

The Charter for Trees, Woods and People



Short title: Tree Charter

Website: treecharter.uk | **Social Media hashtag:** #TreeCharter | **Email:** enquiries@treecharter.uk

Call to action: Sign the Tree Charter and we'll plant a tree | **CTA link:** treecharter.uk/sign

See Appendix B – Plant a tree terms & conditions

Project Summary

More than 70 organisations from across multiple sectors have joined forces to lead society in creating a Charter for Trees, Woods and People that will guide policy and practice in the UK, enabling a future in which trees and people stand stronger together. Trees, woods and forest livelihoods in the UK are facing more threats today than at any time in history, yet are consistently undervalued and overlooked in decision-making and practice in all areas of society. The charter will be launched on November 6th 2017, the 800th anniversary of the historic 1217 Charter of the Forest which established rights of access and use for the Royal Forests in England.

What will the charter say?

The Tree Charter will set out how people and trees should be able to benefit each other. The guidelines and principles it contains will be applicable to policy, business practice, communities and individual action. The Tree Charter will consist of 10 Principles, each dealing with a different aspect of the relationship between people and trees in modern society. Under each Principle there will be about 10 articles that give guidelines for how society could achieve the Principle.

The Principles have been defined by more than 50,000 stories and survey responses received from the public since the launch of the campaign in January 2016. (See **Appendix A – Tree Charter Principles**)

Who is writing the Tree Charter?

The 70+ steering group organisations are collaborating to draft and agree the articles of the charter, with one relevant organisation leading on the development of guidance around each specific area (eg planting/protection/urban trees). This will ensure that the guidance is grounded in knowledge and expertise, and that the actions and behaviours suggested are agreed to be positive steps by representatives of many sectors and interest groups across UK society.

How will the stories and survey responses be reflected in the final charter?

The stories and survey responses collected in the consultation phase are being analysed to identify themes, priorities and language trends. The findings will continue to inform the process as the articles are developed. The steering group organisations will ensure that suggestions, priorities and concerns around the future of trees and woods raised in the consultation are addressed in the articles, and that the language used reflects how people in everyday life talk about those issues.

Stories will be drawn upon to illustrate what the Principles of the Tree charter mean to people in reality, showing the issues that people are facing that need addressing, and the ways that trees can improve lives if society stands up for trees.

What is the Tree Charter Art Programme?

There will be 8 artists in residence around the country, working around different themes to do with the value of trees. Each will undertake 6 weeks of activity including public engagement workshops and talks

between March- November 2017, and much of the work produced will be showcased on or near sites hosting Tree Charter Markers in National Tree Week 2017.

An 'Art & Heritage Trail' will be created to highlight sites, artworks and exhibitions around the UK that reveal the important role of trees and woods in our culture. This will be promoted in the Summer issue of LEAF! newspaper including a map of the trail, and an online version will be on treecharter.uk.

What will the legacy of the Tree Charter be?

The launch of the Tree Charter is a beginning, rather than the end. Although it will not be adopted as a whole into law, it will exist in the public domain with a huge mandate from the huge number of organisations who contributed to it, and the thousands of people across the UK who have signed it. It will become a benchmark for policy and practice to do with trees, ensuring that everyone in society knows what is needed to ensure trees and people benefit each other. This will be a powerful tool in campaigning, and a useful and easy way for businesses, institutions, communities and individuals to make decisions that are good for trees and people.

To keep the Tree Charter and its Principles in public consciousness, there will be a physical legacy (a national monument) and a behavioural one (tradition).

National Monument - Tree Charter Markers

In November 2017 carved wooden poles made from oak from the Crown Estate (carved by artist Simon Clements at the Sylva Wood Centre) will be unveiled in sites across the UK to provide a visible legacy in the landscape for the Tree Charter. There will be 10 Principle Poles around the country - one for each of the Principles of the Tree Charter - and a larger Champion Pole in Lincoln, where the Tree Charter will be launched on 6th November.

- Lincoln Castle
- Alder Hey Children's Hospital
- Cardiff –Bute Park
- Belvoir Forest Park, NI
- Glasgow - Langs Craig
- Sherwood Forest, Nottingham
- Manchester – City Forest Park
- New Forest National Park Visitor Centre
- Sylva Wood Centre, Abingdon
- Durham – Burnhall Viewing Point
- Heartwood

Tree Charter Legacy trees

800 community markers (evoking the 800 years between the two charters), in the form of semi standard trees, which will be given to Charter Branches, community groups, universities schools and colleges. These will be planted during National Tree Week 2017 (November 25th – December 3rd)

An annual moment for trees, woods and people

Each year, the steering group organisations will convene to review the 'state of the nation' in relation to the principles of the Tree Charter. A joint statement on 6th November (or in the lead up to it) will raise a particular issue of concern and where appropriate kick-start a joint campaign with a public call to action.

Community activity for National Tree Week (last Saturday of November to first Sunday of December) will be promoted on this day, allowing 2 weeks to build up to National Tree Week, which will always start with a 'National Tree Action Day' (name TBC) for everyone in the UK. This will become the equivalent of 'Arbor Day' for the UK.

Timeline

March 2017: 10 Tree Charter Principles announced

Announcement of these Principles will be an opportunity to build public awareness of the upcoming launch of the Tree Charter. We will also launch our 'Sign the Charter' movement, where we ask people to sign to support the Tree Charter. For each signature of support, a tree will be planted.

April – October 2017

Building the Tree Charter

There is a lead organisation for each theme of the Tree Charter, who will coordinate relevant organisations to bring together expert knowledge to draft the articles of the Tree Charter.

Art Programme

Art residencies around the UK, Art & Heritage Trail launched early Summer.

Charter Branch activities

Charter Branches will be running a huge number of local activities and events – some supported by Tree Charter funding – to build grassroots awareness of and support for the Tree Charter

Launching the Tree Charter: November 6th 2017

A national event in Lincoln Castle, attended and promoted by representatives of organisations involved will mark the launch of the Tree Charter and the Champion pole. The Tree Charter will be launched and accessible online, and the physical copies of the charter will be installed in key sites across all four countries of the UK.

November 25th – December 3rd 2017: National Tree Week

Unveiling the Principles Poles and National Tree Day

On the first day of National Tree Week, on the 25th November 2017, we will hold the first National Tree Day. This will be a regional launch for the Tree Charter and 10 Principle poles. From this point on, every year, there will be a day of tree planting, tree dressing and story sharing across the UK at the start of National Tree Week.

What can people do?

- **Sign the Tree Charter** – treecharter.uk/sign
- **Collect signatures** from family, friends and colleagues. LEAF! Newspaper will feature a form to collect signatures. Alternatively, a signature collection form can be downloaded and printed from treecharter.uk/charter-champion-resources/ and then returned to the Woodland Trust when complete to strengthen the charter.
- **Spread the word** about the Tree Charter on social media using #TreeCharter
- **Get involved in a local Charter Branch** (or start one if there isn't one) to build engagement with the charter campaign among the local community, and to explore ways to improve things locally for trees and people. At the end of the project active Charter Branches will have the opportunity to claim a Tree Charter Legacy Tree for their community or institution.
- **Go to an event or exhibition** to explore and celebrate our tree heritage. treecharter.uk/events-calendar/

Appendix A: Tree Charter principles

We believe in:

1. Thriving habitats for diverse species

Urban and rural landscapes should have a rich diversity of trees, hedges and woods to provide homes, food and safe routes for our native wildlife. We want to make sure future generations can enjoy the animals, birds, insects, plants and fungi that depend upon diverse habitats.

2. Planting for the future

As the population of the UK expands, we need more woods, street trees, hedges and individual trees across the landscape. We want all planting to be environmentally and economically sustainable with the future needs of local people and wildlife in mind.

3. Celebrating the cultural impact of trees

Trees, woods and forests have shaped who we are. They are woven into our art, literature, folklore, place names and traditions. It's our responsibility to preserve and nurture this rich heritage for future generations.

4. A thriving forestry sector that delivers for the UK

We want forestry in the UK to be more visible, understood and supported so that it can achieve its huge potential and provide jobs, environmental benefits and economic opportunities for all.

Careers in woodland management, arboriculture and the wood supply chain should be attractive choices and provide development opportunities for individuals, communities and businesses.

5. Better protection for important trees and woods

Ancient woodland covers just 2% of the UK and there are currently more than 700 individual woods under threat from planning applications because sufficient protection is not in place.

We want stronger legal protection for trees and woods that have special cultural, scientific or historic significance to prevent the loss of precious and irreplaceable ecosystems and living monuments.

6. Enhancing new developments with trees

We want new residential areas and developments to be balanced with green infrastructure, making space for trees. Planning regulations should support the inclusion of trees as natural solutions to drainage, cooling, air quality and water purification. Long term management should also be considered from the beginning to allow trees to mature safely in urban spaces.

7. Understanding and using the natural health benefits of trees

Having trees nearby leads to improved childhood fitness, and evidence shows that people living in areas with high levels of greenery are 40% less likely to be overweight or obese. We believe that spending time among trees should be promoted as an essential part of a healthy physical and mental lifestyle and a key element of healthcare delivery.

8. Access to trees for everyone

Everyone should have access to trees irrespective of age, economic status, ethnicity or disability. Communities can be brought together in enjoying, celebrating and caring for the trees and woods in their neighbourhoods. Schoolchildren should be introduced to trees for learning, play and future careers.

9. Addressing threats to woods and trees through good management

Good management of our woods and trees is essential to ensure healthy habitats and economic sustainability. We believe that more woods should be taken into management and plans should be based upon evidence of threats and the latest projections of climate change. Ongoing research into the causes of threats and solutions should be better promoted.

10. Strengthening landscapes with woods and trees

Trees and woods capture carbon, lower flood risk, and supply us with clean air, clean water, shade, shelter, recreation opportunities and homes for wildlife. We believe that the governments must adopt policies and encourage new markets which reflect the value of these ecosystem services instead of taking them for granted.

Appendix B – Sign the Tree Charter and we'll plant a tree T&Cs

If someone signs the Tree Charter via the online form (treecharter.uk/sign) or offline (at an event or using a form from LEAF!) their name will be added to the ledger of signatories that will be archived with the physical Tree Charter and listed online.

From the announcement of the Principles in March 2017 we will also be stating that a tree will be planted to mark every name added to the charter. In practice these are trees that are being planted by the Woodland Trust and other organisations involved that are not already dedicated or funded.

The terms and conditions for this are listed below. This offer may not apply all through the year.

1. For every person signing the Tree Charter, online or offline, there will be tree planted designated as a Tree Charter Legacy Tree.
2. You must be over 18 to sign the Tree Charter.
3. Designated Charter Trees are being planted in various locations around the UK, in a variety of different environments and by a number of different organisations connected to the Tree Charter campaign.
4. There will be no Tree Charter Legacy Trees that correspond individually to persons signing the Tree Charter. The total number of signatories will simply be matched with the number of Charter trees planted. You can of course visit one of the locations to see our Tree Charter Legacy Trees.
5. Please note that not all trees planted will be on sites that are public.
6. It is intended that all trees will be planted by the end of the 2018-19 planting season (April 2019).
7. For details about locations and species planted for the Tree Charter email enquiries@treecharter.uk
8. We are unable to respond to requests for individual trees to be planted in a particular location or to be a particular species, although the Woodland Trust always looks to plant native species.