

A message from our chief executive

This unprecedented year brought a new-found understanding and appreciation of the purpose and power of the Forest for people.

Understanding the important role that the Forest would play in helping people cope with the pandemic, we were determined to keep it open, supporting people's physical health and mental wellbeing by spending time in the woodlands.

The Forest also became a sanctuary for children and young people, helping them to cope with the extraordinary times they were experiencing, catch up on lost learning, and safely reconnect with friends after so much time apart.

Despite everything we had to contend with, the Forest continued to grow. We acquired new land and created new woodland at two sites.



We have now planted over 1.9 million trees since the charity began, and excitingly will plant our two millionth tree this coming winter season.

We have been overwhelmed by the continued support we have received, and I would like to personally thank our volunteers for their dedication and resilience, and all our supporters, individual donors, companies, and trusts who have so generously helped ensure our important work can continue.

Beth Brook, Chief Executive, Heart of England Forest



Wetland at Oak Wood



Brown hairstreak butterfly



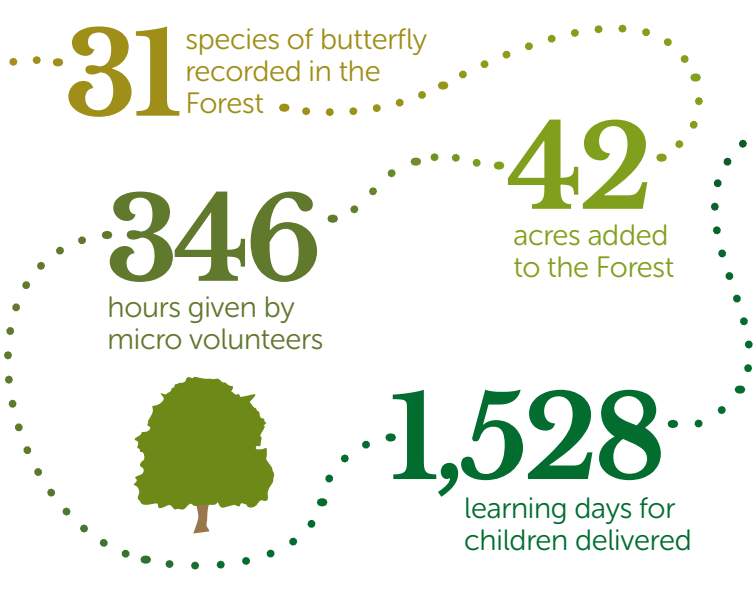
Newly planted trees at Chapel Gate Wood



The story so far...

- 1,930,163 million trees planted across 4,143 acres since the charity began
- These newly created woodlands join a mosaic of habitats in the Forest including mature and ancient woodland, grassland, heathland, farmland and wetland, to benefit the environment, wildlife and people
- A Forest around 7,000 acres strong – that's 23% of the journey towards our 30,000 acre goal
- More than a new woodland for the region, the Forest is already an incredible national asset for the country

The year in numbers



It has never been more important to protect and invest in our natural environment. To find out how you can get involved in our exciting and vital mission visit www.heartofenglandforest.org

In partnership with ThinkForward, a charity working to equip young people with the skills and experience they need to move into work after they finish school, we were able to offer a work experience programme in the Forest for three days a week.



Matt

"I especially enjoyed making fences out of hazel coppicing, and weeding, bush trimming and statue cleaning with Pete in the Garden of Heroes and Villains. I also worked with Jeremy making wood plaques for the tree memorials. He cut the outline and I sanded it down to make it smooth and painted it with varnish"

27 species of butterfly were recorded in transect surveys, including two high priority species and one medium priority species.



Mike

"As far as Butterfly Conservation is concerned, the way the Heart of England Forest has set up monitoring is seen as an exemplar as an organisation. You are only rivalled by the RSPB in the way you establish monitoring as soon as you obtain new land holdings."

We continued our commitment to investing in training budding foresters with the skills and experience needed to forge a career within the modern forestry industry.



Fiona

"Helping to grow the Forest feels like a form of direct action to me. I hope this internship marks the beginning of a long career in the outdoors - protecting, promoting, and creating landscapes for wildlife to mitigate the impact of the climate and biodiversity crises."

The Forest remained open throughout the pandemic, providing a safe haven for people during this challenging time.



Claire

"For my family the nature walks are just perfect and have given them a love and respect for the countryside. While our family walks round the Forest might only be planned to be a short hour or so, we always end up being 'lost in nature' for hours. The forest certainly saved us during all the madness of 2020."



OUR IMPACT

2020/21

In a year like no other, the Forest continued to grow with your support. Look at what we achieved together.