

England's community forests

PRESS RELEASE

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Launch of national tree planting campaign welcomed by England's Community Forests

England's Community Forests have welcomed the launch of the Coalition Government's national tree planting campaign, The Big Tree Plant.

The Big Tree Plant will encourage community groups, organisations and individuals to plant and care for trees in towns, cities and residential areas across England.

The Community Forests are active local partnerships that are greening neighbourhoods in and around many of our towns and cities including Swindon, Bristol, Sheffield, Manchester and Liverpool. Established in the early 1990s, the Forests are well-placed to help deliver the new national campaign, with almost 20 years' experience working with communities to create new woodlands, plant street trees and re-connect people with their local environment.

Paul Nolan, Chair of England's Community Forests, said: "From combating climate change to bringing communities together, the benefits of planting trees for people, wildlife and the economy are far-reaching and well documented. We look forward to helping more people than ever get involved through the new campaign."

Research from one of the Forests has shown that 65% of Merseyside residents think that their local green environment has improved in the last decade thanks to the area being part of a Community Forest. It is this track record of urban tree planting that will help The Big Tree Plant to deliver its one million tree target by 2015.

Launching The Big Tree Plant, Defra Minister Jim Paice said: "The Big Tree Plant

will use the power of the Big Society to plant trees in areas where people want and need them. Using the enthusiasm of local communities and the knowledge of the groups that know most about trees and their unique benefits, we'll help create neighbourhoods that we can be proud of.”

Community groups can apply to The Big Tree Plant for funding for local projects at the campaign's website: www.direct.gov.uk/thebigtreeplant.

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Notes to editors:

England's Community Forests

The Community Forest programme was established in 1990. Each Community Forest is a partnership between local authorities and local, regional and national partners including the Forestry Commission and Natural England. The founding basis for each Forest is a government-approved Forest Plan, a 30-year vision of landscape-scale improvement. Find out more at www.communityforest.org.uk.

The Big Tree Plant

The Big Tree Plant is a new national tree planting campaign being delivered by civil society partners and conservation organisations working with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Forestry Commission. The campaign launched on the 2nd December, during National Tree Week 2010. For further information visit www.direct.gov.uk/thebigtreeplant or contact thebigtreeplant@defra.gsi.gov.uk.