



THE TREE
COUNCIL



Tree Warden Update

Spring 2011 IN THIS ISSUE

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SIGN UP TO RECEIVE THE UPDATE DIRECT

Tree Wardens can sign up to receive *Tree Warden Update* by visiting this [link](#) and completing the simple form. (<http://bit.ly/giOIA2>)

DIARY DATES

Community Action Programme

The Tree Council's Community Action Programme offers lots of opportunities for Tree Wardens to get their communities thinking about the importance of trees in their neighbourhoods and doing something about it.

The programme for 2011 kicks off with:

Tree Care Campaign

21 March to 21 September

Healthy trees for a healthy future

[Read more](#)

Walk in the Woods

Throughout May

Enjoy trees, enjoy the future

[Read more](#)

And continues with:

Seed Gathering Season

23 September to 23 October

National Tree Week

26 November to 4 December

For more details of the programme and tips on TLC for young trees, to download free [Tree Care Campaign](#) and [Walk in the Woods](#) posters for advertising

Dear Tree Warden

With local authority budgets under so much pressure, volunteers like you are more important than ever to the future of your communities' trees.

Tree Wardens are already playing an important role in the Government's new Big Tree Plant campaign and this should increase as the campaign builds over the next four years. The Big Tree Plant is the first government tree planting campaign since the 1970s when it galvanised the nation to "Plant a Tree in '73" – the genesis of The Tree Council.

Other major challenges include the continuing discussions about the future of Forestry Commission woodland and the Localism Bill that is currently going through Parliament.

We wish you all the very best for Tree Wardening throughout 2011.

Margaret Lipscombe & Jon Stokes, The Tree Council

Future of England's forests

As soon as Defra releases the terms of reference for the independent panel to consider forestry policy in England, The Tree Council will be inviting representatives of all its member organisations to a forum to discuss a "third way" approach to the future of woodland currently managed by the Forestry Commission. [Read more](#)

Suspension of forestry sales

The programme of forestry sales announced in the Spending Review in October 2010 is being temporarily suspended until extra protection for access and biodiversity is put in place, Defra has announced. Once this has happened, the sales will go ahead. [Read more](#)

local events or to [register](#) all your events throughout the year for free publicity on The Tree Council website go to

[www.treecouncil.org.uk/
community-action](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/community-action)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Tree planting grants

The deadline to apply to The Tree Council for 2011 planting grants is **31 March**.

Grants are available for school or community group projects that actively involve children under 16, with National Tree Week as the focus.

Funding is for projects between £100 and £700 and successful applicants receive up to 75 per cent towards their planting costs.

Find out more on the Tree Council website

www.treecouncil.org.uk/grants

RESOURCES

Barrier busting team

Red tape, rules and regulations can sometimes get in the way and stop people putting good ideas into action in their local communities.

The Government has set up a Barrier Busting team to help – civil servants based in Whitehall who will listen to local people's ideas and try to solve their problems, perhaps by cutting red tape, reducing the burden of regulation, or allowing for greater discretion in how local authorities spend taxpayers' money.

Find out more at

[http://barrierbusting.
communities.gov.uk/](http://barrierbusting.communities.gov.uk/)

Help with damage diagnosis

Specialist staff at Tree Council member The Arboricultural Advisory and Information Service is now offering a choice of services for people who want to find out what's causing damage to a tree – pay-as-you-go for a one-off enquiry or a faster, high-level service covering five diagnostic enquiries. Find out more at

Welsh woodlands

Meanwhile Wales' Rural Affairs Minister Elin Jones has made a firm commitment to the future public ownership of the Welsh National Forest Estate. [Read more](#)

Localism Bill unveiled

The Localism Bill, which took its first step towards becoming law in December, could have considerable bearing on Tree Wardens' activities and decisions.

The Bill has been published at

[http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-
11/localism.html](http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/localism.html).

Detail on specific measures can be found at

[www.communities.gov.uk/documents/
newsroom/word/1795339.doc](http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/newsroom/word/1795339.doc).

The Government has also published *Decentralisation and the Localism Bill: an essential guide* which can be found at:

www.communities.gov.uk/decentralisationguide.
[Read more](#)

The Big Tree Plant launched

Tree Wardens are at the very heart of four pilot projects that are helping to get the Government's new Big Tree Plant campaign rolling. Backed by funding from the Forestry Commission, The Tree Council is working with **Walsall, Manchester, Newcastle** and **Plymouth** to get urban communities engaged in planting and caring for local trees. The first project to go ahead was in Walsall on 2 December to launch the campaign - during National Tree Week. [Read more](#)

The Big Tree Plant is a five-year England-wide campaign launched by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Funding of £4 million will be available to support planting by community groups in towns, cities and residential areas throughout England that would benefit most. To apply go to <http://thebigtreeplant.direct.gov.uk/funding.html> If you already have activities planned, add these to The Tree Council website by filing in the form here: [www.treecouncil.org.uk/community-
action/suggest-event](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/community-action/suggest-event)

[www.treehelp.info/
diagnosis-of-tree-condition](http://www.treehelp.info/diagnosis-of-tree-condition)

Hedges as wood fuel

Robert Wolton of Hedgeline has carried out a study of *The economics of harvesting wood for heating fuel from hedgerows* on behalf of the Devon Hedge Group.

He concluded that for the species-rich hedge, laid in the traditional Devon style, which he used for his study, it was uneconomic to lay it purely for firewood to use in wood stoves.

However, if it was going to be laid anyway, and the firewood extracted as a by-product, it was a very cost-effective source of fuel, saving £198 on the costs of heating oil (1.7p per kWh).

Buying in the energy as oil would have cost 61 per cent more than the cost of extracting the wood from the laid hedge.

The study is available at www.biomassenergycentre.org.uk/portal/page?_pageid=75,20595&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

Hedgeline is the partnership that brings everyone interested in hedgerows together to share knowledge and ideas, encourage and inspire, and work with farmers and other land managers to conserve and enhance our hedgerow heritage.

<http://hedgeline.org.uk/>

School hedge wallchart

A free wall chart on hedges in the Developing School Grounds for Science series is available free from the British Ecological Society.

The wallchart, produced in collaboration with Hedgeline, and associated online materials provide teachers and their students with a good introduction to the importance of hedges and their plant and animal inhabitants.

To find out more or request a free copy go to www.britishecologicalsociety.

Celebrating 20 years

The 20th anniversary of the national Tree Warden Scheme came to a climax during National Tree Week.

Celebrations included a Scottish forum, hosted by **Perth & Kinross** Council and a reception at the House of Lords where **Manchester** Tree Warden Elaine Speakman gave guests a lively glimpse of what motivates her to champion her local trees. [Read more](#)

Snowy National Tree Week

Many events scheduled for National Tree Week were hit by snow, but it was not just **Walsall** Tree Wardens who were able to go ahead with some of their plans that week.

Portsmouth and Southsea Tree Wardens, for example, joined their Lord Mayor for a commemorative tree planting.

[Read more](#)

And although the freezing conditions played havoc with **Wakefield** Tree Wardens' events, it did not dent their enthusiasm. [Read more](#)

Warwick Tree Wardens fortunately had an indoor event planned for National Tree Week – their annual Christmas Party. [Read more](#)

Welcoming new networks

Reading Borough Council is the latest local authority to start a Tree Warden Network in its area. [Read more](#)

Two more new Tree Warden networks are in the offing – there are plans to launch one in **Erewash** in Derbyshire at the end of March and in **North Somerset** in mid May.

Hedgerow Harvest

Tree Wardens in South-east England are playing an important part in The Tree Council's new project – Hedgerow Harvest. [Read more](#)

[org/educational/hedge_resources/index.php](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/educational/hedge_resources/index.php)

Weed suppressant fabric

Hartlepool Borough Council's Countryside Team has experimented with using weed suppressant fabric when planting hedges as part of a Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership project. As a result, it would now recommend this option to anyone planting in hostile environments – if resources allow. Find out more at <http://teesvalleybiodiversity.org.uk/1805/experiences-of-weed-suppressant-fabric-for-hedge-planting-in-hartlepool/>

Call to improve hedge regs

A new report from Tree Council member the Council to Protect Rural England (CPRE) calls for the current Hedgerow Regulations to be improved to give local authorities more powers to protect hedgerows that are valued in their local landscape and community. The report, *England's hedgerows: don't cut them out! Making the case for better hedgerow protection*, draws on a survey that CPRE carried out in 2010. It showed that 42 per cent of local councils want hedgerow protection rules to be made simpler to help them achieve this.

Find out more at www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/landscape/hedgerows/hedgerows-what-is-the-problem



Championing local trees

Havant Tree Warden Paul Diaper was given a grilling by budding reporters from Hart Plain Junior School during a mayoral tree planting. [Read more](#)

St Albans Tree Warden Kate Bretherton has brought out a book that tells the fascinating stories behind her local trees – and it's doing wonders to heighten awareness and appreciation. [Read more](#)

Surrey Tree Wardens got a pat on the back from a local MP as examples of the 'big society' already in action. [Read more](#)

York Tree Wardens bid a snowy farewell to a senior figure in the local conservation movement with a morning's hard digging. [Read more](#)

Technical Update

Healthy trees, healthy future

March sees the start of the tree care season – an important time of year for everyone to revisit trees they have planted in the last five years and give them the TLC they need to survive. The Tree Council looks to its Tree Wardens to spearhead its Tree Care Campaign and lead by example. [Read more](#)

Tell us your news

If you have news to report, dates to flag up or ideas and information to share with fellow Tree Wardens in the summer issue of *Tree Warden Update*, please email the details to TreeWardenUpdate@treecouncil.org.uk

Or write to Tree Warden Update, The Tree Council, 71 Newcomen Street, London SE1 1YT

Tree Warden Update supplement

Spring 2011

Future of England's forests

As soon as Defra releases the terms of reference for the independent panel to consider forestry policy in England, The Tree Council will be inviting representatives of all its member organisations to a forum to discuss a "third way" approach to the future of woodland currently managed by the Forestry Commission.

The aim of the forum is to come up with balanced suggestions for the role of the Forestry Commission and of the Public Forest Estate which can be put forward to the independent panel of experts that will examine the future direction of forestry and woodland policy in England and report back to Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman in the autumn.

Mrs Spelman announced the plan for a panel at the same time as she confirmed that the public consultation on the future management of the Public Forest Estate had been halted – on 17 February.

"The panel will advise me on the future direction of forestry and woodland policy in England, on the role of the Forestry Commission, and on the role of the Public Forest Estate," she explained.

"The panel will include representatives of key environmental and access organisations alongside representatives of the forestry industry. I will shortly publish its membership and terms of reference."

The good news for Tree Wardens working in their communities to raise awareness of the importance of trees is that the reaction to the proposals in the consultation demonstrated huge grassroots support and strength of feeling for England's woods and forests.

As Mrs Spelman pointed out: "If there is one clear message from this experience, it is that people cherish their forests and woodlands and the benefits they bring."

She also went on to say: "The Forestry Commission has itself acknowledged that change is needed and will of course be fully engaged in this process going forward, as I know they have many ideas to contribute."

Suspension of forestry sales

The programme of forestry sales announced in the Spending Review in October 2010 is being temporarily suspended until extra protection for access and biodiversity is put in place, Defra has announced. Once this has happened, the sales will go ahead.

This only applies to the 15 per cent of the public forestry estate referred to in the Spending Review. It is not connected to

the discussions about the future management of the other 85 per cent of the Public Forest Estate.

The temporary suspension of the Spending Review sales programme is a technical change to ensure that the right framework and robust criteria are in place to meet the commitment from ministers to protect the public benefits of the forest estate.

Welsh woodlands

Meanwhile Wales' Rural Affairs Minister Elin Jones has made a firm commitment to the future public ownership of the Welsh National Forest Estate.

In a statement to the National Assembly on 1 February she said there would be no overall reduction in the size of the National Forest Estate – but called on Forestry Commission Wales to adopt a more flexible style of management to ensure maximum public benefit from Welsh woodlands.

The current Welsh Assembly Government-owned woodland estate is 125,000 hectares, which is six per cent of the land area of Wales, and almost 40 per cent of Welsh woodland.

Find out more at <http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/environmentandcountryside/2011/110201woodland/?lang=en>

Localism Bill unveiled

The Localism Bill, which took its first step towards becoming law in December, could have considerable bearing on Tree Wardens' activities and decisions.

The Bill has been published at <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/localism.html>

Detail on specific measures can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/documents/newsroom/word/1795339.doc

The Government has also published *Decentralisation and the Localism Bill: an essential guide*, which can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/decentralisation/guide.

The Government says that the Bill, laid before Parliament on 13 December, contains reforms that will devolve greater power and freedoms to councils and neighbourhoods, establish new rights for communities, revolutionise the planning system, and give communities control over housing decisions.

Unveiling the Bill, Communities and Local Government Secretary Eric Pickles said: "The Localism Bill will herald a ground-breaking shift in power to councils and communities overturning decades of

central government control and starting a new era of people power."

Measures in the Bill include:

- devolving new powers to councils
- establishing rights for local people and communities to challenge to take over services or bid to buy local assets such as libraries, pubs and shops
- reforming planning by replacing the Infrastructure Planning Commission with an efficient and democratically accountable system for major infrastructure, enabling regional planning to be replaced by neighbourhood plans, with communities having the power to grant planning permission if a local majority is in favour
- returning decision-making powers on housing to local councils and communities through a new Community Right to Build.

Said Housing Minister Grant Shapps: "The Bill will end top-down targets. In their place communities with the vision and drive to build more homes will be given the freedom to achieve their ambitions, and this will be backed up with powerful cash incentives for councils that allow new development in their area."

The Big Tree Plant launched

Tree Wardens are at the very heart of four pilot projects that are helping to get the Government's new Big Tree Plant campaign rolling. Backed by funding from the Forestry Commission, The Tree Council is working with **Walsall, Manchester, Newcastle** and **Plymouth** to get urban communities engaged in planting and caring for local trees.

The first project to go ahead was in Walsall on 2 December to launch the campaign – during National Tree Week.



There Tree Wardens, Junior Tree Wardens, local volunteers, the Forest of Mercia Community Payback team, Walsall Council staff and local councillors planted a three-acre community orchard that will form part of a green link into the city

centre. Because of the heavy snow that cloaked most of Britain at the time, it was one of the few planting projects to go ahead during National Tree Week.

For more information about the Walsall project go to <http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/press-and-news/item/2990-the-big-tree-plant>

In Plymouth the focus is on planting trees in streets that have lost their trees, then getting residents involved in the aftercare.

In Manchester, Tree Wardens and the council's Parks and Leisure Department are hoping to establish a new community orchard in a part of the city which is not very prosperous. The project is intended to involve existing Tree Wardens and recruit new ones.

In Newcastle The Tree Council is working with the Parks Department, local schools and Tree Wardens to replace lime trees on a main road that leads into the city centre.

There will be more on all of these projects in the next *Update*.

The Big Tree Plant is a five-year England-wide campaign launched by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The aim is to plant one million extra trees, particularly in areas that are currently deprived of greenery (www.thebigtreeplant.direct.gov.uk).

Launching the campaign, Defra Minister Jim Paice said: "The Big Tree Plant will use the power of the Big Society to plant trees in areas where people want and need them. Using the enthusiasm of local communities and the knowledge of the groups that know most about trees and their unique benefits, we'll help create neighbourhoods that we can be proud of."

The Big Tree Plant partnership brings together civil society partners and conservation organisations, such as The Tree Council and members like the Woodland Trust, Trees for Cities and Community Forests, working with Defra and the Forestry Commission.

• Funding of £4 million will be available to support planting by community groups in towns, cities and residential areas throughout England that would benefit most. To apply go to: <http://thebigtreeplant.direct.gov.uk/funding.html>

If you already have activities planned, add these to The Tree Council website by filling in the form on the Tree Council website (www.treecouncil.org.uk/community-action/suggest-event)

Celebrating 20 years

The 20th anniversary of the national Tree Warden Scheme came to a climax during National Tree Week.

Celebrations included a Scottish forum, hosted by **Perth & Kinross Council** and a



reception at the House of Lords where **Manchester** Tree Warden Elaine Speakman (pictured) gave guests a lively glimpse of what motivates her to champion her local trees

Highland gathering

To round off the UK-wide programme of 20th birthday regional Tree Warden forums, Tree Wardens from across the Highlands gathered in Perth on 9 December.

Temperatures dropped to -18 degrees centigrade in the week before and the snow was extremely heavy, so there were last-minute fears for the Scottish event. Fortunately a minor thaw occurred on the day, with temperatures rising to the balmy heights of -2 degrees, allowing Tree Wardens to get together after all.



After talks and discussion about trees in the 21st century and the role that global warming may have in future tree-planting strategies, everyone

assembled outside in 10 inches of snow for a commemorative photograph – possibly the snowiest Tree Warden event in the 20 years of the Scheme.

During lunch – a Christmas menu – the Tree Warden's role in the Big Society was the subject of much discussion.

With similar pressures on budgets north and south of the border, the future for tree

conservation will be challenging. However there has never been a more important time for volunteers such as Tree Wardens to take a major role in shaping their local communities. Scotland's Tree Wardens, like those in the rest of the UK, will be in the forefront of this discussion.

House of Lords celebrations

Tree Wardens were among the tree champions from across the country who headed for the House of Lords on 29 November to mark 20 years of The Tree Council's national Tree Warden Scheme and celebrate its National Tree Week.

They were joined by network co-ordinators, politicians and senior local council officials for a special reception hosted by Tree Council Trustee The Lord Best OBE on behalf of The Tree Council.

"Tree Wardening is the embodiment of the Government's 'Big Society' plans to engage more people in becoming 'community organisers'," says Lord Best.

"We look forward to them spearheading government campaigns like The Big Tree Plant, particularly as the Tree Warden Scheme is stronger than ever before in urban areas – in communities which especially need trees and the benefits they bring."

He adds: "Trees must continue to be planted, and we are appealing to communities throughout the UK to carry the message to heart."

As well as from Manchester Tree Warden Elaine Speakman, guests heard a few words from Tree Council Chairman Alastair Douglas and Forestry Commission Chairman Pam Warhurst.



Scrolls were presented to **East Sussex** and **Leicestershire** County Councils to thank them and their tree volunteers for inspiring The Tree Council to develop the national Tree Warden Scheme 20 years ago.

Then the event was rounded off by a slice of special birthday cake for everyone.

Snowy National Tree Week

Many events scheduled for National Tree Week were hit by snow, but it was not just **Walsall** Tree Wardens who were able to go ahead with some of their plans that week.

Portsmouth and Southsea Tree Wardens, for example, joined their Lord Mayor for a commemorative tree planting.

They and local school pupils helped the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Councillor Paula Riches, plant a red sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus* 'Spaethii') on 30 November to celebrate 20 years of the national Tree Warden Scheme.



The choice of species was in keeping with the other trees in the windswept coastal location.

The network will be launching a 'Favourite Trees' initiative which will run during 2011, and has produced *A Green Walk in Old Portsmouth* leaflet, authored by Tree Warden Jackie Baynes.

And although the freezing conditions played havoc with **Wakefield** Tree Wardens' events, it did not dent their enthusiasm.

Their planned native woodland planting at Haw Park Wood was frozen out on 28 November, but during a brief thaw they managed to plant over 400 trees, leaving about 400 more for when the ground thawed again during the Christmas period.

Another event scheduled for the end of National Tree Week had to be postponed until the end of January, but that has now been completed.

But even in the cold weather they were busy making country benches for one of their joint venture project sites at Lawns Dike, Newmillerdam, where they are working with the Friends Group.

Warwick Tree Wardens fortunately had an indoor event planned for National Tree Week – their annual Christmas Party.

This featured a talk on trees around the world, a tree quiz and the amazing after dinner event of "making a tree". Each group of Tree Wardens was supplied with plant material and encouraged to create a tree from scratch.



Much hilarity followed, but the winning tree, produced on a table captained by Steven Falk from Warwick Museum Service, was a sight to behold (see above).

Steven has also just recorded this wild pear tree – the largest in the country. It is located in mid Warwickshire, a few metres south of South

Cubbington Wood. The trunk is solid up to 1m, where it branches, and has a girth of 3.78m at 50cm.



Welcoming new networks

Reading Borough Council is the latest local authority to start a Tree Warden Network in its area.

A launch meeting on a bitterly cold evening during National Tree Week saw residents gathering from across the borough to hear about Tree Wardening from The Tree Council, Trees for Cities and Reading Borough itself.

The Reading Network is being launched as part of the borough's tree strategy and the evening was hosted by Councillor Tom Stanway, Lead Councillor for Culture & Sport.

The first tree planting and training event took place in February, when more than 25 volunteers were joined by two of Reading's MPs, several councillors and representatives from the local leisure centre and residents' association.

The next event is planned for the beginning of April.

One of the priority tasks for Reading's Tree Wardens is to identify their 'Favourite Trees' as part of the search that is taking place across the borough. These trees don't have to be the biggest or the oldest tree in the borough, but all must have an interesting stories linked to them.

Two more new Tree Warden networks are in the offing – there are plans to launch one in **Erewash** in Derbyshire at the end of March and **North Somerset** in mid May.

Hedgerow Harvest

Tree Wardens in South-east England are playing an important part in The Tree Council's new project – Hedgerow Harvest.



- **Portsmouth and Southsea** Tree Wardens (above) joined volunteers from the Stacey Centre Community Orchard Garden and Portsmouth Cycle Forum to plant 100m of fruiting hedge along a new cycle path by Hilsea Station and along the edge of Rugby Camp open space.



- **Kent** Tree Wardens and BTCV Green Gym volunteers have planted 100m of fruiting hedge at Singleton Environment Centre.



- **Gosport** Tree Wardens were among the volunteers who, with the Mayor and staff from the borough council's Countryside Section, planted more than 200m of fruiting hedge in Alver Valley (pictured above).
- **Merton and Surrey** Tree Wardens came together with other local volunteers to plant 280m of fruiting

hedge at Three Kings Piece in Mitcham (pictured below).

These demonstration hedges have been planted to inspire other groups to grow productive hedges in their own communities. The Tree Council's Hedgerow Harvest project seeks to reconnect people to the heritage of free local healthy food. It builds on



existing work being carried out as part of the Hedge Tree Campaign and will encourage local people to access food for free on their doorstep by supporting a network of hedgerow foragers across the region who can inspire their neighbours and undertake projects in their communities.

The project is encouraging people to use the free, healthy food that is there for the picking by providing advice and information on the Hedgerow Harvest website and producing a collection of recipes collected from Tree Wardens and Tree Council members to inspire more people to collect hedgerow produce.

It is also offering advice about what to grow and how to plant and maintain a productive hedge.

In the pipeline is a Hedgerow Harvest teachers' pack, with lesson plans that meet the needs of Key Stage 3 of the National Curriculum.

The Hedgerow Harvest project is supported by a Local Food Grant from The Big Lottery. To find out more go to www.hedgerowharvest.org.uk

Championing local trees

Mayor celebrates anniversary

Havant Tree Warden Paul Diaper was given a grilling by budding reporters from Hart Plain Junior School during a mayoral tree planting.

The Mayor, Councillor Yvonne Weeks, helped to mark 20 years of Tree Wardening by planting a large oak tree in the school grounds.

Paul, a Tree Warden for Waterlooville, initiated the event.



Paul and the mayor are pictured here at the tree planting, being interviewed by school

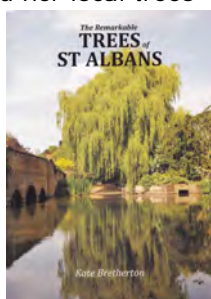
reporters Rhys Hanscombe and Ella Shaw.

Havant Tree Wardens have planted over 1,200 trees in the last year and raised £7,000 to support the network.

Remarkable trees in print

St Albans Tree Warden Kate Bretherton has brought out a book that tells the fascinating stories behind her local trees – and it's doing wonders to heighten awareness and appreciation.

Kate, one of 40 Tree Wardens in the network, published *The Remarkable Trees of St Albans* during National Tree Week. The book's 244 pages of text and photographs – by Donato Cinicolo – highlight the favourite trees flagged up by Tree Wardens and other local residents – how they came to be there, and what can be done to ensure there are remarkable trees for future generations.



She was inspired to write the book by forester Paul Arnold, who went to work in St Albans City Parks Department in the 1970s. "When he told me about the trees he had planted for their historical connections, I wanted everyone interested in St Albans now and in the future to know about them – and that is how this book came to be written," Kate explained.

"However the project has widened to include trees in our parks and streets, surrounding villages and countryside, people's specific favourites and some issues to do with trees."

Kate has had the feedback she hoped for, such as:

"It made me want to rush out and find all the trees you included."

- "There are so many trees I have passed by over the years without realising their significance to the local landscape, still less the reason they were planted or why a particular species was chosen."
- "It has made me see the city I have lived in for most of my adult life in a new way."
- "An excellent initiative and well worth emulating elsewhere."

She is taking advantage of this enthusiasm by giving talks – a further opportunity to bring trees and tree issues into focus.

The book is on sale for £14.95 from local and internet booksellers, and is available direct from Kate via her website www.walk-talk.co.uk/ at £12.00 (+£3 postage or packing unless buyers live in St Albans District, in which case it's free delivery through your door).

MP praises volunteers

Surrey Tree Wardens got a pat on the back from a local MP as examples of the 'big society' already in action.

In a letter to the *Surrey Herald*, Spelthorne MP Kwasi Kwarteng said: "The government is committed to building a 'big society'. The concept is positive: it means making Britain better by creating a wider culture of responsibility and participation in society, and redistributing power to individuals and communities.

"A series of articles in last week's *Herald & News* showed these ideas already have a tradition locally and are burgeoning. One article celebrated the national success enjoyed by the Stanwell Community Project. Others detailed the work being done by the Community First responder team and voluntary Tree Warden scheme in Spelthorne. These are great achievements and activities. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate all those involved, and encourage more residents to take part."

Tree Wardens bid farewell

York Tree Wardens bid a snowy farewell to a senior figure in the local conservation movement with a morning's hard digging.

The volunteers, who play an active part in events run by the City Council's Parks and Open Spaces Team, were helping to plant shrubs and trees in one of York's main green spaces.

Leading his last day with the Tree Wardens was Stephen Whittaker, a senior ranger with the Parks Team, who is recognised as having had a large impact on the development of the city's parks and community involvement. Tree Wardens Ian Tomlinson, Cap Fowles, Alison Rebol and



Graham Pearson are pictured helping Stephen in a snowy West Bank Park. Cap, chair of

York Tree Wardens, said: "Stephen was always a great encouragement to the Tree

Wardens and we wish him every success in the future."

Stephen, who is leaving the council after seven years to develop a career in internet marketing, said: "I've enjoyed the practical steps and securing Local Nature Reserve status for local parks.

"But I would not have been able to do this without community involvement. Our job is working with local green spaces, people and wildlife."

During his tenure the number of Local Nature Reserves increased from one to four, and the Green Flag Award – the national standard for UK parks – has been awarded to five of York's green spaces.

Technical update

Safeguard your investment

March sees the start of the tree care season – an important time of year for everyone to revisit trees they have planted in the last five years and give them the TLC they need to survive. The Tree Council looks to its Tree Wardens to spearhead its Tree Care Campaign and lead by example.

Nature plants trees in suitable conditions. Humans plant trees where they want them, often in far from ideal conditions. By itself this would not be a major concern, but difficulties associated with poor sites are often made worse by the trees being neglected and forgotten. Dead and dying trees are an expensive way (in both time and money) to try to supplement nature and improve the urban environment.

It is estimated that one in four trees planted in urban areas does not survive beyond its first few years. By contrast, rural plantings using small planting stock can show losses as low as two per cent.

Poor initial planning and planting of new sites are compounded by a lack of aftercare, especially:

- constriction of the stem by ties that are too tight and poorly maintained
- abrasion of the stem and branches by rubbing against the stake
- mechanical damage to the tree by mowers and strimmers during grass cutting
- competition with grass and weeds for water, which cannot be overcome by watering.

Any of these factors can lead to a tree having difficulties in surviving, perhaps even resulting in its death.

Neglect of newly planted trees is thus a national problem. To help tackle the issue, in 1998 The Tree Council – with its member organisations the Arboricultural Association, the International Tree

Foundation and the Tree Advice Trust – launched Trees Love Care on the third weekend of March. This has since developed into the Tree Care Campaign, spanning the period from the spring to the autumn equinox.

Time and money (both scarce commodities) have been invested in your trees. To safeguard that investment, give your trees a little TLC:

- **Tending** - some trees may need pruning
- **Loosening** - of ties
- **Clearing** - of grass and weeds

For a quick guide to TLC tasks, go to the website (<http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/community-action/tree-care-campaign>)

Community Action Programme

The Tree Council's Community Action Programme offers lots of opportunities for Tree Wardens to get their communities thinking about the importance of trees in their neighbourhoods and doing something about it.

The programme for 2011 kicks off with:

Tree Care Campaign

21 March to 21 September

Healthy trees for a healthy future

This highlights the need for better care for all trees, of all ages, in order to ensure their survival and increase the number reaching maturity. The Tree Council urges anyone who has planted trees in the past five years to revisit them and carry out a few simple tree care tasks, such as clearing weeds, mulching and checking ties.

Walk in the Woods

Throughout May

Enjoy trees, enjoy the future

May is a great time to organise walks, talks and other events that inspire people to go down to their local woods or parks or just enjoy tree-lined streets. This month-long festival is a chance for everyone to enjoy trees and woods in spring when flowers, birdsong and fresh green leaves make them particularly inviting.

And continues with:

Seed Gathering Season

23 September to 23 October

and

National Tree Week

26 November to 4 December

- For more details of the programme and tips on TLC for young trees, to download free Tree Care Campaign and Walk in the Woods posters for advertising local events or to register all your events throughout the year for publicity on The Tree Council website go to <http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/community-action>