



Saving Devon's Treescapes Bovey Tracey proposal for planting

Introduction from the Climate Emergency Bovey and Heathfield (CEBH) Group

On behalf of the CEBH group, Councillor Fletcher would like the Recreation, Parks & Property Committee to consider the below proposal in light of the Town Council's declaration to aim to be carbon neutral by 2025.

Introduction from Saving Devon's Treescapes

Saving Devon's Treescapes is a new initiative led by Devon Wildlife Trust on behalf of the Devon Ash Dieback Resilience Forum and supported by National Lottery Heritage Fund as well as other funders. It is a partnership project covering the whole of Devon.

Right now, Devon's Treescapes are facing unprecedented threats and have been in decline for decades. Ash dieback is estimated to kill 90% of Devon's ash trees in the coming years. Without concerted, sustained efforts to replace them, there will be profound impacts on the many other species that they support.

Over the next five years, Saving Devon's Treescapes aims to plant and nurture 250,000 trees outside of existing woodlands across Devon. The project will be advocating for the 3-2-1 principle where three new trees are planted for every large ash tree lost, two for a medium ash tree and one for a small ash tree. Ash dieback will affect everyone and all communities can help provide the solutions, which is why Saving Devon's Treescapes is excited to work with community groups in Bovey Tracey to make new plantings possible.

Planting trees also has a massive environmental benefit. Trees are able to store carbon as they grow, removing it from the atmosphere. According to [ecomatcher.com](https://www.ecomatcher.com/how-to-calculate-co2-sequestration) (<https://www.ecomatcher.com/how-to-calculate-co2-sequestration>) one tree is able to sequester approximately 23 kilograms of carbon per year, and about 227 kilograms over its lifetime, as a conservative estimate. This proposal is for at least 225 trees, which would approximately equate to 51 tonnes of carbon removed from the atmosphere during the trees' lifetime.



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Proposal sites

1. Rendell's Meadow

Rendell's Meadow is an area of parkland owned by Bovey Tracey Town Council (BTTC). It is predominantly a grassland park with commanding views toward Dartmoor and the Bovey Basin. It is bounded by hedgerows and is benefitted by supporting clusters of trees sympathetically planted soon after the development was completed.



The proposal for planting at Rendell's Meadow is to plant small clusters of trees, mirroring the approach that has already been adopted on the site. The circles outline two possible sites of approximately 5-7 trees which will enhance the environmental value of the space and its special qualities. The trees to be planted would be similar in size to those already on the site to avoid impacting the view (see below section on Species).

2. Grassed area which is entered through the pathway at the junction between Le Moly-Littry Way and Churchfields Drive.



The proposal on this site is similar to the approach at Rendell's Meadow. The circle outlines an area where we propose a community orchard could be established. Orchard trees would be in keeping with the surroundings and provide fruit for local community residents. At this site there is also a large ash tree which is displaying very early signs of ash dieback. At some point in the future this may require attention if the disease progresses. Following the 3-2-1 approach of the project, this is the ideal site to plant at least three replacement trees for the one ash tree that will eventually be lost, enabling the new trees to become established before removal of the ash tree is required.





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Species

The trees which are proposed to be planted will be a combination of fruit trees which will be provided through funding from Bovey Tracey Town Council, and UK native species provided by the Saving Devon's Treescapes project.

We will be able to recommend local orchard tree varieties, pollination groups, and rootstocks. A 'half standard' rootstock (M26 or M106) would be most suitable for community orchards, enabling residents to access the fruit from ground level.

The Saving Devon's Treescapes project can provide species such as Hazel, Rowan and Field Maple. The maximum height of these trees is <10 metres, although this can be managed with pruning.

These species have been chosen as they are characteristic of the local landscape and have a small tree / large shrub growth form. This will enhance the special qualities of the sites and avoid potential conflict with neighbouring properties.

Maintenance

To ensure the trees have a long and healthy life, they will need regular maintenance, especially during their establishment phase (five years). This will involve activities such as regular weeding and removing tree guards. Watering is not recommended unless extreme drought conditions are experienced in the first year after planting. The CEBH group will commit to the regular maintenance of the trees beyond the initial planting, which is vital to give these trees the best possible start to life.

Additional trees

In addition to these plantings, the CEBH group has also offered to act as a distribution hub for the Saving Devon's Treescapes Free Tree Scheme. The new Riverside Community Centre is the perfect location to support the distribution of free trees to the local community.

The Free Tree Scheme will provide approximately 200 trees in the first year which can then be distributed to individuals throughout Bovey Tracey who have space to plant a tree in their garden, or in a communal space where they have permission to do so. The trees will come with guidance including how to plant a tree as well as all the things to think about before planting. The trees will also come with protection such as tubes or spirals to help it in its first few years of establishment.

These two schemes combined will bring around 225 new trees into Bovey Tracey outside of woodlands, improving wildlife in the area, as well as contributing to combating the climate emergency through carbon sequestration.



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Timescales

The key date by which the results of the consultation would need to be obtained and analysed in order for the Committee to make a decision on whether to proceed with planting at the sites will be at the Recreation, Parks & Property Committee meeting on 19th October 2020. Should the Town Council decide to commence planting, the trees would then be planted in the autumn.

For any further questions about Saving Devon's Treescapes please contact Rosie Cotgreave at Rcotgreave@devonwildlifetrust.org

Recommendations

Given that the proposals include planting of around 21-25 trees at two of the Town Council's green spaces, the Recreation, Parks & Property Committee are asked to consider:

1. Whether it initially supports in principle the planting of the trees at the locations specified as part of the Town Council's contribution to combating climate change and increasing biodiversity.
2. If so, and in particular given the nature of the site at Rendell's Meadow, how the Town Council might best consult with the public on its plans (see Appendix 1), to ensure any concerns are taken into consideration before a firm decision is made. (*Note: whilst those closest to the sites should be the focus of the consultation, discussions had at the CEBH group have indicated that other residents do also use the sites and that it might be useful to have a wider consultation whereby residents specify their location relative to the sites to enable the Town Council to understand any issues both due to proximity and also use*).
3. To support the distribution of South Devon's Treescapes Free Tree Scheme and in addition to be supplemented by a small supply of 'wildflower seeds' (donated by Bovey Tracey Town Council) and appropriate supporting planting guidance sheets. If approved, to be managed from volunteer operated sessions at the Riverside Community Centre following the opening of the centre.