

Blenheim Creating Nine New Public Access Woodlands as Part of 'Unprecedented' Tree Planting Project

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The first of 270,000 trees are being planted at Blenheim as part of an 'unprecedented' project to create nine new woodlands on the Oxfordshire estate.

Throughout December around 30,000 trees are being planted at a site known as the River Dorn Wood including hornbeam, lime, sycamore, wild cherry, oak, Norway maple, alder and beech.

Work will begin on creating eight further woodlands in the new year, with the first phase of planting expected to be completed by the end of March 2022.

Blenheim is working in partnership with Morgan Sindall Group plc, the construction and regeneration group, the Forest Canopy Foundation (FCF), Grown in Britain and Nicholson Nursery on the ground-breaking scheme.

The tree planting the project, which will capture over 22,000 tonnes of CO₂ over the next 25 years, also includes the creation of a forest school, wildflower meadows, open spaces and more than 15km of linked public footpaths.

"This partnership with Morgan Sindall is a first for us and is incredibly exciting in terms of both scale and what it will deliver in improving our estate, the environment and opening up access to surrounding communities," said Blenheim Estates Director Roy Cox.

The Blenheim project represents the first woodlands to be planted under the Forest Canopy Foundation (FCF) – a not-for-profit collaboration of private sector forestry companies who have joined forces to demonstrate technical rigour and quality in woodland creation.

Grown in Britain will carry out regular independent auditing of the scheme to measure its natural capital gains including cleaner air and water as well as richer soil.

"We're going to be measuring and monitoring all the elements in these new woodlands to see how biodiversity is improving, how carbon is being captured and how the air is being filtered using innovative techniques to track this project's environmental impact," said John Morgan, Chief Executive Morgan Sindall Group plc.

Blenheim's rural team are working with Nicholson Nursery to create the new woodland areas, put up signage, waymarkers and fencing and all the trees will be fitted with biodegradable tree guards to minimise use of plastics.

"For people to be able to get out of their built environment and be able to go and walk through woodlands that have got permissive access throughout them on this sort of scale in the English lowlands is virtually unprecedented," said Nicholsons Nursery's Nathan Fall.

Issued on behalf of Blenheim. For more information please contact Stephanie Duncan, Marketing and Communications Director, on 07881 356736 or email SDuncan@blenheimpalace.com or Drew Cunliffe at drew@flamingo-marketing.co.uk

About Blenheim Estate

At Blenheim Estate Land we know that our land is precious and finite, but cared for properly its benefits can be limitless. Yet today there are fresh challenges like climate change, an aging population and increasing urbanisation.

So our approach - spanning a number of projects - needs to be as sophisticated, enduring and holistic as those issues we face.

By adopting new methods of valuing our natural capital we can view our land resources as part of an ecosystem. An ecosystem whose benefits extend to the air we all breathe, the green transport solutions that connect our communities, the physical and mental health we enjoy, and the quality of the food we consume.

Morgan Sindall

Morgan Sindall Group plc is a leading UK construction and regeneration group with revenue of c£3bn, employing around 6,700 employees and operating in the public, regulated and private sectors. It operates through five divisions of Construction & Infrastructure, Fit Out, Property Services, Partnership Housing and Urban Regeneration.

Morgan Sindall Group is an environmental leader within its sector. In 2020, the Group was awarded an A Grade by CDP, formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project, in recognition of its actions to tackle climate change. It was the only major UK-based contractor to do so. It was the first construction company in the UK to set and approve science-based emission reduction targets and, in 2012, became the first non-FTSE 350 company ever to be included in the Climate Disclosure Leadership Index.