



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **St Albert's Catholic Primary School creates outdoor learning zone**

Children at St Albert's Catholic Primary School in Stockbridge Village have dug in to help create a new community orchard and outdoor learning zone behind their school.

The new area, created on Knowsley Council open access land neighbouring the popular Mab Lane Community Woodland, will include wildflower meadows as well as hazel, willow and sweet chestnut trees.

The children were assisted in their tree planting efforts by students from Liverpool John Moores University who have been learning about the development of the Mab Lane woodland as part of their environmental science and geography degree in a module called 'Sustainable Natural Heritage' which explores the cultural and social aspects of conservation and how it engages the wider community.

The outdoor learning zone will be used by St Albert's pupils for regular outdoor lessons, delivered by teachers from the school who have trained as "Forest School" leaders. Research has shown that teaching children outdoors using the natural environment leads to calmer, more physically active kids. What's more, by getting children hooked on nature and inviting parents to come and be part of some of the sessions, it encourages whole families to visit the great outdoors more often.

The project was coordinated by The Mersey Forest as part of Access to Nature, a national scheme run by Natural England and funded by the Big Lottery Fund. The outdoor learning area was funded by The Big Tree Plant and Cory Environmental Trust in Britain (CETB) through the Landfill Communities Fund.

Angela Haymonds from CETB said: "Getting children learning outdoors brings so many positives – and it's great to support a project that has got the children involved right from the start."

Lorraine McEvoy, head teacher at St Albert's, said: "We're currently using Little Wood for our Forest School sessions which the children really enjoy, and we're now looking forward to having another great venue right outside the gate for even more children to benefit from."

## **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)

#### **Access to Nature**

Access to Nature is run by Natural England and is part of the Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme launched in November 2005 to help communities enjoy and improve their local environments.

Natural England manages this £28.75 million Lottery-funded programme on behalf of a consortium of twelve national environmental organisations comprising BTCV, British Waterways, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Greenspace, Groundwork UK, Land Restoration Trust, The National Trust, Natural England, RSPB, the Wildlife Trusts and the Woodland Trust.

Through this programme, it is Natural England's ambition to create opportunities for people from all backgrounds to have greater access to our natural environment and bring a lasting change to their awareness and understanding as well as improved links to the natural world, which many of us can take for granted.

Access to Nature closed to applications in May 2010 but for further information about the programme visit [www.naturalengland.org.uk/accesstonature](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/accesstonature)

### **Cory Environmental Trust in Britain (CETB)**

CETB is an Environmental Trust set up under the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) (formerly known as the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme) under the Landfill Tax Regulations 1996. Its funds are derived as a result of a tax placed on waste that is sent to landfill. CETB funds projects that bring benefit to local communities close to an active landfill site. Since the Trust's inception in 2002 it has funded over 230 community projects with a total value of £8.9 million. For more information visit [www.coryenvironmental.co.uk](http://www.coryenvironmental.co.uk) or contact Angela Haymonds on 01753 582513 or [ahaymonds@cetb.org.uk](mailto:ahaymonds@cetb.org.uk).

### **The Big Tree Plant**

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.

Details of the campaign can be found at: [www.defra.gov.uk/bigtreeplant](http://www.defra.gov.uk/bigtreeplant)

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.