

Plymouth Tree Partnership

Annual Report 2018-19



Plymouth Tree Partnership was one of the leading organisations that pioneered Plymouth's Plan for Trees so it was a great achievement when Plymouth City Council adopted it on 5th March 2019 and launched it straight afterwards.

The Plan for Trees provides the context for improving the city's canopy cover and for promoting the benefits of trees so their importance to lives and livelihoods is widely appreciated. Based on collaborative working, the plan chimes with Plymouth Tree Partnership's mission to:

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

Plymouth Tree Partnership is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with a committed membership and an active volunteer base, and there have been achievements in every area of its work. With climate change becoming more obvious, urban trees provide localised 'eco-system services' and reduce the need for energy generation. They bring health and wellbeing benefits too and altogether do much more than simply make places look attractive.

Supporting resident and community groups

Plymouth Tree Partnership led or played a supporting role in planting trees in eight places in 2018-19. The list is at Annex B but the following deserve mention as typical of situations right across the city:

Torr Lane

The cherry trees planted in grass verges when the road was built in the 1930s are well past their best and about half have already been lost. Since 2013, a committee of residents has raised money to plant replacements and Plymouth Tree Partnership has supported them by identifying the work required, managing the project's finances and applying for the necessary consents.

This year, we were able to plant another nine trees making a total of 25 since 2013. You can easily imagine how bare this road, a major thoroughfare, would look now if residents had not been motivated to take action and Plymouth Tree Partnership had not been there to support them.



Plymouth Tree Partnership

Annual Report 2018-19



Haddington Road

Built in the nineteenth century, pavements on both sides of the road were planted with Common Lime, *Tilia x europaea*, but, today, only 17 of the 38 original trees remain. A resident had asked Plymouth Tree Partnership to help with restoring the road's tree cover and, with greater experience of hard-landscape projects, we were able to take it on this year.

Having surveyed for underground services and confirmed the project was feasible, residents and ward councillors were invited to a meeting in April 2018. Proposals were explained and support invited. This and a subsequent questionnaire brought few responses although they were mostly favourable. However, it was obvious that the project could not rely on money raised locally so funding applications followed.

Plymouth Tree Partnership is a member of Environment Plymouth, one of the POP+ networks that supports the voluntary sector and, through their good services, we secured a grant of £5,000 from the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation. Other funding came from the councillors' Community Fund, a local charitable trust and a donation from a resident.



Circumstances meant that planting was planned for early March 2019. A final leaflet to households described the work and requested parking spaces be kept clear. With traffic cones put out the day before, our contractors were able to get straight on with reinstating nine of the tree pits and planting them with a street-friendly lime cultivar, *Tilia cordata* 'Rancho'.

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It remains to get the new trees established and growing well. People in the road have committed to watering them in summer whilst volunteer Tree Wardens will lend a hand as required.

James Street, Devonport

Contractors were also needed to re-plant pavement tree pits in James Street, made when the road was rebuilt about ten years ago and which had since become empty. As with Torr Lane and Haddington Road, the request for new trees came from residents.

Households nearest the pits were contacted and they quickly confirmed their support. Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) assisted by holding two meetings to discuss landscaping proposals around the tower blocks, including new trees, and by posting notices in prominent places. PCH also arranged for a semi-mature stone pine to be planted in the lawn under Lynher House.

The tree pits had been made out of concrete manhole rings which were favoured at the time but which deny trees the root space they need to flourish. To address the problem, the pits were emptied of soil and lifting eyes in the manhole rings enlarged so that tree roots would be less prone to girdling and more able to access moisture in the surrounding ground. It meant using an angle grinder which proved difficult in the very cramped working conditions.

Tree guards, re-used from other places, were fitted after planting and the finished work drew complimentary comments from passers-by. A future phase of work could easily plant several more trees in James Street as the need there (and elsewhere) remains very great.

Plymouth Tree Partnership

Annual Report 2018-19



Sharing knowledge and information about trees

In May 2018, we saw first-hand the issues that can arise with trees in built surroundings when Joe Berryman, assistant tree officer with Plymouth Community Homes, led a guided walk around the Union Street area.

Our winter talks programme was able to resume in January after Dr Sophie Fauset, who lectures in Environmental Science at the University of Plymouth, kindly agreed to sponsor them. It followed a recent requirement for organisations using the University's facilities to be sponsored by a member of the teaching staff. There have been three talks this year attended by an average of 15 people and details are at Annex A. It has been especially good to welcome new faces, students among them.

Spreading knowledge and information about trees, as well as awareness of Plymouth Tree Partnership and its work, continues to be a challenge. Encouragingly, the Facebook group, 'Plymouth's Favourite Trees' has grown its following over the year thanks to the enthusiasm of its administrators, Carole Elliott and David Frost, and their ability to unearth fascinating snippets of information and equally fascinating pictures.

During the year, we have worked with Lynher Training to develop a course of twelve monthly lessons, each lasting three hours, and three practical days that would lead to a Level 2 Extended Certificate in Arboriculture. Take-up at launch in September was slow and, with uncertainty about the continuation of funding subsidies, the course regrettably had to be withdrawn. It is hoped that another opportunity may arise in future.

Working in partnership with others to deliver projects

Family Tree Field

Our main focus for partnership working has been the Family Tree Field. Staff from Calor Gas came on 12th and 13th July 2018 to tend young trees and refresh the gravel apron at the south-west entrance. Staff from EDF Energy came on 27th September 2018 and gave the field an autumn tidy.



Thanks to designs by Charlotte Rathbone, a Director at Rathbone Partnerships, we were able to secure Postcode Local Trust funding for a level seating area in the centre of the field and work should complete in summer 2019. Another seating area is planned near the top end of the field for moments of quieter reflection. It will require further funding and we hope to continue working for it with Jeremiah's Journey, a charity that supports bereaved children.

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In November 2018, we collected a cheque for £2,252 from the Hyde Park Co-op store, being the money raised over the year as a result of Co-op shoppers allocating their Community Fund dividends for the Family Tree Field. It will be used to rebuild the two entrances from Gilbert Lane into the field.

In other places, we spent some time with the Derriford Hospital Environment Group to help with establishing the orchard planted last year and developing planting plans for car park A.

Perhaps the culmination of partnership working was the planting of three trees in the Mutton Cove playground undertaken with other Plan for Trees partners to mark the plan's launch in March.

Plymouth Tree Partnership

Annual Report 2018-19



Celebrating heritage and culture

New World Tree Trail

Two teams of Illustration Course students at the University of Plymouth each produced a trail leaflet as part of their studies. They were shown trees in the city centre that have an American association and they had to use their judgement to select the ones of most interest and construct a trail which could be easily followed. Their work was most helpful in shaping ideas and producing content for the leaflet.

Pilgrim 400 apple

The 'Pilgrim 400' apple has propagated well and better than another seedling tree that was being considered for the Mayflower commemorations. It was officially registered as a local cultivar in 2018.

The 'Pilgrim 400' mother tree is in Southwell, Nottinghamshire and it came to light as a result of a Radio Nottingham broadcast. It means we are working closely with tree lovers in the 'Pilgrim Roots' area who also see value in promoting this new variety in and for events in 2020.

Celia Steven and Andrew Young, who are leading the project for Plymouth Tree Partnership, attended a meeting at Bassetlaw District Council on 14th March 2019. Bassetlaw Council is inviting Mayflower Destinations to accept a 'Pilgrim 400' tree for planting at civic events whilst Plymouth Tree Partnership will be offering schools and community groups the chance to buy one of a limited edition of 40 trees.

Managing a network of Tree Wardens

Tree Warden work is as varied as the people involved. Individual initiative plays an important part and some of the tasks are described here:

One Tree Warden spotted discrepancies in a tree survey for a park and decided to check the whole survey. After painstaking work, several rare trees were identified and opportunities for new planting recorded. The information will assist with maintaining tree cover and preserving the park's unique sense of place.

Some Tree Wardens have given talks in schools and helped children learn about trees and the natural world through educational activities.



Most Tree Wardens have been providing the all-important care for young trees near their home or place of work, and keeping a lookout for problems. As one example, Astor Park Tree Wardens have a long-term aim to re-shape two young trees which were damaged a few years ago and require incremental pruning.

The mobile team has gathered once a month to lend a hand where needed and, this year, has worked in Boon's Place, Burleigh Park Road, Careswell Avenue, Central Park, Crownhill car-park, Freedom Park, Hartley Park, Morice Town School, Patna Park, Pemros Road, Sheridan Road and Vicarage Gardens.

Plymouth Tree Partnership Annual Report 2018-19



Governance and finance

None of the above achievements would have been possible without all the background work required to keep the charity running well. It has been entirely voluntary and led by the trustees:

David Curry Chair
Roger Atkin Treasurer
Teresa Frost Membership Secretary
Alan Harvey
Chris Hunt
John Stone
Alexander Borthwick

Membership

With two new pop-up banners, a simpler joining form and, most of all, existing members telling others about Plymouth Tree Partnership, there are currently 55 members. Further growth is still required in order to be properly sustainable and we continue to promote our activities and encourage more people to join. This picture shows our stand at the All Ways Apples festival on 24th October 2018.



From 1st April 2019, annual subscriptions increase to £15 for individual members and £30 for corporate members. A new category of joint membership will also become available for £20 for two people at the same address.

Volunteering

There are currently 32 Tree Wardens in Plymouth, mostly Plymouth Tree Partnership members. Five enrolled during the year and three left. Altogether, they have spent an amazing 850 hours on practical tasks around trees in 2018-19. Many more hours have been spent in other volunteering roles, such as researching an area's history or planning activities.

Partner organisations

We value the close links that Plymouth Tree Partnership shares with other organisations and they include:

- The Tree Council
- South Hams Tree Warden network and Cornwall Tree Wardens
- Plymouth Environmental Action
- Plymouth Community Orchards
- Environment Plymouth and POP+
- Friends of Parks and Woods; Central Park, Devonport Park, Freedom Park, Ham Woods, Hartley Park, Hoe Park, Radford Park, Radford Woods and the Derriford Hospital Environment Group
- Plan for Trees partners; Plymouth City Council, Plymouth Community Homes, Plymouth Open Spaces Network, National Trust and Woodland Trust.

Plymouth Tree Partnership

Annual Report 2018-19



Funding

We are very grateful to all those individuals and organisations who donated money or made grants in support of our work during 2018-19. They include:

- Co-op Community Fund
- Esmee Fairbairn Trust
- Mayflower Community Sparks
- Postcode Local Trust
- Torr Lane residents
- Plymouth City Council Community Grants allocated by councillors

Plymouth Tree Partnership's income for the year 2018-19 was £26,591. About 80% came from funding grants for tree projects and the remainder from membership and other donations.

Expenditure was significantly less at £10,585 because projects in the Family Tree Field and for Mayflower 400 are not due to complete until 2019-20.

Charity management

Policies for volunteering, health and safety, safeguarding and data protection continue to be kept under review and there were no incidents of a serious nature.

Acknowledgements

In addition to our funders, Plymouth Tree Partnership greatly appreciates the time and expertise willingly provided by individuals to make things happen. They include:

Richard Cosgrave from Whitchurch-based IT firm, 'Beside the Box' who has kept IT systems running and tutored us in using Google Drive for document management.

Dr Sophie Fauset for her interest in Plymouth Tree Partnership's work and making it possible to hold talks in the University of Plymouth.

Deborah Moss, Senior Events Co-ordinator at the University of Plymouth, who has arranged everything necessary at each meeting.

Jamie Griffiths at Calor Gas and Lynne Hunt at EDF for co-ordinating their staff's volunteering days at the Family Tree Field, and to those who came on each day for being such a brilliant help.

Plymouth Tree Partnership

Annual Report 2018-19



Annex A – Meetings

Meetings were held on these dates with speakers on a topic of current interest:

- 16th January 2019 Andrew Young, Plymouth Tree Partnership’s volunteering co-ordinator, presented an overview of the tree projects being planned for the Mayflower Commemorations in 2020. They include the ‘Pilgrim 400’ apple, the New World tree trail and restoring the group of locust trees in the Civic Square.
- 20th February 2019 Sandy Borthwick, a Plymouth Tree Partnership trustee, described how he had bought and managed a small woodland for conservation and pleasure. It provided a fascinating account of the challenges involved and a deeper understanding of woodland ecology.
- 20th March 2019 Rob Wolton, Chair of the Devon Hedge Group and author of the Devon Ash Dieback Action Plan, looked at the impact of Ash Dieback Disease and its projected progress before encouraging us to promote replacement planting as a matter of urgency.

Annex B – Tree plantings

Plymouth Tree Partnership played a part – big or small – in delivering the following tree projects which do not include trees planted on the Family Tree Field:

- Devonport High School for Boys 1 *Liquidambar styraciflua* ‘Worplesdon’ as a specimen;
1 *Prunus* ‘Shirofugen’ in a shrub border.
- Haddington Road 9 *Tilia cordata* ‘Rancho’ in empty pavement planting pits.
- James Street, Devonport 2 *Pyrus calleryana* ‘Chanticleer’ in empty pavement planting pits.
2 *Sorbus x thuringiaca* ‘Fastigiata’ in empty pavement planting pits.
1 *Pinus pinea* in a grass play area.
- Wingfield Road 1 *Zelkova serrata* in a grass area.
- Derriford Hospital, Car Park A 2 *Malus* ‘Rudolph’
1 *Acer pseudoplatanus* ‘Brilliantissimum’
1 *Acer campestre* ‘Elsrijk’
1 *Quercus robur*
1 *Carpinus betulus*
1 *Liriodendron tulipifera* ‘Aureomarginatum’
1 *Tilia tomentosa* ‘Brabant’
1 *Magnolia stellata* ‘Waterlily’
- Mutton Cove 1 *Quercus ilex*
1 *Crataegus monogyna*
- Torr Lane 9 *Prunus* ‘Tai Haku’ to replace original street trees in grass verges
- Junction Lopes Rd and Parker Rd 1 *Quercus rubra* to replace an end-of-life ornamental cherry tree.

A total of 38 trees were planted in 8 different locations.

Plymouth Tree Partnership

Annual Report 2018-19



Annex C – Tree care and surveys

We are very grateful to Plymouth Tree Partnership's volunteer Tree Wardens who have been delivering care to young trees or undertaking tree surveys in the following places in 2018-19:

Adelaide Park	Barbara Hampson
Astor Park	Becka Adams James Kazer
Beaumont Park	Chris Hunt
Burleigh Park Road	Tina Wilson
Careswell Avenue	Dave Curno
Central Park	Ian Teague (Pounds Park) Alan Harvey and Chris Hunt (Family Tree Field) Martin Blacher
Freedom Park	Jacques Marchal
Ham Woods	Dave Curno
Hoe Park	Keith Tarrant
Manor Street	Barbara Hampson
Patna Park	Zita Moyse
Pemros Road	Ken Hamblin
Radford Park	Kevin Warley Jenny Floyd
Radford Woods	Andy Anderson
Staddiscombe Playing Fields	Alan and Menza Ramage
Thorn Park	Gloria Dixon
Torr Lane	Roy and Liz Harris
Tothill Park	Charlie Dawson Nick Reid
Victoria Park	Zita Moyse
Mobile Tree Wardens	Diane Barrall Heather Barriball Martin Blacher Claire Branson David and Teresa Frost Chris Hunt Charles Kelly John Stone Andrew Young

Volunteer Tree Wardens spent a total of 840 hours delivering tree care or surveying trees in 2018-19.