



Northumberland

'Trees of hope': Sycamore Gap tree saplings to be

planted around UK

Project asks people to make 'promises to nature' after 'rollercoaster' year for the Northumberland landmark

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Its illegal felling brought feelings of grief, distress and anger but after a “rollercoaster” 12 months custodians of [the Sycamore Gap tree](#) say they want its legacy to become one of hope.

The National Trust and Northumberland national park have announced an initiative inviting the public to request one of 49 saplings from the tree.

Successful bids will lead to the saplings being planted in publicly accessible spaces across the UK that “have emotional connections with people and different communities”.

The closest school, [Henshaw primary](#), will also receive a sapling as well as all 15 national parks to ensure they are in “some of the most beautiful landscapes in the UK”.

The announcement, along with details of a new exhibition, was made before the first anniversary of the felling of the tree.

The Sycamore Gap tree was planted as a landscape feature in a dell on Hadrian's Wall 150 years ago, becoming one of the most photographable places in England and the site of countless marriage proposals, birthday celebrations and scatterings of ashes.

For people in the north-east of England it was something more, an emblem of the region's history and character. It was illegally cut down overnight on the 27-28 September, an act that left local people and tourists bereft.

Andrew Poad, the general manager for the National Trust's Hadrian's Wall properties, said the last 12 months had been "a real rollercoaster of emotions" from feelings of "hopelessness and grief" to "joyful stories" about what the tree meant to so many people.

He added: "In announcing our 'Trees of Hope' initiative, we aim to find new homes in community settings across the UK so people can have the opportunity to engage with the Sycamore Gap tree and its legacy so that more people everywhere can feel that they are part of this story - that they are a part of this tree's wonderful legacy, helping to create a new chapter in the life of this legendary tree."

Applications for a "tree of hope" open on Friday 27 September and close on 24 October. The 49 saplings being made available represent each foot of the height of the tree when it was felled.

A new exhibition featuring the largest remaining section of the Sycamore Gap tree trunk will also open to the public on Saturday.

The idea is that people will have space to remember the tree but also be inspired to make their own “promises to nature”, which will find their way into a second and final phase of the exhibition to open by Easter 2025.



📷 The largest remaining section of the tree will form part of the new exhibition. Photograph: Owen Humphreys/PA

[Charlie Whinney, an artist](#) who co-developed the Sycamore Gap: One Year On exhibition, said: “This show is the halfway part of our project, processing what

happened, what the tree meant to everyone, and the wonderful regrowth that now counts at 25 new shoots. It marks the beginning of our public engagement process.

“Going forward, we hope to empower people with a sense of joy and hope for the natural world through positive actions, which starts now.”

The exhibition at [the Sill visitor centre](#) will open on Friday, when 240 children from 13 local schools will take part in a celebration of the tree’s life before the public are allowed in on Saturday.

Tony Gates, the chief executive of [Northumberland](#) national park authority, said everyone involved had worked hard to ensure a fitting legacy for the tree.

“From the very beginning it was clear what people wanted us to do in response to the tragedy. They wanted us to help nature thrive, provide space for reflection and work with artists.”

At the site of the tree itself there is still hope it will literally live on after shoots [were discovered at the base of the tree’s stump](#).

Two men charged with the criminal damage of the tree will face trial at a crown court in December. They have denied the charges.
