

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate use

Wildlife Trust gets funding for urgent orchard repairs

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust has been granted £50,000 to carry out urgent restoration work at a traditional orchard in Tewin.

The one year project, which is funded by Biffaward and East Herts District Council, will restore rare local varieties of fruit trees and protect and enhance the diversity of wildlife at Tewin Orchard Nature Reserve.

The orchard is home to a number of threatened species including great crested newts, noctule and brown long-eared bats, birds like yellowhammers and bullfinches and the rare white letter hairstreak butterfly, which has seen a dramatic decline in the last 30 years or so, with over 70% of the UK population lost.*

Tim Hill, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust Conservation Manager said: "The wildlife of orchards depends on the mosaic of habitats they contain, including fruit trees, hedgerows, grassland, trees and features such as ponds. Tewin Orchard's habitats are in urgent need of restoration and this funding will enable us to begin bringing it back into a condition where associated wildlife will thrive.

"As part of the project we will create a hibernaculum for great crested newts, a place where they can spend the winter in safety! Great crested newts already live in the pond at Tewin Orchard and we want to protect this crucial population and ensure it flourishes." A circular path will be created around the pond for visitors to do a bit of newt-watching and see what other wildlife they can spot too.

Gillian French, Biffaward Programme Manager commented: "Our natural environment provides endless enjoyment and learning opportunities to communities across the country, and for this reason it must be protected. The restoration work at Tewin Orchard Nature Reserve will create a habitat for wildlife to flourish in, as well as an area of significant beauty for members of the public to enjoy."



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President - SA Bowes-Lyon, PCA

An East Herts Council spokesperson said: “We’re delighted to support this project through our community capital grant scheme. East Herts has stunning countryside and wildlife across the district and we’re committed to making sure it stays that way. We hope that the project will help protect our precious and diverse wildlife for many years to come.”

The project will see 90 new fruit trees planted, many of which are local Hertfordshire varieties in danger of disappearing forever. The planting of Hertfordshire varieties of fruit has long been a policy at Tewin. The Hitchin Pippin was propagated here from the last known named tree, which was over one hundred years old.

Tewin Orchard is one of the largest and best remaining orchards in Hertfordshire. Nearly 60% of traditional orchards have been lost from the county since 1950**, through the development of land mainly for housing and agriculture.

* Source: *The State of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland* (Fox et al. 2006)

** Source: *Traditional Orchards Habitat Action Plan*, Hertfordshire Orchards Initiative; December 2009

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Notes for editors:

Tewin Orchard Nature Reserve comprises Tewin Orchard, Hopkyns’ Wood and Badger Meadow. Hopkyns’ Wood is a shady oak and hornbeam woodland significant for its large and established badger sett. A mammal watching hide situated next to Tewin Orchard and overlooking Badger Meadow attracts more than 1,000 visitors a year to the site. Built in 2003 with support from Heritage Lottery Fund and Biffaward, the hide provides a spacious and accessible area for wildlife watching with rare opportunities to view badgers and other animals at close proximity.

<http://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/NatureReserves/Local/tewinorchard>

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk

We are the leading voice for wildlife conservation in Hertfordshire and neighbouring areas. With 44 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 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. We are a membership organisation, relying on supporters for three quarters of our income.

Biffaward www.biffaward.org



Building Communities. Transforming Lives.

In 1997 Biffa Waste Services agreed to donate landfill tax credits to the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT) to administer under the fund name Biffaward. Grants made from the fund currently amount to £100 million, supporting many worthwhile projects.

Biffa Waste Services Limited is one of the largest single suppliers of waste management services in the UK. It collects, treats, recovers and disposes of municipal, commercial and industrial waste nationwide. It is ultimately owned by a private equity consortium comprising Montagu Private Equity, Global Infrastructure Partners, Uberior Co-Investments Limited and other co-investors.

The landfill tax came into operation in 1996. Its purpose is to reflect the impact of landfill on the environment and also to help achieve the targets for more sustainable waste management. The tax, levied on the tonnage of all material disposed of in landfill sites and collected by Biffa on behalf of HM Revenue and Customs, aims to encourage recycling and reduce waste by raising the cost of disposal.

The regulations allow landfill site operators to direct approximately 6% of the tax they have collected towards approved environmental projects. However, any approved project can only receive 90% of its desired funding from the landfill tax. The remainder must come direct from the landfill site operator or from a third party organisation or company.

The Wildlife Trusts (TWT) wildlifetrusts.org There are 47 individual Wildlife Trusts covering the whole of the UK and the Isle of Man and Alderney. All are working for an environment rich in wildlife for everyone. We have more than 800,000 members including 150,000 members of our junior branch [Wildlife Watch](#). Our vision is to create [A Living Landscape](#) and secure [Living Seas](#). We manage around 2,300 nature reserves and every year we advise thousands of landowners and organisations on how to manage their land for wildlife. We also run marine conservation projects around the UK, collecting vital data on the state of our seas and celebrating our amazing marine wildlife. Every year we work with thousands of schools and our nature reserves and visitor centres receive millions of visitors. Each Wildlife Trust is working within its local communities to inspire people about the future of their area: their own Living Landscapes and Living Seas.

Contact for further information and high res images:

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