



PRESS RELEASE

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The WI receives Heritage Lottery funding to Preserve, Protect and Plant Urban Trees

The National Federation of Women's Institutes Wales has received a grant of £48,100 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to engage its members in Preserving, Protecting and Planting Urban Trees. Thanks to the money raised by National Lottery players the project aims to engage WI members in being champions of trees in their local communities.

Over the next two years, the WI with its large, locally connected membership will participate in assessing the state of urban trees, by promoting active management, providing the eyes and ears for public bodies and taking action to safeguard this incredibly valuable natural heritage. The project will engage 200 WIs throughout Wales who will survey, observe, preserve, protect and engage communities in tree planting and on-going monitoring, and spread the word about the value of trees to the wider public.

Urban trees are amongst the most versatile natural assets that can be used to effectively raise the quality of Welsh towns and cities. Research shows us that trees in Wales' towns and cities deliver many social benefits – as well as mitigating the effects of climate change. However, most recent studies show that 73% of urban areas in Wales have lost trees since 2010 and between 2006 and 2013 7,000 trees were lost. It is important that this decline is halted and the NFWI-Wales will be working with Natural Resources Wales, the Woodland Trust, Open University, Open Air Laboratories and Voluntary Arts Wales to secure the future of trees for generations to come.

Mair Stephens, Chair of NFWI-Wales said:

“This is an exciting project for our members to get involved in, we already know that WI members perceive climate change as the biggest threat facing future generations and want to take action to mitigate its effect in a practical way, and thanks to National Lottery players, what better way than looking after and planting trees, leaving a wonderful legacy for generations to come”

Dr David Slawson, OPAL Director, Imperial College London said:

“Urban trees are a hugely under-appreciated asset. But they are under threat from pests and diseases, climate change and increased development. This project, led by the Welsh Women's Institute, is hugely inspirational. OPAL is absolutely thrilled to help the project through use of our Tree Health Survey.”

Richard Bellamy, Head of HLF in Wales, said:

“Our natural heritage is a most precious resource and, thanks to National Lottery players, HLF grants have helped to protect an amazing range of landscapes, habitats, and species of plants and animals. HLF is delighted to support ‘A Natural Heritage project to Preserve, Protect and Plant Urban Trees’ that will stimulate people’s interest in the natural world and so help them conserve it for future generations.”

-ENDS-

Notes to editors:

1. The WI is the largest voluntary women’s organisation in the UK with some 220,000 members in over 6,300 WIs across England, Wales, and the Islands. In Wales, we have about 16,000 members belonging to close to 600 WIs. The WI 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. For further information please visit www.theWI.org.uk

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) aims to make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities across the UK and help build a resilient heritage economy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. www.hlf.org.uk Follow us on facebook [HLFWales](https://www.facebook.com/HLFWales) and Twitter [@HLFCymru](https://twitter.com/HLFCymru)

Further information

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