



## The Great Western Community Forest

The Great Western Community Forest was founded in 1994 alongside eleven other community forests across England, where local people and organisations are working together to create a better environment.

Unlike traditional forests, community forests aren't geographically restricted to one place. Instead, they are spread across a mix of community woodland, private woodland, on-street, urban woodland, wooded habitat corridors and hedgerows.

By growing trees where they are most needed, corridors of woodlands better connect communities to nature, helping people enjoy the benefits of being close to trees and woodlands, enhance biodiversity and provide resilience to help reduce the effects of climate change on local communities through carbon capture and mitigating flooding and drought.

With the town of Swindon at its heart, the Great Western Community Forest originally covered an area of 39,000 hectares (over 168 square miles) stretching from the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the River Thames. The boundary was extended in spring 2023 to include towns in the west of Wiltshire.

The Great Western Community Forest aims to create a network of woodlands and associated semi-natural habitats in response to local development pressures. Large areas of woodland have been planted in and around Swindon and approximately 60,000 trees have been planted to date.

## Examples of projects we can fund



**Multi-purpose woodland (>5 ha)**  
 Minimum of 1,600 tree per ha  
 No single species more than 70%  
 Up to 25% woody shrubs



**Low density tree planting**  
 Minimum of 25 trees per ha  
 Minimum final canopy cover of 20% across area planted  
 Species appropriate to context



**Small scale tree planting (0.5-4.99 ha)**  
 Minimum of 1,100 trees per ha



**Hedgerows with / without trees**  
 5 plants per linear metre  
 Trees planted every 15 metres as appropriate  
 70% native or locally characteristic



**Very small scale tree planting (0.1-0.49 ha)**  
 Minimum of 1,100 trees per ha  
 Up to 20% woody shrubs  
 Fruit trees accepted



**Natural colonisation**  
 Must achieve minimum of 60% woody cover and 100 trees per ha within ten years

**100% funding for tree planting projects plus 15 years of maintenance payments**

# Trees for Climate

The Trees for Climate grant is available across the whole of the Great Western Community Forest area around Swindon and, in certain circumstances, beyond. The grant is highly flexible, supporting planting schemes from the very small to the very large.

Trees can be planted for many purposes, including:

- timber
- carbon sequestration
- water catchment management
- landscape enhancement
- nature recovery
- permissive public access
- parkland and wood pasture
- agroforestry (silvopastoral and silvoarable)
- hedgerows and shrub belts with field trees
- community orchards and woodlands
- urban green space and street tree planting.

Trees for Climate Grant covers all agreed costs which can include:

- establishment
- maintenance
- site surveys
- fencing
- accommodating new public access.

The minimum size is 0.10ha (or equivalent for parkland, wood pasture or hedgerow planting). Note that planting proposals above 0.5ha are subject to Forestry Commission regulatory checks, which we help with.

## Great Western Community Forest funding offers:

- 100% of costs for planting and establishment
- 15 years of maintenance payments



## Contact

To find out more, or for help with preparing a proposal, please call 07929 650450 or email [communityforest@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:communityforest@swindon.gov.uk)