

POULSHOT'S BIG TREES PROJECT

Press Release: September 2010

Information:

The exceptional beauty of the English landscape owes much to the towering presence in our hedgerows of big trees, which are also home to a huge amount of native wildlife - including small mammals, birds, butterflies, moths, beetles, lichens, mosses and fungi.

Poulshot, just outside Devizes, used to be celebrated for the glorious tall elms in the hedges bordering its many lanes - but when Dutch Elm disease killed 21m elms in England, Poulshot was not spared the devastation.

In 2009 the Poulshot Village Trust's 'Big Trees Project' was set up to replace our lost elms with other tall trees. It began with a survey of the parish to identify suitable planting locations. Local landowners gave strong support and the Trust soon realised that they had the opportunity to plant a thousand or more new oak, ash and lime trees.



What the hedges in Poulshot used to look like



What they look like today – no trees

A successful fund-raising drive has resulted in generous grants from Wiltshire Council, the International Tree Foundation and Melksham Community Area Board - and the Village Trust and its supporters are now ready to begin the massive 5-year tree planting exercise.

They will be getting welcome help with the actual planting of trees in the hedges from the Community Payback Scheme.

There will be an address at 10.00am on Thursday 25 November 2010 in Hay Lane, Poulshot, by Nicky Hunloke, Chairman of the Village Trust, before planting begins.

Jonathon Seed (Wiltshire Councillor and Chairman of Melksham Community Area Board), Steve Russell (Wiltshire Council Countryside Manager) as well as Members of the Parish Council and local landowners have all been invited.

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Notes to Editors

Poulshot, near Devizes, has a population of around 400 people. In 2003 it was the scene of “*A Country Parish*” the BBC2 documentary about Jamie Allen who, much to his surprise, is suddenly made rector of a beautiful parish in the heart of rural Wiltshire. It became a huge success, with millions tuning in to see Mr Allen adjusting to his new life.

Poulshot was designated a Conservation Area in 1973, and the Parish Council established the Village Trust, as a charity, to monitor and advise on possible development, on conservation, and on the maintenance of the village’s rural amenities, such as byways, lanes, ponds and woodlands. Our community began tree planting in 1977, at first around the village green and then in 1985 in a small plantation. In 2003 we planted some 1,200 native trees and shrubs to create a 3 ½ acre wood, the *Green Gardens Woodland* – which has become a popular place for village and private gatherings.

Our primary aims are (i) to greatly improve the visual quality, scale and character of the rural environment which makes Poulshot such a pleasant place to live and work, (ii) to conserve, protect and enhance our local biodiversity by restoring Poulshot’s traditional big tree habitats and the wildlife they attract, (iii) to play our part in reducing the impact of climate change by offsetting our own ‘carbon footprint’.

For further information contact the Big Trees Project Leader:

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