



**\*\*UNDER STRICT EMBARGO 0001 BST TUESDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2022\*\***

## **THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY "TURNS BLUE" FOR PLYMOUTH KELP FOREST DEDICATION**

On Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September, the Kelp Forests off Plymouth will be dedicated to Her Majesty as part of The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) in a special ceremony to highlight the importance of kelp as an environmental treasure which fringes much of the UK's coastline.

Kelp forests are some of the most diverse and productive ecosystems on earth. In the UK, kelp forests cover an area similar in size to the nation's woodlands – estimated to be 3.2 million hectares or 13.2% of the UK's land surface. Just like forests on land, kelp plays a crucial role in the regulation of our atmosphere by absorbing carbon dioxide.

Led by Lewis Pugh, QGC Ambassador and UN Patron of the Oceans, a wild swimming relay will take place in the waters surrounding Plymouth Sound - the UK's first National Marine Park - ahead of an unveiling ceremony overlooking the spectacular seafront.

Home to the Royal Navy, Sailors and Royal Marines from HMNB Devonport will start the relay by delivering a plaque to Lewis and a group of wild swimmers who will swim it to shore. The plaque will be passed to children who will swim the length of the Tinside Lido to deliver it to the Naval Base Commander, who will then present it to Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant, to finally be unveiled by the Mayor of Plymouth.

Members of the Plymouth community are invited to gather around the harbour to help celebrate this unique marine dedication as part of The Queen's Green Canopy and to cheer on the wild swimming relay. Open water or wild swimming is a popular activity in Plymouth Sound, with over 30,000 members in the Devon and Cornwall Wild Swimming club.

### **Lewis Pugh, QGC Ambassador and UN Patron of the Oceans, said:**

"We are thrilled to dedicate The Kelp Forests off Plymouth to Her Majesty in honour of her Platinum Jubilee. Kelp is a hidden wonder – it's magic is largely unseen. Kelp Forests are extremely important ecosystems which are vital to the health of our oceans. It is wonderful to see Plymouth's environmental treasures recognised as part of The Queen's Green Canopy."

### **Professor Pippa Moore, Marine Ecologist at Newcastle University, said:**

"The UK's kelp forests cover an area of approximately two million hectares, supporting high levels of diversity with single kelp plants providing a home for over 50 species and 50,000 organisms. Providing habitat and food for a wide range of crabs, lobsters, fish and marine mammals, kelp also plays an important role in protecting our coasts from storms, cycling nutrients and acting as blue carbon donors. Indeed, it is estimated that kelp forests provide millions of pounds worth of goods and services to the UK economy. It is therefore vital we protect and conserve these amazing habitats."

**Elaine Hayes, CEO of Plymouth Sound National Marine Park, said:**

“It’s such an honour to have the marine component of The Queen’s Green Canopy in Plymouth Sound National Marine Park. Here in Britain’s Ocean City we are dedicated to celebrating our amazing waterscape and to help locals and visitors alike, get in, on or under the water. The dedication of our kelp forests in this Platinum Jubilee year will help raise the profile of this iconic species that surrounds our islands and its importance to a wider public who rarely get to see kelp forests.”

**Background - Kelp Forests**

In the UK and Ireland alone, kelps are found along 12,000 km of coastline and predicted to inhabit an area of 9,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

Kelp is the name given to several species of large brown seaweed. Where conditions are right, kelp can form dense underwater forests. Like plants, kelp depends on sunlight for survival which means that they will only grow in shallow water, on hard and rocky surfaces where they can attach their root-like holdfasts around the rock.

Similar to mangroves and coral reefs in warmer waters, kelp forests are vital ecosystems which offer shelter to a host of animals, including marine mammals and birds. They are a critical foraging and nursery habitat for fish and shellfish - vital to the health of our oceans. Kelp plays a crucial role in the regulation of our atmosphere by absorbing carbon dioxide. They are also important buffers against storm surges, reducing the impact of waves and preventing coastal erosion.

Kelp only grows in the cool temperate and polar regions of the Earth. Global warming could change the distribution of kelp species or make the water too warm for them to survive in their current region.

**Plymouth – The UK’s first National Marine Park**

Plymouth is home to the UK’s first National Marine Park. The unique waters of Plymouth Sound have been instrumental in shaping the city and nation’s heritage, culture, wealth and security, as well as supporting over 1000 marine species beneath its waters. Its natural harbours are home to the largest naval base in Western Europe HMNB Devonport, commercial port, a centre of excellence for marine autonomy, and a hub for fishing, diving, sailing, paddle boarding, and wild swimming. Although Plymouth Sound already benefits from multiple marine protected area designations the National Marine Park will encourage greater prosperity and engagement with the marine environment helping more locals and visitors get in, on or under its waters. <https://plymouthsoundnationalmarinepark.com/>

**Background - 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. All across the UK people are invited to **“Plant a tree for the Jubilee”** to create a legacy in honour of The Queen’s leadership of the nation, which will benefit future generations.

With a focus on planting sustainably, 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.

***Over a million Jubilee trees were planted during the first planting season, from October 2021 to March 2022.***

As well as planting new trees, the QGC has dedicated a UK-wide network of 70 Ancient Woodlands and 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](http://www.queensgreencanopy.org)

### **The Queen's Green Canopy Partners**

Collaboration is central to the QGC. We are proud to work with **Cool Earth, The Royal Horticultural Society, The Woodland Trust, Trees for Cities, The Forest Canopy Foundation, DEFRA, The Tree Council, The Conservation Volunteers & 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 **Bloomberg Philanthropies, 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 and Bollinger** are Official Supporters.

## **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: @QGCcanopy*

*Facebook: @queensgreencanopy*

*LinkedIn: @queensgreencanopy*

Hashtags: #queensgreencanopy #plantatreeforthejubilee #jubileetrees

### **Notes to Editors**

The following material is available **under the same embargo - 0001 BST Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

- A video of Lewis Pugh swimming through the Kelp Forests off Plymouth:  
<https://we.tl/t-ig9ye10so8>
- A document with downloadable images and credits is attached separately

Media who are interested to attend this event are invited to contact Marnie Gaffney on the details below.

### **Media Contact**

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