

Local Authority Treescapes Fund case study: Pennine Lancashire

This year, the local authorities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) of the Pennine Lancashire districts re-established partnerships from 15 years ago to plant 40,000 trees.



Partners within the bid

- Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Burnley Borough Council
- Hyndburn Borough Council
- Pendle Borough Council
- Rossendale Borough Council
- Ribble Rivers Trust
- Trees for Burnley
- Prospects Foundation
- Blackburn with Darwen Food Resilience Alliance
- Blackburn with Darwen CVS

The challenge

Authorities across Pennine Lancashire are encouraging people to plant trees to increase levels of outdoor activity among children, improve mental health among adults, and help deal with the high levels of obesity found in some areas. This tree planting has the added benefit of improving publicly accessible green spaces.

Size of land

The group are planting 39,850 trees across 135 sites across Pennine Lancashire, covering 31.2 hectares. This involves 95 council-owned sites and community spaces, and 40 schools.



Grant used

The Local Authority Treescapes Fund (LATF) is a grant scheme for partnerships formed by local authorities (LAs), to drive an increase in non-woodland tree planting across our landscapes, in parklands, riparian zones, urban areas, beside roads and footpaths, small linear woodlands, copses, and shelterbelts.



Species

900 fruit trees
(499 apple & damson trees, 401 crab apple trees)

5,825 oak

3,900 alder

3,900 willow

7,800 silver birch

5,825 hawthorn

3,900 hazel

7,800 others
(including 2,975 bird cherry,
975 wild cherry, 2,700 rowan,
400 hornbeam & 750 field maples).

The solution: re-establishing partnerships across Lancashire to bring trees to local communities

This group made their LATF bid work through partnership and innovation, harnessing each partner's individual strengths, and distributing the benefit across all. When approached by the Ribble Rivers Trust, who buy tens of thousands of trees every year, nurseries went out of their way to supply 40,000 trees. Following negotiations, Burnley District Council utilised their established tree planting procurement processes to purchase, then care for, all trees for the group bid – getting good value bulk purchases done quickly.

Ellie Brown, of Ribble Rivers Trust, highlighted how the partnership approach introduced by LATF benefitted all: "Different partners have brought different things to the table – sharing the knowledge, experience, and relationships really worked."

Gwen Kinloch, of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, felt the same: "From my perspective it [LATF] did trigger something. It perhaps wouldn't have happened – and wouldn't have happened as quickly – had the [LATF] grant not been available. It is helping to inspire our next generations and start some really meaningful conversations."

Anne Hourican, of Hyndburn Borough Council, shared similar thoughts: "This revival of the joint working between the districts, the two main environmental charities, and local community organisations 'oo... We see this as the beginning of something."

Objectives

- **Generate and enhance green spaces** in 40 schools and 95 community spaces, including new 'urban micro-woodlands' and a site adjacent to a new health centre.
- **Equipping children and adult volunteers** who are new to tree planting with knowledge of how to plant and care for trees, providing outdoor exercise in the form of tree planting, and the health benefits which come with it.
- **Using innovation and experimentation** for natural woodland regeneration in two Hyndburn sites.
- **Partnership working** between local authorities, NGOs, schools, a healthcare site, and community groups to maximise the benefits of knowledge and experience exchange for all partners.



Photo credit: Ribble Rivers Trust. LATF school planting in Pennine Lancashire.

Community engagement: Schools and the NHS

LATF enabled Ribble Rivers Trust and Prospects Foundation to massively scale up their school planting this winter – from a few schools to 40. These schools helped design their bespoke planting plans, starting with site surveys with a teacher, the forest schools lead, or a child-led environment group. Through innovation from the Ribble Rivers Trust, and LATF funding, four schools with concrete school grounds planted trees in wooden planters – creating green space which had not existed before.

Following educational games about the importance and needs of trees, all planting was done by children. Some schools sat in areas with low levels

of exercise among children, particularly outdoors. By planting trees, the children accessed much needed outdoor activity, and took stewardship of their school environment. Native tree species were available, including apple and damson, and schools who opted for these planned to deliver lessons on growing food and cooking with the produce.

Hyndburn Borough Council also used LATF funds to engage the healthcare community. One new planting site neighbours an NHS healthcare centre, and the direct contact with the practices will likely lead to tailored health-related activities for the patients and NHS staff.



Gwen Kinloch and Andy Warburton planting trees with LATF

The benefits and innovation of the planting

This year, partners have said LATF allowed them to reach people who haven't volunteered before from the local community, including 72 new volunteers across four events in Rossendale alone. With various reasons for joining in – health, a love of trees, or the climate emergency – volunteers felt connected to the trees; keen to revisit the site to exercise and care for the growing saplings. Gwen Kinloch of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council pointed out the benefit this feeling of ownership has in the success of sites like this "when people feel that connection, [the trees] will be looked after."

In two sites in Hyndburn, volunteers are providing a small helping hand to nature. A recent ecology survey commissioned by Hyndburn Council recommended natural colonisation for two sites. One site (Woodnook Water, with ancient woodland and veteran oaks nearby), forms part of the main river network. Volunteer-led approaches for natural colonisation

included protecting areas with natural materials, and the ancient art of 'dead hedging' to protect saplings.

LATF tree planting is also serving to regenerate urban areas in green spaces, many of which were previously derelict or reclaimed. Plans are also in place to plant a full half-hectare ex-construction site, should the land under the rubble be suitable. This round of LATF will provide a fresh layer of enhancement to these pockets of greenery. Community engagement formed a big part of this project, and even after planting, visitors to all planting sites can access information about the project through QR codes provided on wooden posts.

Front cover photo: Eddie Maxwell and Elaine Cookson planting trees with LATF

To find out more about the LATF

please visit www.gov.uk/guidance/local-authority-treescaping-fund

