



Press Release
28th November 2014

40 YEARS OF MAKING TREES MATTER

40th National Tree Week Launches Tomorrow *Saturday 29th November – Sunday 7th December*

The Tree Council is calling on people to improve their neighbourhoods through joining together and tree planting during the 40th National Tree Week, Saturday 29 November to Sunday 7 December. The Tree Council's National Tree Week is the UK's largest celebration of trees and the start of the winter tree planting season.

The first-ever National Tree Week was held in 1975 to make Britain more tree-conscious, encourage tree planting and awareness of the importance of proper care and maintenance of trees. The Prime Minister at the time, Harold Wilson, planted a Holm oak at Chequers and Margaret Thatcher, then Leader of the Opposition, planted a Lime tree on land adjacent to Grendon St, NW6. Every Prime Minister since then has responded to the invitation to plant a tree at Chequers during National Tree Week, with the exception thus far of only the present incumbent, David Cameron.

At a time when more than 90%* of the population lives in towns and cities, National Tree Week is an important reminder that trees are our neighbours as much as other people, and a great chance for communities to improve their local area. Each year, The Tree Council's member organisations, 8,000 volunteer Tree Wardens, schools and community groups support the initiative by planting around a million trees. Events can be found on The Tree Council website, along with tips on organising your own successful tree planting activities and more activities are advertised locally, using the downloadable, specially-designed poster. <http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/Take-Part/National-Tree-Week>.

National Tree Week aims to inspire people from all walks of life, culture and faith to come together with a common aim of improving their environment for both people and trees. Communities can take action by planting trees or tending the trees they already have or raising tree awareness through woodland walks, fairs, workshops and local events.

Upcoming events as part of the National Tree Week 2014 include:

-  Fruit Tree Planting at Common Ground Communal Garden, Sheffield on 29th November
-  Tree Planting at the Falkland Estate, Fife on 29th November
-  Children's Big Tree Plant in Harmony Woods, Andover on 1st December
-  Tree-Huggers Ball at the Herefordshire United Club, Hereford on 6th December
-  Tree Identification Walk at Stroud Green, London on 7th December

Pauline Buchanan Black, Director-General of The Tree Council said: 'From joining activities and meeting neighbours to planting a tree of their own, we aim to inspire people to grow not only new, healthy trees but

together, grow the recognition that working together makes more sense than working alone and grow a more favourable environment for both people and trees. We need to '

Forestry Minister, Dan Rogerson added: "Trees are of vital social, environmental and economic importance. That's why we are planting one million new trees in towns and cities through the Big Tree Plant, and through our Rural Development Programme, are on track to have planted at least 10 million new trees in England by the end of this Parliament. National Tree Week is a brilliant opportunity for families and communities to come together and celebrate through tree planting events."

*2010 Defra statistics <http://bit.ly/1qgYMMG>

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. For **further information**, please contact (press enquiries only)

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2. National Tree Week

The **40th annual National Tree Week will run from 29th November to 7th December 2014** and marks the launch of the bare root tree planting season. Forty years ago, *Plant a Tree in '73* carried a message of landscape repopulation in the wake of Dutch Elm Disease, which had already wiped out more than 20 million of our most significant landscape trees. The year-long operation was run collaboratively by organisations under the banner of the *Green Survival Campaign* which, the following January, generated *The Tree Council* to carry on the work (*Plant Some More in '74*). **National Tree Week** became the annual celebration to raise awareness and appreciation as well as encourage planting every year since.

Visit **The Tree Council's website**, <http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/> for details of **local National Tree Week events** and tips on tree planting and aftercare. Event information is also available from the Tree Council infoline, 020 7940 8180 (office hours)

3. The Tree Council

Environmental charity **The Tree Council** is the UK's lead charity for trees in all settings, urban and rural, promoting their importance in a changing environment and it works in partnership with communities, organisations and government to make trees matter to everyone. As the coalition body for over 180 organisations working together for trees, it focuses on getting more trees, of the right kind, in the right places; better care for all trees of all ages and inspiring effective action for trees.

It works with its national volunteer **Tree Warden Scheme** and member organisations to engage people in biodiversity and environmental issues and to promote planting and conservation of trees and woods in town and country. A major part of this is achieved through its annual **Community Action Programme** that includes Walk in the Woods month, Seed Gathering Season and **National Tree Week** (first run in March 1975), and through supporting groups organising local events.

It operates a tree-planting grants programme for UK schools and communities to plant trees and create woodland habitats, as well as working on an agenda for change that includes its annual Tree Care Campaign, the Green Monuments Campaign and Hedge Tree Campaign.