

Oxfordshire's Tree
Guardians Maximising
Community
Ownership and
Value

#### Who are TAPS



- ► TAPS is an inhouse team set up in November 2023
- The project aims to plant 4400 highway trees all over Oxfordshire over 4 years
- We have already planted over 1630 trees on the public highway
- Our services include community driven planting projects as well as strategic planting organised by us.
- Aftercare is a key part of our work ensuring high survival rates for the trees - 94%

# Growing future "favourite" Trees in our Streets

- Thriving Helping the trees through their first difficult years on the streets.
- Mature Ensuring the trees are set up to succeed as street trees for decades to come.
- Belonging To the people/community
- Belonging To the place/environment



### Thriving

- ► TAPS provide 3 years of aftercare including watering, formative pruning, topping up of mulch and responding to ad hoc issues e.g. loose ties
- ► This helps the tree to survive BUT when the community gets involved it THRIVES 94% survival rate.
- Tree guardians are key to this aspect of the project's longterm success.



# Reaching maturity

- After 3 years of aftercare, the trees are adopted onto the highway management scheme inspected every 4 years.
- Hopefully the tree has now been "adopted" by the community, and they are invested in its future.



# Belonging to the community - Issues

- First year issues a lack of communication
- A lack of transparency regarding decision making
- Disempowering parish councils
- Were we being democratic?
- Problems arising from poor communication vandalism; distrust in the council; disempowerment



#### Belonging to the Community - lessons learnt

- Strategy (70%) vs submissions (30%)
- Importance of communication letter drops
- Residents taking ownership before the tree has even been planted - impacting on site and species selection.
- Being visible on multiple site visits an opportunity for face-to-face discussion
- Listening and not planting!



Reference: Tree Planting 2025/26

County Hall New Road OX1 1ND



**Environment and Highways** 

August 2025

Oxfordshire County Council's Tree Service is planning to plant trees in your local area. Yo are receiving this letter as there are proposed planting sites within the vicinity of this

To keep you informed, we are sharing our proposed plan, which can be viewed online by scanning the QR code or at this web address: tinyurl.com/TreePlotterOCC



Username: Tree Planting

Password: oxontrees

We have verified that all locations are on land designated as Highway Maintainable at Publ Expense (HMPE) and all sites will be surveyed for viability prior to any planting, including utilities surveys - the plan is live and will reflect any changes made as a result. We expect the final number of planting sites to be 1100

The locations will be subject to small adjustments by operatives on the day of planting. We have determined the maximum canopy space suitable for each location which can be seen on the proposed plan. We have not selected tree species at this stage. We plan to begin planting in November

We welcome any feedback you may have regarding the tree planting proposals. Feedback can be shared by emailing tree.planting@oxfordshire.gov.uk. Feedback will be considered until 31/08/25.

All trees we plant receive three years of aftercare from our in-house team. If you would like

to support these efforts and help us water newly planted trees, please get in touch with us at tree.planting@oxfordshire.gov.uk to become a Tree Guardian

Tree Aftercare & Planting Service (TAPS)



Email: tree.planting@oxfordshire.gov.uk





# Belonging to the Environment

- By this we mean being well suited to the place
- Right tree, right place
- Again Listening to the community -"they've just run a gas line through there"; "there used to be a lovely elm tree here" etc.
- Not blocking light, sightlines, street lights, culverts etc.
- Communities directing priorities





Support our Tree Aftercare and Planting Service by watering this tree in between their visits



### Tree guardians - Formal

- 123 Official tree guardians have access to Treeplotter
- ▶ 571 watering trips recorded
- Help us prioritise those trees not being watered
- Watering tags direct people on how to become tree guardians.

### Tree Guardian recruitment

- Tree tags
- Climate action website
- Word of mouth
- Being visible on site multiple times throughout the year.
- Future plans

Garden/Biodiversity

#### **Become a Tree Guardian**





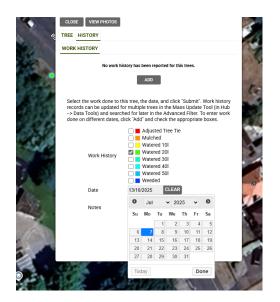
Become a tree guardian and join a network of volunteers looking after Oxfordshire's trees. Oxfordshire County Council has ambitious plans to plant thousands of new trees on public land, and you can help look after them! Young trees need regular weeding and daily watering in the spring and summer to help them establish and thrive.

Already know where a tree has been planted in your parish? Great! There's no formal signup needed so feel free to start watering. Over time there may be more opportunities for other volunteer activities, so check back for updates.

If you'd like to find your nearest community tree, get some advice, or just let the Tree

#### **Next steps**

For information, advice and supplies, email <a href="mailto:tree.planting@oxfordshire.gov.uk">tree.planting@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>



## Tree Guardians - Informal

- Please water me tags community made
- Tying/protecting trees informal
- Bottom left tree thriving despite drought









#### Final thoughts

- Creating "favourite" trees for the future
- Wanting people to be excited about street trees and adopt them as their own
- The importance of tree guardians (both formal and informal)









