

PRESS RELEASE

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Community 'digs' nature

If you go down to the Scrubs today, you're sure of a big surprise! That's because local schools, residents and community groups have been spending the last three months helping Groundwork London improve Wormwood Scrubs Local Nature Reserve for wildlife.

Since December, the Groundwork team has planted over 1000 native trees to link sections of the Nature Reserve to benefit wildlife, particularly bats which are a protected species. Many of these trees were planted as part of the BBC's "Tree O'clock" campaign, a world record attempt to plant as many trees as possible in one hour. "Although Groundwork didn't break the record, the trees planted will have lasting benefits for native wildlife, people and the environment for generations to come", says Francesca Barker, Nature Conservation Officer for Groundwork London.

Other important conservation work has included clearing scrub with hand tools. This has improved basking conditions for common lizards and created grasslands that support a huge variety of plants, which will result in a mass of colour during the spring and summer. Grasslands also provide food for bees, butterflies, grasshoppers and many more insects, which are themselves food for birds, reptiles and mammals such as bats.

Groundwork volunteers have also laid 50 metres of hedge, a traditional practice dating back to medieval times. "As well as providing nesting sites, shelter and a wide range of habitats for many animals, doing this work helps us to appreciate the hard work carried out by our ancestors", says one volunteer.

"Although Groundwork London has done great work to improve the Scrubs, we have many exciting projects planned for the future and seek enthusiastic volunteers to assist conservation work", urges Francesca Barker. This includes planting over 400 meters of hedge to connect more areas of the Nature Reserve and planting wildflower meadows for both animals and the public to enjoy.

If you want to help out, the regular volunteer group runs between 10:30am – 3:30pm on the second Saturday and last Tuesday of each month. You don't need to have any previous experience as full training will be given. Tools and tea and coffee will be provided on the day, and £5 will be contributed to each volunteer to help towards travel costs.

Alternatively you can come and visit the site during Wormwood Scrubs Open Day, a fun day full of activities on April 10th .

Those interested should contact Francesca Barker on 020 8743 3040 or francesca.barker@groundwork.org.uk.

Notes to Editors:

Groundwork London builds sustainable communities in areas of need through joint environmental action. To do this, we deliver practical projects with our partners in four key areas:

- **Communities & Young People** – engaging communities in decision making, realising the potential of young people;
- **Urban Landscapes & Open Space** – improving open spaces;
- **Environmental Services** – promoting positive environmental behaviour in schools, communities, businesses and organisations;
- **Employment & Skills Training** – delivering skills training and employment opportunities.

Last year, we invested over £10m of funding in London's most deprived areas, delivering over 850 projects that helped change places and lives.

Visit www.scrubs-online.org.uk

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