



Increasing Tree Cover in Portsmouth

Introduction

The national environmental organisation, Friends of the Earth, is campaigning to double tree cover across the UK by 2045. There are many benefits in doing so, including:

- absorbing carbon emissions to help combat the climate emergency
“doubling the number of trees could deliver annual carbon sequestration equal to around 10% of the UK’s current greenhouse gas emissions.”ⁱ
- cleaning the air we breathe by absorbing NO₂
- creating wildlife corridors and habitats
- providing greener spaces for people’s enjoyment and well-being
- providing shade and shelter from hot sun and rain
- slowing down surface run off and helping to reduce flood risk at times of heavy rain

Our local group, Portsmouth Friends of the Earth (PFOE), calls on Portsmouth City Council (PCC) to make “doubling tree cover to 20% by 2045” an explicit, measurable, objective in Portsmouth’s Local Plan and supporting Green Infrastructure Strategy and Tree Charter.

In parallel with tree planting, the Green Infrastructure Strategy should include proactive measures to support other greening initiatives such as green roofs, living walls, hedges, rewilding and wildflower verges.

What does doubling tree cover mean in numbers?

According to PCC’s recent report ‘Assessment of Tree Cover in Portsmouth’ⁱⁱ, *“there are approximately 86,500 trees in total across Portsmouth; total tree canopy coverage across the city equates to 9.8% of the land area of the city.”*

PFOE calculates that on this basis increasing tree cover in Portsmouth to 20% would mean planting a minimum of 86,500 additional trees by 2045. We understand that planting on Horsea Island has involved 50,000 new trees, although not all may survive. This means a minimum of 36,500 additional trees should be planted by 2045, equivalent to 1,460 each year.

Where can more trees be planted in Portsmouth?

The responsibility for doubling tree cover cannot lie solely with PCC, although of course they need to plant more.

Major landowners: PFOE recommends that PCC should approach other land-owners in the city to gain a commitment to doubling tree cover on their land by 2045 eg Navy, University, NHS, National Rail, Waterboards, the Port.

Existing tree planting programmes: Several local and national groups are already involved in tree planting and rewilding in Portsmouth, including:

- Hampshire & Isle of Wight Trust have a Wilder Portsmouth project
- The Tree Council are aiming to get 1 million people to commit to planting 1 million trees during National Tree Week and have trees to give away
- Portsmouth & Southsea Tree Wardens are actively involved with a range of tree planting initiatives
- Sikhs around the world are taking part in a scheme to plant a million new trees as a "gift to the entire planet". More than 500 native trees are to be planted on the roundabout at the top of Eastern Road in Autumn 2019
- A Charles Dickens Orchard Trail is being planted with fruit trees.

Public spaces: About 20% of Portsmouth's trees grow in public spaces such as parks, recreation grounds, play grounds, allotments, churchyards and cemeteries, commons and civic spacesⁱⁱⁱ. PFOE considers that the number of trees planted in public spaces should be doubled. Our group has researched possible tree-planting locations by collected suggestions from Portsmouth residents^{iv} and it is clear that they would like to see many more trees in public spaces. Interestingly, quite a number of people suggested that whilst open spaces should be preserved on Southsea Common, more clusters of trees would be welcomed for their shade in hot weather. Local residents also suggested more trees should be planted at Great Salterns and Baffins. It was suggested that rewilding parts of Baffins would save on the cost of grass-cutting.

Schools: PFOE's research has revealed the potential for tree planting and rewilding in school grounds. PCC should encourage and support the planting of trees in schoolgrounds. Teachers, parents, children and anyone living in the neighbouring streets will all benefit from the creation of green oases on school grounds.

Neglected patches of land: As part of our research, PFOE members asked local residents to identify neglected patches of ground near where they lived which would benefit from trees. Within a short space of time we collected over 80 suggested locations, many of which would be the responsibility of PCC^v. PFOE recommends that PCC should prioritise tree-planting in these places wherever practicable as this is likely to make a significant improvement to the local neighbourhood. We also recommend that PCC should seek opportunities to ask residents in each Portsmouth

neighbourhood about suggestions for tree planting locations. Neglected patches are most easily identified by local knowledge.

Private gardens: 31% of trees in Portsmouth (equivalent to 2700 trees) are planted in private gardens^{vi}. If PCC encouraged local residents to plant a tree, with advice on suitable varieties and planting techniques, it should be possible for local residents to help double tree cover. PFOE recommends that PCC mount a publicity campaign about its ambition to double tree cover in Portsmouth.

Greener streets: About 10% of Portsmouth's trees are street trees.^{vii} PFOE understands that planting street trees is extremely expensive because of the contract with COLAS, who charge £25,000 for each additional street tree to cover planting and lifetime maintenance costs. PFOE recommends that PCC approaches COLAS to investigate the possibility of bringing street-tree planting and maintenance back in-house. This is particularly important, given that many of the wards with the lowest tree to person ratios are also areas of the city with some of the highest levels of deprivation, below average levels of health, and some of the worst air quality^{viii}. Additional street trees would help to improve air quality for local residents in these areas, as well as helping mental wellbeing through reducing stress and anxiety.

4. Summary of recommendations

1. PCC should make doubling tree cover to 20% by 2045 an explicit, measurable, objective in Portsmouth's Local Plan and supporting Green Infrastructure Strategy and Tree Charter.
2. The Green Infrastructure Strategy should include proactive measures to support other greening initiatives such as green roofs, living walls, hedges, rewilding and wildflower verges
3. PCC should approach other land-owners in the city to gain a commitment to doubling tree cover on their land by 2045
4. The number of trees planted in public spaces should be doubled.
5. PCC should encourage and support the planting of trees in school-grounds.
6. PCC should prioritise tree-planting on neglected patches of land wherever practicable as this is likely to make a significant improvement to local neighbourhoods.
7. PCC should seek opportunities to ask residents in each Portsmouth neighbourhood about suggestions for tree planting locations.
8. PFOE recommends that PCC mount a publicity campaign about its ambition to double tree cover in Portsmouth
9. PCC approaches COLAS to investigate the possibility of bringing street-tree planting and maintenance back in-house.

Appendix

Portsmouth residents' ideas for places to plant more trees in Portsmouth:

Collected at 'Wild About Portsmouth' stall at Portsmouth Museum (August 2019)

1. Site of former toilets opposite Milton Park School
2. Outside of Eldon Building on Winston Churchill Ave
3. Fratton Park Industrial area
4. Site of old petrol station on Victoria Rd South
5. Outside Kingston prison
6. Patch of concrete Wadham Rd/London Rd
7. Fenced off area – Baffins Pond park/playing fields
8. Southsea Common

Collected via PFOE Facebook page (5-6th Sept 2019)

9. Also certain streets – Winston Churchill Ave, Warren Ave, St Mary's Rd, Milton Rd, Tangier Rd and Fawcett Rd.
10. Around the sea walls with the new sea defences (Stamshaw/north of the city). Really lovely bee friendly, perennial planting but loads more opportunities for trees.
11. Winchester road and surrounding areas eg Langley, Malta have indents out of the road for trees, but most of the trees removed and not replaced. It would be great to have those back as this is a pollution air quality hot spot
12. Down Devonshire Avenue there's a bit of grass in between the roads. I have always thought that could look lovely with little trees and flowers on it.
Particularly popular – 17 likes
13. On the common, or Southsea castle field. Not suggesting lots of trees, as the big open spaces have benefits too, but I think some additional trees could be added.
Popular - 5 likes (plus other similar suggestions)
14. In front of King Henry Building (UoP), near the bike racks. There is a square space available for a tree, with soil already.
15. Copnor Bridge, full of beer cans and rubbish scattered all over the grass, in need of meadow flowers trees etc etc **Popular – 8 likes**
16. Next to Fratton train station where all the brambles were cut back, but litter not picked up **Popular – 8 likes**
17. South of Southampton road, between mother Kelly's and Port Solent
18. Waste ground opposite Milton Park Primary School. Was an old police station many years ago. I believe it is also a high car pollution area so trees on this land would help in the clean air policy 🍷 win/win **Popular – 14 likes**
19. My road Wykeham road would look great with trees but has none.
20. More trees needed on the common.
21. Between the Hilsea McDonald's and roundabout
22. On the corner of Powerscourt Road and Copnor Road there's a patch of green, would liven up the area for the residents in the care home opposite!

23. Fawcett Road. A tree planting / environmental improvement scheme has been in discussion with Liberal Democrats Suzy Horton, Steve Pitt and Portsmouth City Council for the past year and initial plans drawn up. Still waiting for the results hope this can be delivered.
24. More trees needed on the common.
25. End of Essex rd in Milton
26. Roundabouts

Suggestions from Wilder Portsmouth stall (Garden Centre)

27. St Catherine's Road Waste ground at residential roads
28. Great Salterns
29. By Hilsea Lido /bus station
30. Green verges
31. Schools
32. Osborne Road
33. Lake Road
34. Eastern Road
35. Fratton Park
36. Baffins
37. Somerstown
38. Corner of Essex Road under the billboards
39. Fratton Bridge cycle path down from Fratton Bridge to St Edmund's School – concrete path could be 'greened'
40. Salterns
41. Edge of Great Salterns - on the north side of the access lane at the rear of Stanley Avenue. Replace trees removed by 7 residents on the south side of the lane.
42. Replace lost trees in Drayton park
43. St George's Benefician
44. Ferry Road – waste land behind car parking, between car park & Fort Cumberland
45. More trees on Southsea Common – in clusters
46. Landport – St Faith's Church garden
47. St Jude's Church Garden
48. School gardens. Most schools have little gardens and want to encourage diversity of wildlife
49. Southsea common – trees will provide additional shade now we are having hotter summers
50. Frazer Range site
51. Field near Eastney car park at Frazer Range is designated as a Special Interest Nature Conservation site. Planting silver birch would work well.
52. Pumping Station
53. Water Company site
54. Evergreen oaks around Eastney Lakes

55. Green space at back of chip shop in Ferry Road . This needs managing for wildlife. Cut grass less, but cut at right time of year to encourage wildflowers and wildlife. Create a corridor that stretches around Eastney Lakes to Great Salterns and Hilsea Lines.
56. Somerstown – a few areas near Grosvenor Houuse, Warwick Crescent,
57. Near the Adventure playground near ASSDA needs more trees
58. Eastern Road
59. Teapot Row – green space in front of old Royal Marines buildings
60. Langstone Junior School – massive field. Historically, took all the trees down. Put more next to the fencing.
61. St George's, Portsea
62. More on Southsea Common
63. Off Leith Avenue, Browning Avenue – patch - bramble covered, also alley way.
64. Browning Avenue – replant street trees that have been removed
65. RNLI, Solent Reach, near Fish and Chip shop – lots of brambles by Langston, Eastney Point. Link together with Allotments to create wildlife corridor
66. 2 planting areas in Tokar Street (corner Morley Street). Planted with shrubs, but neglected and could have small trees.
67. Schools
68. Devonshire Avenue
69. Devonshire Avenue
70. Bath Road/Devonshire Avenue – where join
71. Baffins Pond – could have a lot more. Save money and cut the grass less. 30% could be rewilded. Overcutting is killing hedgehogs. Was once a farm and pond is a natural feature. Could even fence off a small area for grazing.
72. Clegg Road
73. Highland Road
74. Lindley Avenue/Collins Road
75. Silver Street Minerals Estate Great Southsea Street – derelict areas for 15 years – face Co-op – footpath to left, through there
76. Buckland Park – some trees have been cut down recently and not replaced
77. In front of King Henry Building, King Henry Street
78. Near Fratton train station
79. Goldsmith Avenue
80. Baffins – Tangier Road
81. Eastern Road
82. Cobden Park near Painton Avenue and Tamworth Park – replace oak trees that have been cut down

Other suggested locations:

83. Wimbledon Park – trees that blew down in a storm were never replaced
84. Exmouth Road has several build-outs but no longer any trees.
85. Behind Make - Cornwall Road

i [Friends of the Earth's tree campaign website](#)

ii '[An Assessment of Tree Cover in Portsmouth](#)', Portsmouth City Council, February 2019,

iii Ditto

iv See Appendix

v Ditto

vi Ditto

vii '[An Assessment of Tree Cover in Portsmouth](#)', Portsmouth City Council, February 2019

viii Ditto