



**Co-operative Councils**  
Innovation Network

## CLIMATE CHANGE ENVIRONMENT

### Witney Town Council

### **How Witney's Community came together to plant a tiny forest to boost biodiversity**

Having declared a climate emergency in 2019, the opportunity to pioneer an exciting joint project, a first in the UK, was one that we, as a forward-looking council and energetic community, absolutely could not turn down.

A Tiny Forest is a densely planted, fast-growing native woodland usually sited in built-up areas. It's around the size of a tennis court and 3000 of them exist worldwide. The chance to have the very first one in the UK came from Earthwatch, an international charity who offer nature-based solutions to boost biodiversity.

Our Tiny Forest directly supports key elements of the Town Council's climate and biodiversity strategies, and its secondary aim to maintain the town as a green and pleasant place to live.

After the decision taken, everything happened very quickly. A suitable site was identified, and surveys and soil tests carried out. Our grounds maintenance contractors were fully supportive and ready to swing into action, offering equipment, soil preparation and help on planting day all at no cost. Local volunteer group, Witney Land Army recruited a team of community planters, with Earthwatch providing selected native trees which were appropriate for the soil and site.

Our design deviated from the usual rectangle, opting instead for a polygon mirroring the shape of the local church tower - a tangible link to a historic feature of the area.

On the day, wellies were an absolute must as heavy machinery had been on site preparing the soil after weeks of wet weather. 600 saplings were planted by around 70 volunteers



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over the course of a day. There was a relaxed atmosphere and a feeling of satisfaction at being instrumental in creating this important new outdoor space.



## Tychwood: Witney's Tiny Forest



Cllr Luci Ashbourne, Leader of the Council said:

*“Working with Earthwatch has been an incredible way for Witney Town Council to lead the way on creative, proactive and local solutions to the climate emergency. The residents that helped with planting expressed their delight at being able to be part of something so progressive, and to have the ongoing benefits of a beautiful, health promoting space that we can all feel invested in and help nurture as it grows.”*

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### For more information contact:

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