

# THE MERSEY FOREST TEAM REPORT

## JANUARY 2020

### NEWS

#### COLLIERS MOSS, ST.HELENS

The second phase of the excavated pipeline / trackway project has been delayed – partly by 6 months of constant wet conditions, but it is hope it will be completed in the springtime, with reinstatement of the access track and other paths as the final phase.

Warrington Running Club's 5 mile trail-race series will once again be at Colliers Moss for 2020, taking place in winter, spring summer and autumn. The races each attract c.300 runners.

The National Forum for Biological Recording will be using the site in May as the venue for up to 40 experts to find and record species of plants and wildlife.

### WOODFUEL AND FOREST INDUSTRIES

#### WOOD ALLOTMENTS

New Wood Allotment groups are in development with several other interested landowners across the Forest, including at Ince and in Liverpool. Our existing four wood allotment projects are progressing well at Spud Wood, Sefton, Northwich Woodlands and Weaverham.

#### NORTHERN FOREST

Planting going well – Canadian planters on site

Over 100 sites in our pipeline

Planting this 19/20 season delivering a wide and varied programme focusing on parks Friends groups, Country Parks, Farm sites, new community woodland sites, providing opportunities for volunteering and schools planting events.

A healthy pipeline of schemes will carry this programme strongly into the coming years of the programme as complimentary funding is sought.

On the back of recently declared Climate Emergencies there is an upsurge of interest in tree planting as well as volunteering that is driving suggestions for new sites across the forest area.

## **WATER MANAGEMENT**

### **NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT**

The team are supporting Environment Agency backed natural flood management projects in Smithills, Bolton and Rochdale where around 40 run-off attenuation features are being deployed to alleviate flood risk above communities that are at risk. Most recently, short of 1,000 trees have been planted and 6 leaky at the source waters of the River Mersey, at New Mills to reduce flood risk for 10 properties. 40 volunteers from transition New Mills lent their support to plant. In Smithills, recent work includes delighting 150m of watercourse previously buried in a plastic pipe along with 5 log jams being monitored by Manchester and Liverpool Universities – early indications show a slowing of the flow and reduced peak water levels. In Rochdale, community flood groups, members of which have been flooded, have been given water level logger and rain gauge training as citizen science investigation into natural flood management efficacy.

### **WARMINGHAM NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT**

Emerging from its work with farmers in the Lower Dane area, a project to install 13 leaky woody dams at a member's farm in Warmingham has now been completed. The work was funded by a Water Environment Grant from the Environment Agency and will be a demonstration project for the Network, with water quality monitoring to evaluate its impact. A woodland feasibility study is to take place to create new plantings as part of The Northern Forest initiative.

### **NATURE4HEALTH**

Nature4Health is a successful project funded by The National Lottery's Community Fund to tackle health inequalities and reduce social isolation in targeted communities across The Mersey Forest. The first programme (2014–2017) provided health-promoting, enjoyable group activities in a green, therapeutic environment for just under 2,000 participants. Our latest programme started in June 2019 and lasts for two years with programmes of activity taking place in the Baltic Triangle in Liverpool, Calderstones Park and Toxteth.

## **PLAY AND EDUCATION**

### **COMMUNITY FOREST AND WOODLAND OUTREACH**

Forest Schools in the Mersey Forest is a recently approved CFWO project funded by the DOE and Defra via Natural England. We will work with 28 schools across the Forest to improve school grounds, inspire and empower teachers to deliver a supported programme of Forest School Activities. Site visits for 12 schools have taken place and plans for the sites have been

developed. Delivery of Forest School sessions should commence in early Feb. The project will be widely communicated following the launch in March.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

### URBAN GREENUP

This five-year €10 million Horizon 2020 European funded project started in June 2017. The Mersey Forest is working with colleagues at Liverpool City Council and the University of Liverpool to deliver a £3.4 million programme of interventions in the city.

Several of the interventions are in progress, with most complete by March 2020.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

### WHOLE PLACE LOW CARBON SOLUTIONS (ESIF)

The £2m ERDF-funded project is progressing with procurement taking place soon on the Bluecoat low energy lighting and smart energy management system. The green infrastructure improvements and cycleway at Tower Road and Northbank West will be delivered during the summer. Street trees within then Fabric District in Liverpool form the final element of the wider project – although procurement has taken place, negotiations are ongoing over how the contract will be managed.

## FUNDING

### BIDS RECENTLY APPROVED INCLUDE:

- Defra “Children in Nature” CFWO – £283,000 over three years
- Urban Tree Challenge Fund - £2.4 m
- Men’s health £12,800