

Ron Smith, President of Hawick Rotary, met online, using Teams, with Carol Cooke and Fiona Cameron of Scottish Borders Council, on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023, to discuss potential for Hawick Rotary to take part in the ***Plant a Tree in 23*** scheme. This scheme is a partnership project between Borders Rotary Clubs and Borders Forest Trust. The coordinators of that project are Denis Robson (Rotary District 1230 Environment Lead) and Anna Craigen (Borders Forest Trust).

The overall aim of the project is 'to engage local communities and school children in planting approximately 2000 native trees in a variety of sites around the Borders'. A fuller rationale for the project is given in the Appendix below.

The discussion between Ron, Carol and Fiona was conducted on the basis of there being a potential 150 – 200 trees available to plant within the wider Hawick area, and therefore to consider where there might be suitable locations.

The assumption was made that these trees would come as 'whips'.

After consideration of several other possibilities, discussion centred on two possible proposals.

The project paper speaks only of 'native trees'. If this included fruit trees, then we would encourage the planting of such trees within the grounds of local Primary Schools. Can the availability or otherwise of fruit trees be confirmed?

The second proposal would be to plant suitable native trees on a single large area within Hawick Moor, on the east side between top and bottom Moor gates where the land is little used and damp, providing further shelter for the racecourse area. It is possible this area could accommodate 150 – 200 trees, the varieties to be confirmed through a possible site visit by Ms Craigen and Mr Robson.

The first step however would be to seek the agreement in principle of Hawick Common Good committee. Given that agreement, further work could be undertaken by the project leads to confirm the practicality of this proposal.

*Ron Smith*

## Plant a Tree in 23



**A partnership project between the Borders Rotary Clubs and Borders Forest Trust.** After a prolonged application process, we are very pleased to announce that the Rotarians of the Borders and Borders Forest Trust (BFT - a local environmental charity) have successfully secured Global Grant funding from Rotary Foundation to engage local communities and school children in planting approximately 2000 native trees in a variety of sites around the Borders. We hope this will be a highly visible campaign raising the profile of both organisations working in partnership.

It is planned that with support and assistance from Borders Forest Trust some of the Rotary Clubs in the region will participate in this project and work with us to create new woodlands, plant native trees, provide valuable habitats for wildlife and help us to engage local people and school children in connecting with nature and helping the planet.

**Are you interested in getting involved and finding out more?**

**The plan going forward:**

**When do we hope that this will take place?** We kick started this project at the first Rotary Borders Area Meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> August inviting clubs to participate, enabling us to develop plans to run a series of community/ school planting events over the coming planting season Oct 23 – early April 24.

**Finding suitable sites.** It might be that you have an idea of a ready made community green space that might benefit from having a few trees planted, it's also possible that there is scope for some tree planting within your local school grounds, but it would be amazing if you can think of potentially suitable new small areas of land (common good, privately owned etc.) within close proximity of your town or village (and local schools).

**Gaining landowner consent.** It is crucial that the landowner is on board with any tree planting plans. Are they interested in enabling longer term access to the community and school to provide an opportunity for the development of a Community Woodland/ Wildlife Area where local people can help to look after the trees and use the site recreationally? Borders Forest Trust staff will be able to help with this.

**Site Visit. Is the site suitable?** Planning the planting. How many trees will fit? What species would suit the area? Where should trees be planted according to access/ viewpoints etc. Once potential new planting areas have been found, BFT staff will happily come along for a site visit to discuss appropriate plans.

**Planting Events:** BFT hope to work with you during all the steps in this project, including liaising with local schools (if this would help), and assisting and supporting any planting events (with schools and members of the local community). We have lots of planting expertise and equipment available to put to use during these sessions, e.g. planting spears and lump hammers.

**Ongoing woodland management and maintenance:** In an ideal world these areas of woodland will become little hubs of activity, with thriving wildlife, school visits and small teams of interested local volunteers helping to nurture the trees. BFT also have a team of regular Woodland Volunteers that can bolster capacity at any new woodland sites and will offer ongoing support in woodland maintenance jobs too.

**What next?** Soon Anna Craigen (Community & Education Manager at Borders Forest Trust) intends to hold a short online meeting for any interested Borders Rotary Club members. This will incorporate a brief presentation about the project and provide an opportunity for questions and answers.

In the meantime, if you have any ideas, thoughts and questions please do get in touch with Anna - [anna@bordersforesttrust.org](mailto:anna@bordersforesttrust.org).

**We truly hope that we can make this a fun, interactive, hands-on project with multi-faceted benefits, including increasing biodiversity, raising awareness and nurturing an interest/sense of responsibility of ecological and environmental sustainability. This will provide opportunities for local people to get active and involved in their own locality, raising the Rotary's and Borders Forest Trust's profile in the community.**

We look forward to working with you. Anna Craigen (BFT) & Denis Robson District Environment Lead