



PRESS RELEASE

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Launch of Warrington's Big Tree Plant

A four-year tree planting drive to create a greener, healthier Warrington has been launched.

Local residents and members of Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council dug in at a planting morning at the recently revamped Euclid Park to kick off Warrington's part in The Big Tree Plant, the national campaign to get more people planting and caring for trees.

Locally the campaign has set aside £255,000 over the next four years to support tree planting and get people involved in their environment across North Cheshire and Merseyside. The funding for the local area was secured by The Mersey Forest who will use the cash to help community groups and schools to brighten their neighbourhoods with new street trees, woodlands and mini-orchards – starting with hundreds of trees to be planted across Warrington this winter.

Warrington South MP David Mowat took part in the tree planting and said: "The benefits of creating a well-wooded landscape are there for all to see – from providing places to relax and stay fit and healthy, to providing habitat for wildlife, to helping fight climate change. It's excellent to see this new campaign continuing the greening of Warrington's landscape that's already been achieved as part of The Mersey Forest."

He was joined by the Mayor of Warrington, Cllr Mike Biggin, who is Warrington's member for The Mersey Forest and has been involved in the Euclid Park project from the start. He said: "Across the country The Big Tree Plant is aiming to help people plant 1 million trees by 2015. It's great to be part of launching Warrington's contribution, and what better place to do so than at Euclid Park, one of the town's most recent green success stories."

The trees planted at Euclid Park – which were co-funded by The Woodland Trust through their MOREwoods project – will add to spring's revamp of the park, and included fruit trees such as a special variety of sweet chestnuts which will produce nuts for the community to harvest.

Thanks to funding secured by The Mersey Forest and Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council from the Play Pathfinder Programme, the previously drab and uninteresting park has been brought to life this year with a 'natural play' area of logs for children to clamber upon, new buggy and bicycle-friendly paths, new trees, more colourful shrubs, new seating and a community orchard.

People interested in getting involved in The Big Tree Plant can call The Mersey Forest on 01925 816217, email mail@merseyforest.org.uk or visit the national website www.direct.gov.uk/thebigtreeplant.

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Notes to editors:

The Big Tree Plant

1. The Big Tree Plant is a national campaign that helps people and communities across England to plant more trees where they live and work. Our target is to plant 1 million additional trees by April 2015.
2. Details of the campaign can be found at: www.direct.gov.uk/thebigtreeplant
3. Details on how community groups can apply for funding can be found at: <http://thebigtreeplant.direct.gov.uk/funding>
4. The Mersey Forest funding was applied for through Community Forests Northwest, the charity that supports The Mersey Forest, Pennine Edge Forest and Red Rose Forest - the latter of which has also been offered an additional £184,000 for tree planting in Greater Manchester.
5. The campaign has the support of major bodies, environmental charities and agencies including National Forest Company, The Tree Council, Trees for Cities, the Woodland Trust, England's Community Forests, Keep Britain Tidy, BTCV, Civic Voice, Groundwork, Natural England, Mayor of London, the Department for

Communities and Local Government, the Local Government Authority and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

The Mersey Forest

The Mersey Forest is a growing network of woodlands and green spaces spread across Cheshire and Merseyside, which has been creating 'woodlands on your doorstep' for 20 years.

The Forest is one of the leading environmental regeneration initiatives in the North West. Through community and partnership working, we have planted more than 8 million trees - equivalent to five new trees for every person living within the Forest area.

The Forest helps our towns and cities adapt to climate change and has won the Brian Redhead Award for Environmental Sustainability, creates woodlands that 20% of local people visit at least once a week, and by improving the image of our towns and cities sets the scene for growth within the region's £98 billion economy.

We achieve all of this and more through our partnership of local authorities, landowners, the Forestry Commission, Natural England and businesses including United Utilities.

www.merseyforest.org.uk