



**THE  
MERSEY  
FOREST**

**redroseforest**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **ACHIEVEMENTS OF ETHICAL BUSINESS PIONEER CELEBRATED**

Leading Northwest business figures have gathered at an intimate tree planting event to salute the achievements of Lord Terry Thomas of Macclesfield CBE, former Managing Director of The Co-operative Bank and first Chair of the Northwest Regional Development Agency.

Lord Thomas and friends celebrated a career spanning 45 years at new community woodland Griffin Wood, located adjacent to the M62 midway between Liverpool and Manchester. The event was hosted by environmental regeneration initiatives The Mersey Forest and Red Rose Forest, of whom Lord Thomas is patron, with the woodland backdrop providing a fitting setting following the life peer's long and successful record of championing both business and the environment in the region.

Paul Nolan, Director of The Mersey Forest, said: "After transforming The Cooperative Bank into a cornerstone of ethical banking in the 1990s, Lord Thomas went on to successfully champion at the NWDA the vital link between the quality of our environment and the success of the regional economy.

"His vision and commitment will have a long-lasting impact on the organisations he leaves behind as well as upon the region as a whole, and we are extremely pleased to have been able to help celebrate his career in this special way."

Eight yew trees were planted to celebrate Lord Thomas's Welsh heritage as well as to symbolise his recent work in cancer research, as yew needles are used in the production of chemotherapy treatments. The plaque installed at the woodland to mark the occasion is mounted on a sandstone block sourced from Macclesfield, Lord Thomas's borough.

Lord Thomas will now step down from some of his public commitments, but will continue as patron of the Northwest's two Community Forests.

He said: "Red Rose Forest and The Mersey Forest are making great strides in regenerating the region's land, involving local people and setting the scene for investment through a greener image for our towns and cities.

"As climate change looms, the business case for improving our environment has never been stronger nor more urgent and the work of the Forests is something I will continue to support."

## **ENDS**

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### **Editors Notes:**

#### **Lord Thomas of Macclesfield CBE:**

Lord Thomas of Macclesfield CBE began his banking career at the National Provincial Bank (later the National Westminster) in 1962. He joined The Co-operative Bank in 1973 as marketing manager, rising to managing director in 1988. During his time at the Bank he spearheaded its reinvention as a market-leading ethical bank with cutting edge policies on human rights, animal welfare, armaments and the environment. He retired from banking in 1997.

He was Chairman of the East Manchester Partnership (1990 - 1996) and founding Chair of the Northwest Partnership. In his role as a champion of regional affairs Lord Thomas also helped to establish and lead a range of organisations including the Northwest Business Leadership Team, Sustainability Northwest and the National Centre for Business and Sustainability Northwest.

He was the first chair of the Northwest Regional Development Agency where he reinforced the importance of sustainable development in the Agency-led Regional Economic Strategy.

He was awarded the CBE in 1997 and was also raised to the peerage as Baron Thomas of Macclesfield, of Prestbury in the County of Cheshire.

## **The Mersey Forest:**

The Mersey Forest is the largest of England's 12 Community Forests and one of the leading environmental regeneration initiatives in the North West. The Mersey Forest is not restricted to a single site, rather it is being created across a 465 square mile area of Merseyside and North Cheshire as networks of woodlands and other habitat between and within our cities, towns and villages for - and with the involvement of - local communities.

The regeneration of The Forest is driven by The Mersey Forest Partnership, which includes the Forestry Commission, Natural England, United Utilities and nine local authorities – Cheshire, Liverpool, Ellesmere Port and Neston, Halton, Knowsley, St.Helens, Sefton, Vale Royal and Warrington. The Mersey Forest is the key driver for investment into and for the development of a green infrastructure for the North West, reclaiming over 8000 hectares of land, home to 1.6million people, over a 30-year period to bring revolutionary economic, social and environmental benefit to the region.

## **Red Rose Forest:**

Red Rose Forest is a leading environmental regeneration initiative in Greater Manchester and is one of 12 Community Forests across England. We are a partnership of Natural England, the Forestry Commission and the Metropolitan Boroughs of Bolton, Bury, Trafford and Wigan and the Cities of Manchester and Salford. Over forty years we will help to transform a large part of Greater Manchester into a greener, healthier and more satisfying place to live, work and invest. At the heart of our strategy is the involvement of a wide partnership of local communities, businesses and other partners in the environmental, social and economic regeneration of the area. United Utilities is the principle private sector supporter of the Forest and together we have worked in a close partnership over the last 10 years.