

Annual Report 2025-26

Plymouth Tree People is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with a growing membership and an active volunteer base. Its mission is to help others plant, care for and learn about trees.

Working with colleagues in the Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest (PSDCF), Plymouth City Council (PCC) and Plymouth Community Homes (PCH), Plymouth Tree People (PTP) has in this past year led on planting 175 urban trees over 12 projects, engaged with 198 people during project consultations and at least another 1,000 people in other events, and cared for numerous young trees across the city.

Planning and planting new and replacement trees

A list of the trees planted during the 2025 season is in Annex A.

All required careful planning and extensive consultation with community groups and residents, as well as approval from the relevant public-body landowner and, where applicable, PSDCF's agreement for Trees for Climate funding. This funding programme can include small amounts to help people appreciate the new trees better which made it possible to install seating at Wingfield Road and Pasley Street Pocket Park, interpretation boards at Radford Park and Pasley Street Pocket Park, and crocuses under the trees in Plymstock.



Wingfield Road and Maker View

The season began for PTP on 7th November when 27 volunteers came to plant eight field maples and one oak in the grassed areas along Wingfield Road and Maker View. These trees had been tended in their containers during the summer after a late complication prevented them from being planted in the 2024-25 season.

Durnford Street

The following week, Glendale Countryside came to Durnford Street to deliver a challenging street tree project for PTP. The previous trees had died after less than 20 years' life and their demise was undoubtedly hastened by the use of manhole rings as below-ground planting containers. Glendale drilled holes in their concrete walls to provide more rooting space for the new trees. Tamarisks were chosen because residents wanted a light canopy in front of their windows and the species seemed right for the location and ground conditions.



Radford Park

Thirteen trees, chosen by local people, were added to Radford Park's growing arboretum on 28th November. Everything came together at the right time and, with the sunny weather and views to Radford Lake, it was a most enjoyable morning.

Patna Park

Volunteers went to the dog exercise area on 4th December to replace 13 missing trees in the pine circle and to plant a pair of cherries by the entrance. With tough ground conditions on the infilled railway cutting, rain threatening and large nursery stock to manage, this was a demanding project which was successfully planted by a good turnout of willing and determined helpers.

Flats on King Street and St Leo Place

The Plymouth Community Homes flats on King Street were the scene of more replacement planting on 16th January and with just six trees, better weather and easier ground, the plantings were completed in good time.

A similar scheme was delivered around the PCH flats on Keyham Road and St Leo Place on 23rd January when volunteers and PCH staff planted 14 trees and 9 shrubs. Funding for King Street came from PCH and for St Leo Place from the Trees for Climate programme.



Wingfield Road and Maker View



A dozen Tree Wardens and a similar number of local volunteers braved a wet and windy day at Wingfield Road and Maker View to help at PTP's most ambitious planting day ever on 30th January. They were joined by others from Glendale, PCH, PSDCF and Miller's Cleaning to plant another 41 trees across the estate, all carefully sited to enhance views and keep places free for recreation. Plymouth City Council gave extra support by delivering a large pile of mulch, and everything was completed in just over three hours, an amazing achievement.

Freedom Fields Park

Only three trees needed planting in Freedom Fields Park on 18th February but the weather was even wetter for the hardy volunteers there. The work was to replace two trees in the horse chestnut avenue where dog owners had not understood that their animals would kill young trees if not stopped from chewing them, and a poorly rooted Amelanchier from 2013 which was blown over in Storm Goretti.

Pasley Street Pocket Park

On the northern side of Blockhouse Park is a gap between houses with a steep set of concrete steps between the gable walls. It had nothing to commend it in landscape terms until the 'Stoke in Bloom' group decided it needed attention. Their horticulturally trained co-ordinator designed a planting scheme and PTP was delighted to help them realise it on 26th February when volunteers turned out to plant a cheerful selection of small trees.



Central Park

The two plantings in Central Park were arranged with interested parties, one on the golf course and the other on Jubilee Row to replace a dead tree.



Plymstock road verges

Tree Wardens were joined by local people, members of the Plymouth University Geography Society and a team from contractors, Arborcure, when they planted 22 trees in the verges around Mount Batten Way, Plymstock, on 11th March. The work attracted plenty of compliments but, unfortunately, one resident raised objections on the day which could not be resolved. As a charity, PTP operates by general consent which means that five Prunus 'Shirofugen' will now be tended through summer and planted elsewhere in 2026-27.

Torr Lane

The Great White Cherries on Torr Lane planted over 70 years ago continue to decline and another six have been lost since the replacement plantings in 2013, 2016 and 2018. They too were replaced on 19th March when Glendale, Tree Wardens and residents joined forces to bring the total of young trees in the road to 30. Once the remaining few old trees have seen out their days and been replaced, Torr Lane should have a new complement of its landmark cherries.



Pemros Road

The first street tree project undertaken by PTP in 2011 and 2012 was on Pemros Road but it had to remain unfinished until 31st March when PTP's contractors, Arborcure, planted a mixture of birch, cherry and ornamental pear. Responses to the consultation leaflet showed a preference for small blossom trees and the planting scheme was planned accordingly.

Caring for trees

Tree Wardens

Volunteer Tree Wardens remain at the core of PTP's work by conscientiously tending young trees, whether using their own initiative or by working with others in organised tree-care sessions.



The mobile Tree Warden group has met every three weeks between September and April, sometimes with tree care work being carried out alongside new plantings. The approach may vary but the aim is always the same – to help young trees establish quickly and grow well with balanced canopies. The jobs provide plenty of scope for outdoor exercise with a purpose and every opportunity has been taken to showcase the Tree Warden role to others. One such occasion was a taster session for newcomers held in Central Park's Family Tree Field on 11th October.

There were 57 Tree Wardens on the roll at the end of March 2026, with 40 having dedicated areas to cover. Young trees in the following places have benefitted from a mobile group visit:

26 th September	Victoria Park
17 th October	Devonport Hill and Stonehouse Creek
7 th November	Wingfield Road and Maker View
28 th November	Radford Park
19 th December	Neswick Play Park and Adelaide Park
20 th February	Tothill Park east end
13 th March	Swarthmore allotments orchard

Tree Wardens gathered for an informal social event at 'Snapdragons' in Victoria Park on 4th April to share stories about their work and try out the new gazebo ahead of the Urban Tree Festival. More than 1,500 volunteer hours have been given to practical tree care activities throughout the year.

Watering Heroes

Launched in 2024, the Watering Heroes scheme was to encourage people to water young trees near them or to make a financial contribution towards providing contract cover. The scheme has remained in its infancy while Trees for Climate funding has covered three years of aftercare but it is starting to look essential as hotter, drier summers become more common.

Watering contract

Miller's Cleaning Specialists fully delivered on their seasonal contract to water selected trees using their vans fitted with tanks and long hoses. 2026 was the driest spring on record and the benefits of such regular attention can be readily seen in the growth rates of recipient trees.



Survey of recently planted trees

Plymouth Tree People collaborated with the University of Plymouth on a citizen science project to assess the growth of urban trees planted since 2012. The aim was to identify how species selection and external factors had influenced tree growth. The project was developed by one of the University's students, with guidance from his tutor and PTP Trustee, Matt Underwood, who had experience of a similar project elsewhere.



There were 25 volunteer surveyors and each was provided with measuring equipment and survey sheets at one of the training sessions from 14th August onwards. They measured and assessed their allocated trees through to October and used an online form to record their findings. More than 1,000 trees were surveyed and the University was continuing to analyse the results at the time of writing.

Established trees – development situations

Caring for established trees has typically meant reacting to development situations where trees could be lost. It depends on having someone with sufficient background and interest to lead for PTP and the ability to make a cogent case for retaining the threatened trees. The work can involve a great deal of research and, whilst several individuals have contributed, much of the burden has fallen to PTP's Trustees and Co-ordinator, with written submissions being made for these places:

A38 Manadon interchange

It was unclear from the initial consultation in May 2025 which trees might be lost so PTP made a general point about the value of mature, veteran and ancient trees and a potential need to modify the scheme if necessary to avoid felling the most valuable. The likely impacts of the scheme on an adjacent area of ancient woodland and the natural drainage pattern into Ham Brook were also flagged as concerns.

Kings Road, Devonport

Four street trees were threatened with felling at the beginning of 2026 to make way for two new pedestrian crossings. Following representations, an alternative road layout was designed such that all 4 trees are being retained.

Armada Way

In January 2026, PCC consulted on a proposal to remove three Laburnum trees because of their proximity to the new playground. Representations having been considered, only one tree is now scheduled for removal.

Major Road Network

PCC has applied for government funding to improve the Major Road Network through the city, which will involve tree losses along the St Budeaux bypass and Embankment Road. As part of an initial consultation in February 2026, the project team provided more background at a Plan for Trees meeting and walked along the Embankment Road section with PTP representatives soon afterwards. This close level of engagement was most welcome and made it possible to offer some suggestions for retaining the tree-lined character of the affected roads.

Pounds House

PTP requested that the most prominent trees in the area being sold by PCC should be protected by a Tree Preservation Order. In the event, a TPO was made on all of the trees in the sale area.

Lambhay Hill

Representations in 2023 about the need to retain 7 mature trees on the Regimental Training Wing site were not upheld and planning approval was granted on condition that there would be 7 onsite and 29 offsite replacements. PTP was closely involved in planning the offsite compensation, which included filling gaps in the tree avenues below the Naval War Memorial, and they were planted in spring 2026.

Established trees – practical interventions

Practical tree care activities were once exclusively directed towards young trees but the contribution that Tree Wardens can make to preserving older trees from damage, disease and other threats has become more apparent this last year.

Sir John Hawkins Square

Some of the square's trees have died which appears to be caused by pits being paved over such that rainwater cannot reach their roots. Another mature tree has received similar treatment but remained alive. PTP has entered discussions with the Council with a view to leading a project that would open up this tree pit's surface and potentially replace some of the lost trees.

Learning about trees

Educational talks

Evening talks in Café Momus have continued to attract a good attendance with an average of 40 people attending these talks during the year:



28th April

Prof Sir Ghilleen Prance FRS, a former director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, described how certain trees from his explorations in the Amazon Basin had fascinated him. The Brazil nut story especially highlighted how different species depended on each other for survival.

20th October

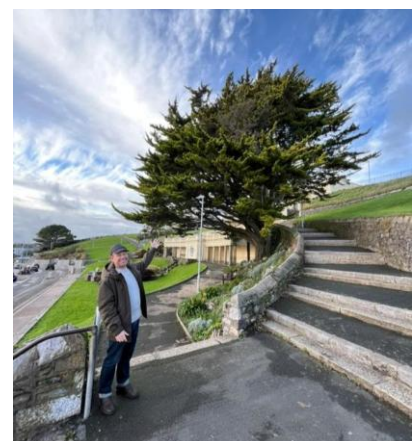
Andrew Young, a PTP Trustee and Tree Warden, traced the history of Plymouth's trees from the ice age to present times, while emphasising the need for urban trees as part of good design.

3rd December

Paul Wood, tree book author and founder of the Urban Tree Festival, came from London to describe his travels to find 1,000 of Britain's most remarkable trees which included this *Macrocarpa* on the Hoe and another 18 Plymouth trees.

2nd March

James Brown, a landscape architect with detailed local knowledge, applied his experience to explain the many varied benefits that come from living, working and being close to trees and green spaces.



Events

Plymouth Urban Tree Festival

This was Plymouth's third year taking part in the National Urban Tree Festival which ran from 10th to 18th May 2025. It was supported financially by the Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest and organised by Plymouth Tree People's co-ordinator with 49 separate events being held, including 11 walks, 13 workshops, 6 film showings, 4 socials, 3 talks, 2 exhibitions and 10 other activities. There were nearly 1,500 attendees in total and almost 500 hours of volunteer time.

One activity was to participate in making a willow sculpture of PTP's logo which, when completed after the festival, was installed in the garden at Keyham Green Places.



A guided walk around the trees in Mutley and Thorn Parks had to be postponed due to a travellers' encampment and it took place on 14th July. A good number of people attended and they were grateful to the Park Pharmacy Trust for providing a light lunch in the lodge afterwards.

Other events

Plymouth Tree People held a stall on the Barbican as part of the Big Green Trail organised by Plymouth Climate Connections on 21st June. Children were invited to make tree ID spinners and all visitors had the chance to add to a giant willow sculpture started during the Urban Tree Festival.



Those attending the AGM on 9th July were treated to a guided walk in Radford Park afterwards when local Tree Warden, Graham Titchmarsh, selected some of the best specimen trees and described their main features of interest.

Management, Communications and Administration

Membership

It is pleasing to record that member numbers have increased five-fold from March 2020 to 444 at the end of the 2025-26 reporting year. The list of members is held on Mailchimp.

Trustees

Trustees act in a voluntary capacity and the following have served during the year, Penny Tarrant having been re-elected at the 2025 AGM:

Roger Atkin	Treasurer
Dave Curno	
Louise Henry	
Penny Tarrant	Chair
Matt Underwood	
Andrew Young	Secretary

Balance of funds

PTP funds have increased by about £55K over this financial year which is a result of the significant increase in tree planting undertaken for the Community Forest. A large proportion of these funds (around 60%) has to be retained for 3 years to provide aftercare beyond the capacity of Tree Wardens, especially with watering, and should any failed plantings have to be replaced.

Reserves

Plymouth Tree People's policy of maintaining sufficient unrestricted funds to continue operating for a minimum period of twelve months has been met.

Risks

The charity's finances and associated risks have been discussed as a standing agenda item at each of the trustees' five meetings during the year.

Three trustees come to the end of their terms in 2027, and ways to ensure continuity are being actively pursued.

Risk assessments are always undertaken before carrying out practical tasks but, notwithstanding, a volunteer sustained a minor injury while planting trees at St Leo Place on 23rd January. It occurred when a post driver fell onto his head after his hard hat was inadvertently dislodged. The incident was recorded in the accident log.

Sharepoint

Plymouth Tree People's not-for-profit licence has enabled 10 key individuals to access files held on SharePoint and to use the Microsoft Office suite of applications free of charge. Microsoft is changing the terms of its not-for-profit licence from May 2026 and, although details are awaited, additional costs are likely to be involved.

Business continuity

Trustees have re-examined and strengthened PTP's business continuity arrangements to provide improved security against cyber-attacks and greater resilience should an attack succeed.

Organisational policies

Plymouth Tree People has policies for: biosecurity, data protection, health and safety, dealing with incidents, safeguarding, social media, sustainability, and equality, diversity and inclusion.

Plan for Nature and People

Five Tree Wardens attended the launch of Plymouth's Plan for Nature and People on 11th November. This plan expands on the 2019 Plan for Trees and it includes an aim to plant 1,000 street trees before March 2030.

Tree Cities of the World

With support from Plan for Trees members, Plymouth City Council's application to become a Tree City of the World was approved in May 2025. The accreditation is awarded by the Arbor Day Foundation to cities that can show they have met quality standards which cover:



- ★ Responsibility for city trees
- ★ City tree policies
- ★ Tree and forest assessments
- ★ Annual budget
- ★ Celebrating achievements

Plymouth's participation in the national Urban Tree Festival has been key to meeting the last of these standards.

Liaison with other tree groups

Two Trustees and PTP's Co-ordinator attended a meeting hosted by Birmingham Tree People on 29th July to discuss how city-based volunteer groups can make a difference to improving urban tree cover. Sheffield, Belfast and Lewisham were also represented.

PTP's Co-ordinator attended the Tree Warden Co-ordinators' annual conference, arranged by The Tree Council, which took place in Surrey on 23rd October. Each Tree Warden network is organised and administered differently and it is useful to share experiences. Current topics such as tree health monitoring were also discussed.

Communications

News items have been posted on Plymouth Tree People's website and on Meta (Facebook & Instagram) immediately following each activity, whilst the planting days at Wingfield Road and Pasley Pocket Park were featured in The Herald and Plymouth Chronicle respectively. A monthly round-up of tree news has continued to be emailed to members.

Acknowledgements

So many individuals have given their time or money to growing Plymouth's tree canopy and explaining to others why it matters. The planting days were especially well supported, and sincere thanks go to everyone who contributed in some way; even small things like coming to watch and giving moral support mean a great deal.

We have received warm hospitality from Snapdragons at the eastern end of Victoria Park, the Park Pharmacy Trust in Thorn Park, and Sid and Sam Remmer at Tulgey Woods for different events during the year. Their generosity is greatly appreciated.

Plymouth Tree People is fortunate to have enjoyed such strong support from its contractors. They have brought a great deal of enthusiasm to their work and cheerfully gone the extra mile. Most notably, Alison White, as PTP's Co-ordinator has shown forethought, vigour and good humour in getting things done, and many of the achievements outlined in this report are due to her. We are extremely grateful for her services.

Sincere thanks also go to Sam and Bianca Miller, owners of Miller's Cleaning Specialists, who have been assiduous with tree watering duties and willingly attended several volunteer days.

Richard Archibald at Glendale Countryside and Tom Roe at Arborcure have been similarly helpful in finding solutions to technical issues, and nothing has been too difficult for them. James Brown too has brought his professional expertise to delivering the more challenging street tree projects.

Richard Cosgrave from Beside the Box has kept the charity's IT available and trouble-free as he has done for more than 12 years. This is no small achievement in a fast-changing technical environment, and we are very grateful for his pro-bono contribution.

We are similarly grateful to chartered accountant, Paul Marker, and to Mark Thomas from Low Carbon Web, who have also given their professional services to PTP free of charge. Paul has undertaken the independent examination of annual accounts for the ninth consecutive year, and Mark has administered Plymouth Tree People's website for the third year.

Our major partners, Plymouth City Council, the Plymouth & South Devon Community Forest and Plymouth Community Homes have together provided the background and culture for better treescapes in Plymouth, and we are happy to tell others about it. As a Tree City of the World, Plymouth shows that it sees trees as an integral and beautiful element of the urban fabric.

In summary

Over the reporting year Plymouth Tree People has:

- ★ Enjoyed the support of 444 members and 57 volunteer Tree Wardens
- ★ Planted 175 urban trees over 12 projects
- ★ Engaged with 198 people during project consultations
- ★ Cared for numerous young trees across the city
- ★ Surveyed more than 1,000 trees planted since 2012
- ★ Held 4 evening talks, each attended by an average of 40 people
- ★ Managed Plymouth's Urban Tree Festival with 49 events attended by 1,500 people
- ★ Responded to 5 consultations about proposed developments.

Annex A - Plantings by Plymouth Tree People 2025-26

Radford Arboretum (North)

- 1 *Ginkgo biloba*
- 1 *Alnus cordata*
- 1 *Amelanchier* 'Ballerina'
- 1 *Prunus* 'Okame'
- 1 *Tilia platyphyllos* 'Rubra'
- 1 *Quercus patraea*
- 1 *Araucaria araucana*
- 1 *Prunus* 'Shizuka'
- 1 *Acer rubrum* 'Brandywine'
- 1 *Sorbus carmesina* 'Emberglow'
- 1 *Acer negundo* 'Winter Lightning'
- 1 *Betula ermanii* 'Polar Bear'
- 1 *Koeleruteria paniculata*

Patna Dog Park

- 11 *Pinus nigra* 'Austriaca' to replace spaces in ornamental pine circle
- 2 *Prunus* 'Schmittii' to frame the park entrance

Pasley Pocket Park and Blockhouse Park

- 7 *Crataegus* 'Crimson Cloud'
- 3 *Cercis siliquastrum*
- 1 *Albizia julibrissin*
- 3 *Sorbus* 'Apricot Queen'
- 2 *Sambucus Nigra* 'Black Lace'
- 1 *Parrotia persica*

Durnford Street

- 6 *Tamarix tetrandia* - in existing tree pits to replace failed street trees

King Street

- 4 *Carpinus betulus* 'Frans Fontaine' to replace lost rowans
- 1 *Ficus carica* - in addition to other fruit grown by residents
- 1 *Prunus domestica* 'Victoria' - in addition to other fruit grown by residents

St Leo Place

- 5 *Betula pendula* 'Fastigiata'
- 3 *Crataegus monogyna* 'Stricta'
- 1 *Gleditsia triacanthos*
- 1 *Betula pendula*
- 2 *Malus baccata* 'Street Parade'
- 2 *Amelanchier arborea* 'Robin Hill'
- 9 *Euonymus alatus* 'Compactus' (shrubs)

Wingfield and Maker View

7 Malus 'Rudolph'
5 Amelanchier 'Robin Hill'
1 Prunus 'Umineko'
4 Betula pendula
6 Betula pendula 'Fastigiata'
2 Populus nigra 'Italica'
2 Prunus avium 'Summer Sun'
1 Parrota persica
3 Acer cappadocicum
6 Prunus avium 'Kordia'
8 Acer campestre
1 Quercus robur
3 Prunus virginia 'Canada Red'
1 Prunus 'Shirofugen'
1 Alnus x spaethii

Central Park

1 Fagus sylvatica 'Purpurea' - Golf Course
1 Castanea sativa - Jubilee Row

Freedom Fields Park

1 Amelanchier arborea 'Robin Hill' - replace one lost in a storm
2 Aesculus hippocastanum - replace 2 ring-barked by dogs

Pemros Road

1 Betula nigra 'Heritage'
2 Betula pendula 'Zwitsers Glory'
9 Prunus 'Umineko'
10 Pyrus calleryana 'Chanticleer'

Torr Lane

6 Prunus 'Tai haku' - replacing avenue trees

Plymstock verges

1 Styrax japonicus
1 Amelanchier 'Robin Hill'
1 Quercus robur
1 Aesculus hippocastanum
2 Magnolia x soulangeana
11 Betula pendula
1 Cedrus libani 'Glaucua'
4 Prunus 'Shirofugen'