



# Hedgerow Heroes Phase Five Final Report

April 2026

100  
YEARS



Campaign  
to Protect  
Rural England

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## Introduction

### Roger Mortlock, Chief Executive Officer, CPRE

This has been a year when threats to the countryside have come thick and fast. For many of us at CPRE, these assaults on the countryside have felt relentless at times, and our precious rural landscapes have too often felt undervalued. But with Hedgerow Heroes, we have a different story to tell. It is a story of hope, renewal, of nature's restoration and of communities coming together with landowners to deliver real change.

Visiting the projects highlighted in this report leaves you with a sense of optimism for the future. That is particularly important in this, our centenary year, as we both celebrate 100 years of CPRE's impact, but also look forward. Appropriately enough for our centenary, this has been a bumper year. Not only have we seen the incredible investment bring us within touching distance of 100 miles for 100 years, but we have also seen more branches than ever join the project, and the majority of them go on to exceed the ambitious targets they set themselves. This report celebrates not only hedgerows restored and created, but also lives changed, wellbeing lifted, and communities united.

It's no understatement to say that for those CPRE branches involved, the experience of Hedgerow Heroes has been transformative. New funders unlocked, young people engaged, networks widened and new relationships built. Huge congratulations to everyone involved. Together, you have delivered something extraordinary.

# Overview

Lorraine Ray, Project Manager

## A momentous season

Hedgerows are the vital stitching in the patchwork of our countryside. Not only are they beautiful, with shifting seasonal colours, but they also provide homes and corridors for wildlife. They are climate superheroes, capturing carbon and slowing the flow of water. Hedgerow Heroes is CPRE's flagship hedgerow planting and restoration project.

Hedgerow Heroes Phase Five has been the project's most ambitious and successful season to date, with participation from 13 local CPRE branches. This year aims to deliver 100 miles of hedgerow planting and restoration to celebrate CPRE's Centenary year and we are now within reach!

The season saw the welcome addition of five new counties: Cheshire, Cumbria, Hertfordshire, Kent and Sussex and nine new project leaders. Eleven branches exceeded their original targets, highlighting the collective commitment of local CPRE groups to contribute to the 100-mile goal.

Alongside hedgerow planting, laying and restoration, teams delivered a wide range of complementary activities. These included training sessions, educational talks, workshops and information-sharing events. Several branches developed hedgerow information packs, whilst CPRE's national schools resources continued to be widely used. Together, these initiatives strengthened local engagement, raised awareness and fostered lasting community relationships. Equally heritage-skills such as traditional hedgelaying are being brought back to life. This year, the project worked with 97 farms and delivered multiple sessions with farmers and landowners focussed on good hedgerow management.



Media interest increased with over 21 features, including national coverage on the BBC and Radio 4's Farming Today. Social media engagement also grew, with at least 70 posts shared across platforms. The project was further showcased at an event at the Houses of Parliament in February and featured in CPRE's Town Hall.

Four online hedgerow talks were delivered in partnership with CPRE Hampshire and CPRE Sussex. These events can be watched here:

- **Can hedgerows save the world?**
- **Hedgelife**
- **Restoring hedgerows**

Collaboration with the **Youngwilders** on 'Hedgentines Day' generated additional social media activity and engaged younger audiences with hedgerows.



Care was taken to use biodegradable or recycled plant guards where possible and after-care plans are in place for the hedgerows in all participating CPRE counties.

**Our public survey showed that 99% would recommend the project to a friend, 99% felt a sense of achievement, and 96% felt more connected to nature.**



The following pages present the overall results, with a review of each participating CPRE branch.

# Results

## Year to date results

Year	Number of branches	Result (miles)
Phase 1 2021-2	5	12
Phase 2 2022-3	7	17
Phase 3 2023-4	9	19
Phase 4 2024-5	8	18
Phase 5 2025-6	13	33.77
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99.77</b>

# Results

## Meterage achieved

Output	Target (metres)	Result (metres)
New hedgerow planted	37,700	42,438
Hedgerow rejuvenated (laid, gapped or coppiced)	4,770	11,897
Combined total planted and rejuvenated	54,335 metres or 33.77 miles	
Breakdown of rejuvenation		
Laid	5,958	
Gapped	5,367	
Coppiced	572	

# Results

## Key metrics

Measure (number of)	Result
Hedge whips planted	<b>239,683</b> + 130 standard trees planted within hedgerows
Planting days	407
Rejuvenation days	168
Volunteers	3,846
Volunteer hours	20,968
Events held	679
Sites	212
People trained in hedgelaying	784
Partner organisations involved	216

# Results

## Additional metrics

Measure (number of)	Result
Hedge-centric workshops held	69
Partner organisations involved	216
Delivery partners	94
Children (under 18) involved	1,281
Young people (18-30) involved	534
Farms worked with	97
Educational establishments involved	45

## CPRE Avon and Bristol

This season, two new employees, Sam and Gemma, were brought in to manage Hedgerow Heroes for CPRE Avon and Bristol.

“Our fourth year of Hedgerow Heroes project has built on the momentum of previous years to deliver a very successful programme of activities that engaged a wide range of stakeholders and volunteers across the West Country. Since 2022, we have planted and rejuvenated over 8km of hedgerow and remain on target to achieve our Centenary Challenge goal of 10km by the end of 2026.

In this phase, we worked at nine sites, focusing on areas with significant wildlife or community benefits, and were delighted to continue our partnership work. We engaged 242 volunteers aged 18 to 70, and 100% of respondents reported that these sessions improved their sense of connection with nature and had a beneficial impact on their mental health. Other highlights included working with Avon Needs Trees to establish hedgerows at their ambitious 422-acre Lower Chew Forest – a woodland creation project aimed at helping tackle the climate emergency, improve biodiversity and reduce local flooding.

We collaborated with a local council to restore hedgerows in parks and green spaces, and with Bristol Water to boost biodiversity around key utilities infrastructure. It has been inspiring to witness the growing enthusiasm among local groups and individuals throughout the season, and I believe that the chance to actively contribute to our countryside and green spaces is greatly appreciated by all participants.

In 2026, we have had a wonderful start to our Centenary celebrations, with both our 'Concert for the Countryside' and the planting of our Centenary Woodland Grove attracting significant public attention and raising CPRE's profile with new audiences. We are excited to continue our hedgerow work and would love to end the year on a high with another year of Hedgerow Heroes!”  
**Sam Martlew, Project Lead**



“A huge, huge thank you to both Gemma and Sam for two really informative practical hedgelaying sessions. Gemma gave a great introductory session, explaining the history, techniques and importance. Both Gemma and Sam monitored volunteers throughout sessions and when needed offered tailored support, advice and their own tools during both sessions. This really helped me to improve my technique and I feel I had a much better sense/feel for how to tackle areas within the hedge. I had a really great time and will definitely volunteer with CPRE in future.” **Clare, volunteer**

### Highlights

- 2,900 metres
- 21 planting days
- 8 hedgelaying days
- 10,840 hedge whips planted
- 4 hedgelaying training sessions
- 105 people trained in hedgelaying
- 35 events
- 242 volunteers
- 968 volunteer hours
- 8 sites



“It is great to work with an organisation like CPRE to achieve habitat improvements whilst also working with a wide range of volunteers, keeping rural skills alive and greatly improving our open spaces. Thank you.”

Caroline Glaze, partner organisation



## CPRE Cheshire

CPRE Cheshire is a new addition to Hedgerow Heroes this season and has worked with TCV (The Conservation Volunteers).

“Working with delivery partner TCV, we planted 1,660 metres of new hedgerow and rejuvenated 280 metres. We selected locations where hedging would deliver the greatest benefit for both people and nature, including seven sites in the Mersey Valley (identified as a CPRE hedgerow action priority area). The hedges will make a significant contribution to rewilding former industrial sites, enhancing landscapes, enriching public open spaces, and bringing nature to urban neighbourhoods such as Blacon, one of England’s 10% most deprived areas. Volunteers included residents, children, young people, refugees, and adults with learning disabilities.

The project has sparked multiple new relationships and initiatives, which look set to deliver ongoing benefits. These include a potential long-term partnership involving TCV and Bridge Community Farm and connecting CPRE Cheshire and TCV with Young Wilders for their first project in Cheshire.

For us, as a branch and as members of the Cheshire Local Nature Partnership, the project has improved our public profile, demonstrating that we can deliver on our vision to enhance and protect our local countryside. This has been particularly important at a time when all our other news has been about fighting development threats.”

**Jonathan Clarke, Chair**



“It’s been such a joyful day. I’m proud of our generation for taking action for nature and doing something for their mental health and physical wellbeing. It’s super-nice to start making a network around Cheshire of young people who want to do stuff for nature and climate in their spare time.”

**Molly Easton, Co-director, Young Wilders**

### Highlights

- 1,940 metres
- 30 planting days
- 6 rejuvenation days
- 6,400 hedge whips planted
- 36 events
- 33 people trained in hedgelaying
- 136 volunteers
- 913 volunteer hours
- 10 sites
- Young Wilders ‘hedgentines day’ with CPRE’s President, Mary-Ann Ochota



“The day has been incredible. We’ve planted brilliant robust hedges that will do amazing things connecting nature in the area.”

Elen, volunteer



## CPRE Cumbria - Friends of the Lake District

Friends of the Lake District represent CPRE in the area. They are new to Hedgerow Heroes, and it is part of their wider project, Hedges and Edges.

“We aimed to plant 2km of new hedgerows and rejuvenate through laying, coppicing, and gapping up another 2km, totalling 4km. We focused on the River Petteril Catchment, the Ullswater Catchment, and the Howgills National Character Area. We also held training sessions covering various aspects of hedgerow management, including hedge laying, cutting/trimming, the benefits of hedgerows for livestock, and how to apply for grant funding for hedgerow work. We engaged the public through volunteer hedge planting days, survey work and more casual engagement events such as hedgerow foraging walks.”

**Naomi Walker, Project Lead**

### Highlights

- 5,010 metres
- 15 planting days
- 10 rejuvenation days
- 17,860 hedge whips planted
- 27 events
- 42 people trained in hedgelaying
- 107 volunteers
- 815 volunteer hours
- 25 sites
- Hedgelaying Competition
- Talks, walks and webinars



“You made me feel very welcome, were accommodating and everyone helped create what felt like a friendly and inclusive space. It seemed very well organised and I felt that having a free lunch at the Base Camp cafe was really special and so important for boosting morale! Also, having the photographer there to record the day helped make it feel special.”

**Volunteer at hedge planting day at Basecamp North Lakes**

**“By restoring hedgerows, the project will help protect biodiversity, enhance rural landscapes, and support sustainable farming.”**

Naomi, Friends of the Lake District



## CPRE Derbyshire

CPRE Derbyshire has returned to the project this season, having taken part in phase two. They have worked with their partner, Groundwork Five Counties, to deliver the project.

“With the help of 115 volunteers across 20 sessions, we planted almost 2.4 kilometres (20% over our 2km target) of new hedgerow across a broad range of sites in Derbyshire, from farms to graveyards! The newly planted hedges play a crucial role in linking woodland areas and existing hedges, creating valuable wildlife corridors. The project has also contributed to a local rewilding initiative and helped a school improve its ‘forest school’ site. This involved rejuvenating an existing hedge and engaging children in activities such as planting new hedge and dead-hedging.

We also trained 11 local people in hedgelaying and recruited enthusiastic volunteers ranging in age from 10 to their eighth decade. We welcomed volunteers from the local community, parish councils, businesses and a primary school, plus one individual who travelled 65 miles by public transport – twice! Through this engagement, the project delivered practical conservation work and promoted greater awareness of CPRE and the importance of hedgerows.”

A key motivation for participation in Hedgerow Heroes is to help reverse the ongoing loss of hedgerows in Derbyshire. Research indicates that the county, particularly around the Trent Valley Washlands and Derbyshire Coalfields, has experienced significant hedgerow depletion. Our project has contributed to restoring and enhancing the county’s landscape and biodiversity, and has provided us with the opportunity to play a practical and visible role in CPRE’s ambitious goal of achieving 100 miles of hedgerow in our centenary year.”

**Andrea Watwood, Project Lead**



“Members of the public passing by the Crich hedgelaying site were fascinated by the work being done and complimented the volunteers and the ethos of the Hedgerow Heroes project. Another passerby happened to be a professional hedgelayer and was particularly impressed by the quality of the work achieved by our volunteers . Praise indeed!”

**Andrea, CPRE Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire**

### Highlights

- 2,570 metres
- 20 planting days
- 8 rejuvenation days
- 11,393 hedge whips planted
- 31 events
- 11 people trained in hedgelaying
- 155 volunteers
- 582 volunteer hours
- 13 sites



**“This was a volunteer day from my work. I wanted to do something local so that I can see the progress over the years. Thank you for the opportunity I have really enjoyed it .”**

Corporate volunteer



## CPRE Gloucestershire

CPRE Gloucestershire have taken part this season with a new Hedgerow Heroes project lead, Eve.

“Our Hedgerow Heroes Project has been an incredibly rewarding and successful initiative for CPRE Gloucestershire, bringing together practical conservation work with genuine and enthusiastic community involvement. Over the course of the season, we were delighted to surpass our original target, achieving a total of 2,085m of hedgerow creation and rejuvenation across the county.

Alongside planting, we delivered hedge laying training sessions, giving participants the opportunity to learn traditional rural skills and play an active role in caring for our environment. We were pleased to engage a wide range of community groups, including the Cotswold Wardens (Cotswold National Landscape), as well as local schools, helping to spark interest in hedgerows and their importance for wildlife and the countryside.

By working across nine sites throughout Gloucestershire, we were able to engage many individuals whilst considering accessibility and diversity among our volunteers. A particularly meaningful highlight was the planting of “Richard’s Hedge”, a living legacy to our Vice Chair. This event was attended by his close friends and family, volunteers and a local MP Roz Savage and CPRE’s CEO, Roger Mortlock.

This project has strengthened our connection with local communities and left a lasting impact on both the fabric of the countryside and those who took part.

I was fortunate to attend CPRE’s reception at the House of Lords in February, representing CPRE Gloucestershire and the Hedgerow Heroes project. This was an excellent opportunity to connect with a wide range of networks, volunteers and MPs to raise awareness of the project and its impact across the country.”

**Eve Gilbert, Project Lead**



“This has been my first time volunteering since I retired last year. I have really enjoyed getting out and about in Gloucestershire and meeting lots of wonderful people who are also happy to get their green thumbs muddy! Thanks to Eve and CPRE Gloucestershire for organising these events and getting us all out over the winter!” **Rachael, Volunteer**

### Highlights

- 2,085 metres
- 19 planting days
- 12 rejuvenation days
- 7,200 hedge whips planted
- 28 events
- 50 people trained in hedgelaying
- 168 volunteers
- 708 volunteer hours
- 9 sites
- Represented in parliament



“I was really happy to get involved with CPRE Gloucestershire's hedgerow project. It is such important work. Gloucestershire needs more hedges!”

Carol, volunteer



## CPRE Hampshire

CPRE Hampshire has participated in every phase of Hedgerow Heroes. From 2023, they have been working on a wider project, The Hampshire Hedge, which they have just completed.

“Phase five of Hedgerow Heroes marked the final year of The Hampshire Hedge, following the successful delivery in two previous years (2023/24 and 2024/25). The Hampshire Hedge has delivered connected hedgerows between the South Downs and New Forest National Parks. The aims were to reconnect people with the countryside, strengthen links between farmers and local communities, and improve habitat connectivity. The project exceeded its target last season thanks to a highly motivated volunteer base. A total of 5,198m of new hedgerow was planted, and 149m gapped up, enabling the project to surpass its three-year target of 15,000m.

Strong partnerships remained central to delivery. The project worked across land management, conservation, farming and volunteering communities, including workshops delivered with Sparsholt Agricultural College and University Centre. Support was provided to 12 Community Hedge Fund groups, alongside practical work with 10 farmers and landowners. Education remained important, with 13 schools involved in hedgerow activities, eight of which planted new hedgerows. Training and skills development were another major focus. Across our courses, we trained people in hedgelaying alongside community groups and ran eight ‘Improver days’ to support skill progression. Five years of activities culminated in ‘Hedgefest’, our first hedgelaying competition. Delivered in partnership with the Broadlands Estate and the South of England Hedge Laying Society, the event celebrated project success and was attended by 137 participants, including volunteers, trainees, funders and partners.”

Ellie Banks, Project Lead



“We were keen to have female stewards at Hedgefest to demonstrate to the novices and trainees that women can, are and should be hedgelayers. One of the stewards told us afterwards that she had been a bit nervous beforehand and was a little intimidated by the idea of helping some of the competitors that she felt were more experienced than her. However, by the afternoon she realised that she was able to help and guide and she was well within her ability to do this. Plus it was fun to help people.” Ellie and Katie, Hedgerow leads, CPRE Hampshire

### Insights

- 6,712 metres
- 26,000 hedge whips planted
- 104 events
- 256 people trained in hedgelaying
- 818 volunteers
- 3819 volunteer hours
- 35 sites
- 12 workshops
- 29 partners
- Young Wilders ‘hedgelines’ day



“Thankyou for the session with our children. It's clear they learned a lot from your visit. The work you did fitted really well with their work on habitats and has further enriched their outdoor learning. In particular, while we were birdwatching last week, many children were looking for sparrowhawks and explaining to me the importance of hedgerows for small mammals to escape becoming sparrowhawk prey. I know the staff learned a thing or two about hedgerows too!”

Teacher, North Baddesley Primary School

## CPRE Herefordshire

This is CPRE Herefordshire's second season of taking part in Hedgerow Heroes. They over-delivered by 5377 metres.

“Working side-by-side with farmers, landowners, parish groups, communities, schools and colleges, we set out to plant and restore 4km of hedgerow across the county. Between November 2025 and April 2026, we delivered 9,377 metres. That's more than double our target, spread across 18 farmland sites around Herefordshire, with around 50,000 plants installed under biodegradable guards.

The community turned out in force: 226 registered volunteers contributed 1,636 hours across 104 planting sessions; 65 people trained in traditional hedgelaying; 150 attended our public talks; and 74 young people gained hands-on experience through schools and colleges. Natural England, the Environment Agency, Herefordshire Council, Hereford Wildlife Trust, Semperian, Oak Tree Funeral Services, and the Scouts all provided volunteer days.

Every metre helps tackle climate change (an estimated 7.2 tonnes of e locked up annually, plus long-term soil storage), boosts biodiversity, and brings landscapes to life, providing safe passage for hedgehogs and dormice and shelter for pollinators and birds. With UKSPF part-funding our hedgelaying courses, the Tree Council supplying free trees, canes and guards, and 4km of farmer demand already registered for Phase 6.

Being part of Hedgerow Heroes has genuinely transformed what CPRE Herefordshire can deliver for our county.”

**Angharad, Paul and Andrew, Project Team**



“I've found it really enjoyable and have learnt a lot and feel confident in my new skills!” **Participant, hedgelaying course.**

“The team are still talking about how much they enjoyed it!” **Denise Latham, Natural England**

### Highlights

- 9,377 metres
- 104 planting days
- 14 rejuvenation days
- 50,000 hedge whips planted
- 140 events
- 65 people trained in hedgelaying
- 226 volunteers
- 1,636 volunteer hours
- 18 sites



“ The project has generated strong community engagement. Over 200 people have now signed up to our newsletter, and a dedicated team of volunteers has played a key role in helping us surpass our original goals for the season.”

Andrew, CPRE Herefordshire



## CPRE Hertfordshire

This is CPRE Hertfordshire's first time joining the project. A new project officer, James, was brought in to manage Hedgerow Heroes.

“Being part of this project has been a real privilege, both in meeting fantastic people and in leaving a mark on the landscape that will benefit wildlife for decades to come.

From local schoolchildren to families from north-west London, and senior citizens looking to make new friends, this project has not only connected habitats but also people. As the weather turns, the roots of our hedge whips have begun pushing down into the soil, and the people who planted them have become connected to the land, too. Planting hedges means people feel they have a personal stake in the landscape's future, and their legacy is written on its surface.

It has also been my pleasure to spread the word about CPRE more generally, raise our local profile, and build relationships with other charities such as Butterfly Conservation, the Farming and Wildlife Advisor Group East, and the Countryside Management Service.”  
**James Lunt, Project Lead**



“As arboriculture students we learn a lot about woodlands, but getting to know the importance of hedges has been really important too. I really enjoyed coming out to a new part of the countryside and spending time in nature,. It's so important to give back to nature.“ **Scott, 17, Capel Manor College student**

“I really enjoyed talking to a group of students about the hedgerow's role for wildlife. They left feeling genuinely changed by the knowledge they had gained. As nature lovers and ecological professionals, we forget that not everyone sees the landscape as we do. Getting the chance to change the perspectives of those involved in managing habitats directly was really special.” **James Lunt**

### Highlights

- 2,550 metres
- 24 planting days
- 12,000 hedge whips planted
- 24 events
- 140 volunteers
- 700 volunteer hours
- 3 sites
- Hosted 4 national CPRE staff
- Hosting a Centenary Countryside Day in October with a session from the author of 'The Happy Hedgerow', Elena Mannion.

“Hedge planting is a legacy for our children and their future. I've also had a blast!”

Paula Creber, 60, volunteer



## CPRE Kent

This is CPRE Kent's first time joining the project. They have worked with several delivery partners to bring the project to life.

"CPRE Kent has been delighted to be involved in Hedgerow Heroes and to have contributed towards the overall aims of the project. We've planted and rejuvenated over 4000m of mixed native hedgerow across 22 different sites in Kent this winter. Our original target of over 7,000m had to be reduced to 3,998m due to issues at one of the selected sites.

However, in the end, we have managed to go slightly over the new target, achieving 4,140m.

We have worked with hundreds of volunteers, including youth groups and Young Wilders and have had some amazing feedback and publicity, including features on BBC South East and Radio 4's Farming Today programme. The latter resulted in our being gifted some additional trees by a local farmer, so we were able to plant more meterage at another site.

We have enjoyed the project very much. It was great to be involved in something positive and proactive, to meet new people we perhaps would not have met, and to join forces with other organisations. This has resulted in us now having more relevant contacts across the county and having more supporters than we did before."

**Andrea Griffiths, Director**



"I had the pleasure of rolling up my sleeves and getting involved with CPRE's fantastic Hedgerow Heroes initiative at Bilsington Priory. It was great to be able to share the experience with my colleagues, and together with other volunteers, we planted a new stretch of boundary hedgerow using a wonderful mix of native tree species. Days like this remind me why the work of organisations like CPRE matters. There's huge power in local action, strong communities, and a shared belief in a sustainable future!" **Martin Collett, CPRE Trustee and CEO of English Rural.**

"What stands out for me is that we are showing people that, apart from all the different kinds of work on planning, we do things, are active in the countryside and link up with other organisations on projects. It gives us more visibility and it's so good to see – thank you!" **Nigel Britten, CPRE Kent Trustee**

### Highlights

- 4,140 metres
- 26 planting days
- 25 rejuvenation days
- 18,875 hedge whips planted
- 51 events
- 400 volunteers
- 2,105 volunteer hours
- 22 sites
- Hosted 1 trustee and 2 national CPRE staff
- Featured on the BBC...twice
- 6 delivery partners

**"I was unaware of this traditional process of hedgelaying so it was all new to me and very interesting to learn and take part."**

**George, volunteer**



## CPRE Oxfordshire

CPRE Oxfordshire have returned for a fourth season of Hedgerow Heroes. They have worked with their long-term partners, Wild Oxfordshire.

“Oxfordshire Hedgerow Heroes was bigger than ever this year! A whopping 800 people of all ages gave up their free time to plant, mulch, lay, and coppice, collectively achieving 4558.50m of hedgerow planting and rejuvenation across Oxfordshire.

We worked closely with 43 different groups, schools, organisations, businesses and charities at 26 sites in the county, and delivered eight hedge workshops that increased hedge surveying and hedge management knowledge and expertise for 70 people.

Excitingly, we hosted our first ever Novice Hedgelaying Competition in partnership with the University of Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum, which captivated around 1300 spectators and the BBC, who ran a segment about the event on the BBC South Today evening news. The competition welcomed 36 hedgelayers, who got a feel for what hedgelaying competitions are all about and the opportunity to refine their hedgelaying skills, all whilst rejuvenating the hedge so that it thrives for years to come!”

**Lisa Warne, Director**



“The hedgelaying competition was a huge success! The hedge layers had an exhausting but exhilarating day collectively rejuvenating 180m of hedge in just five hours. All the competitors should be extremely proud of what they achieved. We hope this event gave novices the confidence to participate in future competitions, which not only helps hedgerows thrive within the landscape but allows competitors to improve their abilities in this rural craft.”

**Jessica Bower, Wild Oxfordshire**

“Thanks once again for supporting this amazing project, not only does it deliver on the ground it also opens doors for other funding opportunities as we can successfully demonstrate delivery of a project.”

**Lisa, CPRE Oxfordshire**

### Highlights

- 4,588.5 metres
- 54 planting days
- 51 rejuvenation days
- 19,650 hedge whips planted
- 112 events
- 803 volunteers
- 5,048 volunteer hours
- 26 sites
- 86 people trained in hedgelaying
- New hedgelaying competition

“Please say an official thank you from Hill End for the Hedgerow Heroes Project. Your support has really transformed our site for the future.”

**David Millin, Site and Operations Manager, Hill End Outdoor Education Centre**



## CPRE Shropshire

CPRE Shropshire has returned for a fifth season of Hedgerow Heroes.

“CPRE Shropshire's Hedgerow Heroes project has been running since the very start in 2021, so we came into this season with a growing track record of good contacts, a strong volunteer base and helpful networks of like-minded organisations.

We have worked tremendously hard over five years to deliver the project as professionally and as well as we can, and we are delighted that many volunteers return year after year to help us plant. In these dark and turbulent times, going out on a winter's morning to plant a hedge is a simple but hugely positive contribution you can make. Not only are you meeting like-minded, good people, but you are also doing something fantastic for nature and the wider landscape.

Our 6km of hedgerow is a drop in the ocean overall, but it's 6km more than was there on 1st December 2025.”

**Sarah Jameson, Project Lead**



“One of our stalwart volunteers, Tess, is 83 this year. She cycles to most plantings (for up to an hour), does the whole morning's planting and cycles back home again. She's said that hedge planting with CPRE has been the absolute highlight of her winter (she spends the summer botanising). She always wants to stay until we have finished and has been absolutely amazing. She's happiest when covered in mud and planting in the rain!”

Tess below on the far left



“Participating in the CPRE Shropshire Hedgerow Heroes project has been especially fulfilling and enjoyable...it has inspired me to continue looking for similar opportunities within CPRE and beyond.” **Lily, young volunteer**

### Highlights

- 6,113 metres
- 31 planting days
- 10 rejuvenation days
- 30,165 hedge whips planted
- 41 events
- 300 volunteers
- 1,659 volunteer hours
- 23 sites
- 36 people trained in hedgelaying
- Hedgerow art workshops

**“ Today was my third afternoon hedgelaying for a local farmer. My first time to really use hedge-laying skills gained from your courses. The farmer said today ‘well, for someone who has only been on a couple of training courses, you don’t do a bad job!’**

**Adrian Cullis, hedge planting volunteer & hedgelaying training attendee**



Photo credit Lucy Grove



Photo credit Lucy Grove

## CPRE Sussex

This is CPRE Sussex's first time in Hedgerow Heroes. They have worked with the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group to deliver the project.

"Planting hedges in an open, intensively farmed, flat landscape situated between three important coastal protected areas has been extremely valuable for wildlife, the landscape, water quality and local drainage. Two farms were the focus, and both sit adjacent to the important RSPB sites of Pagham Harbour and/or Medmerry. Improving habitat for many species and creating new wildlife corridors have been very rewarding in a sometimes barren-looking landscape. Many of the hedges prominently line local roads or National Cycle Route bike paths, so they will be a visible improvement in people's everyday experience of the landscape."

Over the course of the project, we have had up to 18 volunteers come out each week, often in very challenging weather, to plant a mix of 20 different native tree species, creating valuable, high-quality new hedgerows. During the project, we planted nearly 15,000 trees across more than 25 planting sessions, creating 3 kilometres of hedge.

The volunteers who spent time planting these trees have mainly come from the local community on the Manhood Peninsula, though some travelled from East Sussex to help get them into the ground. This activity has been very satisfying, as everyone could immediately see what had been achieved and the distance planted, and all participants felt a positive sense of a job well done.

CPRE Sussex has met a host of new people - volunteers, local community members and passers-by - and it's created great opportunities to tell many more people about our work, in person, online and in the media.

**Jane Reeve, Project Lead and Paul Steedman, Director**



"Great to see these hedges going in - it feels like they would have been here decades ago but were removed. It's going to be a lovely green corridor here and will help to slow the wind down. You guys have worked really hard, it is a sea of tree guards going into the distance!"

**Robert, a passing cyclist, who stopped to admire the work**



"Thank you Jane and thank you to everyone. You have all worked very hard indeed. I look forward to them being big green hedges."

**Robert, farmer**

### Highlights

- 3,000 metres
- 25 planting days
- 15,000 hedge whips planted
- 25 events
- 61 volunteers
- 775 volunteer hours
- 2 sites
- 2 talks

**"This has been a great project, very visible from the road or track and a good opportunity to interact with the wider public and explain to them why hedges are so important."**

Paul, CPRE Sussex



## CPRE Warwickshire

This is CPRE Warwickshire's second year participating in Hedgerow Heroes.

"In Phase Five of Hedgerow Heroes, we have planted and rejuvenated 3350 metres of hedgerow in both the North and South of the county. For this phase, we worked with the Warwickshire Sustainable Farming Cluster to identify landowners committed to nature recovery. This has enabled us to create long stretches of new hedgerow on farmland, much of it accessible via public footpaths, and to make a greater impact on habitat creation and landscape connectivity.

Our Hedgelaying training sessions, led by expert hedge layer Mike Hartnell, have provided a solid foundation for individuals interested in the craft to learn the basics. We have worked with volunteers from local businesses, communities, schools and colleges. Working with four different educational institutions has given us a fantastic opportunity to engage with young people about the importance of hedgerows for a thriving, nature-rich county.

The project has allowed us to connect with people from a variety of backgrounds and enhance our local countryside."

**Patrick Willis, Project Lead**



"We were joined by a Masters student in Environmental Humanities for three of our hedgelaying sessions. As an old student of Myton School, where we had planted the previous year, she had read about and was inspired by our work in planting hedgerows there, ultimately deciding to write her thesis about Warwickshire hedgerows and their role in combating the climate crisis." **Patrick, CPRE Warwickshire**



**"I now understand the long term management of hedgerows a little better, their purpose and the value that they add to nature."**

**John Bryan, 56, hedgelaying volunteer**

"The children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 had an amazing time planting the whips on Monday and are very keen to look after them."

**Libby, Forest School Teacher, Westgate Primary School**

### Highlights

- 3,350 metres
- 14 planting days
- 8 rejuvenation days
- 14,300 hedge whips planted
- 25 events
- 290 volunteers
- 1240 volunteer hours
- 18 sites
- 2 talks



"The work of the CPRE and, in particular, the Hedgerow Heroes initiative is so vital in enhancing and preserving the beauty of our natural landscape. Being involved in the day, out in the fresh air, and mixing with others who share a passion for the countryside brings so much value to individuals in terms of their physical and mental wellness.

Such activities bring significant educational benefits for schoolchildren in particular (especially those who are not fortunate enough to spend much time outdoors, let alone in a rural setting), and I was lucky enough to have a group of pupils join me on the day on my farm. They loved it and took so much from the experience. I couldn't recommend the experience more highly. "

Hannah Wyatt, farmer, Warwickshire

"Fabulous, being out in the open, digging and planting whilst the birds flew overhead. The train passed several times. I will now look out of the window on my next train journey to London, instead of looking at my phone, to see if I can see our area of planting."

Caroline Auckland, volunteer, Kent

100  
YEARS



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