

## **Largest tree planting scheme in Wiltshire takes root**

A native English woodland area is being created as 10,000 trees put down their roots on a former Hills Group landfill site at High Penn, Calne. Blackthorn, Oak, Ash, Lime, Black Poplar and Downy Birch trees are being planted along with a variety of shrubs to provide a rich source of food for wildlife and insects and to improve the bio-diversity of the area. The scheme is the largest tree planting scheme of its type in Wiltshire during 2010 and funds for the project were secured from the Forestry Commission.

Representatives from Calne Town Council, and surrounding local Parish Councils were given a tour of the site by Nick King Group Director - Homes, Sue Wyatt of the Hills Group, Keith Mills, Southern Forestry and John Rattray - Head of Adaptation, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and to see the project for themselves and were clearly impressed with the work to date.

Commenting on the tour Councillor Mercy Baggs (Priestley Ward) said " I congratulate them on their efforts.....I was impressed by the amount of tree planting that has taken place and the overall condition of the site". Councillor Amanda Venton (Abberd Ward) added "I had no idea how much work had been done .... what a wonderful project."

The Hills Group have been planning the scheme with Southern Forestry and the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and on their advice wide rides (grass pathways) together with an area around the existing lake will be left unplanted. This will compliment the natural woodland habitat and create an environment that will encourage the likes of roe deer and badgers and hopefully attract rare insects such as the Hairstreak butterfly to the area.

Wooden posts are to be put in place to support kestrel, buzzard and owls and the new wide rides will link onto existing footpaths and bridle paths around



High Penn. Once planting has been completed the site will be managed by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust on a long term lease.

This is not the first time High Penn has played a role in bio-diversity. In 2003 the area became home to a colony of over 500 slow worms when they were relocated from a nearby Hills Homes development site. Hibernation mounds and heat traps were created for the slow worms, along with two ponds for frogs, toads, water living plants and creatures.

Nick King, Group Director - Homes commented "We are already seeing an increase in wildlife attracted to the area and have Southern Marsh Orchids and Common Spotted Orchids growing on site. The Hills Group with help from its partners is creating a wildlife habitat for the whole community to enjoy and is a perfect illustration of the company's commitment to the environment and community in which it operates."

Local residents will have the chance to be involved in the project later in the year when Hills holds a tree planting day to coincide with National Tree Planting Week in November (date to be confirmed). A thousand trees will be made available free of charge for visitors to plant on the day. Those wishing to attending should register their interest and contact Sue Wyatt at the Hills Group on 01672 516999 or email [swyatt@hills-group.co.uk](mailto:swyatt@hills-group.co.uk)

**ENDS**

Notes to editors:

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