



MAKING AN IMPACT FOR TREES AND WOODS ACROSS THE UK



**WOODLAND
TRUST**



AVIVA

TWO YEARS, BIG IMPACT

We're two years into our five-year partnership, and Aviva's incredible £10 million commitment is already making a real, lasting impact for woods, wildlife and communities, helping them thrive.

Together, we're tackling the climate and nature crises by restoring vital landscapes and boosting biodiversity.

And we've come a long way in the last year, not least on our hero sites.

Snaizeholme, Yorkshire Dales

One of the largest habitat and nature restoration projects in the English uplands, where we're working to:

- increase ecological connectivity
- improve water quality, slow the flow in periods of flooding and build the foundations for flood resilience
- support the local population of red squirrels.

Smithills, Lancashire

The Woodland Trust's largest site in England, with a host of habitats in need of restoration. It's also a key connection to nature for local people and urban communities, so we're working to:

- renew signage across the site
- install stepping stones to protect delicate peat bogs and moorland
- provide guided walks to help the community connect with each other and the nature on their doorstep.

Thompson Wood, Norfolk

The site of rare pingo ponds – a potential habitat for the super-rare northern pool frog, which is only found in Norfolk. Which is why we're working to:

- revive the pingo ponds and bring a lost ecosystem back to life
- restore wood pasture, broadleaf woodland, grassland and hedgerows
- encourage visitors to explore the site and connect with nature.

But we couldn't do this without the help of Aviva volunteers, who are making a huge difference across the UK.

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At Aviva we recognise that there is no net zero without nature, and the protection and restoration of nature is vital. Through tree planting and restoration, we're working with the Woodland Trust to strengthen our landscapes, capture carbon, and enhance biodiversity. We see our efforts to support climate adaptation and build resilience as critical to helping our customers and communities. Our joint work is contributing to a deeper understanding of the impacts of climate change, supporting our journey towards net zero, and helping the UK get ready for the future.”



Claudine Blamey,
Chief Sustainability Officer, Aviva





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We're driving meaningful change through our partnership with Aviva, accelerating efforts to build a UK that's more resilient to the forces of nature. In just two years, we've transformed ambition into action, restoring vital woodlands, strengthening landscapes, and tackling the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss head-on. Aviva's bold leadership in nature-based solutions is setting a new standard for corporate responsibility, proving that investing in nature is not just necessary, but transformative. The trees we plant today will stand as a legacy for generations, benefiting both wildlife and communities adapting to a changing world. Our progress so far is just the beginning - together, we are shaping a greener, more resilient future.”

Darren Moorcroft,
CEO, Woodland Trust



HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO (SITE)

Our hero sites tell the story of the benefits of our work. Aviva's support is crucial to these special places.

From Snaizholme in the Yorkshire Dales and Smithills in Lancashire to Thompson Wood in Norfolk, we're undertaking landscape-scale restoration, boosting biodiversity and helping nature become more

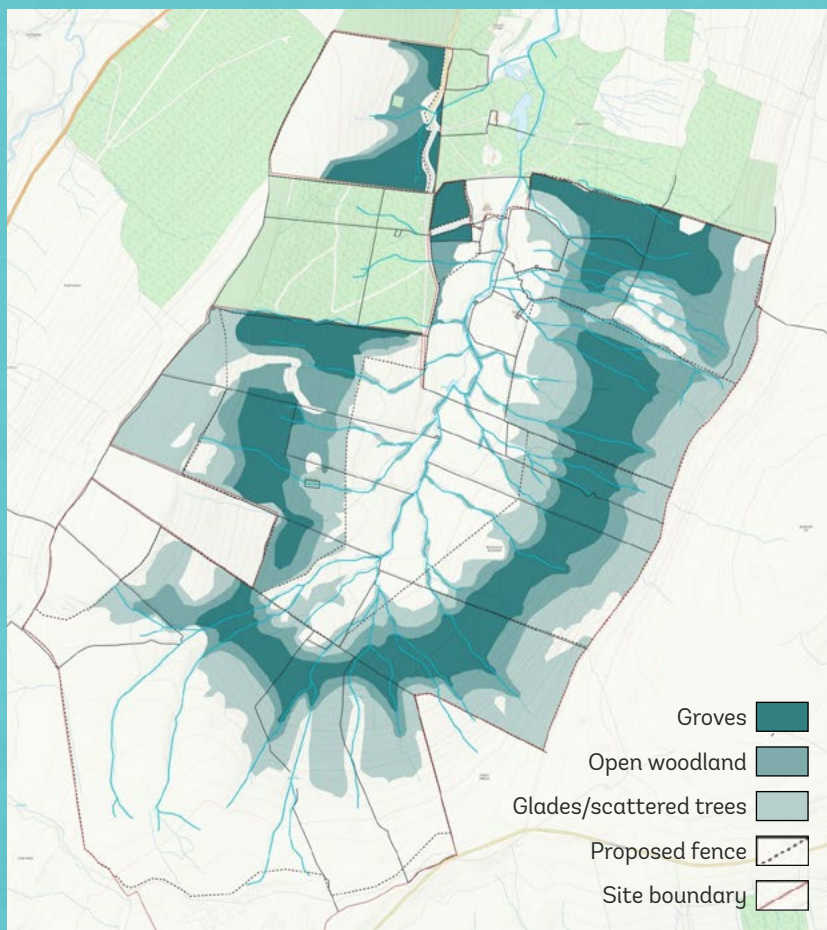
resilient in these remarkable landscapes.

Aviva's support of our Woodland Carbon scheme has the potential to sequester 330,000 tonnes of carbon over the next 100 years. This contribution plays a vital role in reducing carbon emissions and helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change.



RECONNECTING SNAIZEHOLME

Snaizeholme, in the Yorkshire Dales, is a 1,400-acre landscape restoration and nature recovery project, and work is well underway to improve water quality, slow the flow in periods of flooding, and increase ecological connectivity. We completed our second 'phase' of tree planting this year, covering 173 hectares and harnessing the momentum behind this large-scale habitat restoration project in the English uplands.



Infographic illustrating tree planting on site

Building bridges, resurrecting barns

The 30m bridge sits high above the flood level, allowing larger vehicles such as HGVs to access the site. Along with the new track, it'll offer easy access to the barns, which are undergoing essential restoration.

In fact, bringing the barns back to life will create a much-needed base, providing vital shelter from the upland elements for conservationists and site teams.



Heidi Rowan/WTML



Heidi Rowan/WTML

Snaizeholme shines on Countryfile

The Yorkshire Dales, with its craggy hills, plunging valleys and expansive moors, was once covered in trees. We were joined by the crew of BBC One's Countryfile to showcase Snaizeholme, part of this once-wooded landscape and one of the biggest native tree planting projects in England, to talk about how we're helping to restore woodland to the area.

STRIDING THROUGH SMITHILLS

Smithills Estate is the Woodland Trust's largest site in England and provides a key connection to nature for local urban communities in nearby Bolton. A patchwork of wooden cloughs (ravines), grassland, moorland, bogs and farmland, its breathtaking views stretch as far as Manchester.

Steps in the right direction

The peat bog and moorland are special and sensitive habitats, home to a wide range of wildlife and plant life, so it's important we do everything we can to protect them. This includes installing stepping stones over the moorland to preserve the peat and reduce erosion. We've also established dams to reduce drainage, resulting in a wetter moorland.

This will give the bog the chance to develop into a more characteristic habitat and allow an array of plants and animals to thrive. As well as this, the reduced erosion and drainage will decrease the loss of carbon from the moor.

And that's not all. The path will also increase access for visitors while protecting this vulnerable habitat from footfall.



Community connections

Smithills Estate runs a number of initiatives designed to help local communities get outdoors, meet others and feel the benefits of nature. These include:

Guided walks

Accompanied by British Sign Language interpreters, walkers look at local history and reservoirs, piecing together Smithills' past.

LGBTQIA+ meet ups

Visitors get together to raise awareness and become representatives for queer people who work at, volunteer with and support the Woodland Trust.

A dementia-friendly walk

Once a month, people enjoy a short walk through the site, followed by an indoor nature-themed activity and a good chat over a cuppa.

VOLUNTEERS MAKE THE WORLD GO ROUND

Volunteers are essential to the work we do. Without them, we couldn't protect and care for the UK's woods and trees. And everyone can make a difference, no matter their skills or background.

From participating in citizen science projects like Nature's Calendar to getting out into our woods to plant trees and tackle invasive species, our volunteers carry out a huge variety of roles across the UK.

Aviva's employees are no different: with up to 21 hours of paid volunteering each year, they have the chance to create a greener, more sustainable world for local communities.

Of course, volunteering benefits not just our woods, trees and wildlife, but our volunteers too.

Aviva's volunteering in numbers:

- 185 volunteers engaged in 2024.
- 14 events attended.
- 67% take-up.
- More than 2,500 trees planted across the UK.

Aviva volunteers planted trees at:



But tree planting wasn't the only way Aviva volunteers made a difference for nature. They've also been hand-pulling goldenrod at Warren Farm in Leatherhead, removing tree guards at Formonthills Woods, Glenrothes, and recording trees for the Ancient Tree Inventory at York, Norwich, Sheffield, Bristol, London and Perth.



PINGO POND DIPPING

Our plans are underway to transform 119-hectare Thompson Wood into a mosaic of broadleaf woodland, wood pasture, hedgerows and grassland, expanding existing habitats and creating new ones for wildlife in adjoining conservation areas.

We've also submitted plans to the local authority for a car park, which, if approved, will allow visitors to access the site and enjoy the local wildlife.



Heidi Rowan/WTML

Pingos are small tundra hillocks created during the last ice age.

Taking a dip

We took readings from the dip wells installed across the site, allowing us to monitor the ghost pingo areas, survey the water levels and build a picture of the site's rainfall and water retention over time.



Heidi Rowan/WTML



Heidi Rowan/WTML

Many pingo ponds were filled in for farming, so modern restoration projects focus on identifying and excavating these buried 'ghost' ponds.



Pingo bingo

We carried out the first pingo ponds restoration at the end of 2024 together with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, who have been undertaking similar work on Thompson Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). We dug between eight and 10 test pits to find the original pond level, carefully avoiding any damage to the underlying sediment layer.

And our exploration has paid off. We've already found orchids growing in the area, indicating that the land is already changing, and found the remnants of a horsetail fern plant from the excavated pond sediments, showing the history of the biodiversity in the area. By unearthing these natural landscape features we hope to reintroduce more rare plants and encourage more species back to the area – including the rare northern pool frog.



Robin Chittenden/Alamy

Horsetail ferns belong to a very old group of plants that predates the dinosaurs. They've been used in herbal remedies since ancient times.



John Bridges/WTML

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE PARTNERSHIP?

We're embarking on an exciting agreement with the Assynt Foundation to revitalise a vast area in the northwest Highlands of Scotland. The result will be a resilient upland landscape that should support more people, as well as greater biodiversity.

We're so grateful to Aviva for their support – together, we're

making a real difference for people and nature across the UK.

Each year is a new chapter in our partnership, and we'll focus on hero sites as our collaboration and its associated activities progress. We've got plenty on the horizon, including the installation of fencing at Thompson Wood, and undertaking further work at

Snaizholme and Smithills – all with the help of Aviva and their volunteers.

We're looking forward to the next stage, working together to restore and care for some of our most precious and vulnerable landscapes. And we can't wait to see what 2025-2026 has in store!

Elaine Macaskill/WTML