

5 ways the Welsh landscape has improved thanks to thousands of volunteers

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The Long Forest project was created to make hedgerows important again, and thanks to an army of volunteers this mission has become a reality.

Hedgerows form a vital part of Welsh landscape and wildlife habitat but they are at risk from neglect, damage and removal.

Luckily, [the Long Forest project](#) was developed by Keep Wales Tidy which worked in partnership with The Woodland Trust, with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, to try and improve the landscape.

Three years on, the Long Forest project is celebrating what it has achieved so far.

Although there were some challenges along the way, for example the Beast from the East and Storm Ciara and Dennis, the Long Forest project still has some impressive results.

1. Thousands of new trees have been planted



The Long Forest project has planted 119,711 trees as new hedges to restore gappy hedgerows and to reconnect fragmented hedgerow networks. This is thanks to more than

3,000 volunteers. In Wales, one person emits on average 14.2 tonnes of CO₂ a year. The trees planted through Long Forest could sequester 20,000 tonnes of CO₂ over the next 40 years

2. Hedgerows have been improved across Wales



Long Forest landowners training

Over the past three years, 34,628 metres of hedgerow have been improved by physical activity, with a further 113,063 metres now under a regime of progressive improvement.

3. Sustainable trees have been provided



Tree nursery in Bodfari Woodland Skills Centre

The Long Forest project has established eight community tree nurseries, which are raising young tree stock from locally-collected native seed. This is a sustainable method of helping

future tree-planting schemes and protection against tree disease being introduced via imported stock.

4. Thousands of volunteers have been trained to play their part



Long Forest Project volunteers in Anglesey enjoy the sunset after a hard day's work

Education was a key focus for the project, so more than 1,000 volunteers were trained on how to plant, care for and restore hedgerows. This means people can personally make a positive impact on the Welsh landscape. 100 landowners were also trained on hedgerow planting and management.

5. An app has helped to survey metres of hedgerows

Thanks to the project, 48,000 metres of field, wayside and garden hedgerow across Wales have now been surveyed using the Long Forest app. The app was developed in the first year of the project and it was designed to engage members of the public with hedgerows and learn about tree identification.



The landscape has changed thanks to volunteers

And that's not all...



Alongside this work, the Long Forest project developed a hedgerow information pack so community groups could learn about planting and managing hedges. The pack included

illustrated guides and ideas for related activities. This is still available and can be downloaded for free **[via the website](#)**.

Although the Long Forest project is coming to an end, it is still surveying the Welsh hedgerows and this work will continue.

Long Forest encourages everyone to get involved as you don't have to be an expert to make a difference. **[The app is also still available to be downloaded](#)** and it can be used to record a hedge or two while on an walk.

Hannah Wilcox Brooke, Long Forest project co-ordinator at Keep Wales Tidy added: "We are delighted to have delivered such fantastic results across Wales that are sustainable and continue to improve our Welsh landscape.

"Thank you to all the thousands of volunteers who were involved across Wales."

Source:<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/special-features/5-ways-welsh-landscape-improved-18020286>