



# Our Impact

2024 - 2025



# Contents

Welcome to Forest of Avon

Woodland Creation

Woodland Management

Orchard Management

Nature and Health

Volunteers



# Welcome to Forest of Avon

**The Forest of Avon has been transformed over the past 30 years, bringing more trees and woodland to more people every year. Our Community Forest serves to connect people to trees in every corner of the region.**

The Forest of Avon is one of 15 Community Forests in England, covering Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. We engage local communities in planting trees, improving habitats and connecting people with nature.

With over three decades of experience in delivering community-led projects, we have created healthy, inspiring, and resilient places where both nature and people can thrive.

We follow the Forest of Avon Plan as a partnership-based strategy for the whole area, ensuring that our actions are focused where they will have the greatest impact – creating a bigger, better and more connected treescape.

This report outlines the various areas of our work and impact, including woodland creation, woodland management, and our expert-led nature and health activities for people facing barriers to accessing and enjoying their local woodlands.

Over 1.2 million trees have already been planted as part of the forest, and it continues to grow every year.

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## 1.2 million trees planted\*

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\* Total since 1992 (when the forest started) = 1,261,929 through a combination of Trees for Climate and other tree-planting projects.

With everyone's involvement, we can expand our trees and woodlands and bring more into good health – serving our communities, reducing flooding, cleaning our water and air, and providing both a home and food for wildlife.





# Woodland Creation

**As one of England's Community Forests, we offer one of the country's most competitive tree planting grants.**

Through DEFRA's 'Trees for Climate' scheme, landowners can apply for our flexible and bespoke funding. Our dedicated Tree Team work with landowners, often supporting their project from start to finish, handling planning assessments, design and logistics, and minimising paperwork to speed up the process.

The Forest of Avon delivers a wide range of tree planting projects, including woodland creation, wood pasture, agroforestry, hedgerows, orchards and natural colonisation.

In addition to our Trees for Climate team, we have spent the past four years partnering with the Local Authorities of the West of England to develop three Tree Technician roles. These roles have been instrumental in supporting various urban projects and collaborating with parish councils in areas beyond cities and towns.

## Trees for Climate\* 2024-25



**99**

Hectares



**46,430**

Trees planted



**5,379**

Hedgerow  
metres



**48**

Project sites

"I'd advise anyone that's got a bit of land and don't know what to do with it to get in touch with the Forest of Avon. If everyone could do a little bit - plant some trees for the bees and the birds and everything, and we'll see where it goes!"

**Alan Lewis**  
Landowner

Since January 2021, we've planted

**261,929  
trees**

through Trees for Climate\*

\*The above figures do not include planting at partnership sites including Great Avon Wood (co-owned with Avon Needs Trees) or Lower Chew Forest (funded by the Forest of Avon and owned by Avon Needs Trees.)



## Great Avon Wood 2024-25



# 17

Hectares



# 8,785

Trees planted



# 360

Hedgerow metres

## Lower Chew Forest 2024-25



# 39

Hectares



# 10,000

Trees planted



# 2,000

Hedgerow metres



### Case Study:

## Trees for Climate Year 5: Longbottom Farm

"Partnering with the Forest of Avon Trust made the project really straightforward. With everything else on the farm keeping us busy, their support ensured the work was properly planned and executed."

### Ben Rosedale

Landowner

Set within the beautiful Mendip Hills, Longbottom Farm is a 17.5-acre holding where nature and farming go hand in hand. Alongside producing hay and providing winter grazing for sheep, the farm is home to equine facilities, free-range chickens, and plans for developing holiday accommodation.

With support from Trees for Climate funding, they have planted 630 meters of hedgerow, along with several woodland copses, using native species such as hawthorn, alder, birch, blackthorn, hazel and holly. Additionally, they have established wood pasture across large areas of the farm. This habitat features open grassland interspersed with scattered trees and shrubs, creating a mixed environment that supports a diverse range of species and enhances the farm's biodiversity.

Looking ahead, the family's enthusiasm for nature recovery continues. They have restored 175 metres of traditional stone wall to protect local heritage and wildlife, are carrying out soil and botanical surveys to guide future grassland management, and are hoping to create three large ponds to support invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles and birds on the land.

**“This is the second event I’ve done with Joe and he is great, he’s got so much knowledge and is really passionate.”**

Woodland management volunteer



# Woodland Management



Since October 2018, we've been running a Woodland Advisory Service on behalf of the Bathscape Partnership Project.

We work with woodland owners across the Bathscape area to provide free, tailored advice and support with managing their woodlands, ensuring the long-term vitality of the woodland ecosystem as a critical part of the unique Bathscape landscape.

**“It was great to be involved in such a lovely project. I learned so much about the local wildlife and really enjoyed helping to improve the woodland for everyone to enjoy.”**

Woodland Management Volunteer

The Forest of Avon has supported woodland management across the Bathscape area since the start of the project in 2018, which aims to improve the care of key natural areas.

In 2024-25, we supported the management of 107 hectares of woodlands and engaged 30 volunteers in maintenance projects at local woodlands, including The Retreat near Upton Cheyney.

## Local woodlands 2024-25



**107** Hectares



**30** Volunteers

Case Study:

## The Retreat

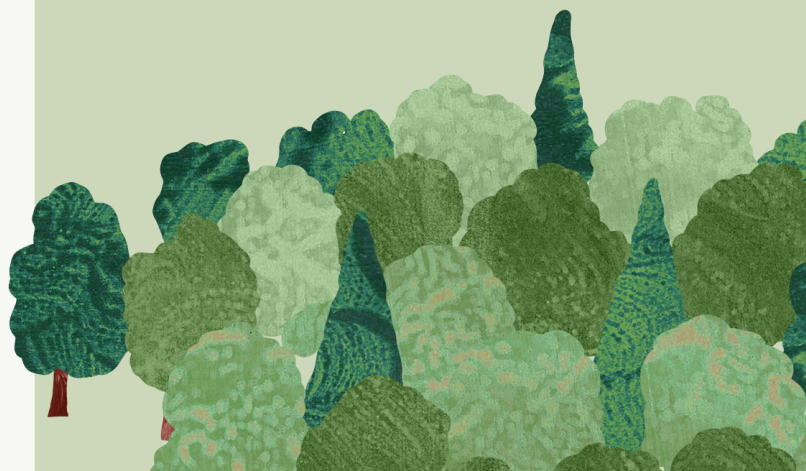
**The Retreat, our community woodland near Upton Cheyney, turned 25 last year! Here's some of the works we have carried out on site as part of its ongoing establishment.**

Alongside the annual ride mowing and regular litter collections and safety works, we've had a few exciting new things. We've hosted a number of coppice volunteering days, creating another four coupes on site, which will increase the structural diversity and incentivise colonisation by new ground flora species as yet not on site.

Further protection of our disease-resistant ash specimen has been fruitful, with the trees continuing to show near-perfect vitality. We await a mast-year to see how its progeny fares.

We've also lined our pond so it won't dry up in the summer - this will allow for better colonisation by invertebrate and amphibian species, as well as a host of new flora.

There's also the potential for an exciting new update in the pipeline for the site, so watch this space!





# Orchard Management

Orchards for Pollinators was our buzzing project that ran from October 2023 to March 2025. Supported by the West of England Combined Authority, we spruced up community orchards in Bristol, Bath and South Gloucestershire.



We worked with schools and communities to give people practical skills to care for their local fruit trees, offering free training sessions in orchards across the region.

With the guidance of our Project Officer, we brought local orchards into good management, recruited Orchard Leaders and encouraged new community groups to come together to care for and sustain our orchards.

**“It may sound silly, but I feel somewhat attached to the trees we looked after, and will be coming back regularly to check on how they’re doing.”**

Volunteer

**“This project has had such a positive impact on the management of our orchards.”**

Volunteer



**78**

Training sessions



**350**

People trained in orchard skills



**25**

Orchard sites supported



**20**

Orchard Leaders recruited



# Nature and Health

**We've been running inclusive woodland activities since 2011, designed to directly benefit people with mental and physical health needs, and their supporting carers.**

Our Nature and Health evaluation collects both qualitative and quantitative evidence to assess impact. Across all groups, participants reported measurable improvements in their health and wellbeing. These included improved mood and motivation, reduced anxiety, better sleep as a result of being active and outdoors, benefits from peer support, reduced feelings of isolation, and an increased desire to try new activities.

**"I find the group gives me a sense of purpose, I feel welcomed and the shared knowledge gives me hope."**

Participant of Forest Friday group

**We run groups for people with differing needs, including:**

- Woodland groups for people living with dementia and their family carers
- Forest Fridays for people with complex mental health needs
- Woodland Wellbeing for people with learning disabilities
- A Woodland Wellbeing pilot for people who've experienced a cardiac event

Our experienced Nature and Health team brought these projects to life. We take a person-centred approach, and our activities are delivered in public, accessible woodlands close to where participants live, so they can return and visit the spaces again in the future. We are guided by Forest School principles and the NHS's Five Ways to Wellbeing: Be Active, Notice, Connect, Keep Learning and Give Back.

In 2024-25 we worked in partnership with the NHS Clinical Health Psychology Service, Bristol Dementia Wellbeing Service, Second Step Bristol Rehabilitation Service, Milestones Trust and Best Life.



**105**

Wellbeing sessions delivered



**193**

People supported



**“It’s so valuable to meet other carers who know exactly what you’re going through and have time to talk to them.”**

Carer of someone with dementia

# Volunteers

## Volunteering

In 2024-25, 494 people volunteered with the Forest of Avon, contributing to tree planting, orchard care, woodland management and our health and wellbeing sessions. Collectively, volunteers devoted 1,976 hours to supporting our work.



494

Volunteers



1,976

Volunteer hours

## Impact of volunteering

Most attendees reported that volunteering with us positively impacted their mood. Additionally, participants felt they received clear instructions and found the volunteering sessions enjoyable.

“Really well organised, and a friendly and knowledgeable team. I felt very welcome on the day, and left with a warm glow; from the experience (and the wind!)”

Volunteer



“Enjoyable and rewarding. Would have been happy to do a full day. Great to meet some really interesting people.”

Volunteer





With thanks to all our partners, funders  
and volunteers who have helped make  
all of this possible.



**Forest of Avon**

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