



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Children muck in to plant community woodland**

Youngsters from St. Bede's Primary School helped to plant over 200 trees at Widnes Tennis Academy on 5 December, as part of a project to create a new community woodland on the land adjacent to the academy.

The children donned wellies and picked up spades in order to kickstart the development of the woodland, which is set to feature new footpaths, wildflower meadows and a willow dome.

The woodland will be a shared community space which everyone can use. The club, which already gives back to the community by providing occasional free tennis sessions, has plans to use the woodland to host Forest School sessions, which combine child-led learning about the natural world with the national curriculum.

It is hoped that the children who benefit from these natural learning sessions will also take advantage of the tennis facilities on the site with their families.

The project is being funded by Runcorn-based chemicals manufacturer INEOS ChlorVinyls through the Landfill Communities Fund, and is being coordinated by The Mersey Forest.

Janet Ward of INEOS ChlorVinyls said: "We are very pleased to be involved in this project. The benefits of natural play are well documented and we hope that everybody in the community will enjoy the woodland."

Alison Redman, a spokesperson from Widnes Tennis Academy, said: "The woodlands will be open for everybody to use, not just patrons of the tennis club."

“We hope that by creating the community woodland at Widnes Tennis Academy, we will be able to encourage families to play together, both on the tennis court and in the great outdoors.”

## **ENDS**

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### **Notes to editors:**

#### **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](http://www.merseyforest.org.uk)