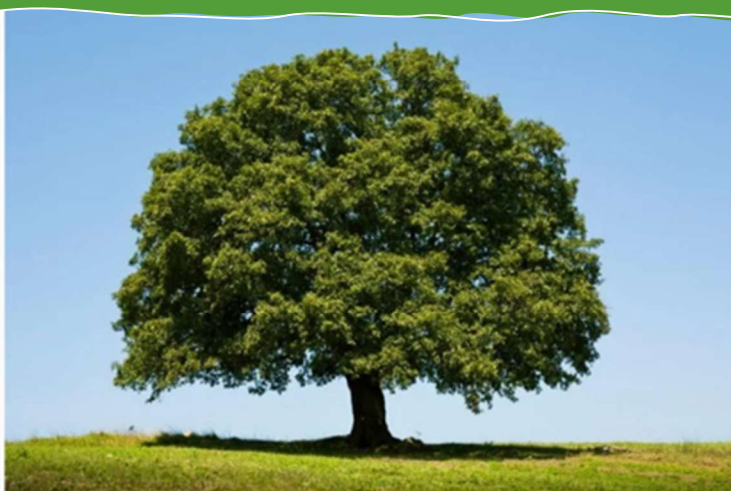




COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT



**Community Tree
Planting Project
2025**



Executive Summary

On behalf of the Newcastle Landscape and Ecology (Planning) Team, Newcastle City Council's Communities Team have undertaken a community engagement exercise about the Community Tree Planting Project (the project). The aim of the engagement was to review potential locations for new trees and understand the views of local people about the proposals.



Research proves that humans feel better when they are in the company of trees. Even in urban areas we require contact with the natural world and trees provide this and minimise the impact of the built environment by providing colour, shade, and shelter. They act as way-markers and signposts for people and provide homes for wildlife. By the careful selection of species, it is possible to provide trees that will contribute to improved air quality, reduce noise, and control run-off from heavy rain. Because of this the project was designed to plant additional trees and increase the tree canopy across key urban green spaces.



Working in partnership with England's Community Forests (ECF) and North-East Community Forest (NECF) Newcastle City Council (NCC) were able to apply for Trees for Climate funding to create small community tree spaces. This funding program is available within the Community Forest areas in England. It is part of DEFRA's Nature for Climate Fund which is a national Government scheme to support woodland creation and peat restoration in England.



The project identified schemes through existing partnerships with groups and local people who wanted to improve open spaces, and their local environment. The schemes were designed to enhance biodiversity by providing natural habits for wildlife and to help promote physical outdoor activity such as walking and playing.



On larger sites, it was proposed that trees would be planted in small groups and the grass mowing regime reduced to an annual cut with the longer-term aspiration to establish more diverse wildflower meadows in our park and recreation areas.

From our engagement we can conclude there is support for the planting of additional trees in neighbourhoods and that there were opportunities to extend the tree planting within the identified sites.

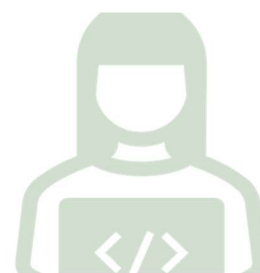
Summary of Engagement Activity



Over 800 letters were sent to local residents



Knocked on over 100 doors



Online surveys were available for individual schemes. Six responses were received.



18 comments submitted to the Ezytreev Portal



Engaged with 5 sets of School Councillors from local Schools



22 comments received on the tree portal

Community Tree Planting Project

Introduction

The Community Tree Planting Project had a clear aim – to increase the tree canopy by 850 trees during the planting season of 2025.

Working in partnership with ECF NECF, NCC was able to apply for Trees for Climate funding to create small community tree spaces. In order to ensure the proposals were tailored to community requirements we needed to engage with local residents which took place in two phases.



Phase 1 - Engagement with local Councilors and relevant local groups to identify potential sites.

The project identified schemes where additional trees could be planted through existing partnerships with groups and local people who wanted to improve open spaces, and their local environment. The schemes were designed to enhance biodiversity by providing natural habits for wildlife and to help promote physical outdoor activity such as walking and playing.

Each proposed scheme was unique and reflected the local community with schemes including new fruit orchards, tree planting which will be resilient to climate change, trees with berries and/or blossom and native trees.

Phase 2 - Engagement with residents about the idea of the proposed scheme and what trees they would like to see planted in their neighbourhood.

The Communities Team delivered a package of engagement activity with residents to;

- Share plans and the location of each neighbourhood scheme.
- Encourage residents to share their views in person or via an online survey
- Offer residents an opportunity to select the type of tree that should be planted in their neighbourhood.
- Promote the Tree Portal.
- Invite residents to take part in tree planting sessions with their neighbours.

Following this engagement final plans for each scheme were drawn up considering the views, ideas and aspirations of local peoples or users of the spaces identified.

Engagement: What did we do?

Phase 1

Councillor engagement

- Consulting with local councillors across the city.
- Met with 15 local Councillors on sites they had identified.

Ward Committee Meetings

- Attended ward committee meetings to speak directly with residents about potential planting sites.

Phase 2

Letter Drop

- Letters were designed by the Communities Team.
- Designated areas were selected based on the location of the tree planting.
- Letters were sent out to people living close to the planting schemes.

Online Surveys

- The Communities Team designed online surveys using Microsoft Forms for each neighbourhood scheme.
- A Let's Talk page was launched.
- Information was distributed by the Communities Team newsletter.

Door to Door Engagement

- A door to door leaflet was designed by the communities team.
- A small team of officer knocked at properties that were in close proximity to the planting areas.
- For those not home leaflets were posted through the letterbox.

Children and Young Peoples Engagement

- Schools were contacted and engagement sessions designed by the Communities Team were delivered to School Councillors.
- Youth Groups were contacted via email. Engagement sessions with young people attending youth provision were delivered by the Communities Team.

Older peoples engagement

- An older people's care home was contacted and they asked to be involved. We spoke directly to older people who shared their knowledge about trees.

"I support the idea of planting more trees around this area (Blakelaw Park), it would improve the looks of the area, obviously we all know the benefits of more trees as well."

Resident, 2025

"The project (Quarry Park) is a great idea! It would be great to see trees that are native to our region as well as more exotic and colourful, to lift our very dull skies."

Resident, Ezytreev Portal Query, 2025

"We want to improve the environment and provide free food for our community" young person D2 Youth Zone, 2024

What happened?

Following our engagement trees (whips and standards) were planted in areas across the city;

- Appletree Road, Walkergate (113 trees)
- Blakelaw Park (96 trees)
- Caroline Pit, Denton Burn (64 trees)
- Hesleyside Drive, West Fenham (including King George Playing Field) (378 trees)
- Kenton Dene (269 trees)
- Quarry Park, South Gosforth (14 trees)
- Quarry Road, Lemington (805 trees)
- Relton Terrace, Byker (746 trees)
- Green space outside D2 Youth Zone (41 trees)



Fruit Orchard outside of D2 Youth Zone, Newbiggin Hall

The original proposal was to increase the tree canopy by 850 trees during the planting season of 2025. **As a result of our conversations with local residents 2601 trees were planted.**

A number of other changes were made to reflect the local communities tree preferences including

- The number and range of species - **60 species planted**
- Two new fruit orchards with increased varieties of fruit trees including
 - Cherry
 - Plum
 - Apple
 - Pear
 - Hazel
- Which trees were planted at specific schemes
- Where trees were planted at each scheme

South Gosforth First School. Young Councillors planting session



Community tree planting days were arranged with

- D2 Youth Zone
- Kenton Hall Care Home
- South Gosforth Primary

Children and Young People became active partners in two schemes

- D2 Youth Zone, Newbiggin Hall, led on the project design and engagement leading to a variety of fruit trees being selected by the children.
- The school councillors from South Gosforth First School undertook site visits met, local councillors and supported the planting day.

Conclusion

The Community Tree Planting Project 2025 has demonstrated the power of collaboration between local residents, schools, community groups, and Newcastle City Council. Through meaningful engagement and shared decision-making, we have not only increased the city's tree canopy but also strengthened community ownership of our green spaces.

The feedback gathered throughout the consultation clearly shows that residents value trees for their environmental, social, and aesthetic benefits. From fruit orchards in local parks to climate-resilient species in urban spaces, each scheme reflects the unique character and aspirations of its neighbourhood.

This project has laid strong roots—both literally and figuratively—for a greener, healthier, and more connected Newcastle. As we look ahead, the enthusiasm and support from our communities will continue to guide future greening initiatives, ensuring that our city remains vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive for generations to come.



Young People from D2 Youth Zone and the Bee Better Group. The young people gave up one of their Saturdays to help us plant the fruit orchard for their local community.



Quarry Park Fruit Orchard, South Gosforth

For more information contact:

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