

We need trees... now trees need you!

Everyone will be aware of the push to plant more trees that was highlighted right across the political spectrum during the last General Election and more recently taken up by HRH Prince William in his TV programme "A planet for us all". Whilst tree planting in itself cannot arrest climate change, it does enable partial mitigation to the levels of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere. Add in changes we can all make to our personal carbon footprint and lifestyle means we could all enjoy better health and wellbeing.

We must never forget how vital trees are to the planet's ecosystem. They have many attributes including: binding soil, keeping soil healthy (nutrient rich), reducing soil erosion and, as seen on BBC Countryfile, prevent flooding. Undertaking a tree planting programme will enable us to increase nurture for nature, combat climate change, recover biodiversity and place ourselves and the planet on the road to recovery. Today we are enjoying the results of our ancestors in their management of our natural resources and the time has now come for us to continue that work for the enjoyment (and very existence) of our grandchildren and all the generations to come.

As it is so important to consider seasonal timing and matching the right species to an appropriate location West Mersea Town Council (WMTC) is delighted to embrace an initiative that Colchester Borough Council (CBC) has embarked upon, which is closely aligned to the Town Council's policy of managing and expanding its existing tree stock.

The Colchester Woodland Project is an ambitious project to plant a total of 200,000 native trees over a 3 year period across the Borough that will offset 32,000 tonnes of carbon in the lifetime of the trees. CBC's Woodland and Open Spaces Project officer, Mr Nick Day, (Mersea resident, no less!) has identified suitable locations on West Mersea including the Glebe, Willoughby Car Park, West Mersea Park and the two cemeteries off Firs Road. The intention is to undertake a 3 year planting programme commencing this November with 1000 whips at the Glebe and some 400 whips (supplied by the Woodland Trust) in Feldy View; this followed in successive years at Willoughby car park and West Mersea Park in 2022.

March and November 2023 will see us revisit the Glebe for additional planting along with the other sites to replace any trees that failed to take.

In addition to the CBC supplying us with the 1000 whips Nick has given guidance on the best way to tackle the initial planting involving teams of four.

The planting of whips is a relatively quick and simple task and that is where you come in! Therefore the call goes out for assistance with this excellent project.

Volunteers, of all ages, and of varying experience and expertise will be warmly welcomed on a date to be arranged in November. If you would like to assist please make contact with Carol at our office or with Cllr. Bob Jenkins - Email: info@westmersea.org or cllr.jenkins@westmersea.org, or phone Council Office on 01206 382128.

Cllr. Peter Banks - WMTC