

# Plant a Tree Town.

A guide to getting started



**Possible.**  
Inspiring climate action



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**Inspiring climate action**

At Possible, we're on a mission to speed up action on climate change. Whether it's our world-leading Solar Schools campaign, our work building solar powered railways, or fighting the ban on onshore wind, everything we do is about inspiring more people to take more action on climate change.

Charity no: 1157 363.

**[www.wearepossible.org](http://www.wearepossible.org)**

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# Introduction

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**H**i, I'm Lara! I wanted to plant trees in my town to help tackle climate change. I asked for Possible's help so that other people could plant trees in their areas too, and - ta da! This is your very own guide to get you started. Don't worry if this is your first time, we have broken down the steps to help you along the way.

Planting trees is a great way to connect with your local community while combating climate change. Trees are the ultimate carbon capture and storage machines, soaking up the carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, locking it up and breathing out oxygen into the air.

Not only do they directly tackle climate change, trees help to limit the negative impacts of climate damages. They reduce pollution, keep soil well-drained and nutrient rich, keep cities cool and prevent flooding too.

The benefits are endless. It's not as difficult as you might think to get trees planted in your local area and can be a great project for the whole family. I did all this with the help of my dad. To stay safe young people should get support from an adult, especially because this might involve speaking to people you don't know.

Good luck and have fun!



Lara



# Let's get started!

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First things first, you need to get prepared and map out spots that are suitable for planting trees. Local councils usually own lots of green spaces across towns, so that's the land I decided to concentrate on. That makes it simpler to get permission, as you're only dealing with one landowner or manager. There are other landowners you could ask too though, such as schools, businesses and housing associations.

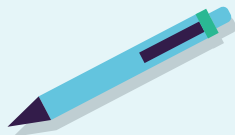
## You will need:



**Access to the internet**



**The name of your local council**

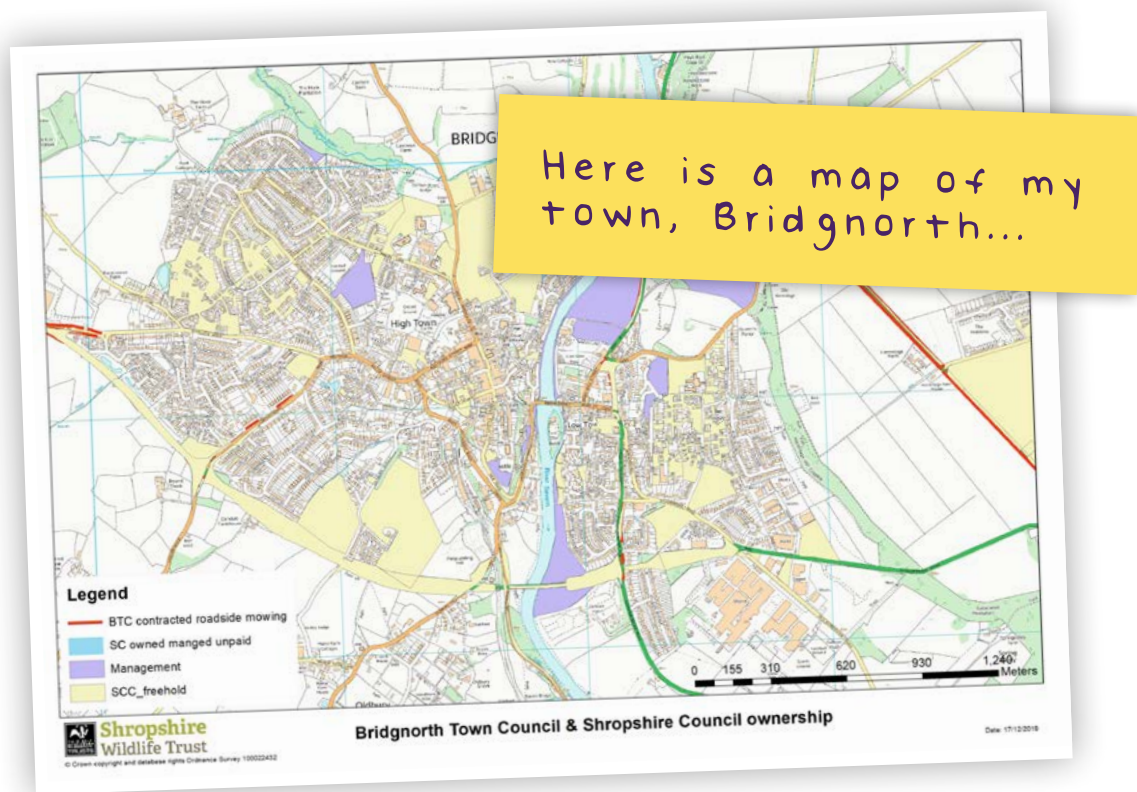


**Pen or pencil**

# 1. Find a map

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Find a map that shows which bits of land are owned by your local council. Their website should be able to provide this information. If not, there will be a contact page telling you how to get in touch so you can ask for it. Local knowledge can be useful too.



The council's map might show you which bits of council owned land is green space. If not, then other online maps will be able to help with this. Mark the green council-owned land on your map. These areas could be good places to plant new trees!

## 2. Scope out your local parks and green spaces

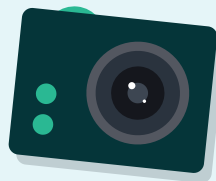
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Time to visit your potential sites in person. Sometimes an area can look perfect for tree planting on the map, but might not work in practice. Going and taking a look in real life will give you a clearer idea about where you could plant your trees.

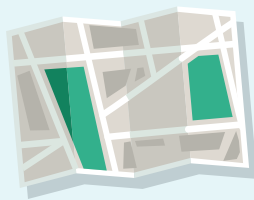
### You will need:



**Pen and paper**



**Camera or phone**



**Maps from Section 1**



**A few printed copies of the checklist below**

**Site .....** **Date visited .....**

### USE

It's a good idea to think about how a tree might affect the space. Observe the area and make notes about how the space is used by the public.

**Is your area in an open space?**

**Is your area used by people? If so, how often?**

**Will planting this tree here affect anyone's daily lives?  
Footpaths, walking routes, play areas etc.**

**Will the tree provide a nice space for people to use?**

**What are the conditions like? Is the ground dry or wet? Is it sheltered or exposed to the wind?**

### VISUAL

Think about lines of sight from surrounding houses, often people enjoy their views.

**Does planting your tree in this area obscure views for anyone?  
Houses, gardens, cars on roads etc. If so it might be a good idea to check in with the landowner first.**

**What do you like about the surrounding shapes and lines? What could make it look even better?**

**How could planting this tree attract wildlife? Does it connect with other habitats?**

### SAFETY

Remember trees can grow extremely large over time. It is best to limit any damages or interference that could be caused by planting your tree in the wrong spot.

**Are there any underground or overhead lines?**

**Can you see any depressions or lines of dry grass across the land? This might indicate something underneath.**

**How close would this tree be from a home or building?  
Remember that some tree roots can grow deep and wide. Make sure you allow enough space from buildings.**

At each site, take photos of potential spots for tree planting and make notes using the checklist above. Note down any information that will be useful for putting together your plans when you get home.

Sketch a rough map of the site and mark where you can plant an individual tree, group of trees or a hedgerow. Note if the tree is going to be large or small. Or if it's a hedge, does it need to be kept low, or can it have larger trees planted within it? You could even label the map to show extra areas that could be left untamed for nature.



We made a note of areas where we thought mowing could be reduced to create grassy habitats around the edges for nature!



### 3. Drawing up your plans

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Your plan is starting to come to life! Once you're back home, it's time to combine all your hard note taking and draw up planting plans for each site to propose to the council.

#### You will need:



**Your maps, notes  
and sketches**



**Pen and  
paper**

Draw more detailed maps of your sites, or print them out from the internet. Label them with the trees you are going to plant, noting whether they are large or small trees or hedgerows.



## 4. Getting permission

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You can't plant your trees until you've received permission from the landowner and checked in with anyone that the planting might affect.

### **Get approval for your plans from your council.**

Send your maps and proposals for tree planting to the local council for them to have a look and hopefully agree. You will need to find out who is responsible for street and park trees at your local authority and talk to them about your ideas. You could contact one of your elected councillors first to ask them who to talk to - all local councillors will have contact details on your council's website.

**Speak with local people** and invite them to help. It is extremely important that you speak to your community to discuss your plans, so you can take their views on board and give them an opportunity to get involved. A great way to do this might be to knock on the doors of homes near the tree planting areas, or alternatively find your local community group on social media or email. Most areas will have a community Facebook or Whatsapp group.

We need people to feel that the trees are their trees. It is better to not plant a single tree than to lose the goodwill of local people, so be prepared to compromise!

**Make changes** to your planting plans if needed, based on feedback from the council and the local community.

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# 5. Choose your trees

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Create a shopping list of trees you would like to plant. Again this is something to discuss with your local community so that people will enjoy looking out for their trees and understand the role they are playing to improve the environment.

## What species?

Trees will grow to different heights and their roots can be shallow and fibrous or deep and tough. It's important to plant the right tree in the right place. There are **lots of people**<sup>1</sup> who can help you with this, including whoever you decide to order your trees from.

### Small fibrous root systems

Species: Rowan, Whitebeam, Cherry

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Won't grow too large</li><li>• Don't tend to drop their branches</li><li>• Roots are unlikely to cause major problems</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specimen trees standing alone or in an open space will need to be quite large at the time of planting (1.5-2m)</li></ul>

1. [www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/urban-tree-manual](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/urban-tree-manual)

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## Large root systems

Species: Oak, Ash, Lime, Poplars

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Great for planting in lines such as walkways</li><li>• Can be planted individually to break up otherwise uniform boring open spaces</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specimen trees standing alone or in an open space will need to be quite large at the time of planting (1.5-2m)</li><li>• Trees will come with a soil ball around the roots which require a larger hole</li><li>• Need support and protection</li></ul>

## Hedges

Small 'whips' (40-60cm tall trees) can be planted really quickly with just a spade.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Easy to plant</li><li>• Cheap</li><li>• Fill up areas and great for flood prevention</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specimens are small to start with, so might take some time to fill in areas</li></ul>

## 6. Purchase your trees

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### Who?

Some councils might help to pay for trees, but others might not be able to. Lara fundraised at her local school to raise money to buy trees. If you need a hand with this just get in contact at [hello@wearepossible.org](mailto:hello@wearepossible.org)

### Where?

There are many places you can buy trees and the guards and stakes that protect them while they get established. The [Woodland Trust](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)<sup>2</sup> is a great place to start because they can often provide trees to community groups at a discounted price. Your local tree nurseries may be able to help too.

2. [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities)

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## 7. Plant!

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You'll need lots of hands to help plant all your trees. It's a good idea to form a group to get people involved. Local groups on social media, schools and flyers are a great way to promote your event. Set a date to hold your own community tree planting day and get stuck in! Trees should ideally only be planted between October and March to give them the best chance of survival. Let us know what you have planned as we may be able to help.

It's really important that you plant your trees properly to give them the best start in life and ensure they survive. There are some great online resources available, including this one from the [Woodland Trust](#).<sup>3</sup> You can share these with your fellow tree planters in advance and make sure someone is on hand to show people what to do on the day.

Always carry 10% extra stock or funds to replace damaged trees. Be open to teaching and helping others understand the need for trees in our towns.

3. [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/how-to-plant/](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/how-to-plant/)

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It is so important that you involve your local community so that everyone appreciates and looks after your trees.

Talk to your community and local council about looking after the trees while they get established. Small trees are easily damaged, so make sure that they are properly protected and replaced if broken.

Watering in dry periods for the first three years is key to success, involve local volunteers to look out for and water their tree. Keep a regular check yourself if you can.

# Good luck!

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Good luck planting your very own tree town. If you have any questions or need a helping hand message **Possible**...

[hello@wearepossible.org](mailto:hello@wearepossible.org)  
[www.wearepossible.org](http://www.wearepossible.org)

 [wearepossibleuk](https://www.facebook.com/wearepossibleuk)

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**With special thanks  
to Lara and Luke!**



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