

Wandsworth Common 150th Anniversary Tree Planting

DESCRIPTION

To celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Wandsworth Common Act in 1871, the Friends are working with the Wandsworth Common MAC (Management Advisory Committee) and Enable LC, who manage the Common, on a major new tree planting project.

There were very few trees on the Common 150 years ago. Prompted by the Act, however, planting then began in phases, resulting in the amazing array of trees and woodland we enjoy today.

After discussions with Enable, we are taking the opportunity not only to expand our future tree canopy by planting individual, semi-mature trees, but also to increase habitat and enhance biodiversity in the form of a 'mini-forest' of younger, more dense and faster growing planting. We will be planting more than the 150 trees we initially envisaged.

Tree cover is important to mitigate global warming and air pollution, particularly in urban areas, while the creation of rich biodiverse woodland in the form of 'mini-forest' has been proven beneficial in supporting habitats, particularly for some of the most at-risk species.

Planting will include most areas of the Common, allowing benefits to be enjoyed by everyone, and will include 50 semi-mature native trees – cherry, hawthorn, hornbeam, maple and oak - typically 7 years old and around 2m in height, dotted around the Common. 100m² of mini-forest will be created on the eastern (Bolingbroke) side of the Common (see map below) including 4 semi-mature, disease resistant elms and 200 saplings (these 'whips' are young, sometimes unbranched tree or shrubs, typically 30-90cm tall) to include buckthorn, blackthorn, dog rose and guelder rose, attractive to pollinators in general but in particular to several rare hairstreak butterflies we want to encourage. The 'understory' level will be completed with over 500 wildflowers and plants of 15 different species including agrimony, broom, celandine, cow parsley and foxglove. The mini-forest will connect two existing woodland strips and develop over time into a tiered canopy area that will support a variety of habitats. The plan is to further enhance the Common as a regionally important site for biodiversity and wildlife, celebrating the past by delivering a legacy for the future.

Planting will commence in w/b December 7 with the first specimen trees and will continue into next season 2021/2. The mini-forest will be planted in January 2021, in time for next summer's Wandsworth Common 150th Anniversary celebrations.

FUNDING

Enable LC has generously offered to fund £10,000 of the £15,000 projected cost of the project. We therefore need to fundraise £5,000 to allow the initial planting programme to be completed.

We are reliant on fundraising from members of our community and would like to encourage individual donations.

We very much hope to exceed our target which would allow us to continue a longer rollout of planting, beyond the anniversary year.

In keeping with the Common land we are celebrating, open to all, donations will not 'buy' or 'own' a specific tree. **Individual donations will go towards the project as a whole.** The wide diversity of planting means that every donation will help bring the project to fruition, contributing to the planting of both individual trees as well as the collection of smaller trees, shrubs, plants and flowers in the mini-forest. Contributions will be ring-fenced for use only for this project.

The successful establishment of new planting, especially adequate watering, is crucial, and we will be working hard with Enable and volunteers to ensure this happens. If you are interested in volunteering to help with aftercare, please let us know.

In order to donate, please visit the dedicated section of our website
<https://www.wandsworthcommon.org/history-blog/2020/9/16/planting-150-trees>.

All donations will be acknowledged and we are considering how best to do this. Ideas are very welcome.

Thank you for your interest in supporting this exciting project to enhance Wandsworth Common's tree canopy and biodiversity for the benefit of the community, now and in the future.

Location of the Bolingbroke 'mini-forest'

