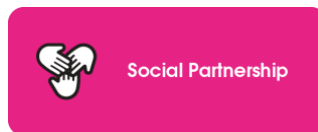


CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT



North Herts Council

North Herts 10,000 Tree Giveaway

North Herts Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and this declaration asserted the council's commitment toward climate action beyond current national targets. A key priority within the council's current Climate Change Strategy is 'Inspiring the Community.' The Council aims to encourage citizens and businesses to take action to go further and faster in cutting carbon emissions whilst also taking other local environmental factors into consideration, such as biodiversity. The climate emergency requires a collective effort, recognising the need for action across the district.

The North Herts 10,000 tree giveaway took place between 2021-2022. In April 2021, the budget was approved for the project and the distribution of trees to residents began in Autumn 2021, reaching completion in February 2022.

Prior to the commencement of the tree giveaway, the initiative was promoted on the Council's website, social media, magazines, emails and other media outlets, and residents were encouraged to register their interest in advance. Many residents also found out about the initiative through word of mouth.

Tree species were chosen based on a number of criteria: ensuring the species were indigenous to the UK, sourcing species which are known to do well in North Herts with the local, heavy chalk soil taken into consideration, and biosecurity. Species were generally chosen so that they would not grow too large, ensuring they were suitable for being planted in regular gardens.



In November 2021, North Herts Council's giveaway of 10,000 free trees to residents commenced. The timing was due to the need for the trees to be dormant before being taken from the ground and replanted. Tree saplings were given away on a first come, first served basis, with the only requirements being that individuals must live within the district and must have a suitable space to plant a tree. Guidance was given as to what suitable space for planting trees would be, and residents were able to choose whether they would like a tree that could grow in a small, medium, or large space. Leaflets were also provided with basic information about the species of trees available and how to plant them.

The tree giveaway continued to be promoted across many media platforms throughout the giveaway period and was heavily publicised during National Tree Week (27 Nov – 5 Dec), encouraging residents to #PlantForOurFuture. Five giveaway events were scheduled before Christmas in the five most populous areas of North Herts. Trees were also delivered to parishes for distribution and for some larger projects involving larger landowners. Initially the policy allowed one tree per household however after many requests were received by residents, this number was increased. After Christmas, trees were available to be collected from the contractor's depot.

By the end of February, the 10,000 tree giveaway was complete. The trees found new homes across the district in almost every parish and ward. The scheme has also been able to support some local planting projects in Kimpton, Royston, Ashwell and Pirton. Overall, residents were very complimentary of the scheme.

Each tree sapling planted locally will contribute towards the fight against climate change in the district. The trees will create mutual benefits across the district by enhancing local biodiversity, offsetting carbon, helping to improve air quality, and providing cooling effects in hotter weather. Those that participated in the initiative will be able to enjoy the benefits of their tree as it grows; for some, this may even include enjoying future harvests of fruit.

The 10,000 tree giveaway was a project that required collaboration, partnership, and shared responsibility between the Council and North Herts residents. The project drew on council funding, expertise, and the work of council officers, as well as relying on the involvement of local residents to receive, plant and nurture the trees going forward. Collaborative working and the mutual benefits created through this project exemplify the co-operative value of social partnership.



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