

A man and a young girl are jumping over a large pile of autumn leaves in a forest. The man, wearing a green beanie and a grey sweater, is in mid-air with one leg extended. The girl, wearing a red sweater and tan pants, is also jumping. The background is a lush green forest with trees and foliage.

Bringing the Tree Charter to life: ***a toolkit***



Charter
for Trees, Woods
and People



WOODLAND
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Contents

Foreword	3
Principles.....	4
What are Charter Branches?.....	14
Defining your patch	17
Local events and activities – ideas	23
Virtual forest – the charter online	24
Money grows on trees	25
Raising funds.....	26

“We’re stronger together, people and trees...”

Foreword

The Charter for Trees, Woods and People (the Tree Charter) sets out the principles for a society in which people and trees can stand stronger together.

Inspired by the original 1217 Charter of the Forests, it is rooted in stories and memories gathered from people of all walks of life. These formed themes which developed into 10 guiding principles agreed upon by 70 different organisations and underpinned by research. Each articulates the relationship we all want between people and trees in the 21st century. Led by the Woodland Trust and involving a wide range of experts, enthusiasts and organisations, the charter has been developed as a positive response to the disconnection from nature that much of UK society is dealing with today. Our collective ambition is to put trees back where they belong - at the heart of our lives, communities and decision making.

How can we all meaningfully give something back in return for fresh air, food, resources, shelter, careers and inspiration? We hope this toolkit offers you a starting point. You’ll find a few suggestions on each page, but there are tonnes of different ways you can bring the charter’s principles to life - it’s up to you!

It’s taken 800 years to acknowledge the debt we owe to trees, and to establish a new accord between us and them. It’s critical now that the charter makes the shift from text, into the very fabric of society. From here on in, it is our attitude towards trees and woods, our behaviours, and our choices, that will make the Tree Charter’s ambitions a reality.

Principles



Sustain landscapes rich in wildlife.

Our future good means thinking in the round, adapting plans to what is on the ground.

A rich diversity of trees, hedges and woods provide homes, nourishment and safe spaces for all sorts of wildlife, including pollinators.

You could bring this principle to life in a range of ways. Here are just some ideas:

- Allow natural regeneration to thrive.
- Can you find ways to support focused tree planting, or to get involved in designing areas of habitat?
- Leave deadwood where it is - including ancient, veteran and standing dead trees. Are there local, certified suppliers for firewood?
- Show your support for agroforestry (growing and using trees and shrubs around or among crops or pastureland).





Plant for the future.

We will always owe thanks to those with the foresight and confidence to invest in the future.

The UK is one of the least wooded countries in Europe: a major shift in tree planting levels is urgently needed.

You could bring this principle to life in a range of ways. Here are just some ideas:

- Can you plant more trees in the community, as a community? Whether hedges or coppice woodlands, people of all ages take pride in their trees if they are involved in planting or management.
- Plant with purpose. Have you selected the right tree, for the right place?
- Healthy, vigorous trees with known provenance can thrive: make UK sourced and grown trees your first choice.
- Can you ask local schools if they incorporate tree planting with pupils? Where are the opportunities to learn about trees, forestry and good management near you? Help the next generation gain skills and knowledge about nature.





WITML / COLIN VARDELL

Grow forests of opportunity and innovation.

Trees reward us with fuel for enterprise, craft and invention, green energy and fires.

Working together will lead to more sustainable timber production, and build modern progressive forestry, arboriculture, construction, landscape architecture and conservation sectors.

You could bring this principle to life in a range of ways. Here are just some ideas:

- Responsible sourcing supports responsible management: do you always remember to choose certified timber products?
- Use your consumer power and choose forest-based products made from sustainable, certified, legal wood to support local business and artisans. Can you swap plastic for wood at home or at work?
- Do you know of forestry experts and professionals who can use training and further educational opportunities, or small business support?





PHILIP FORMBY/WTML

Protect irreplaceable trees and woods.

A quiet connection to the past, a sanctuary from 21st century life, a gift to our descendants.



Our oldest woods have witnessed history, and are still very relevant today. A country that cares for its future cares for its past.

You could bring this principle to life in a range of ways. Here are just some ideas:

- Have you had your say in your council's Local Plan or your community's neighbourhood plan? Your oldest trees and woods are valuable natural and historical assets as well as important ecosystems.
- Do you know where the precious trees are in your community? Mapping ancient woodland and trees, and the rest of the UK's treescapes, will make a real impact on their future.
- Trees take several years to establish, so why wait to plant the next generation?



Celebrate the power of trees to inspire.

Trees and woods have inspired artists, musicians and writers for centuries.



Check out your local library or book shop, theatres, museums, galleries, sculpture parks and even cinemas for inspiration, and deepen the emotional connection we all have with trees and woods - children and adults alike.

You could bring this principle to life in a range of ways. Here are just some ideas:

- How many writers and artists can you think of that include trees and woodland in their work?
- Can you invite your family and friends to join you in honouring pastimes and traditions like Tree Dressing Day, Apple Day, or wassailing?
- Don't forget that the deep roots of history and tradition cross cultural boundaries across the world. Could your local school or place of work do more to highlight the diverse cultural associations of trees?



Plan greener local landscapes.

Good landscapes of the future depend on care for trees today.



We should all have a right to influence decisions affecting the trees in our lives. The benefits of trees and woods are realised over long time periods, but are worth the investment.

You could bring this principle to life in a range of ways. Here are just some ideas:

- Have you spoken to your local planning authority to make sure trees and woodland contribute effectively to the Local Plan, neighbourhood plan and other plans in the area?
- Does your local area have a tree strategy? Maybe you can be part of developing one.
- Do you look out for (and respond to) planning applications that could threaten trees or woods? You can ensure existing trees and wooded areas are incorporated into development, and new planting is prioritised in development plans.



Recover health, hope and wellbeing with the help of trees.

Harness the healing power of trees.

Spending time with trees is a great habit to have. Trees and woods are not just a cosmetic feature, they are part of the efficient “natural health service” looking after whole communities.



- Healthcare and tree-care should go hand-in-hand. Does your local authority include trees where people live and work as part of its health and wellbeing strategy (or equivalent)?
- Do you get outdoors among trees as often as possible? Research shows this improves health and wellbeing by improving air quality, raising the spirits and encouraging healthy lifestyles.
- Can you encourage and enable cross-sector working between the health sector and the forestry, conservation and green space management sectors?
- What can you do to ensure the health benefits of trees form part of the curriculum in local schools?



WTML/MICHAEL HEFFERNAN

Make trees accessible to all.

There should be room for all of us under spreading canopies.

Everyone, no matter who they are or where they're from, should be able to enjoy and visit woods and trees. But not everyone knows about the opportunities to spend time among trees where they live and work.

- What are the travel options to the nearest accessible woods and green spaces with trees?
- Can you ask at your place of work or study about planting trees near where people live, work and play?
- Do you know about the local volunteering, socialising and exercising opportunities in woods or near trees?
- Are there privately owned woods that need upkeep?
Managing woodland, trees and hedges in the community can be incredibly rewarding.





Combat the threats to our habitats.

Enlightened management of woods will help ensure their future health.



Pests and diseases are a serious, increasing, threat. Rigorous biosecurity should be in place for all trees and timber. Some tree pests can also affect people, so it's important to know what to look for.

- Do you know how to identify tree pests and diseased trees?
- Interested in being part of the solution? Get involved in research and monitoring projects and report sightings, outbreaks or concerns.
- Do you manage or own woodland? Remember to promote good health with a mix of species and properly managed woods.
- What can you do to help to prevent the spread of tree pests and diseases?



ADAM BURTON/WTML

Strengthen our landscapes with trees.

The right tree in the right place earns its keep again and again.

Trees and wooded habitats provide many different benefits – like providing clean air and water and helping to stabilise soils - which improve all our lives. These are public goods, which public money should support.



- Do you know which tree species can offer the services you most need (like alleviating flood risk)?
- How can you promote agroforestry systems and using more trees and hedging in farming? As farmers and landowners benefit from woods, the country will be strengthened in the years ahead.
- Can you ask your MP about the Government's plans to increase the use of trees in productive land management?
- Make the most of trees in your garden, and the green spaces near you, so they deliver for people, wildlife and the planet.



How you can get involved

What are Charter Branches?

Every person that steps forward to engage their community in the Charter for Trees, Woods and People will be vital in ensuring that the charter truly speaks for all trees and people in the UK. Working at community level will ensure no tree or wood is overlooked, and no person is unaware of the call for a charter and of the importance of trees and woods.

In return, you'll be provided with guidance and resources that we hope will inspire and support you to put on local activities and to help you create a lasting legacy in your community. Thanks to support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, some funding will also be available to support delivery of local events, activities and projects that reconnect people and trees now and in the future.

Forming your local Charter Branch

- Check woodlandtrust.org.uk/support-us/act/tree-charter/ to find existing Charter Branches near you.
- If there is already a branch near you, get in touch and bring your ideas together to form one large group.

- If there is not a Charter Branch near you, existing community groups might be willing to become your local Charter Branch. Existing groups may already have some structures in place that will make organising meetings and activities easier – e.g. a contact list, places to meet, bank account etc. A village or Parish Committee, a community woodland, PTA of local schools, or another community based club or society may all be interested in getting involved.
- If neither of these apply, don't despair! It is not hard to start a Charter Branch and it doesn't need to be a registered club, society or charity. A Charter Branch is simply a group of people working together for a common aim. Follow these steps to set up your own branch:
 - 1.** Create an email address for your Charter Branch. This will give your branch one point of contact and allow you to keep all your charter communications in one place. It also means you will not have to publicise your own contact details and you will be able to share management of the Charter Branch email account with other branch members. Gmail and some other free email providers also allow you to store documents and photos on your account, which can be useful too.
 - 2.** Place an advert in your local newspaper or community newsletter explaining that you are starting a Charter Branch for the area, and inviting people to get in touch with you.
 - 3.** Create a simple poster (perhaps with a picture of a local tree or wood) announcing your plans and inviting people to get in touch. Place this in shops, libraries and popular meeting places.
 - 4.** Arrange a meeting and advertise this with posters, adverts and via your social media accounts. Ensure that the time and place suits those who have already

expressed an interest. The meeting could take place in a local pub or café, or in a community space.

5. Use the first meeting to explain what the Charter for Trees, Woods and People is all about and why you think it's relevant to your community. Share your thoughts and ideas about how it might work but try to keep the floor open and encourage input.
6. Once you know how many people would like to be involved in the branch and what you'd like to do, you'll be able to consider structure. For example whether or not you need titled roles e.g. if the branch will be handling money you should make one person treasurer and give them responsibility for all finance matters. If you're planning on promoting the branch email address, someone should be asked to monitor it regularly and respond to enquiries
7. Even if you do not plan to start activities in your community for a while, it's a good idea to try to hold regular meetings to share ideas and start putting plans together. This will help to build the commitment of your branch members and ensure that your activities are fully planned.

Defining your patch

Defining this early on will help you to identify the issues and opportunities that are most relevant to your community and help us to understand which areas are covered by Charter Branches.

Before you start, remember to check for other Charter Branches near to you on woodlandtrust.org.uk/support-us/act/tree-charter/. Not only will this help to make sure patches do not overlap, but there may be opportunities to join forces with your neighbours on certain activities.



Your Charter Branch could represent a whole county, a parish, a village or simply a particular local wood or park. It may even be an area that does not conform to existing boundaries, but which contains the woods and trees that are special to the people in your community. Your area could change or grow during the next two years, but starting with a clearly defined patch will help you gather statistics, and it will help the people that live locally understand why your work is relevant to them.

Once you have defined your patch, you can start to research and record the natural assets within it e.g. woodland, ancient woodland, significant trees, wildlife. To record woods you can check ordnance survey maps or use online mapping. Be aware that these maps will not give you information about the age of those woods, or the trees and other wildlife within them. They will also not show you trees outside woods. There could be wooded areas which are not shaded green on the map. It will be useful to do a physical recce of your area to record trees and patches of woodland that do not appear on the maps. Organise walks or rambles between you to cover your area.

- Use the ancient tree hunt website to check for ancient, veteran and notable trees: ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/
- Use the MAGIC website to check your area for ancient woods: magic.defra.gov.uk/
- Note that the Magic Map system does not record smaller woods that may be remnants of ancient woodland. Information about the ages of woods or historical woods that have disappeared in recent years can be requested from the charter team at the Woodland Trust: email charter@woodlandtrust.org.uk



Community mapping ideas

We cannot be sure that all data sources suggested are complete. The most important source of data will be the people in your community. You can capture lots of the local knowledge about the tree heritage of your area by undertaking community mapping exercises. Use these exercises to engage and inform people in your community about your work and the Charter for Trees, Woods and People.

1. Choose how you want to run your community mapping

- Invite people to a specially organised event and ask community members to feed in what they know.
- Set up a map in a local community space and ask people to add their knowledge at their leisure.
- Contact local schools and encourage them to run a mapping exercise as part of a geography, PSE, science or art lesson.
- Contact other local interest groups such as faith groups, history societies, photography clubs, art groups, book

clubs, youth groups or ramblers. Ask them to join you at an event or to run their own mapping exercise within their communities.

- You could choose to run multiple versions of the exercise and combine all the maps at the end.

2. Choose your map

- A map can be any format – but bigger is better as you will be able to capture more information and detail.
- Order a custom ordnance survey map that contains your area at as large a scale as possible here: **[ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop/custom-made-maps.html](https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop/custom-made-maps.html)**
- Draw a rough map showing the area marked with key buildings and roads to help people get their bearings. Provide pens and post-its so people can annotate and add drawings.
- Make a table top map and ask people to add tree cut-outs or even plasticine tree models – this is a fun and engaging way of gathering your data and could be ideal for schools.
- Capture everything on a digital map by creating a custom Google Map (you will need a Gmail account): **support.google.com/maps/answer/3045850**. Ask people to add digital photos or interview them with a voice recorder and upload these digital files to capture what they want to share.

When you have chosen the format, invite community members to feed in what they know. The more people that contribute, the easier it will be to build up a picture of everything in your area.

There are two levels to gathering data from community mapping. You can ask people to complete these levels at the same time, or focus on them separately depending on your audience.



1. Trees

- Where are there woods?
- Where are there old trees – and are they ancient or veteran?
- How many trees are there in gardens, on streets and in parks?
- What species of tree can be found in different parts of your community?
- Where did there used to be woods or trees that are now gone?
- What animals, birds, plants and fungi can be found within the habitat?

2. People

- What do people do in the woods?
- What do people feel about the woods and trees? Why?
- Which woods are accessible to people and which are private or difficult to enter?
- What significance have the woods and trees had to the community's development or the lives of people in it?
- What would people like to be different about the woods and trees in their community?

The information that you capture will show you what is important to the people in your community, what priorities people have in common, and what interests them. Keep a consistent record by labelling things on the map with a key which connects to longer and more detailed notes.

Photographing your map, its detail and who has contributed is a great way to record your map and share it with the wider community.

Your final map will help to inspire ideas about activities you can run in your community. It will also highlight the issues they are concerned about.

For example, if it becomes apparent that people are avoiding a park because it is not being maintained, that might become a priority for community action or an appeal to the council. Likewise, it could emerge that there are a large number of ash trees in your area, and your focus becomes checking them for signs of ash dieback or planting a range of trees in hedgerows and gardens.

Contact the charter team for ideas on how to focus community action.

Quick tips to mapping

- Choose a format that will encourage as many people in the community as possible to contribute
- Identify your tree heritage (woods, street trees, ancient trees)
- Capture personal and historical stories of your local woods and trees
- Use the map going forward (display in local library / community centre / school, convert into online map, photograph and share in local newspaper or magazine)



Local events and activities – ideas

- Stall at village fete or local school fair – informing people about the call for the charter and your activities and events, craft activities with paper and wood, mapping.
- Guided walk around local area with a nature expert and/or historian.
- Treasure hunt in local wood or park e.g. Easter Egg hunt.
- Open gardens event.
- Evening or weekend workshops – Tree ID, wood carving, paper making.
- Visiting speakers from organisations (e.g Woodland Trust, RSPB).
- Pub quiz based on tree facts.
- Tree themed stories / photography / artwork competition via local paper / newsletter.

I've shared!



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HELEN PUGH

Virtual forest – the charter online

- Twitter hashtag - #TreeCharter
Connecting to the charter on Facebook:
 - Post updates
 - Use the hashtags
 - Join the Charter Champions group
 - Start a closed group for your Charter Branch
- - Make your cover photo a woodland scene or tree photo
- Create a website for your Charter Branch – free template driven sites such as **wix.com** / **weebly.com**
- Create an Instagram account for your Charter Branch and encourage people in your community and network to share photos of trees, woodland activities and art/craft projects using wood

Money grows on trees

You probably have a whole host of exciting ideas for activities and projects to help embed the charter principles! Most often these projects will cost money. The following funding tips will help you turn great ideas into action.

Budgeting

The first step should be to create a budget for your activities which will be vital when applying for funding. It will help you identify how much it will cost to make your idea a reality and what tasks you will need to perform to get there. You might find it useful to include timescales in your budget, or to capture this in a separate document at the same time.

Example budget table

<i>Item</i>	<i>Detail</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Contingency</i>
The item or service you need to purchase in order to make your idea a reality.	What exactly will you be paying for? Why is it needed?	Cost (based on quote or research).	Cheap or free backup plan.
Leaflet printing.	Printing.com - Design support and printing of 500 x A4 tri-folded colour leaflets for village shop, local pub and events, informing community members of charter campaign and Charter Branch activities.	£100	£15 Print cartridge and paper for home printing A5 leaflets as needed.
Stationery for community consultation.	Rymans – pens, post-its, Blu tack etc.	£20	£5 For post-its & paper. Borrow pens etc from school.
Expenses for guest speaker.	Fee for visiting expert to give guided nature walk in local wood.	£150	£50 Personal contact. Expenses only.
<i>Total</i>		<i>£270</i>	<i>£70</i>

Always record two different amounts: the cost of doing exactly what you plan to, and the smallest amount you could spend to make it worthwhile. For example, you might want colour leaflets, but have the option of photocopying in black and white, therefore producing 500 leaflets for £30 instead of £100. This contingency column will allow you to adapt depending on your funding.

Share the budget with everyone in your Charter Branch and make sure they understand the breakdown. They may be able to suggest cheaper options or have contacts and resources you can use.

Raising funds

When you have a clear budget showing all the costs of your proposal you can look at options for raising the money you need. If your Charter Branch is hosted by an existing organisation or society, there might be a small budget available. If not, here are some ideas to explore as a group.

1. Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is a way to raise money, awareness and support for a project from the people around you. Crowdfunding money from your local community or online network will make people aware of your plans and could lead them to get involved with your activities after they have contributed financially. You can appeal through community newsletters, on noticeboards or in person at meetings, and set up collection points for donations at local pubs, shops or community centres. Alternatively, if enough people in your community are online set up an account on a website like **crowdfunder.co.uk** where everyone can see the progress of the fund and donate easily. It is good to offer something in return – for example a special thank you event for donors, a badge or certificate, or via a printed list in a community book or magazine.



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2. Charter Branch micro-grants scheme

Charter Branch funding enabled many projects to collect tree stories and raise awareness of trees and woods in local areas and to enable projects which connect people and trees.

3. Fundraising through sponsorship

Consider undertaking a challenge and asking family and friends to show their support with a donation. Try to relate the sponsored challenge to the project for which you are fundraising, so for example you could do a sponsored walk or run in a wood.

4. Ticketing your events

Organise interesting and engaging events for which you can sell tickets. A visiting speaker, a guided walk, a screening of a relevant film or an exhibition can be ticketed so that the costs are covered by those who attend. You can even use crowdfunding to raise some money in advance so that you know you will not make a loss.

5. Researching local funding opportunities

There may be funding available in your area for community activities and projects. Check your local authority website, or Parish Council, and search for small community grants online. Be aware that some grants are only available to registered charities, but smaller community grants could still be applicable.



The Tree Charter was developed with the full backing of 70 different cross-sector organisations, working together as a steering group chaired by the Woodland Trust for two years to galvanise public support and agree the final wording.

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