

# Plymouth Tree Partnership

## Annual Report 2017-18



Our third year as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation has seen steady progress as well as ongoing challenges in getting the importance of urban trees properly recognised. In everything, our mission is to help others visualise, plant and maintain the kind of treescapes which the city deserves and which are so essential to environmental quality, health and wellbeing. This report describes the activities and achievements in working towards that end.

### Activities

#### Tree manifesto

Trustees have been working on a manifesto for presentation at the 2018 Annual General Meeting. It adds detail to the partnership's work:

- Promoting the use of trees as a key feature in streets, parks, schools and public places.
- Supporting resident and community groups so that they will plant and care for more trees.
- Sharing knowledge and information about trees and how they integrate with the built and natural environments.
- Helping select the right tree in the right place.
- Working in partnership with others to deliver projects that leave a legacy of a greener, healthier and more beautiful city.
- Contributing to initiatives that celebrate the city's heritage and culture.
- Managing a network of volunteer Tree Wardens.

#### Walks and talks

In our tenth year of winter meetings, we have again been treated to a variety of interesting talks given by speakers who presented their subjects with knowledge and conviction. The talks were made possible by the University of Plymouth providing free use of a lecture room as a community learning resource; something we acknowledge by encouraging students to attend without paying the admission charge asked of other non-members.

There was a guided walk in the City Centre on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017 to get close to trees which each make a statement for heritage, amenity or commerce and which are not normally to be found on busy streets.

#### Membership

Over the last few years, the voluntary sector has felt the impact of recession as less grant funding has become available. Plymouth Tree Partnership is no exception, living on the edge like many other local groups, while continuing to work hard for the people and causes we serve.

In this changing environment, it is more important than ever to have a strong membership. The support of existing members is invaluable and a good number have been involved for many years. However, increasing our membership total which stood at 47 in March 2018 is going to be vital for the future of Plymouth Tree Partnership. It means promoting our activities more and encouraging more people to join; something that members are doing in conversations with friends and colleagues.

# Plymouth Tree Partnership

## Annual Report 2017-18



### Tree care

Tree Wardens have continued to care for young trees, especially to water in summer, adjust support arrangements as required and to prune for shape. A total of 29 volunteers have been involved with 24 tending trees in their own locality, 5 in the mobile group to provide additional support where most needed, and another 5 who are both locally based and in the mobile team. Together, they spent over 650 hours on tree care tasks in 2017-18 and this level of attention is very evident in the quality of trees.



*Mobile Tree Warden team at Alcester Close, October 2017*

### Education, awareness and research

In addition to 'hands-on' tree care, volunteers have spent a great deal of time researching issues, preparing and delivering project ideas, educational activities and stories. We have not so far recorded the time spent on this so far but know it would be very significant and at least as much as tree care work.

### Tree Health

Ash Dieback Disease was seen for the first time in Plymouth in July 2017 and several reports were sent to the Forestry Commission subsequently. The disease is most conspicuous in saplings. Discussions about limiting its spread to larger trees by removing diseased material in sealed bags and taking it for incineration did not result in a practical outcome.

In November 2017, Tree Warden networks across the country were asked to check sweet chestnuts in their area for signs of blight and to report both positive and negative sightings. Thankfully, Plymouth and surrounding areas appeared to be clear at the beginning of 2018.

### Regional Tree Warden Forum

Seventeen PTP members attended the Regional Tree Warden Forum hosted by colleagues from the South Hams Tree Warden Network at Dartington Hall on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Themed around tree values, it was a day of interesting talks and an outdoor workshop aimed at winning arguments in favour of amenity trees.

# Plymouth Tree Partnership

## Annual Report 2017-18



### All Ways Apples

Our stand at the All Ways Apples festival on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2017 was well visited and it was enjoyable showing people of all ages how to grow trees from seed and chatting about their tree experiences.

### Data privacy

Plymouth Tree Partnership has implemented the General Data Protection Regulations by preparing a privacy statement, amending the membership joining form and asking existing members to confirm they wanted to continue receiving the regular news updates.

### Office move

We have been looking to reduce office costs for some time and the opportunity to move into Poole Farm, Plymouth City Council's recently established environmental learning hub, came in January 2018. The move took place in March and the new base provides the same facilities as the one in Mutley, including a small meeting room and a single point of contact for all partnership communications.

### Plan for Trees

The working group consists of representatives from Plymouth City Council (Natural Infrastructure Team and Street Cleansing and Waste), the Woodland Trust, Trees and Design Action Group, Aspect Tree Consultancy, Highways England, Plymouth Open Spaces Network and Plymouth Tree Partnership.

The group has met twice during the year and, whilst there has been good agreement about what is needed, proposals have still to be presented to the City Council. The slow progress is frustrating and we are always on the lookout for ways to make Plymouth's 'Plan for Trees' a reality.

### Environment Plymouth

Plymouth Tree Partnership joined 'Environment Plymouth' in April 2017. It is one of the eight networks of the Plymouth Octopus Project (POP+) which exists to build a vibrant, sustainable third sector in Plymouth, capable of delivering effective and efficient services for local people.

Environment Plymouth's October meeting discussed how to develop momentum for the 'Plan for Trees' and it is good to know that our concerns for declining canopy cover are shared widely with other voluntary and community groups.

### Planning

With another tree removed from the Royal Parade lime avenue on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018 and the threat of more being felled as part of the Civic Centre makeover, we requested that the lime avenue planted in the first phase of the city's post-War reconstruction in 1948 be made the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. We expect to hear the outcome soon.

Plymouth Tree Partnership attended a 'Better Places' stakeholder meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018 where proposed designs for re-vitalised streets within the city centre were presented. There is much detail that needs to be discussed in relation to new and existing trees and a further meeting is in prospect.

Plymouth Tree Partnership is working with the Derriford Hospital Environment Group to understand how emerging proposals for widening Morlaix Drive could involve losing a significant number of street trees.

## Achievements

### New World Tree Trails

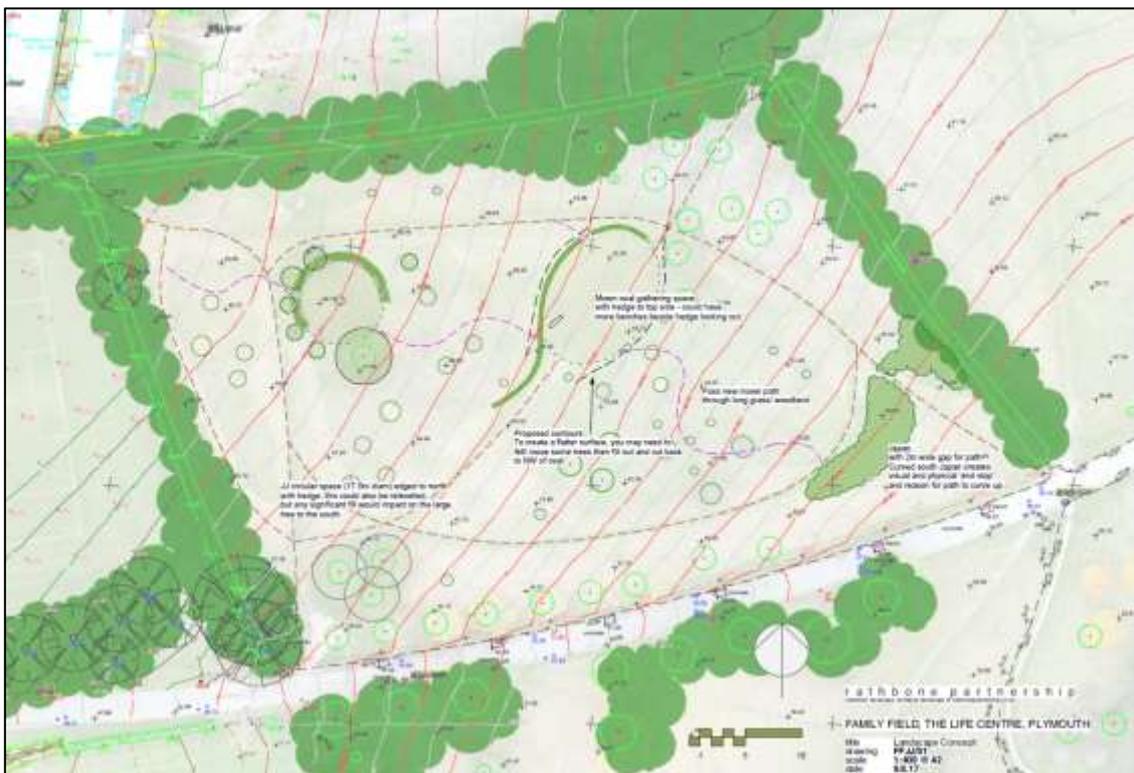
Planned as a contribution to the Mayflower 400 celebrations in 2020, the trails will link trees with some American association and help to highlight events in the city's shared history. Plans took a big step forward when the University of Plymouth agreed it would a good assignment for students in the second year of their Illustration course. Two teams were given the project brief in January 2018 and hand-in is due in May.

### Pilgrim 400 and Mayflower 400 apples

Two new apples are being raised with the Mayflower 400 celebrations in mind. DNA testing has proved that 'Pilgrim' is a unique variety and 'Mayflower' is due to be tested presently.

### Family Tree Field design

Jeremiah's Journey, a local charity which supports bereaved children contacted Plymouth Tree Partnership in April 2017 to see if a space for reflection could be introduced at the Family Tree Field. This appeared mutually beneficial and an ambassador for the charity found a landscape architect, Charlotte Rathbone, who kindly agreed to help us develop a concept design. It features a level, central gathering space with more benches, a quiet glade bounded by a stone bank and a new mown path through the long grass to provide a sense of journey.



*Concept plan for the Family Tree Field*

Following an unsuccessful application to the Aviva Community Fund the concept plan remains ready for the next opportunity.

# Plymouth Tree Partnership

## Annual Report 2017-18



Since November 2017, it has become clear that there is no more space for large-species trees on the Family Tree Field and donations are only being accepted for other features that will enhance the landscape. We want to acknowledge such donations in a tangible way and ideas are being explored, either by introducing an evolving on-site feature or personalised mementos for donors to keep at home.

As with the trees, all donations will still be recorded in the book kept for the purpose together with a dedication message.

### Co-op Local Community Fund

We successfully applied for a grant from the Co-op Local Community Fund to rebuild entrances from Gilbert Lane to the Family Tree Field. The actual amount will depend on how much is spent by shoppers and which local causes attract the most attention from Co-op members between November 2017 and October 2018.

### Corporate volunteering

Thanks to Eco-Land Management's generosity, we were able to run another corporate volunteering day at the Family Tree Field in April 2017. Six staff from EDF Energy joined in helping to weed around trees and installing more tree name posts.

### Tree planting

In addition to five new plantings at the Family Tree Field, Plymouth Tree Partnership was involved in planting another 87 amenity trees, sometimes taking the lead and sometimes acting in a supporting role. The list of trees and places is at Annex B. We also hear about and welcome tree plantings undertaken by other individuals and organisations. Each one makes a big difference to local environments but, altogether, it is unlikely that the total will approach the 200 new trees that Plymouth requires annually to maintain tree cover at its present level.



*Tree planting at Devonport High School for Boys, February 2018*

# Plymouth Tree Partnership

## Annual Report 2017-18



### Tree of the Year

We entered the Plymouth Pear on Morlaix Drive in the Woodland Trust's tree of the year competition. It was selected as one of the ten England finalists but came a runner-up in the on-line voting that followed with the Gilwell Oak in Essex being announced as the winner in December 2017.



*The Plymouth Pear on Morlaix Drive in full blossom*

### Community Awards

Plymouth Tree Partnership was a finalist in this year's Plymouth Community Awards in December 2017 and received a framed certificate commending our efforts to improving local communities.

### **Acknowledgements**

The loyal support of Plymouth Tree Partnership members and volunteers has been fundamental in pursuing the charity's aims. There is a lot of background work in keeping everything running well and, as a purely voluntary organisation, Plymouth Tree Partnership's trustees elected by the members have been instrumental with that. The following have served as trustees during the year from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017:

David Curry	Chairman
Stephanie Ackland	Treasurer
Jackie Perry	Secretary
Tina Wilson	Membership Secretary
Alan Harvey	
Chris Hunt	
John Stone	
Alexander Borthwick	

# Plymouth Tree Partnership

## Annual Report 2017-18



Especial thanks are due to Jackie Perry who left the trustee body earlier in the year and to Stephanie Ackland and Tina Wilson whose terms as trustees complete at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting. They have quietly and efficiently got on with the various administrative tasks and we are very grateful to them for creating the environment in which tree planting and tree care can take place.

We are also grateful for the considerable assistance provided by many others as we work to conserve and improve trees in Plymouth. We especially acknowledge the valuable contributions made by the following people:

Richard Cosgrave from Whitchurch-based IT firm, 'Beside the Box', has generously continued to give his time providing reliable web communications and email. The office move meant a complete overhaul of the partnership's IT infrastructure and he not only managed that with great calmness but also donated a second-hand lap-top so we can use the network at Poole Farm.

Charlotte Rathbone, a partner at Rathbone Landscapes in Modbury, has visited the Family Tree Field several times and helped us distil ideas for taking forward the Family Tree Scheme. An important outcome has been the production of a concept design for the Family Tree Field.

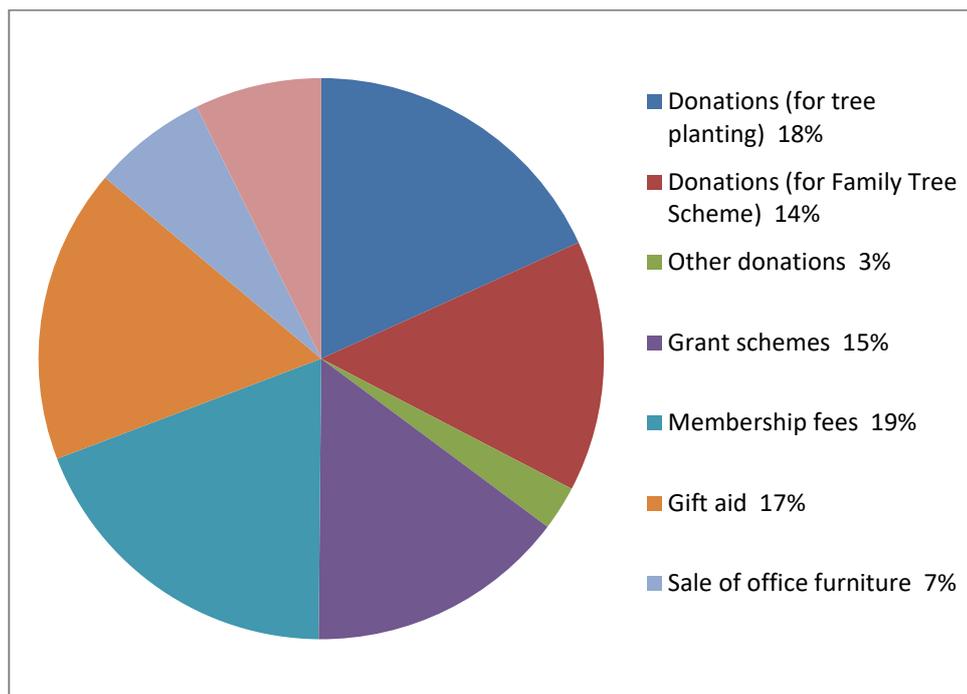
Deborah Moss, Senior Events Co-ordinator at the University of Plymouth, has willingly assisted with our requests for support, especially with classrooms and equipment for partnership meetings.

Dean Price and Suzy Kraike, from Eco Land Management, have not only run a Corporate Volunteering day at the Family Tree Field but also made a financial donation to the partnership's work.

### Financial summary

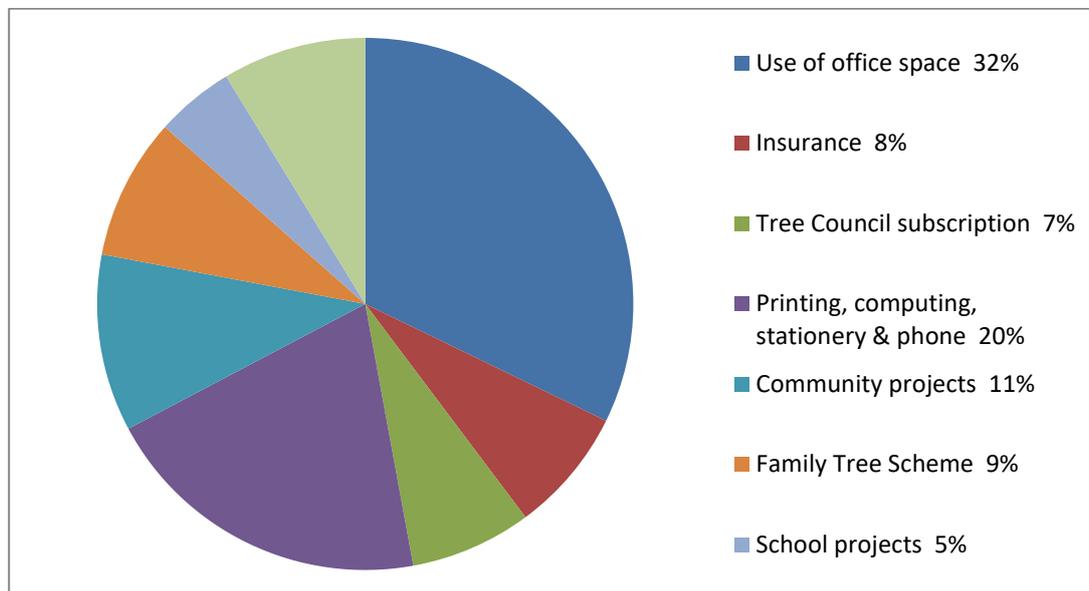
#### Income

Plymouth Tree Partnership's income for the year 2017-18 was £3,801.



## Expenditure

Total expenditure for 2017-18 was £3,412.



## Annex A – Speakers at meetings

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| 11th October 2017          | Heather Barriball presented some local trees with an American connection with a view to creating a new tree trail for the Mayflower 400 celebrations in 2020.    |
| 8th November 2017          | David Curry spoke about the wildlife havens to be found in 'living churchyards'.   |
| 6th December 2017          | Dr Martin Blacher showed how British trees were rich in folklore and suggested how the ideas arose and what we can learn from them today.                        |
| 10th January 2018          | Chris Avent, Project Manager for the Derriford Community Park, explained why the new park and farm were needed, what they will look like and how they will work. |
| 7th February 2018          | Soil specialist, David Hogan, spoke about the factors needed to provide good growing conditions for trees.   |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> March 2018 | Alan Harvey, who runs the Family Tree Scheme, shared his selection of favourite trees and opened our eyes to some amazing local trees.                           |

42 different people attended the meetings with an average audience size of 20.

## **Annex B – Tree plantings**

Plymouth Tree Partnership helped to organise the following planting schemes which do not include trees planted on the Family Tree Field:

Devonport High School for Boys	7 <i>Ulmus</i> 'Lobel' as a row along one side of a sports field; 1 <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> to replace a stump in the Colonades row; 1 <i>Metasequoia glyptostroboides</i> 'Sheridan Spire' as a specimen; 1 <i>Morus nigra</i> in a fruiting tree border; 1 <i>Magnolia stellata</i> , 1 <i>Parrotia persica</i> and 1 <i>Hamamelis</i> 'Arnold Promise' in shrub borders.
Prynne Close	1 <i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i> in a raised planter.
Central Park – Golf Course	2 <i>Betula pubescens</i> to strengthen an existing birch stand; 1 <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i> as a specimen.
Central Park – Pounds Park	1 <i>Prunus</i> 'Amanogawa' to fill gap in cherry avenue.
Manor Street	1 <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> 'Sunburst' to replace broken tree from 2016
Patna Park	1 <i>Acer platanoides</i> 'Laciniatum' to complete a circle of the same; 1 <i>Acer platanoides</i> 'Crimson King' as a specimen.
Victoria Park	1 <i>Quercus rubra</i> to replace a failing tree planted in 2017; 2 <i>Crataegus x lavalleyi</i> to replace failing trees planted in 2015.
Mount Street School	1 <i>Sorbus aria</i> 'Lutescens' as a specimen at the school's entrance.
Kings Tamerton Woods	20 fruit trees as a new orchard.
Derriford Hospital	42 fruit trees, mainly heritage varieties, as a new orchard on the old helipad site.

A total of 87 trees were planted in 10 different locations.