

A partnership powered by passion

OVO Energy are true tree champions. OVO have helped fund our free tree pack scheme since 2020, aiming to get 500,000 of their pledged trees in the ground whilst engaging schools and communities at the same time.

With OVO's help, over the past year we've been able to give free trees to thousands of schools and communities across the UK, achieve more for nature in our woods, and add more passionate voices to our campaigns. So much so, in fact, that OVO was nominated for the Nature-Based Project of the Year award at the BusinessGreen Leaders Awards.

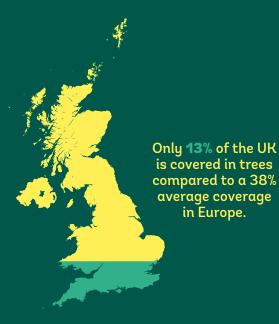


Woods and trees are essential. They can help us tackle climate change, reverse the devastating speed of nature loss, and make us happier and healthier. Despite this, just 13% of the UK is forested. To put that into perspective, the average tree cover for Europe is 38%.

We know that extraordinary change is needed to return harmony and resilience to our natural world - we also know that we can't do it alone. Our partnership with OVO Energy has been invaluable in helping us take a giant leap closer to our goal.

We believe in nature-based solutions: we believe in right tree, right place; and we believe in the benefits that tree planting can bring to communities. All of this fits incredibly well with the Woodland Trust's tree pack scheme. Going forward we want to plant over one million trees a year in the UK, and we couldn't do that without the support of the Woodland Trust. Thank you for everything that you do, and I look forward to years of partnership to come."

Alex Doorey, VP Corporate Affairs & Sustainability at OVO



Free trees for nature, people and climate

We want to make sure that everyone in the UK has chance to plant a tree. Our free tree pack scheme is crucial to this – offering trees to schools and community groups who want to make a difference for nature, people and climate, completely free of charge.

Our tree packs contain a mix of different tree species, with different packs available to suit different landscapes. Our **urban trees pack**, for example, contains low maintenance crab apple, hazel and rowan trees that suit areas with limited communal space. Our **working wood pack**, on the other hand, includes sessile oak, silver birch and grey willow – perfect for creating an educational community wood where people can learn to carve or weave willow.

Hedges support up to:



50% of our mammals



80% of our woodland birds



30% of our butterflies

They enable wildlife to move through the countryside, protect soils from wind erosion and provide shelter for people and livestock and habitats for pollinators.



SICHARD FAULKS/WTML

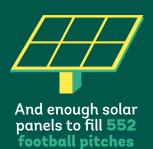


That equates to...





With the potential to mitigate 134,120 tonnes of carbon



OVO's contribution played a huge role in the number of different tree species we were able to get in the ground...



Changing lives in the community

Our free tree packs don't just help wildlife – they bring communities closer together, and closer to nature, too. Thanks to OVO, we were able to send free tree packs to 8,595 schools and 6,832 community groups.



RAF Benson Community Primary School, Oxfordshire

26 students in RAF Benson Primary School's Eco Club took part in a 'secret mission' on International Day of Forests 2022. Their goal? To create a wildlife haven by planting trees from our hedge pack along one of the school's garden areas.

Rather than jumping straight into planting, the children first learned about how the hedgerow would benefit wildlife, particularly the hawthorn shieldbug, which lives off the hawthorn trees included in the hedge pack. Each child then helped to plant a sapling and was awarded a much-deserved 'I planted a tree today' sticker. Next, all that was left to do was report back on their mission to those outside of the Eco Club – inviting around 200 pupils and school staff to see the hedge.

We decided to apply for a free tree pack to create a lovely native hedge and greatly increase the biodiversity of our garden.

For me personally, it's been a wonderful experience. It was easy to apply and I feel it is having a big impact. It has the potential to inspire both children and adults."

Adèle, Teaching Assistant.



RAF BENSON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Point Football Club and Stornaway Allotments, Outer Hebrides

To say it gets windy on Lewis and Harris in the Outer Hebrides is an understatement. Luckily, Matt Bruce from the Point & Sandwick Recreation Association had an ingenious idea – plant a series of free tree packs to shelter the Point Football Pitch and Stornaway Allotments from the elements of the rugged Western Isles.

Groups from the local community planted more than 2,000 trees around the football pitch, and 420 trees along the perimeter of the allotments over three or four sessions fuelled by hot food, tea and coffee.

The football pitch here has been used for the last 80 years. We could just do with more shelter. We're exposed on all sides and, in fact, our opening match with the Junior Rangers team felt like November, but it was the middle of July.

The trees changed the landscape, and they can certainly make you appreciate the seasons an awful lot more.

Matt Bruce, Point & Sandwick Recreation Association.



Short Heath Fields Trust, Birmingham

Estelle Murphy, Deputy Chair of Short Heath Fields Trust, reached out to us for tree packs to help replicate a natural woodland for the community of Erdington.

The group soon set about planting their 420 wildlife-friendly trees at Bleak Hill Park, filling in the gaps with British bulbs to give even more food and refuge to birds, insects and small mammals.

But this fledgling wood won't just benefit wildlife. The new trees will form part of a COVID memorial for those in the area who lost family or friends during the pandemic – giving them a peaceful place to sit and reflect.

It's absolutely invaluable, because we wouldn't have been able to afford to go out and buy these trees. So, without the Woodland Trust this just wouldn't happen. It's as simple as that."



Team OVO taking action

Our volunteers make what we do possible. More than 4,000 people across the UK give up their time to help woods and trees – a contribution equal to around £2.2 million.

We were thrilled when OVO employees decided to pitch in too, volunteering at Langley Vale Wood near Epsom, on the beautiful North Downs, on 7 June 2022.

Langley Vale Wood is one of our Centenary Woods – a living memorial to those who sacrificed so much during the First World War. As part of our work to transform the arable land here into a wildlife refuge, we've been planting trees, which inevitably means we end up with lots of tree guards to remove. With the young trees maturing past the point where grazing animals would threaten them, OVO employees got straight to work removing the tree guards – in driving rain, we might add!



"We had such a fun, invigorating day in Langley Vale amid beautiful surroundings. It was amazing to contribute to Plan Zero in a meaningful way. The team were fab and special shoutout to Heidi for letting us have lunch in her car in the pouring rain"

Tom Stainer, OVO Energy Volunteering at Langley Vale

MTW

Advocates for change

One of the most inspiring things about our partnership with OVO is their authentic passion for change. As well as helping to fund our free tree packs and giving up their time to volunteer at our woods, they spent the year working hard to raise awareness about the benefits of trees (and our campaigns) through their social media and blog channels.

Social media

May 2022 retweeted our Living Legends campaign:



November 2022 general benefits of trees awareness:



December 2022 tree packs promotion:



Parliamentary reception

We were so pleased to have OVO's support at our parliamentary reception celebrating our 50th anniversary on 20 December 2022.





OVO attended alongside parliamentary supporters, funding partners, major donors, local authority leaders, landowners and other supporters – a fantastic cross-section of the wonderful people we work with to protect woods and trees. Held on the Terrace Pavilion at the Houses of Parliament, conversation flowed about nature's importance to us all, accompanied by afternoon tea and inspiring speeches.



PETER DENCH/WTML

Thank you

OVO Energy are making a real impact on our planet, one tree at a time. Last year alone, OVO Energy funded over 500,000 of our free tree packs for schools and community groups, bringing children and communities together to plant new native trees nationwide and create new green spaces that are accessible to everyone. These green spaces will continue to flourish; providing essential habitat for wildlife, soaking up carbon, contributing to net zero, and tackling the effects of biodiversity loss and climate change while helping future generations boost their physical and mental wellbeing.

Thank you OVO Energy for joining our mission – fighting for the health of people and our planet with every tree. We look forward to developing our partnership over years to come."

Pip Greensmith, Head of Partnerships at the Woodland Trust

