



PRESS RELEASE
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WI report promotes and celebrates the contribution of WI members across Wales in helping address the decline in urban trees

As we mark Volunteers' Week (1 - 7 June) and World Environment Day (5 June), a report published by the National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI)-Wales has shown the huge voluntary contribution WI members across Wales have made in helping address the decline in the urban trees through participation in NFWI-Wales' Natural Heritage Tree Project. WI members contributed 10,080 days to the project amounting to a monetary value of £1,984,300.

The NFWI-Wales Natural Heritage Tree project was established in September 2017 following a grant of £48,100 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to inspire and support members to take action to protect, preserve and plant urban trees.

Every federation in Wales and over 200 WIs were galvanised into action such as identifying, measuring, surveying and planting trees as well as creating tree-inspired craft and art work. The project report features pages relating to each federation's involvement including case studies of WI activities. The report also promotes the partnerships developed in communities, the results of the Garden and Street Tree Survey and the project outcomes.

Volunteer Federation Co-ordinators were recruited and trained to support and inspire WIs in their federations to get engaged in the project. The Volunteer Federation Co-ordinators dedicated 3,122 days to the project through organising training days for their WIs, promoting the project across their area and developing partnerships.

Project highlights include the following:-

- WI members surveyed over 5,000 trees;
- WI members planted approximately 6000 trees in their communities;
- Links were established with over 90 community groups;
- Ninety-one tree species were identified by members who took part in the WI's Garden and Street Tree Survey;
- Eighty activities/ workshops were organised by Volunteer Federation Co-ordinators.

Mair Stephens, Chair of NFWI-Wales said:-

“Protection of the environment has always been at the heart of the WI. This project grew out of members' worry about the threat of climate change to our natural habitats and the challenges that future generations are set to inherit; a warmer and more chaotic planet. One

of the concerns that members raised with us was the loss of urban trees. In Wales, a staggering 73 per cent of urban areas have lost trees since 2010.

“As we mark Volunteers’ Week and World Environment Day this Friday, our project report is an opportunity to thank our members for the dedication and passion they have shown, through taking practical and decisive action, in preserving and enriching our natural landscape for our future generations.”

ENDS

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Notes to editors:

1. The WI is the largest voluntary women’s organisation in the UK with some 210,000 members in over 6,000 WIs across England, Wales, and the Islands. In Wales, we have about 16,000 members belonging to close to 600 WIs. It plays a unique role in enabling women to develop new skills, giving them opportunities to campaign on issues that matter to them and their communities, and provides wide-ranging activities for members to get involved in.
2. The Natural Heritage Tree Project was funded by a grant of £48,100 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.
3. The project report is available to view from the NFWI website:- <https://www.thewi.org.uk/wi-in-wales/current-projects/natural-heritage-tree-project-wales>