volunteer and support the local communities where they live."

More information about the fund and how to apply for grants is available on the website: [www.heathrow.com/communityfund](http://www.heathrow.com/communityfund)



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