

## **London's Mass Tree Planting Weekend**

### **Beckenham Place Park, Lewisham**

### **Trees for Cities, December 2018**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> December, as part of London's Mass Tree Planting Weekend, we brought the local community of Lewisham together to plant trees in Beckenham Place Park. This project was part of the regeneration of the park and 200 volunteers, including 64 children, helped to plant 2,000 whips (small trees) to create a mixed woodland. The new trees include Grey Willow, Alder, Hornbeam, Field Maple, Hazel, Guelder Rose, Beech, Lime, Birch, Crab Apple as well as others. The mixed selection will help increase biodiversity, biosecurity, and resilience to pests and diseases.

The local community was involved in the project from start to finish, engaging in consultation and volunteering activities throughout. We attended the local Ward meeting and the Bellingham Interagency Meeting to speak to local residents and present the draft design and collect feedback. We also posted flyers in the houses local to the park. The flyers included a web link where local people had the chance to input and feedback on the draft design and vote for their favourite species. We changed the original planting site following consultation with the local community and what would work best for existing wildlife and visitors to the park.

To keep spirits high between tree planting and mulching at the community event, we served delicious vegan food from a local Ethiopian restaurant and took some fun photographs of volunteers standing in a leaf shape using a drone. Many children (and some adults!) were excited to be able to have their faces painted by the friendly face painter.

The new planted area has been designed to support biodiversity and resilience, encourage use of the site and promote healthy living in an urban area. Trees for Cities will continue to care for the new whips for one year after which, care will be handed over to Lewisham Council as the landowner.

We received very positive feedback on the day with 96% of volunteers rating their experience as 'excellent' and 4% as 'good'. 97% said they rated the organisation of the day as 'excellent' and 3% as 'good'.

With population levels rising, green spaces are under enormous demand and are a hugely valuable resource for recreation, health, biodiversity, relaxation, exercise, education, helping to combat harmful air pollution and more. The new trees will benefit the community of Lewisham for many, many years to come.

