

## **OVO Energy's Planting Promise Report 2021**

OVO Energy and The Conservation Volunteers









Again, I find myself looking back on an incredible and record-breaking year for our community tree planting initiative, I Dig Trees – with a further 600,000 trees distributed and subsequently planted by more than 1,250 community groups, all supporting OVO Energy’s Planting Promise.

Since 2015, we’ve reached a remarkable 2,048,000 trees. But we’re not done there; in the 2022/23 tree planting season we plan to reach 3,000,000 trees which really will be a phenomenal achievement. The Conservation Volunteers has an ambitious goal to plant 5,000,000 trees by 2025 and with OVO Energy’s fantastic support we are well on track to achieving this.

As well as helping to tackle the climate and ecological emergency, I Dig Trees improves health and wellbeing, brings communities together, and provides people with learning and skills.

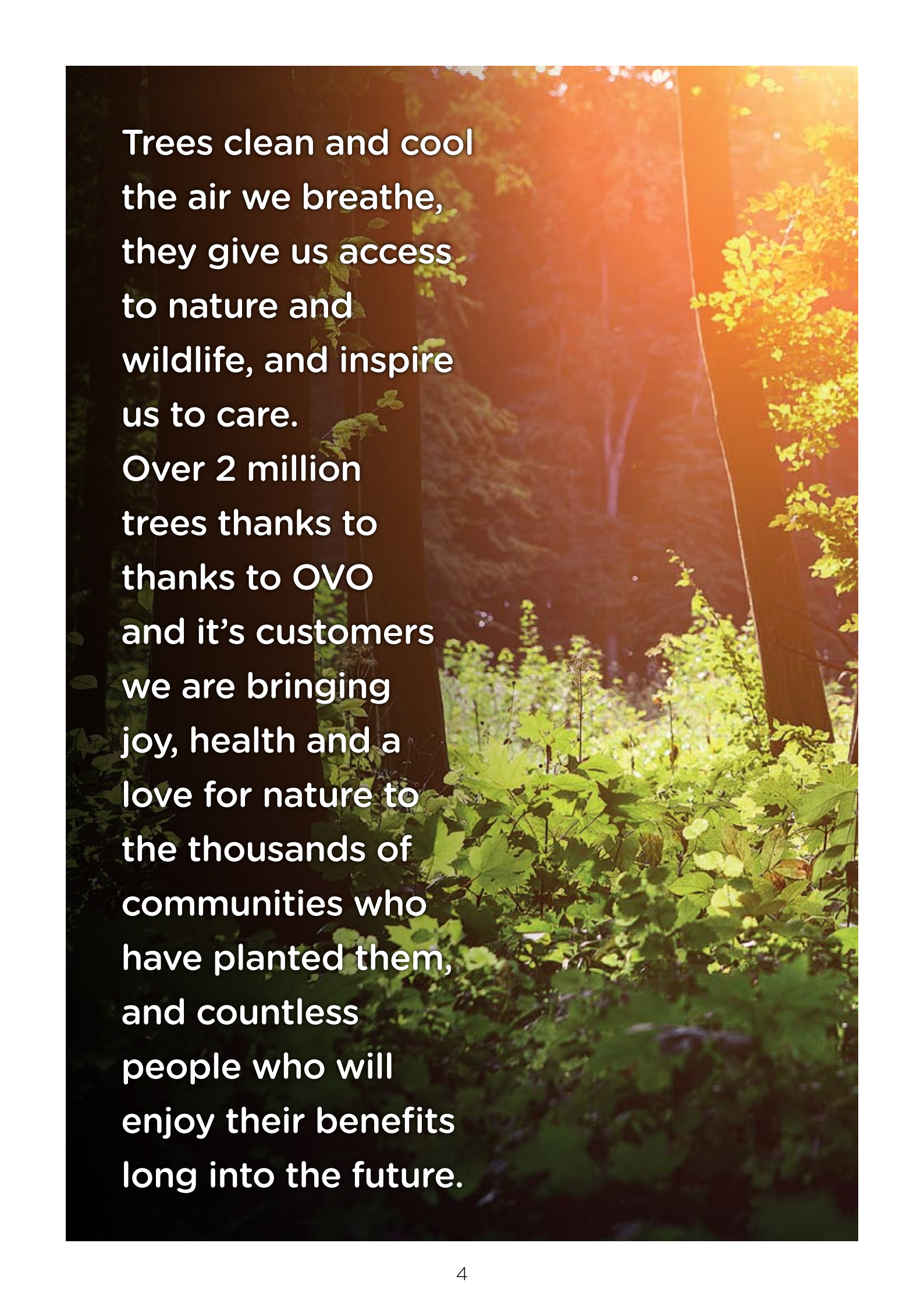
On behalf of everyone at The Conservation Volunteers, and the people and communities we work with, I’d like to say how grateful we are for your incredible support. Very many people are looking forward, with great excitement, to reaching the next milestone in the planting season ahead.

Thank you.

**Darren York**

Chief Executive

The Conservation Volunteers



Trees clean and cool  
the air we breathe,  
they give us access  
to nature and  
wildlife, and inspire  
us to care.

Over 2 million  
trees thanks to  
thanks to OVO  
and it's customers  
we are bringing  
joy, health and a  
love for nature to  
the thousands of  
communities who  
have planted them,  
and countless  
people who will  
enjoy their benefits  
long into the future.

## What we have achieved since 2015



2,048,000  
trees planted  
across the UK



4,752  
community groups  
joining in



5,210  
different sites were  
planted



17,639,965  
sq metres covered by  
newly planted trees



1,024,000  
tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>  
saved



76,032  
volunteers planting  
trees

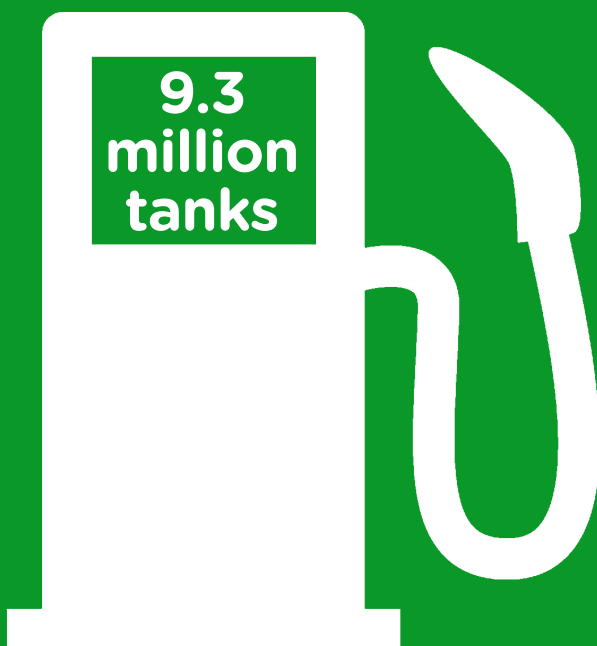


456,192  
volunteer hours  
committed



40,960  
packs of mixed  
variety trees

**Our trees will lock up  
1,024,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.  
That's the same amount that  
9.3 million tanks of petrol  
would release into  
the atmosphere.**



**Laid end to end, our trees  
would span a whopping  
1,536 km. The equivalent  
to a Whooper swan's  
migration from Iceland to  
the UK each year.**







## Regional stats for 2021

In 2021 we reached a significant milestone. Over 2 million trees planted since 2015. 600,000 trees, more than 1,200 community groups and 22,000 volunteers! That's a huge step change for The Conservation Volunteers and a significant contribution to OVO Energy's Planting Promise. Communities have loved it, we've had some wonderful. We've had some wonderful feedback from a range of diverse communities all eager to come together and do their bit for their local greenspace, neighbourhood, biodiversity and climate resilience.

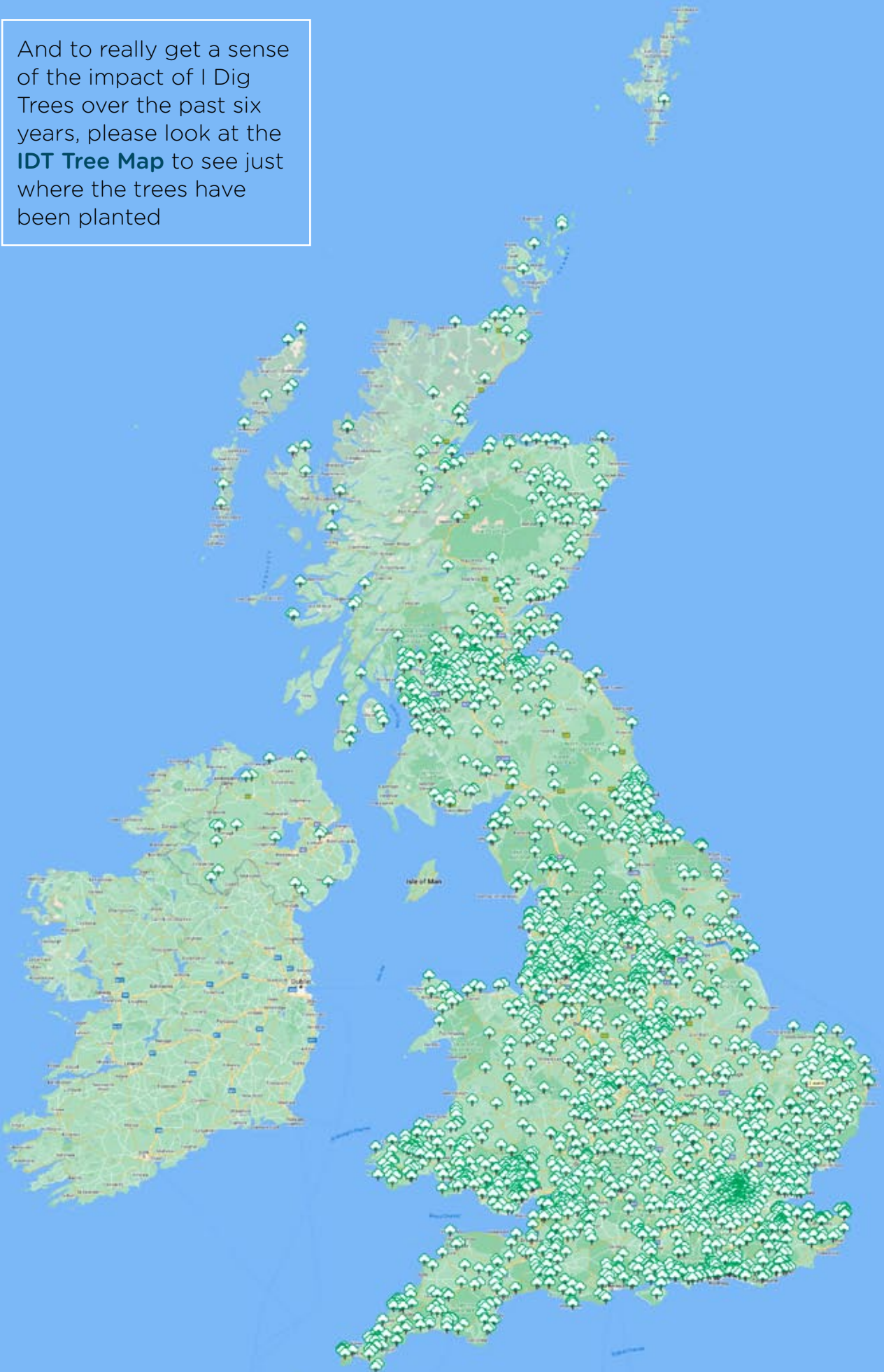
Tree planting has proved to be a joyful shared experience following the isolation of Covid lockdowns, and a meaningful action in the face of climate change. A positive and lasting impact – on the environment, and on the people taking part.

Thousands of new tree planters young and old are inspired, and we've introduced new ways to keep them engaged in the care of their trees, and the trees they have yet to plant.

The season ahead looks incredible.

Region	Trees planted
South West	66,200
South East	94,600
London Region	25,500
East Anglia	84,600
West Midlands	20,950
East Midlands	18,900
Yorkshire	30,750
North East	27,300
North West	59,950
Scotland	108,550
Wales	62,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>600,000</b>

And to really get a sense of the impact of I Dig Trees over the past six years, please look at the **IDT Tree Map** to see just where the trees have been planted





This year's feedback and thanks from the community groups, schools and local associations receiving our tree packs shows how much value communities place on free trees and what it enables them to do. A genuine respite from Covid and a sense of isolation, a meaningful contribution to wider green initiatives, and a lasting legacy – of those who planted, and of course it's all registered with the Queen's Green Canopy. Below are just a few of the comments we received and in the remainder of this report you'll find images and case studies from across the UK.

#### **Gosport & Fareham Friends of the Earth**

*"Thank you SO much for our free trees. A local Councillor said this is just the beginning!"*

#### **Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group**

*"It is a such a joyful activity that every age group and physical ability can be involved in, and a way to have conversations with parish councils about wider environmental improvements within their areas. So a huge thank you."*

#### **Willmore End Residents Association**

*"It is our aim to plant 100 – 200 new trees each year whilst nurturing the ones from earlier years by removing nearby weeds and adding fresh mulch."*

#### **Forest for Change Islington Clean Air Parents**

*"Thanks so much for the whips. I Dig Trees is such a great project. Our Biodiversity lead in London Borough of Islington was really impressed. She said, 'The hedge is fantastic! Very impressive... and the extra planting – that's great. The whole project to revive car-free space is really positive'.*

*Jo, a local volunteer said, 'It's great to do something so hands on and positive for the local environment. 'Thanks again for the whips.'"*

#### **Dark Plantation**

*"Thank you so much for donating the trees and hedging - I can always plant more if you have any spare - I've never done this before so had no idea what to expect but thankfully with your leaflet instructions and friends who have done this before it was a huge success and so joyful to be a part of it all."*

#### **Cookhill Parish Council**

*"I am very pleased to confirm that the trees received from I Dig Trees have been successfully planted. On a sunny Saturday in March 2022 Cookhill Parish Council got together with volunteers from the Cookhill Allotments to plant one hundred trees for the Jubilee. Thanks again for supporting the Parish Council's green initiative!"*

#### **Bagots Castle**

*"We spent the recent winter months creating a new Wildlife Nature Walk through wet woodland on the Bagot's Castle site. The 200 trees we received from 'I dig trees' (OVO Energy & TCV) will help revitalise this boggy habitat. Planting conditions were ideal, and the trees are already sprouting well. The rejuvenated area will hopefully attract more wildlife and be enjoyed by visitors for many years to come. Thank you for the trees!"*

#### **Hilton Spencer Academy**

*"During our Forest School sessions in January and February our children were very busy planting some trees. We hope to provide a further habitat for wildlife which will also complement our existing Sensory Garden. The children had a lovely time measuring the required distance between each tree, digging the hole and loosening the soil then planting and firming the tree in. We have planted 120 in total and look forward to seeing them grow. Thank you TCV for providing this wonderful opportunity."*

#### **Skirlaugh School PFTA**

*"Today was our special day! We have started our planting in our forest area. We are so grateful for the trees you provided."*



# South West

## Morched Bishop Playing Fields

“Yesterday a large group of parents, children and friends of the school spent a busy morning planting the trees and hedgerow plants. Many thanks for your support, it is great to think that the children who planted these trees will be able to see them grow and who knows if their children attend our school in the future, they will have a story to tell.”





# South East

## Lessness Heath Primary School

“Thank you so much for our amazing trees - we couldn't believe how many there were and they arrived in great condition!

Our Eco Warriors, who form the school's Eco Council, worked with our Forest School teacher to plant the trees just before half term. One of the children said, “This is the best thing I've ever done!” They all had a great time and did a wonderful job. The trees have been planted on the newly extended boundary of our Forest School area to provide a ‘green screen’ and more hedgerow habitats.

All of this information (and your hashtags) will be posted on the school's Facebook page this week. I am also going to register for the Queen's Green Canopy Jubilee celebrations.”





# London Region

## Little Woodcote Lane Residents

“The day went really well. We got every tree in the ground, most of them replacing trees which have either died or been felled by the council. It will be great to see those empty tree pits filled with native trees again.

It is very important to plant trees alongside main roads (like ours) as it will help to provide shade and reduce the “urban heat island” effect. We hope it will also provide more habitat and fill in gaps in the woodland corridor for local nature.

Several people stopped to chat while we were planting, and all said how pleased they were at the prospect of more native trees in the local area. It helped to unite lots of different people, was a fun and productive day. At the end we even did a litter pick, which filled a whole dustbin.

It's going to be wonderful to watch the trees grow and we hope that in 20 years time we will be able to walk past and say that we had some involvement in that project. Thanks again Sarah.”





# East Anglia

## Clare Combined Charities

“Thank you very much for supplying all the trees. We had a very successful couple of planting days. We managed to time the planting sessions in between the three storms that hit in February, with a windows of a couple hours when it wasn’t raining. We had a turnout of around 23 volunteers who turned up on Saturday 19th February, after promoting the event on our local social media sites and another 11 for a second day the following Wednesday to finish off. It was lovely to see a cross section of local residents helping, meeting each other for the first time, chatting, and many more interested in what we are doing either passing by or talking about the event subsequently. It has been very well received. We managed to plant around 700 trees the first session and completed the remaining 260 approx. in the second session.”





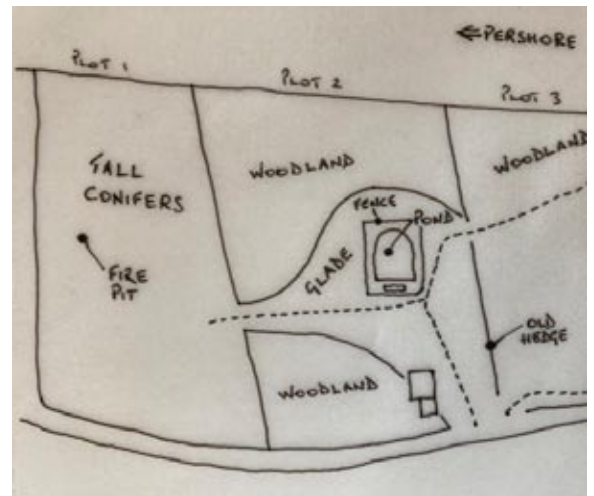
# West Midlands

## Fladbury Community Orchard & Nature Reserve

“Below are some photos of our planting last month. It’s a bit difficult to see the new saplings due to the terrain and because this year the spirals are green (which we love).

As you can see from the photos, this plot still has remnants of Christmas trees which we’re gradually removing. It sits in-between Plot 3, which we planted in December 2020, and the very tall overgrown fir trees which sit in Plot 1.

Thank you for all the help & support that TCV and Ovo Energy provide - it enables us to make a real difference.”





# East Midlands

## Jesse Gray Primary School

“On the weekend of the 27th and 28th of November Jesse Gray Primary School planted over a 1000 mixed native hedge whips courtesy of The Conservation Volunteers and OVO Energy.

The weekend started with a welcome delivery of freshly cooked cakes and cookies from a parent who couldn't be there at the weekend but wanted to support, these really fuelled the team over the next couple of days.

Saturday was freezing! The Headteacher, his press-ganged son and a parent who had access to a man with a digger arrived on site and much fun was had scraping out two sides of the field with a very skilful operator. The final sloping side of the field had to be dug out by hand - this certainly warmed us up.

The next morning was thankfully not as cold and the sunshine was glorious, the Headteacher and his now enslaved 15 year old son laid all of the plants out in varieties on the cricket pitch and awaited the volunteer army's arrival.

Shortly a steady flow of mum, dads, pupils, staff, grandparents and hopefully future pupils arrived for their planting briefing.

A lovely productive morning followed in which all of the plants were planted with great care and of course a cookie filled tea break. We were lucky enough to be visited by the Queen's Deputy Lord Lieutenant, who's badge of office fascinated the children. A quick photo op and then back to work, with the whole thing being done by 11am, a great morning's work.

The children have been interested in the new hedge and have been really careful around it at breaktimes so far. We look forward to seeing them grow and the habitat develop.”





# Yorkshire

## Growing Opportunities

“We had a very successful tree planting day at the Street on Saturday 26 March. We advertised via a FB events page (<https://www.facebook.com/events/s/tree-planting-day/302361725318681/>) and we got a mention on BBC Radio York on Friday afternoon.

It was a lovely sunny day and we had 6 adults and 4 children helping with the planting. We had allowed 5 hours to plant the 50 trees but got them all in with 2 hours to spare. We planted the oak and green beech along the edge to fill gaps in a beech hedge planted a few years ago. The rest of the trees were planted in the space at the front of the building. It was lovely to see the young ones helping with the planting. We also planted some bluebell bulbs next to some of the trees.

Please see attached pics of our event. Thank you very much for giving us this fantastic opportunity to enhance this community space near Scarborough town centre. This is quite an exposed location and the trees will provide much needed shade, shelter from the wind and hopefully attract more birds and other wildlife to the entrance area of the Street, which is accessed by many people.”





# North East

## Climate Action Middlesbrough

**Aim:** To plant 160m of mixed native hedge

**Location:** Middle Marsh

Thankfully, OVO Energy and The Conservation Volunteers continued to run their 'I Dig Trees' scheme that offers free trees to community groups for planting on open green spaces, and our application for hedge plants and standards was successful. Alongside trees previously donated to us by individuals across the Tees Valley we now had the required trees to complete the hedge.

**Results:**

Planted over 900 trees over the course of two Saturdays, starting and completing planting of the mixed native hedge and engaging 39 members of the local community in practical habitat management over the two days.

The events were organised for the dual purpose of planting a mixed native hedge that will screen the site from the A66 and provide much needed shelter and forage for animals on the site, and as a platform from which to build a Friends Of group that will help look after North Ormesby green spaces.

Participant feedback:

*"Great, liked it very much"*

*"Very important activity"*

*"I enjoyed meeting the many friendly people that volunteered"*

*"I think it is good to do activities like this frequently"*

*"Amazing, I will be there for the next one"*

*"Very fun event and a good opportunity to meet new like-minded people"*

*"I have learnt a lot about Middlesbrough's green spaces and why hedges and trees are so important for animals and birds as habitat"*





# North West

## Crosby 14th Scout Group

“We have now planted our trees in the church garden at St Nicholas Church in Blundellsands, Crosby. The Cubs and Scouts were very excited and keen to help us move to net zero carbon as well as improve the local environment. This will help towards getting their Forestry and Environmental Recycling badges. We have taken some photos of our two planting events; one was in the evening during the weekly meeting of the Crosby 14th Cubs and Scouts. In the evening event we carried on planting until it had gone dark! On the following Sunday our vicar Beth then arranged to hold part of the church service in the church garden where we finished the planting, and she blessed the trees. The Cubs and Scouts have been watering and looking after the trees. Overall, we would like to say a big thank you to TCV and OVO Energy for giving us this opportunity.”





# Scotland

## ACE Newburgh (Action for Climate & Environment Newburgh Aberdeenshire)

“On Saturday March 19th 2022, ACE (Action for Climate & Environment) Newburgh held an event to plant 400 trees we had been fortunate enough to receive from TCV. It was a beautiful day of sunshine which brought out over 100 local people of all ages to help us plant! It was a wonderful community event, and just shows the level of support locally for practical action to reduce our carbon emissions. Everyone enjoyed the day and got a sweet treat from the local vegan baker as a reward! Many thanks to TCV for the trees and great advice on how to plant and look after them.”





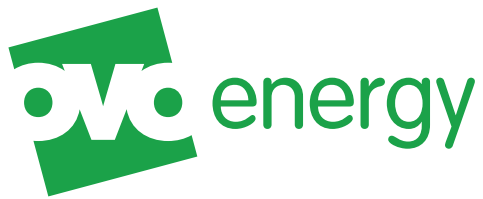
# Wales

## Parc Taff Bargoed Conservation Volunteers

“Please find attached some photos from our hedgerow planting projects we carried out with several groups and members of staff. We had younger pupils from Trelewis primary school, as well as the Countryside management students from Bridgend college. The third group who helped us complete our first hedgerow were a group of adults with additional needs from Cwm Taff people first. Park Taff Bargoed Conservation volunteers are pleased to confirm that we planted over 1800 trees in our successful hedgerow planting projects. Thank you so much for donating the tree for us to carry out our project.”







TCV looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with OVO Energy and your customers. Together we can leave a lasting, positive legacy for the UK's woodlands.

**Douglas Palarm – Director of Partnerships and Fundraising**

**Join in, feel good**