

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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For immediate use

## **Tree-mendous effort for nature's future**

### **Local volunteers plant 250 trees at carbon offset event**

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) teamed up with local environmental groups for a massive tree planting effort at Balls Wood Nature Reserve in Hertford Heath on Wednesday (24<sup>th</sup> Nov), which will benefit local wildlife and offset carbon at the same time.

HMWT aims to attract the exotic purple emperor butterfly and adorable dormouse to Balls Wood, through the planting of 250 native hazels and willows. Andy Brown, the Trust's Reserves Officer for Balls Wood Nature Reserve, said: "We chose to plant hazels and willows because they are popular with the sorts of wildlife we want to encourage. Dormice love to eat hazelnuts, and willow is very important for the purple emperor butterfly which, like many butterflies, is fussy about where it lays its eggs."

As well as benefiting local wildlife, the event was designed to offset carbon generated by the Eco Filmfest in Hertford which took place in April this year, funded by East Herts Council and organised by Transition Hertford, Three Villages Eco Group and Datchworth Climate Change Group. Representatives of these groups, as well as local company WSP Environment and Energy, got to grips with spades and lump hammers to do their bit, and by 2pm the 250<sup>th</sup> tree was firmly in the ground.

Ben Crystall from Transition Hertford said: "Trees are the ultimate carbon dioxide-eating machines, the gas that contributes more than any other to global warming. In turn, they emit oxygen for us all to breathe. Deforestation has had a devastating effect globally – less trees means more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. But there are things we can do locally, on our patch. Transition Hertford is driven by local people. We encourage individuals to take action – whether it be cutting your household energy use, growing your own food, or joining us at events like the tree planting at Balls Wood."



## **Herts & Middlesex**

**Grebe House**  
**St Michael's Street**  
**St Albans**  
**Hertfordshire**  
**AL3 4SN**

Tel: (01727) 858901  
Fax: (01727) 854542  
Email:  
sarah.buckingham@hmwt.org  
www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk

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President - SA Bowes-Lyon, PCA

David Laming from Datchworth Climate Change Group added: "As a very active member of Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust it was great to see two interests of mine coming together on one day. Nature reserves like Balls Wood are fundamentally important to the survival of our local wildlife, but they are also crucial to our whole way of living too. The natural environment underpins everything - we need to look after and expand it if we are to meet the challenges of climate change."

**Ends/**

#### Notes for Editors

#### **Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust**

We are the leading voice for wildlife conservation in Hertfordshire and neighbouring areas. With 43 nature reserves spanning 1,900 acres, from beautiful woodlands and wetlands to rare patches of heath and orchard, we take practical action every day to help wildlife to flourish. The Wildlife Trusts are unique in being the only organisations that work to protect the full range of UK habitats and species, at a local level. <http://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/>

#### **Balls Wood Nature Reserve**

Acquired in 2009 after a high profile fundraising campaign across Hertfordshire, Balls Wood is a mixed woodland spanning 150 acres. Wildlife highlights include great spotted woodpeckers, sparrowhawks, white admiral butterflies, early purple orchids and the rare herb paris. Great crested newts live in the ponds dotted around the site. Balls Wood is adjacent to Hertford Heath Nature Reserve. <http://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/NatureReserves/Flagship/ballswood>

#### **Hertford's Eco Filmfest**

The first East Herts Eco Filmfest took place in April this year and consisted of films, workshops and entertainment on an eco theme. Planning is now getting underway for the 2011 event. <http://www.transitionhertford.org.uk/group/ecofilmfestival2011>

#### **The Wildlife Trusts**

We collectively manage 2,300 nature reserves across the UK covering more than 90,000 hectares, attracting around 6.5 million visitors each year. As well as protection, these sites need to be expanded and buffered, with connections and stepping stones created between them. This will enable species to adapt to a changing climate.

#### **Contact for further information and high res images:**

Sarah Buckingham, Communications Officer  
01727 858901 ext 228 [sarah.buckingham@hmwt.org](mailto:sarah.buckingham@hmwt.org)

