

THE TURN OF TREES



**ORGANISATIONAL
STRATEGY REPORT**
2022 to 2025



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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



The Turn of Trees strategy has driven one of the most ambitious and impactful periods in Trees for Cities' history. Launched to accelerate urban tree planting in response to the climate and nature crises, it built on our historic legacy and aligned our work with three core pillars: Plant, Protect, and Promote trees — underpinned by a comprehensive Theory of Change. At its core, *The Turn of Trees*, tackled inequalities and championed social and environmental justice, delivering tangible, lasting benefits to communities across the UK and beyond.

We are proud to have planted over 400,000 trees in 64 urban areas during the 2022–2025 strategic period, prioritising those most in need. We've transformed urban parks, streets, estates and schools, and enabled over 44,000 children and young people in schools to forge closer connections with nature. Our work has engaged thousands of volunteers, schools, and local groups, proving that people power is central to the urban greening movement.

We've also advanced tree diversity and resilience, ensuring our urban forests can thrive in the face of climate change. Our data-led approach has improved targeting and impact, while

built through *The Turn of Trees* proves that systemic, positive change is not only possible, but already underway. Our progress reinforces our belief that greener, healthier cities are within reach.

“BEYOND THE NUMBERS, THE TURN OF TREES STRATEGY DEEPENED OUR ROOTS IN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP, TREE EQUITY, AND LONG-TERM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT. WE'VE BEGUN INTEGRATING CLIMATE-RESILIENT SPECIES, DATA-LED PLANNING TOOLS, AND INCLUSIVE PLANTING METHODS THAT ENSURE EVERY TREE WE PLANT IS A TREE THAT THRIVES.”

community engagement has made projects truly sustainable. We are proud to have received multiple awards recognising the scale and quality of our work including many of the flagship projects featured in this report.

Delivering *The Turn of Trees* hasn't been without its challenges. Urbanisation pressures, changing climate patterns, and funding constraints continue to test our resilience. Yet, the momentum

Thank you to all our supporters, volunteers and the tremendous Trees for Cities team for making this possible. Your support, whether through time, resources, or shared belief in our mission, has made all the difference. The momentum we've built is strong, and we're just getting started.

KATE SHELTON,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

IMPACT SUMMARY

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

IMPROVED TREE ESTABLISHMENT MONITORING

We strengthened processes around data collection, analysis and reporting of tree establishment rates for both Trees for Cities-led planting and partner-led planting, improving insights into planting successes and failures.



REVITALISED COASTAL TOWNS

Through Forgotten Places, we planted almost 70,000 trees across seven coastal towns in 18 months, addressing deprivation and supporting green economic recovery. In partnership with Forest Research, we co-produced a Tree Planting Guide for Local Authorities in Coastal Areas.



EXPANDED TREE CITIES OF THE WORLD

With Arbor Day Foundation and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, we grew UK participation from 19 cities in 2019 to 26 in 2024, with 27 more recognised in 2025.

SCALED COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Trees for Streets, the street tree sponsorship scheme co-founded in 2019, is now embedded with **19 local authority partners**, increasing sponsorship annually. The scheme fully transitioned to Trees for Cities ownership in 2024.



EMPOWERED YOUNG PEOPLE

Our Youth Programme's multi-session format achieved deeper mindset shifts than shorter interventions, helping participants understand urban trees' importance and develop practical skills to plant, establish, and care for them.

RECOGNITION FOR OUR WORK

We received several awards including three awards from the London Tree & Woodland Awards and the BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award from CIRIA. We were shortlisted for the Ashden Awards for our Forgotten Places programme.

These achievements were only possible thanks to our many partners and supporters, with special thanks to the Players of the People's Postcode Lottery, who awarded us the privilege of becoming a charity partner in 2023.



KEY LEARNINGS

ADDRESSING INEQUALITY

The Turn of Trees strategy revealed scope to target our work even further for tree equity:

On average **73%** of projects were in low to medium canopy cover neighbourhoods¹, but an average of **56%** reached the **40%** most deprived neighbourhoods.

¹ Approximate figure, where precise location data is available — Low to medium canopy cover = 0–20%



STRATEGIC FUNDING ALIGNMENT

Programmes like Forgotten Places underline the importance of aligning bids with our Theory of Change and working with complementary funders.

TREE ESTABLISHMENT REPORTING

Tracking tree establishment requires significant resources, including staff and partner training and site visits. Financing these programmes requires greater advocacy on the importance of this metric with funders.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

It is urgent that we develop novel and robust tree specifications to ensure the longer-term health and resilience of our trees. Collaboration with key partners to promote and improve variation of genetic tree stock will be essential.

DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION

12% of our workforce identify as ethnic minorities, which is above the national average in the environment sector but less than in the communities we serve. Staff identifying as women are well represented, including in our leadership.



THESE SUCCESSES AND LEARNINGS NOW INFORM OUR NEXT STRATEGIC CHAPTER, ENSURING WE BUILD ON STRONG FOUNDATIONS TO MAKE TREES MATTER.



TREE EQUITY FORGOTTEN PLACES

We want to ensure no community is left behind as we work to plant urban trees across the UK. Through our Forgotten Places project which ran from 2021–2023, Trees for Cities helped local authorities who may have lacked either the resources or capacity to increase their urban trees; planting in coastal towns and cities with 10% canopy cover or less.

The project targeted seven coastal and estuarine locations: Brighton, Bexhill-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth, Hull, Portsmouth, Ramsgate and Stockton-on-Tees.

“THIS PROJECT REPRESENTS A FANTASTIC STEP TOWARDS REBALANCING THE UK’S CANOPY COVER BY PRIORITISING SOME OF OUR FORGOTTEN COASTAL TOWNS AND CITIES, AND TACKLING GREEN INEQUALITY AND DEPRIVATION FOR THOSE MORE LIKELY TO FACE BARRIERS TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.”

David Elliott, former CEO at Trees for Cities

The project aimed to deliver on three DEFRA themes: nature restoration and conservation; nature-based solutions; and connecting people to nature.

With partners, we’ve planted 69,842 trees in seven coastal towns and cities on 79 sites to deliver diverse ecosystem services based on local environmental need. Most sites were in areas of high social deprivation and low canopy cover where local authorities had less capacity to deliver community tree-planting. The project therefore delivered tree-planting which would not otherwise have taken place.

Alongside Field Studies Council, local authorities and other partners, we engaged 20,118 people through community planting events, tree ID guides, training and celebration events. The project was particularly successful in engaging people with little or no experience of tree-planting. As a result, people gained new knowledge and

69,842
TREES PLANTED

20,118
PEOPLE ENGAGED

12 17
NEW JOBS CREATED TRAINEES WERE HIRED

skills about planting, protecting and identifying urban trees and have been galvanised to take action for urban trees.

The projects leave a legacy of assets for future use including the Bexhill Tree Planting Strategy in collaboration with partners at Treeconomics. To help support partners navigate the planting challenges presented by coastal environments, we published our Tree Planting in Coastal Towns and Cities Guide, developed in collaboration with Forest Research. The programme was celebrated in our Trees Breathe Life campaign, calling on the public to share the importance of trees in their coastal towns and cities.



We continue to partner with ever more authorities, both coastal and inland, to ensure trees are planted and cared for where they are needed most. Our Forgotten Places programme laid the foundations for our Tree Equity for Hartlepool project, which will be a UK-first in using the Tree Equity tool comprehensively and town-wide, to form rigorous plans for change

for residents where trees are needed most in the coastal town.

The project is running between February 2025 to May 2027, advocating for urban trees, developing strategic documents, and increasing canopy cover through tree planting with the community, to begin a journey towards a more healthy, sustainable and equitable urban forest for Hartlepool.

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

- Brighton & Hove City Council
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council
- Hull City Council
- Portsmouth City Council
- Rother District Council
- Thanet District Council
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- Field Studies Council
- Treeconomics
- Forest Research
- CPRE Sussex

And other funding partners

THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS

- Green Recovery Challenge Fund: The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and The National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Players of the People's Postcode Lottery; Postcode Green Trust
- The Queen's Green Canopy



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

RACECOURSE ESTATE



I'VE ALWAYS HAD AN AFFINITY WITH WOODS AND TREES, AND FELT VERY MUCH THAT TREES FOR CITIES HAVE GIVEN A VERY GOOD IMPULSE TO THE AREA BY PLANTING TREES AND GETTING PEOPLE INVOLVED. I FELT IT WOULD BE A SHAME FOR US NOT TO TAKE SOME POSITIVE STEPS FROM THERE TO KEEP LOOKING AFTER THE TREES. ”

Green Shoots Member

Racecourse Estate is a large social housing estate in Northolt, within the top 15% most deprived neighbourhoods in Ealing, and was the location for a multi-year estate pilot greening project.

The National Lottery Community Fund enabled this programme between 2019–2023, with the aim to “provide access to healthier, greener, more appealing public spaces for residents to connect with nature and enjoy the benefits of trees and increase biodiversity, shade and climate resilience”. We collaborated with stakeholders and community groups focusing on tree planting, co-design, play and sustainable community involvement beyond the programme timeframe.

This was Trees for Cities’ first long-term greening intervention at such scale. Starting as a pilot afforded the time and space to explore in-depth community engagement for meaningful outputs. The final

two years’ focus was to establish a “friends’ group”, a long-term desire of residents, achieved with support from the Freshwater Foundation who enable self-funding of small community organisations. The legacy of the project will not only be in tree planting and other greening interventions but importantly the constituted and self-sustaining Green Shoots group who are using their voice to challenge property development on adjacent open space.

We are now building on this experience of long-term estate greening interventions in two areas of London. In Tower Hamlets we will work with both the council and a housing association to plant trees and increase the biodiversity of estate spaces; including depaving areas to turn them from grey to green. In South London we are partnering with Peabody Trust to deliver a multi-year package of community engagement and tree planting projects for the Thamesmead area. Thamesmead is an approximately 1,300-acre site, so this large-scale project has substantial



potential to improve biodiversity in South East London, as well as providing ecosystem services, health and wellbeing benefits to residents alongside green skills and training for local people.

A significant milestone in greening Thamesmead will be the creation of the Thamesmead Urban Forest Strategy which is planned for publication in March 2026. Trees for Cities will play a leading role in community engagement, ensuring that local voices help steer the development of the strategy. Stewardship and legacy is a key focus of our partnership, and as we engage the community in both the strategy and planting we will be developing recommendations for a context-appropriate stewardship model, using our learnings from Racecourse’s Green Shoots group to ensure the community is empowered to take care of their trees into the future.

THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS

- National Lottery Community Fund
- Forestry Commission: Urban Tree Challenge Fund
- Ealing Council
- Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Mayor of London: Trees Call to Action Fund
- City Bridge Trust
- Stanley Smith UK Horticultural Trust
- All Aboard Shops LTD
- Heathrow Community Trust — Environment and Sustainability

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

- Climate Cartographics
- Freshwater Foundation

Image produced with our partner Climate Cartographics at the University of Westminster





EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TOWER HAMLETS

Trees for Cities has a long-standing relationship with Tower Hamlets Council and the borough's residents. With some of the lowest tree canopy cover in all of London, Tower Hamlets is a key target area of ours, and over the last few years we have been working across parks, estates, school grounds, and our Trees for Streets platform to deliver planting.

Since 2022, we've planted and established new trees at Victoria Park, Weavers Fields, Mile End Park, and Belgrave Open Space, to name just a few. In 2023 at

Victoria Park, one of London's most popular green spaces, we engaged 347 community and corporate volunteers and planted 103 heavy standard trees. In the same year we ran six planting days at Weavers Fields and Bethnal Green Gardens where 58 heavy standard trees took root, made possible by engaging 178 community and corporate volunteers.

During our 2022–2025 strategic period we have also delivered a total of 31 school workshops as part of our Urban Forest programme, engaging 673 students across Tower

Hamlets to educate them on the many benefits that can be derived from the urban trees in their area.

Tower Hamlets is recognised for its commitment to urban forestry and in 2023 became recognised as a Tree City of the World. Having held the status since then, we were delighted to showcase Tower Hamlets' urban forest when our partners, and Tree City of the World leaders, the Arbor Day Foundation, visited London in March 2025. Not only did this allow us to showcase urban forestry in the heart of the capital, but we also met some of the

IN THE 2022–25 STRATEGIC PERIOD...

783
TREES PLANTED
ACROSS...

22 LOCATIONS
IN TOWER HAMLETS,
GREENING PARKS,
SCHOOLS AND STREETS
THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH

2,207
VOLUNTEERS
ENGAGED TO PLANT AND
MAINTAIN OUR URBAN
TREES IN TOWER HAMLETS

residents who've sponsored trees in the borough through the Trees for Streets platform and could share how doing so has brought their neighbourhood closer together.

In 2024, we completed our project to model the effect of introducing hedgerow vegetation on localised roadside air quality across the borough of Tower Hamlets, using the Green Infrastructure for Roadside Air Quality software (GI4RAQ) developed by Dr James Levine.

As we look ahead to the coming season, we will be planting

hedgerows and standard trees for shading at Millwall Park and standards, fruit trees and hedgerow at Padstow House estate. Our work to green Tower Hamlets wouldn't have been possible without the support of the local community,

from community groups and school children to residents and businesses. Together, we've transformed many of the borough's concrete landscapes into greener, healthier areas to live, creating a greener London with — and for — Londoners.

“ THIS IS MY SECOND TREE PLANTING DAY IN TWO MONTHS! I'VE LEARNT A LOT, AND IT'S BEEN GREAT TO HAVE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO PUT WHAT I LEARNT THE FIRST TIME TO THE TEST. ”

Volunteer at our Victoria Park community planting day

THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS

- Allen and Overy Foundation
- All Aboard Charity Shops Limited
- American Express via Arbor Day Foundation
- Cayley Primary School
- Culloden Primary Academy
- FedEx via Arbor Day Foundation
- Bupa Foundation
- EastEndHomes
- Forestry Commission
- GT Gettaxi (UK) Ltd
- Greater London Authority (GLA)
- Hiscox Foundation
- Kusuma Trust UK
- M7 Real Estate Sterling
- Nineveh Trust
- Postcode Green Trust
- Royal Warrant Holders Association
- Seven Mills Primary School
- Stanley Smith (UK) Horticultural Trust
- St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School
- Tower Hamlets
- Tower Hill Trust





EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TREES FOR STREETS

Trees for Streets is the national street tree sponsorship scheme bringing together communities, councils and businesses to create greener and healthier neighbourhoods — connecting people with nature and each other.

Since its inception, over 3,000 individuals and businesses have sponsored over 5,600 trees across more than 20 UK local authorities.

Anyone can sponsor a tree in a participating town or borough and request it to be planted in a location meaningful to them. Trees for Streets also works closely with businesses and corporates, providing expert advice on choosing

planting sites that maximise the positive impact of their sponsorship within the community.

PLANTING TREES FOR A SAFER STREET

In 2023, Bridget and her neighbours living in London's Haringey Council did just that to help make their street safer.

Faced with increasing anti-social behaviour on her street due to a lot of vehicle and foot traffic, the neighbours came together to fund five new trees, boosted by another three additional trees through the help of the council.

“THE SCHEME ENCOURAGES YOU TO GO OUT THERE AND COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR NEIGHBOURS AND GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER — WHICH IS A GOOD THING IN THIS BUSY CITY WHERE PEOPLE OFTEN NEVER KNOW WHO IS LIVING NEXT DOOR!”

Bridget, Trees for Streets sponsor

CONNECTING PEOPLE, POLICY AND PURPOSE

For businesses and corporates, Trees for Streets offers a route to local, instant and measurable impact.

With consumers and stakeholders increasingly choosing brands contributing positively to climate and community efforts, partnering with Trees for Streets can enhance and strengthen corporate social responsibility programmes.

LOCAL ACTION, LASTING IMPACT

One council sharing a similar ambition is London's Haringey Council, where the community celebrated the planting of the 1,000th sponsored street tree in February 2025. This major Trees for Streets milestone supports Haringey Council's 30% canopy goal, and stands as a testament to Trees for Streets' power to unite communities, councils, and businesses in creating greener, healthier neighbourhoods across the UK.

THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS

- Green Recovery Challenge Fund: Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Natural England, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission and The National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Players of People's Postcode Lottery: Postcode Green Trust
- City of London Corporation
- Mayor of London

Capita is supporting park tree planting in the London Borough of Barnet as a way to put their environmental and social commitments into action. This sponsorship helps turn their sustainability goals into visible, local impact.

Capita's unique approach to their social value obligation as a business working with the public sector creates not only visible, tangible and collective benefits for the whole community to enjoy, but is a meaningful contribution to Barnet Council's pledge to plant 5,000 trees by 2028.





INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION CARDIFF SCHOOLS

Over the last three years, 29 school playgrounds across Cardiff have been transformed into nature filled oases; with orchards, trees for shade, wildflower mini meadows, mini woodlands, nature habitats, resources for outdoor learning such as benches and whiteboards, polytunnels, vegetable raised beds and vertical growing areas.

Teachers have been supported to take their classes outside, with staff training sessions covering food growing and managing behaviour outside the classroom. Pupils helped plant

the trees, flowers and first lot of vegetables to get them started on their growing journey.

Trees for Cities, in conjunction with partners Grow Cardiff, has also run 'Growing and Learning' events at host schools, with all current and past Trees for Cities' schools invited to participate; resulting in tens of teachers attending training and sharing learnings.

**I FEEL SAFE AND HAPPY
IN THE GARDEN. ”**
Cardiff School Pupil



**I FEEL HAPPY.
I LIKE TO LOOK
AT THE PLANTS
GROWING. ”**
Cardiff School Pupil

SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS (SUDS)

Over the autumn and winter of 2024/2025, Trees for Cities provided water management workshops to groups of pupils within six schools in Cardiff. Through surveys*, our results indicate an increase in pupil awareness across all intended topics including; water management and conservation, types of flooding and the role of SuDS in reducing surface water flooding as well as changes in weather patterns linked to climate change and ways to reduce personal water use and wastage.



The programme is developing further this year, with a focus on adapting the city's playgrounds to the changing climate, with flooding and scorching heat being more the norm. With funding from Natural Resources Wales and with support from Cardiff Council, a Feasibility Study for natural small-scale interventions to address surface flooding at five Cardiff schools was created. There are now plans to transform some of these sites so that they can better withstand flooding and bring other benefits to pupils.

*Based on a sample of two to three schools provided with baseline and endline surveys

**I'M JUST AS
EXCITED AS
THE KIDS! ”**
Cardiff School
Staff Member

THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS

- The Mohn Westlake Foundation
- All Aboard Charity Shops Limited
- Benefact Group — Movement for Good Awards
- Cardiff Council
- Generation Foundation
- Windsor Clive Primary School
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pen-y-Groes
- Guardian

THANKS TO OUR PARTNER

- Grow Cardiff



INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

YOUTH PROGRAMME

Our youth engagement projects invite young volunteers across the UK to learn about and connect with urban forests. With in-person tree planting, research on youth and nature connection and other activities, we inspire and upskill the next generation of tree advocates.

Our 2023–24 Youth Programme brought together 34 volunteers from across London to take action for the climate and help create dynamic and biodiverse green spaces for everyone to enjoy.

In 2024–25 the Programme was rolled out in Bradford and Glasgow, as well as London, seeing a further 24 young people taking part in tree planting and maintenance, tree ID walks and even the delivery of a youth woodland from co-design to completion. In partnership with GenEarth, our 2024–25 Youth Programme cohort were able to take part in tailored workshops on topics such as climate advocacy and careers in the green sector, aimed at empowering young people to create positive change in the world.

We continuously strive to improve our programmes and actively used recommendations from 2022–23’s successful programme to shape our 2023–24 and 2024–25 programmes:

2022–23 RECOMMENDATIONS

More **focused sessions on tree establishment and maintenance**

More **focused sessions on how to plan** for a tree planting session/event

More **focused sessions on how to effectively promote urban trees**, and the importance of doing this

Sign-post Youth Programme members to further opportunities at the end of the programme, to help enable further action for urban trees

2023–24 RESULTS

All eight of the endline survey respondents reported that they learned or **developed skills regarding planting/looking after urban trees** since taking part in the programme

Participants understand what it takes to establish trees in the right places in the right way, from **pre-planning the environmental logistics to the community involvement required for maintenance**¹

Participants **gained confidence in how to plant, protect and promote urban trees**²

Participants have gone on to take part in **further opportunities with Trees for Cities** such as working on marketing campaigns or becoming a volunteer planting supervisor

¹ Increased knowledge and skills was evidenced through qualitative interviews
² Based on baseline and endline surveys from participants, the average scores of confidence in planting, promoting and looking after trees increased across the board

“ AS SOMEONE WHO HAS ALWAYS BEEN PASSIONATE ABOUT PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT, I SIGNED UP TO THE YOUTH PROGRAMME IN ORDER TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TREES AND WOODLANDS, HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT IN LONDON'S GREEN SPACES, AND GAIN AN INSIGHT INTO HOW AN ENVIRONMENTAL CHARITY WORKS. DURING THE PROGRAMME, I PARTICULARLY ENJOYED MEETING LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE AND INTERACTING WITH OTHERS AT COMMUNITY PLANTING DAYS, WHICH MADE THE EVENTS BOTH EDUCATIONAL AND FUN! ”

Youth Programme Participant



“ I LIKED THAT IT WAS SPECIFICALLY FOR THE YOUTH. I UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE OF ENCOURAGING THE CURRENT GENERATION TO BE INTERESTED. SO I LIKED THAT IT WAS A SPECIFIC PROGRAMME FOR US. I FELT MORE MOTIVATED BECAUSE OF THAT. ”

Youth Programme Participant

GENERATION TREE

Our Youth Programme is primarily funded by the Trees Call to Action Fund through a London Urban Forest Partnership project led by the Greater London Authority. The fund was developed by Defra in partnership with the Forestry Commission and is being delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION TRAINEESHIPS

Through paid, hands-on traineeships in Bradford, Glasgow, and London, young people are embedded in local greening efforts. They're not observing, they're leading. From planting trees and running workshops to guiding walks and engaging neighbours, they're building skills, confidence, and community.

An important aspect of the traineeships is connection between generations. One day,

a trainee might help a child plant their first tree and the next, they're speaking with an older resident who remembers the park fifty years ago. These shared moments create something powerful: a sense of belonging and a shared investment in the future.

Our trainees in Bradford and Glasgow are an integral part of our Trees for Climate Action project; a project that's about more than planting trees; it's about

growing the next generation of environmental leaders. The idea is simple: give young people real opportunities to care for the places they live, and everyone benefits.

In London, our traineeship forms part of a partnership with the Royal Forestry Society's Forestry Roots programme, a scheme that aims to support future foresters to achieve their potential and remove career barriers through training and guidance.



HEIDE GLASGOW TRAINEE

Heide helped recruit and support Glasgow's Youth Programme, led tree walks, and launched Tree Talks, a newsletter that kept young participants engaged. Her events made green spaces more accessible for students and young volunteers and her success in the role has led to her traineeship being extended to see through the planting of a youth woodland in Glasgow.

“FACILITATING YOUTH SESSIONS IN PLACES LIKE THE BOTANICAL GARDENS SHOWED ME JUST HOW MUCH YOUNG PEOPLE BENEFIT FROM TIME IN GREEN SPACES, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO'D NEVER BEEN BEFORE.”



BOLAJI LONDON URBAN FORESTRY TRAINEE

Bolaji is a Forestry Roots Trainee and has supported multiple urban greening projects across London, gaining experience ranging from school planting and estate greening to working as a planting supervisor at large community events. Bolaji became a vital link between delivery staff and community members, developing her volunteer coordination, inclusive facilitation, and public engagement skills by helping people of all ages feel welcome and empowered at planting sessions.

“ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY IN INNER-CITY AREAS, HAS BEEN A REAL HIGHLIGHT. I OFTEN THINK ABOUT WHAT IT WOULD'VE MEANT FOR ME, AS A CHILD, TO SEE SOMEONE WHO LOOKED LIKE ME LEADING THAT KIND OF SESSION.”

KAT BRADFORD TRAINEE

Kat combined creativity with climate action. She co-established a community tree nursery now home to 7,000+ saplings and ran charcoal art workshops using site-grown willow. She also earned a digger licence, boosting her ability to support land preparation and site work across the project. Kat's work helped children, NHS service users, and older adults build connections to nature.



WHY IT MATTERS

These traineeships grow more than trees. They build leadership, trust, and real change, for communities and for the young people themselves. With continued investment, we can help more young people root themselves in purpose and possibility.

“I'VE ALREADY WORKED IN PEOPLE-FACING ROLES BUT IT WAS REALLY NICE TO WORK WITH SUCH A RANGE OF DIFFERENT PEOPLE, THAT DEFINITELY IMPROVED MY CONFIDENCE.”

NURTURING A UK NETWORK

TREE CITIES OF THE WORLD

The Tree Cities of the World programme — led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Arbor Day Foundation — recognises cities and towns across all continents that meet core standards for the care and planning of urban trees and forests.

Trees for Cities has been leading the initiative in the UK since its inception in 2019 and we were delighted that a record breaking 27 UK Tree Cities of the World were recognised in 2025. The award acknowledges that the selected cities serve as part of the solution to many of the global issues we face today and are committed to building a healthy city now and for the future.



We've spoken about our work with Tree Cities of the World and UK urban forestry at both the European and World Forums on Urban Forestry, as well as convening the first gathering of UK Tree Cities at the UK Tree City Forum in 2024. This forum shed valuable

insight into the programme from recognised cities, and we'll be using this insight to work with the Arbor Day Foundation and better tailor the award for the UK in the future — ensuring that we continue to raise standards while recognising those who go the extra mile.

2024 TREE CITIES OF THE WORLD

- Belfast
 - Birmingham
 - Bradford
 - Cardiff
 - Coventry
 - Doncaster
 - Edinburgh
 - Hull
 - Ipswich
 - Leeds
 - Middlesbrough
 - Newcastle
 - Newport
 - Plymouth
 - Sheffield
 - Solihull
 - Stockton-On-Tees
 - Telford
 - Welwyn Garden City
 - The Wirral
 - Wokingham
 - Wrexham
- And the London Boroughs of:**
- Barking and Dagenham
 - Camden
 - Islington
 - Redbridge
 - Tower Hamlets

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

- Arbor Day Foundation
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

URBAN TREE CHALLENGE FUND

Some national government grants are designed with addressing the greatest need for trees in mind, and so, in addition to accessing these grants ourselves, we also help others to access them so key partners can also fund work against this agenda.

Since 2019, the Urban Tree Challenge Fund (led by DEFRA and administered by the Forestry Commission) has supported the planting and establishment of large trees in urban areas — specifically designed to target those which need it most. With the fund having drawn to a close for new applications in 2024, we look back on our six years of work helping our partners access this funding, and the many thousands of trees planted across England with its support.

Throughout the grant's lifecycle, we've worked with over 30

partners to secure funding for the planting and establishment of over 20,000 trees totalling some £6.5million pounds in funding accessed. From Mid Devon in the Southwest right through to Newcastle in the Northeast, our UTCF work has helped partners across the country deliver planting for their communities.

All these projects contributed towards increasing tree equity and, with the grant supporting three years of tree establishment, ensures planting efforts will be successful long term. These kinds of grants will continue to be crucial in the future, and so we look forward to working with the government and partners to keep going, and to help shape future schemes.





CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERS COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

At Trees for Cities, volunteers are the backbone of our work — without them, the thousands of trees we plant season after season just wouldn't get in the ground! No matter the weather, they work tirelessly to make sure each whip and standard is well planted and mulched, ready to reach their potential as a mature tree.

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Many of our volunteers often come back, like Akshay, who has been attending events in London since 2019. "In the fight against climate change, I can still make a difference right here

in my community with something as simple as planting trees."



We often get groups attending our planting days, and in 2023 we were joined by the Ian Chan Fan Club, who also raised over £5,000 in honour of musician and nature lover Ian Chan's birthday.

VOLUNTEER SUPERVISORS

These planting days couldn't even go ahead without our fantastic Volunteer Supervisors who support us with coordinating and supervising volunteers who turn up to get stuck in.

Sam has been supporting our planting days since 2020, sharing her love for urban nature with everyone she works with.

Dave celebrates his 25th planting season with us this year! "We're creating a legacy. After 24 seasons

I can go back to woodlands that I've planted and see them getting used by urban populations."



**BETWEEN 2022-2025, OUR
URBAN FOREST PROGRAMME**

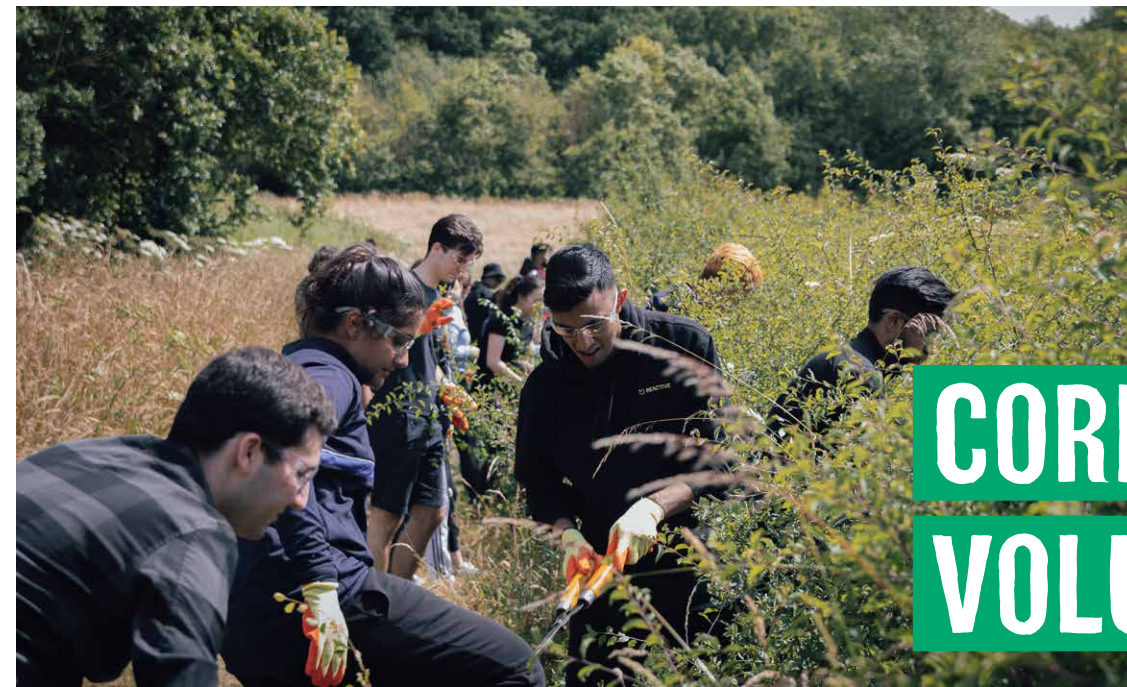
ENGAGED UP TO 32,000 PEOPLE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

We're lucky to have our incredible board of trustees, who generously give their time and expertise to guide Trees for Cities.

Our chair, Janine Hawkins, was honoured as Charity Chair of the Year at the 2023 Third Sector Awards for her thoughtful leadership and pivotal role shaping our strategic direction, growth, and impact.

We thank everyone who volunteers their time, energy and expertise to support our mission of bringing more nature to our towns and cities.



CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS

Trees for Cities offer a year-round corporate volunteering programme that provides essential support to our urban forestry project work across the UK, as well as a space for meaningful outdoor team building activities for your employees.

**DURING THE TURN OF
TREES STRATEGIC PERIOD
(2022-2025), TREES FOR CITIES
AND OUR PARTNERS HOSTED**

296

VOLUNTEERING DAYS FOR

5,536

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteering function intersects our essential activities as a charity, offering events supporting our maintenance and planting operations all year round.

As volunteers, your employees will make a meaningful and lasting impact by helping to transform urban parks, recreation grounds, or housing estates. Through hands-on work, they'll support projects that enhance local green spaces — advancing your corporate social responsibility goals by promoting social mobility and improving the environment. Activities like tree planting help increase canopy cover and combat the urban heat island effect, creating healthier, more resilient communities.

Corporate volunteering days also offer a valuable break from the office, giving colleagues the chance to collaborate in a fresh, outdoor setting. These experiences not only foster teamwork but also allow volunteers to apply their skills in new ways, connect with

**WE HAD SUCH
A GREAT DAY,
OUR HOSTS
WERE LOVELY AND
WE LEARNED A LOT —
THANK YOU SO MUCH! ”**

Wild Volunteer

nature, and return to work with renewed energy and motivation.

We would be delighted to have your support in leaving a lasting impact on local communities by getting stuck in with one of our projects!

**YOU GET TO
CONNECT WITH
PEOPLE YOU
USUALLY WOULDN'T SEE
IN YOUR DAY TO DAY, AND
THEN YOU FEEL CLOSER TO
THE COMMUNITY AND THE
COMPANY YOU WORK FOR. ”**

Bupa Volunteer

BUSINESS IMPACT

SPECIAL THANKS TO PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

Trees for Cities raises funds from a variety of sources including trusts and foundations, lotteries, corporates and members of the public as well as government initiatives, local authorities, landowners and schools.

Diversity across the income streams is important to our long-term sustainability. We are incredibly grateful for our partners and funders, as well as members of the public who have donated to Trees for Cities during this strategic period.

Your support enables Trees for Cities to make a lasting change, delivering greener, healthier cities across the UK.

CORE FUNDING

Core funding is the backbone of our work, allowing us to invest in people, systems and processes to ensure we're working efficiently and effectively. With support from the John Ellerman Foundation and Lund Trust towards staff salaries, we expanded our Urban Forest programme.

Our use of data-led mapping tools and strong partnerships with local authorities and community groups enabled us to target specific tree planting locations, particularly increasing our reach in coastal areas.

UNRESTRICTED FUNDING

Unrestricted funding enables Trees for Cities to invest in programmes that are strategically important, pilot new approaches and sometimes take risks with new ideas. We are grateful to players of People's Postcode Lottery for their important funding. Support from players of the Postcode Lottery, and awarded by Postcode Green Trust in 2023, enabled us to embed our new senior leadership team, strengthen our wider staff structure, and invest in impact-led growth aligned with our tree equity goals.



Planting at Bexhill as part of the Forgotten Places project, thanks to Players of People's Postcode Lottery

MISSION-ALIGNED FUNDING

Working together with organisations who share our mission and values enables us to make a bigger impact. Aligned by our shared goal of creating healthier cities, we are proud to deepen our partnership with Bupa Foundation. Highlights for 2024/25 include three projects to help improve woodland and green spaces across London and our Planting Healthy Air project at a Surrey school featured in their 'Healthy Cities' documentary.



Bupa employees taking part at a Victoria Park tree maintenance day

CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS

Planting a tree for every product sold turns everyday business transactions into a powerful tool for good — connecting customers and employees to meaningful causes through product-linked giving. Our partnership with Festival Republic and Live Nation UK sees donations from parking fees plant trees in the regions surrounding associated festivals. To date, the partnership has funded the planting of over 6,700 trees!

SPONSORSHIP PARTNERSHIPS

Sponsorship allows funders to dedicate their support to specific projects and programmes. With thanks to the continued support of MOJU, we have delivered yet

another Planting Healthy Air school project. We have loved engaging the whole organisation by also including corporate volunteering opportunities for MOJU colleagues in and around London.



Mayor London Sadiq Khan visiting the Planting Healthy Air project that MOJU supported

LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS

We're extremely grateful to our long-standing donors for continuing to give. This allows us to grow sustainably. Our partnership with Bloomberg has run for over 20 years. During that time, locally and internationally, tens of thousands of trees have been planted, thousands of Bloomberg employees have been engaged through volunteering, and hundreds of children have benefitted from healthier, greener school playgrounds.

Bauer Media Outdoor (formerly Clear Channel) has supported Trees for Cities since 2015, funding urban tree planting and the creation of Edible Playgrounds in schools in locations including Glasgow and Newcastle. In 2024/25, Clear Channel funded three Edible Playground projects in Sunderland and the planting of 48 mature trees across the country. This decade-long partnership has helped inspire healthier lifestyles, reconnect children with nature, and contribute to greener urban environments.

PLACE-BASED PARTNERSHIPS

Funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, the Trees for Climate Action project has engaged close to 30,000 young people in Bradford and Glasgow. Led by Trees for Cities, it connects generations through tree planting, outdoor learning, and volunteering. Helping to build intergenerational bonds, stronger communities, and a legacy of thriving urban green spaces.



Tree planting in Bradford thanks to The National Lottery Community Fund

CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Working in partnership with local and national government is vital to ensure the long-term sustainability of our programmes. In partnership with London Borough of Lewisham council's Flood Alleviation team, together we developed and delivered innovative SuDs (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) in schools. We're thrilled to have been recognised as Highly Commended in the 2024 Susdrain Awards, thanks to a submission from our partners at the London Borough of Lewisham.



Abbey Mead Primary Academy with new Sustainable Drainage System



GET IN TOUCH

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