



England's community forests

PRESS RELEASE

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Forestry Commission backs England's Community Forests

Forestry Commission England has announced a new joint working agreement with the country's Community Forests, which will increase collaboration between the two parties and enhance links between national and local level activity.

As part of the rolling three-year agreement, the Forestry Commission will act as a "national champion" for the Community Forests, the local tree planting partnerships which engage people and increase woodland cover around urban centres including Manchester, Liverpool and Swindon.

In return, the Community Forests will share their long experience of neighbourhood-scale working and community engagement, and will provide links into local communities and local government.

The agreement, which will be reviewed every year, will build upon existing joint work between the organisations, which in recent years has included land reclamation, community and health projects.

Pam Warhurst, Forestry Commission Chair said:

"Over the last 20 years or so, Community Forests in England have done a fantastic job working with hundreds of thousands of local people to bring the woodland experience closer to home. I am delighted to be strengthening the Commission's relationship with them as they are a crucial part of our own work to increase community engagement and participation.

"We will be championing the importance of the Community Forests inside and outside government, and look forward to the mutual benefits this will bring."

Paul Nolan, Chair of England's Community Forests, said: "With 20 years' experience of working with local people, the Community Forests have built up a wealth of insight and evidence that we are pleased to share as part of this new agreement. As well as learning from our existing track record, looking ahead the Community Forests will also provide excellent test beds for the Forestry Commission for new ideas and ways of working."

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Notes to editors:

England's Community Forests

The Community Forest programme was established in 1990. Each Community Forest is a partnership between local authorities and local, regional and national partners including the Forestry Commission and Natural England. The founding basis for each Forest is a government-approved Forest Plan, a 30-year vision of landscape-scale improvement.

Find out more at www.communityforest.org.uk.

The Forestry Commission

The Forestry Commission is the government department responsible for protecting and expanding England's forests and woodlands and increasing their value to society and the environment. <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/England>