

Harrogate Advertiser

Why Harrogate must plant a new forest the size of stray each year

15 October 2019



Woodland near the Nidd river in Knaresborough and Harrogate.

The claim comes in a new report written for environmental pressure group Zero Carbon Harrogate by Prof Piers Forster, who is the director of the International Centre for Climate Change at Leeds University.



Members of Zero Carbon Harrogate planting trees in the Stray in Harrogate.

He said: "Based on its 0.3% share of UK emissions, Harrogate district should plant between 90 and 150 ha of new woodland every year as its share of the national 30,000 to 50,000 ha per year target to reach net carbon zero. "This would offset between 66 and 100 ktCO₂ per year by 2050."

Ideally, he said, the amount of new trees required in the Harrogate district would be three times the area of the Stray each year.

Prof Forster said: "A more ambitious target based on available area would be 270 ha per year on new woodland, offsetting 180 ktCO₂ per year."

Zero Carbon Harrogate will further emphasise the importance of expanding wooded areas by holding a Woodlands for Life event this Thursday, October 17 at Harrogate Ladies College at 7.30pm.

The town has a potentially important role to play in current The Northern Forest project, one of the largest tree-planting schemes in the whole of Europe.

Announced by the Government in 2018, the initiative is set to increase our woodland cover by one third, with 50 million trees to be planted over the next 25 years, growing and linking existing community forests from Liverpool to Hull.

Zero Carbon Harrogate argues it will bring many benefits to the Harrogate District, which sits centrally within the White Rose Forest - one of the existing community forests.

The average woodland cover in Europe is about 36%. In the UK the average is 12% but in the Harrogate District and the Yorkshire Dales the figure is down to 8% despite its ancient forests being a favourite hunting ground of English monarchs in the Middle Ages including King John.

Figures produced by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in 2018 show that while only 27.8% of the area's carbon emissions are from industry compared to 40% national average emissions from agriculture are above national average.

And nearly half of reported CO₂ in the Harrogate district is created by transport.

The Woodlands for Life event on Thursday will offer the opportunity to learn more about the Northern Forest project itself and the potential benefits it will bring to the Harrogate district.

Speakers will include Pip Borrill, head of partnerships at the Woodland; Keith Wilkinson, MBE, the honorary chairman of the Nidd Gorge Advisory Partnership and honorary secretary of the Bilton Conservation Group; David Rhodes, a retired architect and town planner who worked for Harrogate Borough Council as the head of Conservation and design, and Terry Knowles of the Rotary of Harrogate which has planted 18,000 trees in Nidderdale.

Woodland is becoming increasingly seen as a valuable asset in the fight against climate change, in providing habitat to encourage biodiversity and in helping to secure our own wellbeing.

The Northern Forest will connect the five Community Forests in the North of England – the Mersey Forest, Manchester City of Trees, South Yorkshire Community Forest, the Leeds White Rose Forest and the HEYwoods Project – with green infrastructure and woodland created in and around major urban centres such as Chester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Manchester.

Source: <https://www.harrogateadvertiser.co.uk/health/why-harrogate-must-plant-a-new-forest-the-size-of-stray-each-year-1-10050428>