

Annual Impact Report 2023

JT Atkinson & Yorkshire Dales
Millennium Trust



JT/ATKINSON
BUILDERS MERCHANT



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With the help of your generous donations in 2023 totalling

£10,000

you have supported the planting of

500 trees

in the Yorkshire Dales and surrounding areas, offsetting
an estimated **83 tonnes of carbon dioxide over the
next 50 years.**

You also supported our Seed to Sapling match funding
campaign and our Green Futures project, enabling young
people to benefit from spending time in nature
in a variety of different ways.

It is with thanks to generous donations from JT Atkinson totalling
£35,000 over the past four years that we have been able to achieve
so much for our people, landscape and wildlife.

This includes supporting the planting of a total of **2,000 trees** in
7 new woodlands and championing 2 match funding campaigns
helping us to raise a total of **£15,712** for our Seed to Sapling project.



Woodland Creation

With the support of JT Atkinson, trees and woodlands remain at the heart of YDMT and thread through many areas of our work. We've helped to plant 1.6 million broadleaf trees, creating native woodlands that provide diverse habitats and are vital for the people, landscape and wildlife within the Dales.

The climate emergency requires an unprecedented step-change to increase sequestration through better land management. Trees and woodlands can significantly contribute to increasing carbon storage as well as providing a multitude of other benefits including enhancing people's health and well-being, increasing biodiversity and improving habitat connectivity.

In 2022/23, our woodlands team managed to:

- **Plant 38,717 new native broadleaf trees in the Yorkshire Dales and surrounding areas, creating 22 hectares of habitat for people and wildlife to enjoy.**
- **Create 2,167 metres of hedgerow, increasing this vital habitat for our most vulnerable and precious wildlife.**
- **Recycle 20,700 redundant plastic tree shelters from 17 sites across the Dales and Nidderdale, removing plastic pollution from our woodlands and water courses.**



This winter we will plant more than 90,000 trees, hedge trees and landscape trees across the Dales and Nidderdale. Our work aims to reduce the fragmentation and lack of habitats by planting wildlife corridors that create greater areas of biodiversity in line with Sir John Lawton's Principles of "more, bigger, better and joined up" ecological networks.

The example below describes just one of the woodlands we will be planting this winter, which will have numerous benefits for the landscape and wildlife in the Dales.

Swineley, Hawes

The landowner at Swineley Farm, in Widdale, Hawes approached us last year with the hope of creating almost 60 hectares of woodland on their land.



In preparation for the planting, they have carried out much site assessment work including peat and wader surveys and have been in touch with Natural England, Forestry Commission and YDNPA regarding their plans. The scheme naturally splits into 2 sections, the first is a corridor along Widdale Beck and the second is moorland area behind the farm which is known to have peat and wader interests. This section is being left until next winter to allow time for the issues to be resolved.

Widdale itself has little tree cover and YDMT has funded 3 schemes in the past about a mile further down Widdale Beck so this scheme, although not directly connecting to these, would provide some much welcome additional woodland cover. The site is approximately 1 mile from the red squirrel sanctuary at Snaizeholme as the crow flies.

Seed to Sapling

Community Growing Schemes in the Dales

For the second year, with the match funding support of JT Atkinson, we have been able to raise over £15,000 for our Seed to Sapling project via The Big Give. The project ensures we have the right trees to plant here in the Dales by growing native tree saplings from local provenance seed. The scheme launched in the Autumn of 2022 when we partnered with several community groups, giving them the tools, skills, and materials, which were also kindly donated by JT Atkinson, to set up their own tree growing schemes. The first steps were to collect and process the seed ready for planting. We then made special germination trays in which to sow the seed and protect them from birds and animals.

Liz Sutcliffe from Heggs Farm in Arkengarthdale, who is part of the scheme, said:

Growing our own trees from seed and then planting them on site, makes the whole process immediately more circular, as well as giving the saplings – raised in our specific microclimate – the best chance of survival. I'm also keen that 'growing trees' at home becomes as commonplace as growing plants and flowers, and hope that by including my daughter Polly in the process from a young age, she will grow up with a feeling of its normalcy.



In June 2023, we were ready to see the results of our work! Community members came together to pot on the seedlings that were big enough. These seedlings will now be looked after for another year before being quarantined at community growing sites to ensure they are healthy. Once big enough, the saplings will finally be planted out at approved woodland and hedgerow sites by our community volunteers.

As well as working closely with communities to help set up, develop and sustain our first tree growing schemes, the Seed to Sapling project will also provide opportunities for a wide range of people to get involved in tree growing and planting.

Through the project, we will provide additional opportunities for vulnerable groups from towns and cities near the Yorkshire Dales to learn about and get involved in our woodland creation work - empowering them take practical action for nature and engaging them with the wider issues of climate warming and biodiversity loss.

Your support for this project, both through the donation of match funding and the materials for the germination boxes, ensures we can continue to be innovative in our approach to woodland creation - thank you!



Seed germination with Matt, YDMT trainee

Green Futures

We are so grateful to have the continued support of JT Atkinson for our Green Futures programme. Through the programme and thanks to your donation, we are able to support young people to raise their aspirations, realise their full potential and empower them to create environmental change through a variety of different projects.

Over the last year with your support, we have been able to support an amazing

406

young people through our Green Futures programme.



Our vision is to create a welcoming safe space in the Dales, rich in diversity, connection and belonging. Our Green Futures programme aims to equip people with the knowledge, skills and passion to be able to access and benefit from nature.

Our Green Futures Pathway inspires young people to connect with nature and then helps them to develop their skills and gain confidence to influence change in their own environments. Our Rural Apprentice Scheme forms part of the Green Futures Programme, giving young people the chance to get practical work experience with employers in and around the Yorkshire Dales, as well as investing in their education and personal development.

In 2022, seven young people began their 18 month apprenticeships with various employers in the Dales area, with a further seven beginning theirs in October 2023.

Meet Amy and Lucas from our current cohort:



Amy started at Make it Wild, based near Harrogate, back in October 2022, and is due to complete the apprenticeship in April 2024. On Amy's last quarterly review, she mentioned ***"The last few months have been full of new opportunities and experiences. I feel I have gained a lot of confidence."*** We love hearing about what Amy gets up to, and are excited to see what this next quarter has in store for her.



Lucas recently started his apprenticeship at the Swinton Estate. He's shared with us ***"I chose to do an apprenticeship as I wanted to put myself in a real world working environment to help me gain as much experience as possible as well as learning in a way that suits me. I'm keen to keep expanding my skill set by doing more qualifications and tickets gaining me more responsibility in the future."***

Your annual donation to support our Green Futures Programme helps to make all of this work possible, creating life changing opportunities for young people in the Yorkshire Dales.

2023 Partnership Activities

As always, it has been a pleasure to welcome members of your team on volunteering events. This year we were thrilled to have you join us to plant saplings at Darley Beck in January, followed by two woodland maintenance events in the Summer.



In July we visited Swinesett wood, near Hawes, to help mark unsuccessful saplings for removal - a day which was one of the very few days of nice weather of the whole season.

Ironically, our other maintenance day, removing redundant plastic tubes at a site near Appersett, was easily the wettest of the season! Hard working JT staff still removed over 1000 tree tubes despite the terrible weather - Thank you!



650

trees planted

1000

tubes
removed

We are looking forward to welcoming even more of your team to events in 2024, beginning with our first tree planting day at a new woodland site near Northallerton - an ideal location for your head office staff.



As our partnership heads in to it's fifth year we are looking forward to continuing working with you all at JT Atkinson.

Your donations across all of our projects have a huge impact on what we can deliver as a small charity, and we are so grateful for everything we have achieved together in the last 12 months. Our sincere thanks for your donations to date - it's a pleasure working with you and a huge honour to have JT Atkinson as a valued partner of YDMT supporting people, landscape and wildlife.

**THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO TO ENABLE OUR
SMALL CHARITY TO DELIVER BIG THINGS!**