



****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

Wednesday, 30 March 2022

MAYOR PLANTS A JUBILEE TREE TO CELEBRATE LONDON AS A QGC “CHAMPION CITY”

On Wednesday 30th of March, the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan joined in to “Plant a Tree for the Jubilee” at Gascoigne Primary School in Barking as London is unveiled as a “Champion City” under The Queen’s Green Canopy (QGC) initiative.

The Mayor visited the school to plant Jubilee trees and learn about a pioneering project led by QGC Partner Trees for Cities (TfC) which has been developed to mitigate against the detrimental effect of air pollution, particularly on children. TfC’s **Planting Healthy Air Programme** involves redesigning playgrounds to reduce the impact of poor air quality by introducing green infrastructure, such as trees and hedgerows.

The Queen’s Green Canopy launched a “Champion Cities” programme to celebrate some of the nation’s outstanding cities which have trees and woodland as a central part of their plans for green spaces.

Working with our partner TfC, The Queen’s Green Canopy is continuing its programme to support urban greening in areas of high socioeconomic deprivation and low canopy cover. Gascoigne is one of Britain’s largest primary schools with over 1,100 pupils. The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham has the highest Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) in London. Every neighbourhood in the Gascoigne ward where the school is situated is among the 20% most deprived in the UK and some neighbourhoods are in 10% of the most deprived.

The trees planted at Gascoigne Primary School reflect London’s ambitious target to increase tree canopy cover by 10 percent and support ambitions to become a net zero carbon city by 2030.

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, said: *“Planting trees plays a vital role in our efforts to tackle climate change and air pollution and I’m delighted that London has been made a Champion City for The Queen’s Green Canopy initiative. This is a fitting way to mark Her Majesty’s Platinum Jubilee and I’m pleased to be joining pupils at Gascoigne Primary School to create a healthier, more beautiful and wildlife friendly school environment.”*

David Elliot, Trees for Cities, said: *“We are delighted that London has been awarded Champion City status by The Queen’s Green Canopy. We welcome the Mayor of London to our ground-breaking Planting Healthy Air Project at Gascoigne Primary School, which provides a showcase for the multitude of greening activities taking root across the capital. Through supporting the planting of urban trees as a legacy to Her Majesty’s Service to the nation, Trees*

for Cities is helping to send a powerful message to young people to connect with urban nature and to re-green the city for future generations."

Other UK cities which have been awarded "Champion" status so far include **Aberdeen, Bath, Belfast, Birmingham, Cardiff, Chester, Derby, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Greater Manchester, Leicester, Newcastle, Perth, Preston, Southampton, Stoke-on-Trent, Swansea, Worcester and York.**

Background

The London Environment Strategy sets out a target to increase the area of London's land covered by trees by 10 per cent by 2050 (from 20 percent to 22 percent). This equates to planting an additional 3,320 hectares of trees.

Since 2016, over 420,000 trees have been planted across London funded by the Greater London Authority, including 84 hectares of new publicly accessible woodland.

London has recently been awarded funding through the Urban Tree Challenge Fund to support the planting of 7500 new street trees across 23 boroughs by March 2023.

London's urban forest is an integral part of the city's green infrastructure and currently covers around 21% of London.

The London Urban Forest Plan, published in 2020, sets out the goals and priority actions needed to protect, manage and expand the capital's urban forest. The London Urban Forest Partnership, organisations with a strategic interest in the capital's trees and woodlands are co-ordinating delivery of the plan, collaborating with others responsible for the stewardship of London's urban forest and the wider urban forest community.

Key facts and figures:

- **8 million** – There are about 8 million trees in London.
- **21%** - The total area of London under tree canopy. The ranges from less than 3% to over 50% across the capital's council wards.
- **£200m** - The value of cooling provided by London's urban forest in 2018. This value will increase as the climate warms and we experience more summer heatwaves.
- **60%** - Almost 60% of London's trees are in private ownership, but the trees on public land contribute 60% of the ecosystem service benefits as there is a higher proportion of larger trees.
- **£147m** - The approximate value of the estimated 2,367,000 tonnes of carbon stored in London's trees.
- **2,241** - Tonnes of air pollution removed by trees annually. The equivalent of 13% of PM10 particulate, and 14% of NO2 emitted annually by road transport.
- **10x** - Trees prevent 10x the volume of water in the Serpentine from entering London's drainage system each year, reducing the risk of localised flooding.

- **Biodiversity** - London's trees and woodlands support a wide range of important wildlife including ten bat species, birds like barn owl, insects such as stag beetle and white admiral butterfly, and fungi like oak polypore.

Trees for Cities

Trees for Cities (TFC) is the only UK charity working at a national and international scale to improve lives by planting trees in cities. Trees for Cities gets stuck in with local communities to cultivate lasting change in their neighbourhoods – whether it's revitalising forgotten spaces, creating healthier environments or getting people excited about growing, foraging and eating healthy food. www.treesforcities.org

TfC's Planting Healthy Air in Schools programme focuses on planting trees and greenery on school grounds to support in mitigating against the harmful effects of air pollution. There is growing evidence of how green infrastructure can be part of a multi-pronged approach to reduce people's exposure to harmful air (see Using Green Infrastructure to Protect People from Air Pollution, April 2019).

The Planting Healthy Air project at Gascoigne Primary School was funded by MOJU and IG Group.

The Queen's Green Canopy

The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invites people from across the United Kingdom to "**Plant a Tree for the Jubilee**".

Everyone from individuals to Scout and Girlguiding groups, villages, cities, counties, schools and corporates will be encouraged to play their part to enhance our environment by planting trees during the official planting season between October to March. Tree planting will commence again in October 2022, through to the end of the Jubilee year.

With a focus on planting sustainably, the QGC will encourage tree planting to create a legacy in honour of The Queen's leadership of the Nation, which will benefit future generations.

As well as inviting the planting of new trees, *The Queen's Green Canopy* will dedicate a network of 70 Ancient Woodlands across the United Kingdom and identify 70 Ancient Trees to celebrate Her Majesty's 70 years of service.

By inviting everyone to plant considerable numbers of new trees throughout the country, the QGC seeks to highlight the significant value of trees and woodlands as nature's simple but highly effective way to clean the air we breathe, slow the impact of climate change, create important wildlife habitats and improve our general health and wellbeing.

- Throughout Her reign, The Queen has planted more than 1,500 trees all over the world and has spoken alongside Sir David Attenborough of the importance of trees in the Earth's future.
- The QGC is a voluntary and inclusive initiative which is open to participation by everyone in the UK.
- The QGC is a symbolic gift which involves the voluntary dedication of forests and woodland – there is no land/title transfer.
- The QGC is a not-for-profit initiative, which has not received Government funding.

Further information about the QGC is available: www.queensgreencanopy.org

The Queen's Green Canopy Partners

Collaboration is central to the QGC. We are proud to work with our partners **Cool Earth, The Royal Horticultural Society, The Woodland Trust, Trees for Cities, The Forest Canopy Foundation and DEFRA, The Tree Council, The Conservation Volunteers and Community Forest Trust.**

The Queen's Green Canopy – Platinum Supporters

The QGC is grateful to the **Royal Mail Group** as our first Founding Partner. We are also working with Platinum Supporters **Coutts, John Lewis & Partners, Waitrose & Partners, Rentokil Initial, Coupa, Regatta and Craghoppers Bridgepoint, Howdens, Johnnie Walker, McDonald's UK & Ireland. Bags of Ethics by Supreme Creations is an Official Supporter.**

The Queen's Green Canopy – QGC Friends Network

A diverse collection of groups located across the UK, our Friends Network is supporting the QGC, from planting trees to helping inspire the nation to get involved.

<https://queensgreencanopy.org/about-us/qgc-friends-network/>

QGC social media channels

Instagram: @queensgreencanopy

Twitter: @QGCanopy

Facebook: @queensgreencanopy

LinkedIn: @queensgreencanopy

Hashtags: #queensgreencanopy #plantatreeforthejubilee #jubileetree

Notes to editors

Images are available via the following link: <https://we.tl/t-GzWtkRYah8>

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