

# West Midlands Greener Together Forum

31<sup>st</sup> March 2022



# Housekeeping

- Please stay on mute when in the main room
- Please respect all opinions and allow opportunity for all to speak when in the breakout rooms
- To ask questions, please use Pigeonhole to ensure questions are not missed in the chat
- No scheduled breaks but please feel free to step away when needed



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**WMFORUM**

# Agenda

18:00 – 18:20 – Introduction to the Forum by Ed Cox, Director of Strategy, Integration and Net Zero, WMCA

18:20 – 18:40 – Breakout rooms to discuss Forum Logistics

18:40 – 19:10 – Tree and hedge planting across the region – presentations by Severn Trent, Birmingham Tree People, WMCA, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and The Woodland Trust

19:10 – 19:40 – Breakout rooms to discuss tree and hedge planting

19:40 – 20:00 – Any other questions and wrap up

# Introduction to the Forum

## Purpose

Bring together representatives of the WMCA, with all those across the region who are committed to cutting carbon emissions and enhancing the natural environment to discuss, collaborate and debate different initiatives.

Space for EVERYONE to update one another about their activities to achieve net zero.

## Membership

**Open to everyone**, with no limit to the number of members. Ensure that voices within the Forum are balanced and **everyone gets the opportunity to raise their ideas and concerns**.

## Format

- Meetings held **four times a year** for 2 hours between 6-8pm
- Hybrid meeting approach with in-person and online joining options
- Meeting will move around the WMCA area
- WMCA will provide administrative support, with the **agenda open for anyone to bring relevant items to the meeting**

## Roles and Responsibilities

- **All to contribute** information, specialist knowledge, expertise, ideas and learning to drive forward discussion and decision-making; members are there to collaborate rather than represent the interests of their own organisation
- Other specific roles and responsibilities to be discussed as the Forum evolves e.g. co-convenor roles
- To **contribute to the agenda setting** for each meeting

## Principles and Ground rules

- Participants will adopt a partnership ethos that stresses **inclusivity, openness, and transparency** in its deliberations, and which drives positive action and improvement as a result of its decisions.
- Every meeting will be engaging, strategic, positive, and focussed on achieving clear outcomes.
- If conflicts of interest occur, participants will be open and honest in order to resolve any issues.
- Agendas will be circulated a week in advance of the meeting with action points showing the individuals/organisations responsible will be circulated within a week of the meeting.

# Ricky Dallow

## Forestry Creation Manager

### Severn Trent Water

SEVERN

TRENT

To ask a question  
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# What are Tiny Forests?

Severn Trent are the **nature and carbon neutral supporter** of the **2022 Commonwealth Games**, and will be **planting 72 Tiny Forests** across region. Each to represent a territory or country within the Commonwealth Games



- 200msq planting of 600 native trees, based on the 'Miyawaki' Method
- Involves community engagement, volunteering & creation of forest schools
- Future monitoring of Carbon, Biodiversity, Air Quality with tree keeper teams





# What are STW Legacy Forests?

- Creation of 2022 acres of legacy forest around the Midlands, to leave a carbon neutral legacy for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games



## Where have we planted so far?

- Walsall
- Wombourne
- Quinton
- Shirley Heath





# How can you get involved?

- <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/severn-trent-b2022-commonwealth-games-with-birmingham-city-council-tickets-301549381317?aff=erelexpmlt>
- Tiny Forest Planting Days remaining:
- 9<sup>th</sup> April – Derby
- 11<sup>th</sup> April – Lichfield
- 14<sup>th</sup> April - Solihull



# Tonia Clark

## Chair of Birmingham Tree People



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# Jackie Homan

## Head of Environment

### WMCA

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# Natural Environment Plan

Our first Natural Environment Plan was published in September '21. It covers four priority areas:

- Widening access to green and blue spaces
- Increasing tree and hedgerow planting
- Promoting wildlife corridors
- Recognising the importance of supporting green finance and behaviour change





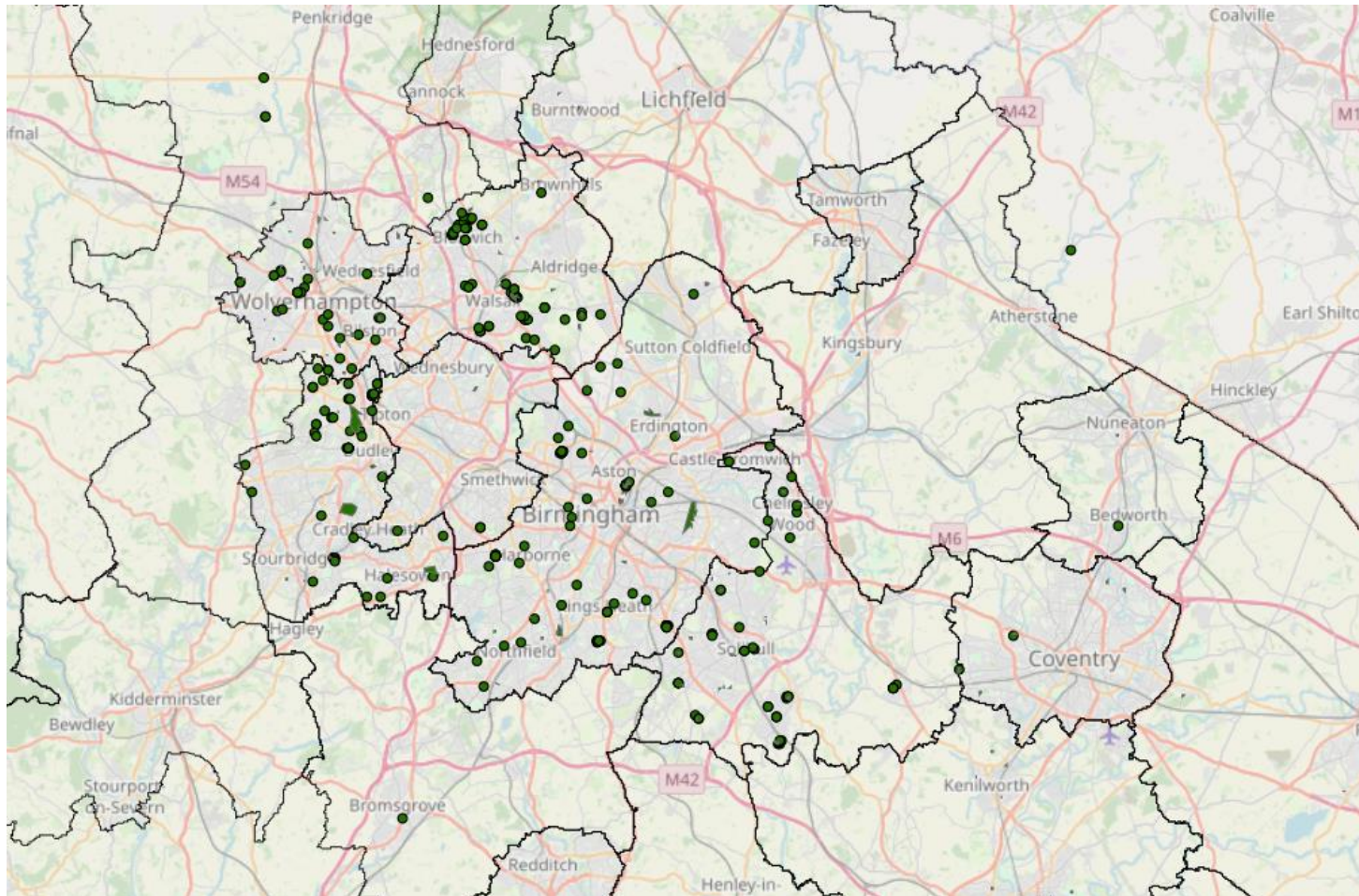
# Virtual Forest



80,887

Trees have been planted as of yesterday

# Virtual Forest



## Map Your Trees!

### Steps For Registering Your Tree(s) Planting:

1. Locate where you planted your tree(s) on the map by using the 'Locate Me' button or searching for an address in the address bar.
2. Select to draw either an areas of trees or a single tree from the "Map Your Tree" widget on the right hand side.
3. Draw the location on the map.
4. Complete the form, adding a picture if you would like.
5. Click 'Save'.
6. Your planting is registered!

Single trees



Tree

Hedges

# Shameena Villars

## Environmental Project Manager

### Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

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# 'Planting Our Future' in a

- SMBC have committed to planting **250,000 trees over 10 years** through local engagement with schools, residents, businesses and community groups
- The '**Planting Our Future**' campaign aims to encourage residents to engage with tree planting projects
- Offer support to private land owners who wish to plant trees
- Promote the numerous benefits trees provide (including increasing biodiversity, capturing carbon & reducing pollution levels).





# The Last Two Years

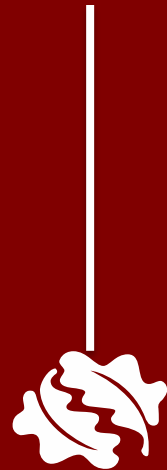
- Over **51,000** trees planted
- Over **30 community events**
- Engaged with **over 450 volunteers** (including planting the first 'Common wealth Legacy Forest with Severn Trent)
- Visited and planted within **10 schools** including raising environmental awareness and discussing the benefits of trees
- Partnered with some wonderful organisations, such as **Severn Trent** and the **National Trust!**
- Approx. 500 trees planted for the **Queens Green Canopy** Campaign



# Building Back Better with Trees

Nick Sandford

Regional External Affairs Officer – Midlands and East



WOODLAND  
TRUST

# The Woodland Trust

- UK's largest woodland conservation charity
- Over 500,000 members and supporters
- Own and manage over 1000 woods
- Our vision: A UK rich in woods and trees





# Community Tree Packs

- Packs of 30, 105 or 420 tree saplings
- Available to schools, parish/town councils & community groups
- 100% funded by corporate partners
- A variety of species mixes
- Simple on-line ordering twice a year



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# Work In The West Midlands

Birmingham Trees for Life

Policy work and planting in Wolverhampton

Tree planting partnership with Solihull MBC

ItreeEco Survey with Black Country Consortium

Supplying trees to Sandwell MBC

Supporting WMCA's tree planting ambitions



## West Midlands Natural Environment Plan

- 19 million trees planted by 2041
- 5.7 million trees by 2026
- A new Mayor's tree nursery established
- 72 new "Tiny Forests" across West Mids
- Developing further the "Virtual Forest"







# Notes from 31<sup>st</sup> March Forum meeting



West Midlands  
Combined Authority



**WEST MIDLANDS**  
Greener Together

# Forum logistics

Discussions in breakout rooms;

- Forum should be hybrid for attendees to attend in-person or online
- Rolling co-convenor to involve a range of people and interests
- Forum to move around the region to allow local community groups and public to attend
- Meetings should be more than 4 times a year to discuss important topics – should be 6-8 meetings a year
- Meetings to start later in the evening from 7-9pm
- Attendees should feel ownership of the Forum and need to make sure there are action points
- Thought needs to go into how this group feeds into the WMCA Environment and Energy Board and how to influence policy makers
- Newsletter/ bulletin to be shared with updates, funding opportunities, project updates
- WMCA have a voice to government and Forum should focus on topics attendees want to lobby for to prevent this turning into similar Forums
- Networking opportunities and sharing of best practice at each meeting
- All questions submitted should be answered

## WMCA response

Thank you for all of your thoughts on the Forum, we have updated the Terms of Reference to include your feedback in line with what we have capacity to support. These can be found on the website here; <https://beta.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/environment-and-energy/west-midlands-greener-together-forum/>



# Tree & Hedge planting

Discussions in breakout rooms;

- Difficulty surrounding land, access and regulations – scope for a programme to bring organisations together to submit planting programme.
  - WMCA Environment Team have submitted a bid into the Woodland Trusts' Emergency Tree Fund to create a West Midlands Forest Partnership. The Partnership would aim to create a regional focus to tree and hedge planting and to complete an i-tree assessment of current tree stock, similar to the assessment in the Black Country. We should know the outcome in June and would look to increase team capacity to lead on this work.
- Tools libraries for the community to borrow tools to plant trees
  - The WMCA Environment Team will have a conversation with the Active Wellbeing Society who have several '[Share Shacks](#)' in Birmingham and North Solihull. The WMCA will look into including community reuse hub as part of our circular economy work, more information on our circular economy routemap can be found [here](#).
- Issue with tree nurseries keeping up with supply and need to set up local tree nurseries to be more self sufficient
  - In the WMCA Natural Environment Plan we have committed to creating a West Midlands tree nursery and will work with partners to progress this. More information on our Natural Environment Plan can be found [here](#).
- How can we work with bigger landowners, who can make a bigger difference than any small group could?
  - In the WMCA Natural Environment Plan we have committed to hosting a regional landowners summit to promote collaboration and bring forward land for trees and other biodiversity projects.

Areas for the Forum to progress;

- Funding available for tree planting but more support needed for street trees and for ongoing management
- Emphasis needs to be on protecting existing trees, especially with new developments and protecting against vandalism
- Need targets and incentives for natural regeneration
- Knowledge sharing and capacity building for community groups, councils and the general public on best practice for improving biodiversity, planting street trees, growing trees from seed, restoration of hedgerows and knowledge of existing habitats

# Topics for future Forum meetings

- Retrofit
- Transport – how to encourage sustainable transport, increase biodiversity along transport routes
- Green jobs and skills
- Education – information for the general public on climate change, build community knowledge

The next meeting shall be held in June. The meeting shall be hybrid with attendees able to join online via Microsoft Teams or in person.

In person location and agenda TBC.