

DorsetCAN Case Study 5: Trees for Beaminster – How to Run a Tree Planting Campaign

On Easter Saturday, members of Beaminster Area ECO Group completed the Group's third winter campaign of tree planting by planting 18 alder and willow trees to enhance the Green at Mosterton, at the request of the Parish Council.

The ECO Group was set up in October 2018, aiming to raise awareness of climate change, loss of wildlife and abuse of the world's resources, and to encourage positive action in Beaminster and surrounding parishes. From the start, the Group saw the planting and care of trees as a way to attract interest and voluntary action.

Beaminster Town Council had secured European funding to re-design its much-used playground. The ECO Group volunteered to plant a thick hedge around two sides of the playground. In March 2019, volunteers – including students from Beaminster School on their Strike for Climate Day – planted 1,000 trees purchased by the Town Council.



At the same time, Group members in Broadwindsor worked to create a new picnic site in their village, with trees funded through a grant from Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Encouraged by these successes, the Group created a tree nursery in the grounds of Beaminster School, working with students from the School. We applied for free trees from Trees for Schools, The Conservation Volunteers, and the Woodland Trust; began to grow our own trees from acorns, nuts, cuttings and volunteer saplings; and received gifts of saplings from many residents. So, we had over 500 trees for use during the 2019-20 winter.

In that winter, we supplied a total of over 500 trees for a dozen public and private sites in Beaminster, Broadwindsor, Corscombe, East Chelborough, Halstock and Misterton. We created teams of volunteers in the first three of these parishes. We kept about 200 saplings in our tree nursery, for use next season.

The winter of 2020-21 saw further expansion. We received gifts of 500 trees from The Conservation Volunteers, plus 200 from Groves Nurseries. Combining these with our home-grown trees, we have dispersed a total of over 850 trees to sites in Beaminster, Broadwindsor, Bridport, Corscombe, East Chelborough, Morecombelake, Mosterton, Netherbury, South Perrott and Stoke Abbott.

Very encouraging has been the rise in interest in tree planting within parish councils. We supplied 200 trees and shrubs to South Perrott Parish Council, one for each person living in the parish, for planting in private gardens or public land. 50 trees went to Mosterton and Netherbury parish councils. We hope this will lead to further tree planting next season, but also to wider action by parishes in the field of climate change, care for wildlife and community resilience.

Also very striking is the evidence, in our group of parishes, of beneficial change in the management of small-holdings, whose long-established or new owners wish to enrich their land as wildlife habitats, with growing attention to wildflower meadows, ponds, wetlands, hedgerows, small copses, orchards or free-standing trees.

We work closely with Bridport Tree Planting Campaign, and are planning to offer trees to the owners of sites in our groups of parishes where – according to Tree Maps published by Dorset AONB – tree planting could strengthen ecosystems, alleviate flooding or reduce air pollution. We will welcome links to other tree planting groups in the County.

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