

The Tree Council Grants

June 2026



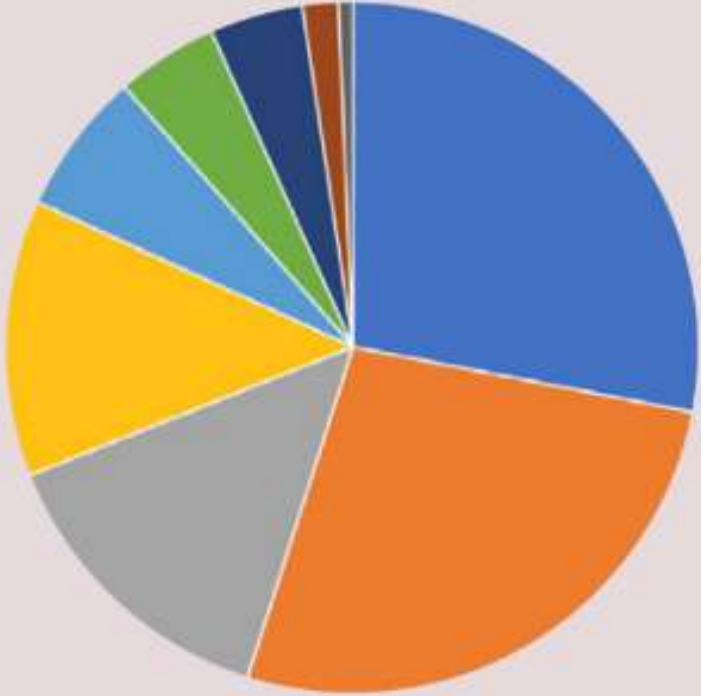


Britain's treescape

Elements of the UK treescape*

Source: [Forestry Commission](#), [Woodland Trust](#), [National Trust](#)

1,637,100 ha	commercial conifer forests
1,511,700 ha	hedgerows and other woody linear features **
821,870 ha	ancient and long-established planted woodland
751,030 ha	other native broadleaf woodland
390,000 ha	small woodlands (between 0.1 - 0.5 ha)
278,004 ha	wood pasture
255,000 ha	groups of trees (less than 0.1 ha)
97,000 ha	lone trees (over 2-3 m tall)
43,017 ha	orchards



- Commercial conifer forests
- Hedges and other linear features
- Ancient and long-established woodlands
- Other native broadleaf woodlands
- Small woodlands
- Wood pasture
- Groups of trees
- Lone trees
- Orchards

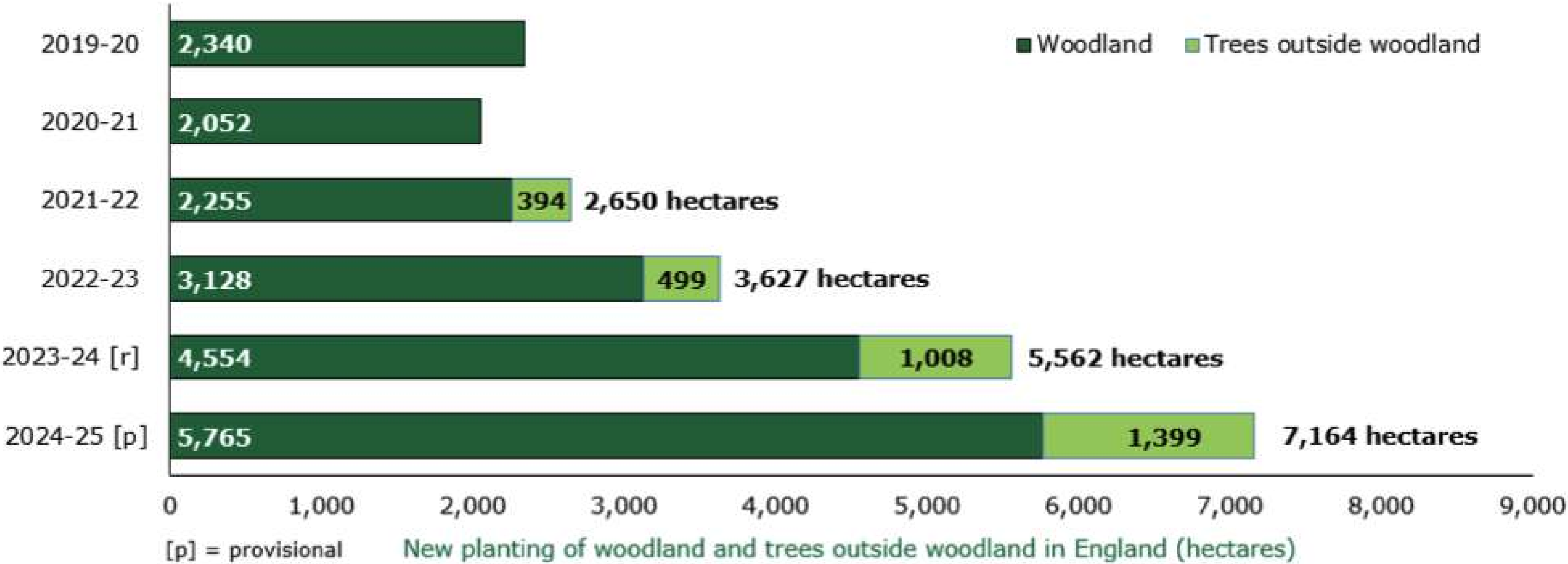
Trees Outside Woods

- There are more Trees Outside Woodlands in GB than previously thought;
- Circa 0.75 million ha, or 3.2% of Britain's
- This confirms their importance to Natural Capital estimates, for example TOW forming circa 20% of Britain's live tree carbon stocks.

Forest Research 2023



New planting of woodland and trees in England



Tree Council and Partners TOW Grants 2025/26



Application Guidance
Branching Out Fund
Grants between £250 & £2,500
England, Scotland, Wales, N. Ireland

the tree council



Application Guidance
Network Rail Community Tree Planting Fund
Grants between £2,500 and £10,000
England, Scotland & Wales

the tree council

Network Rail



Application Guidance
SP Energy Networks Community Tree Planting Fund
Grants between £2,500 and £10,000
Scotland only

the tree council

SP Energy Networks



Application Guidance
Trees Outside Woodland Fund
Grants between £10K and £40K
England only

the tree council

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs



Application Guidance
National Highways 3 Million Trees Project
Free Trees
England only

the tree council

national highways

Grants overview

The Tree Council is a national charity and umbrella body bringing everyone together with a shared mission to care for trees and our planet's future.

We inspire and empower organisations, government, communities and individuals with the knowledge and tools to create positive, lasting change at a national and local level.

We are grateful to the following partners who have made these community planting programmes possible.



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs





Key principles

Criteria for each grant are laid out in the individual guidance documents (see website).

However, there are a number of key criteria that are common to all.

Each project must:

- show clear **community** benefits
- show clear **biodiversity** benefits
- follow the '**right tree, right place**' principle
- demonstrate suitable **aftercare plans**
- be willing to share **monitoring & evaluation** data
- be **not for profit**

Network Rail Community Planting Fund

We are looking to support well-planned tree planting projects that will directly benefit people, communities and wildlife. We favour schemes that use a combination of tree types e.g. hedges with standard trees.

Projects can range between £2.5K - £10K and can be in England, Scotland or Wales.

Eligibility

- Local authorities
- Charities & other NGOs
- Community groups
- Education institutions
- Individual landowners
- Community interest company

Project types

Can include (but not limited to)

- hedgerows
- orchards
- agroforestry
- riparian plantings
- Miyawaki plantings
- standard trees (including urban street trees or those in hedgerows).

What can be funded

- UK-sourced, bare root or cell-grown trees (native and non-native)
- Whips, feathers, maidens and standards (up to 8-10cm girth)
- Sustainable (non-plastic) establishment aids including guards, ties, stakes, mulch and soil enhancers
- Planting equipment and contractor costs (max 20% of total)

SP Energy Networks

We are looking to support well-planned tree planting projects that will directly benefit people, communities and wildlife. We favour schemes that use a combination of tree types e.g. hedges with standard trees.

Projects can range between £2.5K - £10K and must be in Scotland only.

Eligibility

- Local authorities
- Charities & other NGOs
- Community groups
- Education institutions
- Individual landowners
- Community interest company

Project types

Can include (but not limited to)

- hedgerows
- orchards
- agroforestry
- riparian plantings
- Miyawaki plantings
- standard trees (including urban street trees or those in hedgerows).

What can be funded

- UK-sourced, bare root or cell-grown trees (native and non-native)
- Whips, feathers, maidens and standards (up to 8-10cm girth)
- Sustainable (non-plastic) establishment aids including guards, ties, stakes, mulch and soil enhancers
- Planting equipment and contractor costs (max 20% of total)

Branching Out

Small scale projects on public or leased land, with a strong community involvement ranging from £250 to £2.5K. Projects can be in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Eligibility

- Schools, colleges or universities
- Constituted community groups
- Childcare nurseries or care homes - charity or community funded
- Tenants and residents associations
- Parish / town councils / community councils
- Tree Warden Networks (preference given to Tree Council member networks)
- Community interest companies (limited by guarantee)
- Small registered charities

Project types

Can include a combination of the following (but not limited to)

- hedgerows
- orchards
- standard trees (including urban street trees or those in hedgerows)

What can be funded

- UK-sourced, bare root or cell-grown trees (native and non-native)
- Whips, feathers, maidens and standards (up to 8-10cm girth)
- Sustainable (non-plastic) establishment aids including guards, ties, stakes, mulch and soil enhancers

Trees Outside Woodland Fund

This fund supports establishing trees outside woodland through various planting types across England, with grants ranging from £10K to £40K.

Eligibility

- Local authorities in England
 - county council
 - unitary authority
 - metropolitan or London borough
 - combined authority
 - district, borough or city council
 - Note: Parish and town councils can not apply directly - only through a higher tier authority
- Registered charities (turnover >£100,000)

Project types

- Can include
- hedgerows
 - orchards
 - agroforestry
 - riparian areas
 - Miyawaki plantings
 - standard trees including urban street trees

What can be funded

- UK-sourced bare root or cell-grown trees (native and non-native)
- Whips, feathers, maidens and standards (up to 10-12cm girth)
- Must comply with bio-secure sourcing requirements
- Sustainable establishment aids (guards, ties, stakes, mulch)
- Planting equipment and contractor costs (max 20% of total)

Note: To ensure balanced representation, a cap may be applied to the proportion of the total fund allocated to any single tree planting type, organisation or location.

Sourcing your trees

Keeping newly planted trees pest and disease free is a priority for the health of our treescapes. The Trees Outside Woodland Fund requires strict biosecurity measures, with all projects adhering to the specific tree sourcing requirements set out below.

Biosecure Procurement Requirement

All trees must be sourced from suppliers who can provide evidence that they follow the [Plant Health Management Standard](#).

Required evidence (choose one):

- Confirmation that your nursery has current membership of the [Plant Healthy](#) Certification Scheme.
- Confirmation that your nursery can provide a [Ready to Plant \(RtP\)](#) assessment voucher for the trees to be used.

Responsibility for partners

If your project supports others (e.g., parish councils, farmers or landowners), you are responsible for ensuring they also provide the required biosecurity evidence.

Note: If trees purchased do not meet the criteria, then paid funds will be recovered and any outstanding payments will not be made.

National Highways

We are looking to support well-planned, tree planting projects that will directly benefit people, communities and wildlife. Free trees only.

Plants are being grown from British seed in a peat free environment (orders between 500-100,000 trees).

Eligibility

- Local authorities
- Charities & other NGOs
- Community groups
- Education institutions
- Individual landowners
- Community interest company
- Private sector organisations

Project types

Can include (but not limited to)

- hedgerows
- orchards
- agroforestry
- riparian plantings
- Miyawaki plantings

What can be funded

- Tree whips only. No establishment aids.
- Set species list - see guidance.
- Availability subject to change as the plants are being grown from seed and certain species may be in short supply.
- Deliveries direct from Greenwood Plants.

Project criteria	Trees Outside Woodland Fund	Network Rail Community Tree Planting Fund	SPEN Community Tree Planting Fund	National Highways 3 Million Trees Project	Branching Out Fund
Funding type	Large grants	Medium grants	Medium grants	Free trees	Small grants
Funding value	£10k - £40k	£2.5k - £10k	£2.5k - 10k	1000- 80,000 whips	£250 - £2.5k
Location	England	England, Scotland, Wales	Scotland	England	England, Scotland, Wales, N. Ireland
Applicants	Local authorities Charities (annual turnover £100k+)	Community groups Local authorities Charities / NGOs Schools Landowners	Community groups Local authorities Charities / NGOs Schools Landowners	Community groups Local authorities Charities / NGOs Schools Landowners Private sector orgs	Community groups Parish councils Small charities Schools Tree Warden Networks & more
Application deadline	Rolling (until funding is allocated)	Mid July	Mid July	Feb 27	Nov 26
Decision turnaround	Rolling basis (expect 6 weeks)	Notified end of Sep. 2026	Notified end of Sep. 2026	Within 3 weeks	5-6 weeks after submission
Funding available for establishment aids	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Funding available for other project costs	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗

Commonly asked questions

Can I apply more than once and to different funds?

You can apply to multiple funds, however you will need to complete a separate application for each fund. We cannot fund the same project with multiple grants.

An organisation can also apply more than once for the same fund, however you will need to fill out an application for each project (up to the stated funding range). Please note, we need to ensure there is a fair spread of project types and recipients, so we cannot guarantee multiple projects will be approved.





My organisation type isn't listed as eligible for the ToW fund (parish council, farmer, individual landowner, community interest company etc), can I apply?

Town and parish councils and individual landowners (including farmers) are intended to be beneficiaries of the TOW Fund however, to manage the potential volume of applications, we are not able to accept applications directly from an individual town or parish council/individual landowners. A higher tier local authority or charity (income £100K+) will need to submit a coordinated application on behalf of towns/parishes and/or individual landowners (including farmers) and/or other potential beneficiaries.

Town and parish councils/individual landowners/community interest companies can apply directly for grants from all our other funds.

What information do I need to provide for monitoring and evaluation?

We will need to know what you have planted and where and once appropriate, the survivability rates of the trees. Our monitoring and evaluation team will be in touch to discuss upon your application being successfully agreed.





What are the proximity rules for Network Rail and National Highways funds?

Your project does not have to be within immediate proximity of road or rail infrastructure, the majority of projects are not. However, a project will score higher if it is in within the vicinity of/have a positive impact on these networks.

Can I claim credits (carbon, BNG etc) from funded projects?

You will need to declare if you are claiming any form of credits. In some cases, it is accepted that credits can be claimed and used to further community/green benefit. However, as the majority of these funds are from public money, they cannot be sold for commercial or private gain (cannot be claimed for the ToW fund).





What are the closing dates?

There are slightly different timelines for each fund so please check the guidance.

The September date given is an indication of when the first decisions will be communicated to applicants.

If funding/trees remain, the application portal will remain open until these are fully allocated. However we cannot guarantee that any funding will be available after the first decision point. Where appropriate, we recommend getting your application in as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

Tree Establishment



Newly planted trees need care in order to thrive

Newly planted trees need simple care in their tender early years to thrive. Carrying out a little tree care is a great way to stay connected to the tree or trees you have planted, and could help them prosper for years and even decades to come. It's easy to help young trees survive those critical first five years. Find our useful tree care tips below.



Watering

As long as you plant at the right time of year and have mulched and weeded well, you usually won't need to water unless there is a very dry spell of more than a few weeks. In drought conditions, or when planting somewhere with poor soil quality or exposed to the wind or full sun, it's best to water regularly in the summer to help the young trees establish.

Drought & tree care

Mulch

Mulching is a simple, effective way to control weeds, protect the tree's roots from extreme temperatures and keep the ground moist and cool. It means you can avoid using chemicals on any weeds and there's no need to use a lawn mower or strimmer near the tree, which can risk damaging the bark.

Planting guidance

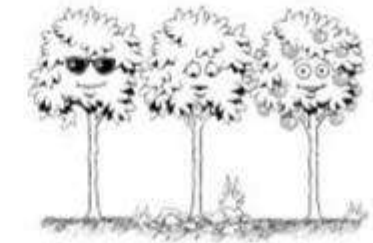


Tree Care Campaign

Planning



Choose your site carefully. Give your tree plenty of room to grow and plant away from buildings and overhead power lines.

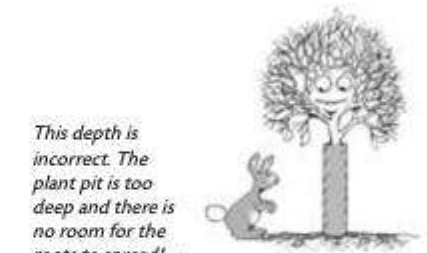


Choose your tree carefully. Look at the tree. Will it grow well in your planting site? Will it like the soil? Does it like sunny or shady places? Do you want a fruit tree?

Planting

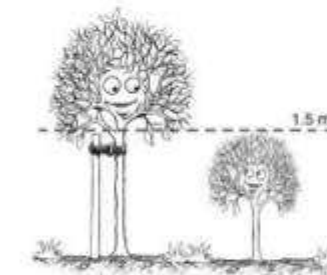


Take care before and after planting. Keep your tree's roots out of the wind. Make sure roots are kept wet during planting.

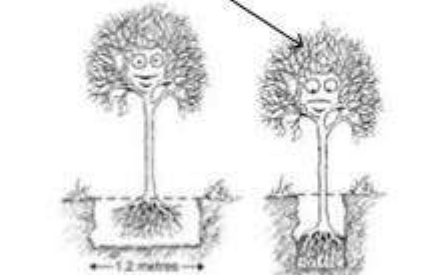


This depth is incorrect. The plant pit is too deep and there is no room for the roots to spread!

If there are rabbits, hares or deer in your area, consider using a tree guard.



A stake will be needed for three years at most if your tree is taller than 1.5m when you plant it. If your tree is under 1.5m when planting, it doesn't need one.

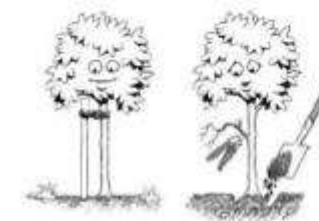


Dig the plant pit to the correct depth so roots are planted just below the surface. It should be wide enough to allow the roots to spread.

TLC maintenance

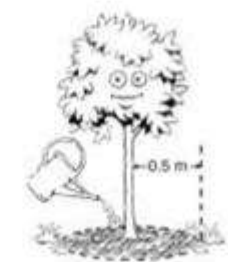
Tending

Between March and September, check your trees. Cut off any dead branches.



Loosening

Is the tie too tight? If so, loosen it, or remove it if the tree doesn't lean.



Clearing

Water your trees during dry weather. Remove all the grass and weeds in a circle 0.5m in radius around the tree. Put down a mulch mat or old piece of carpet.

treecouncil.org.uk

The Tree Council is a registered charity, number 279000.

[thetreecouncil](https://twitter.com/thetreecouncil)
 [treecounciluk](https://www.facebook.com/treecounciluk)
 [thetreecouncil](https://www.instagram.com/thetreecouncil)



Monitoring & Evaluation

We followed a survival rate recording and sampling methodology developed in partnership with Defra and Fera Science as part of The Tree Council's work separately on a tree establishment project.

Further development including an app, additional categories etc.

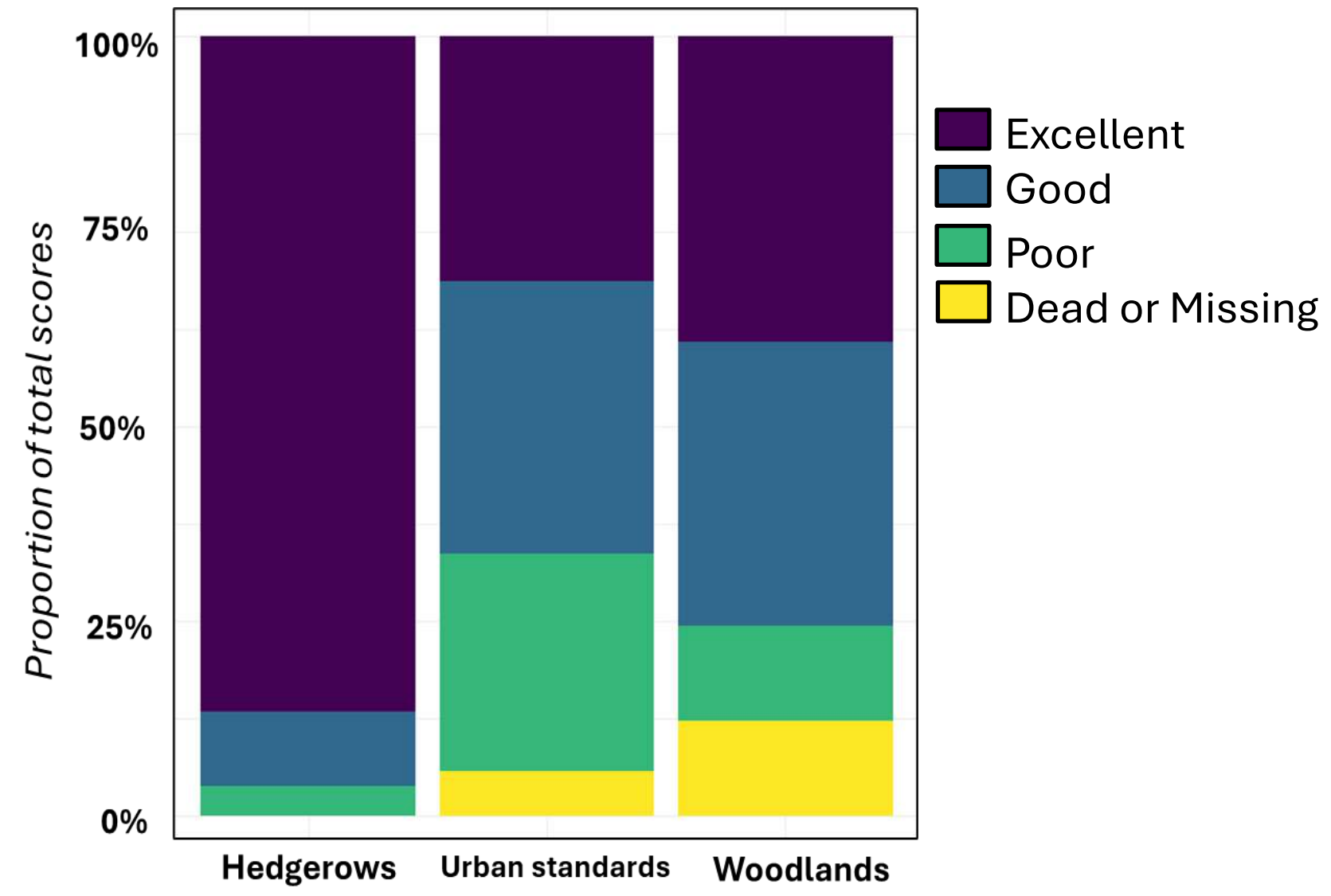
Category 1 Excellent	Category 2 Good	Category 3 Poor	Category 4 Dead
Tree is growing well and looks extremely healthy – vigorous growth with no signs of pests and diseases.	Tree is growing as expected showing little or no signs of pests and diseases.	Tree does not appear to be growing well; you might see signs of poor health and/or pest and disease damage.	Tree is clearly dead or is missing or removed.

Rate this tree!

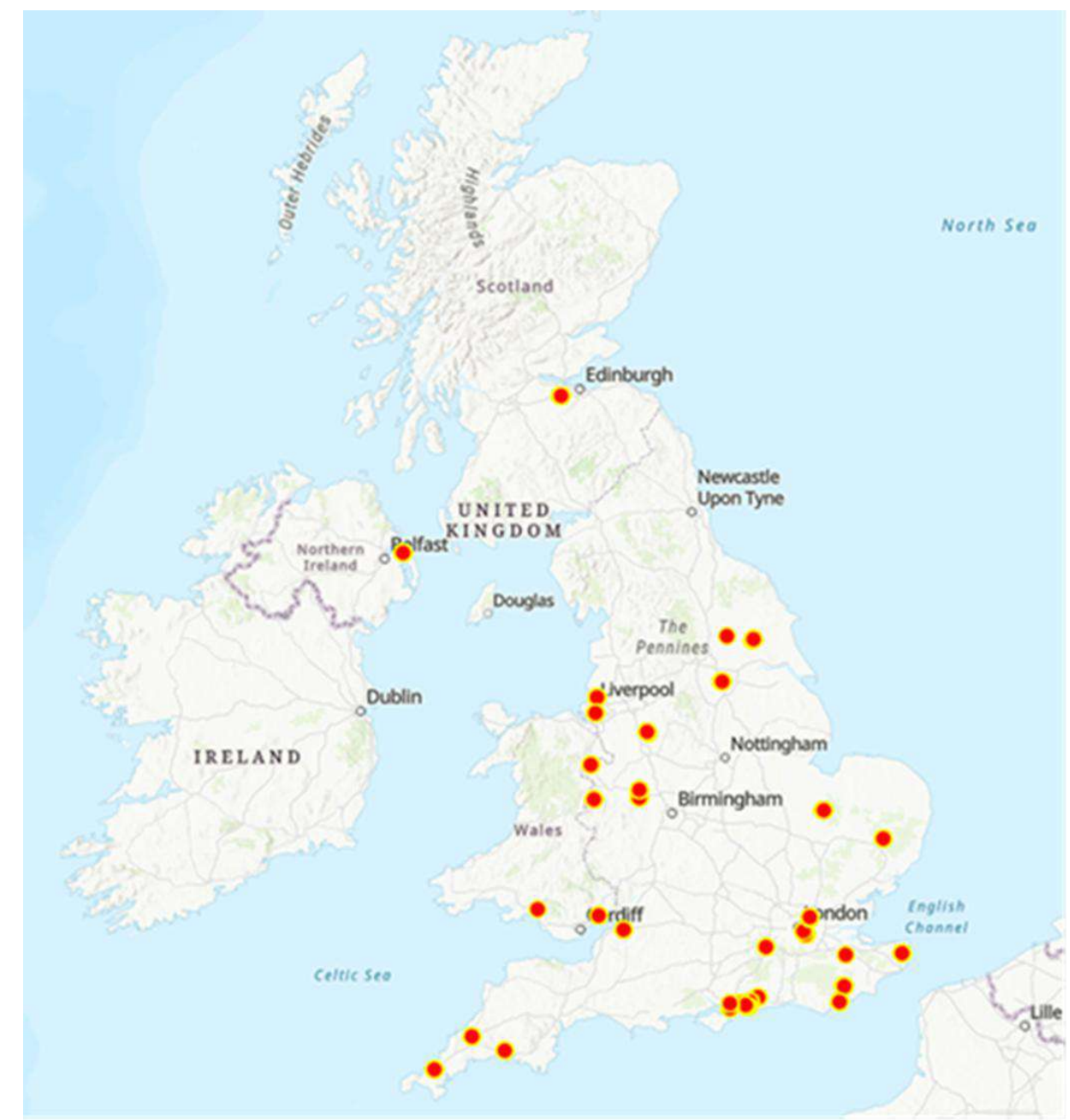


Category 1 Excellent
Tree is growing well and looks extremely healthy – vigorous growth with no signs of pests and diseases.
Category 2 Good
Tree is growing as expected and showing little or no sign of pests and diseases.
Category 3 Poor
Tree does not appear to be growing well; you might see signs of poor health and/or pests and diseases damage.
Category 4 Dead or Missing
Tree is clearly dead or is missing or removed.

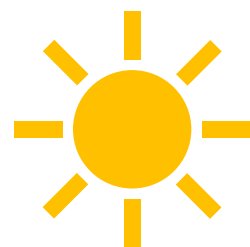
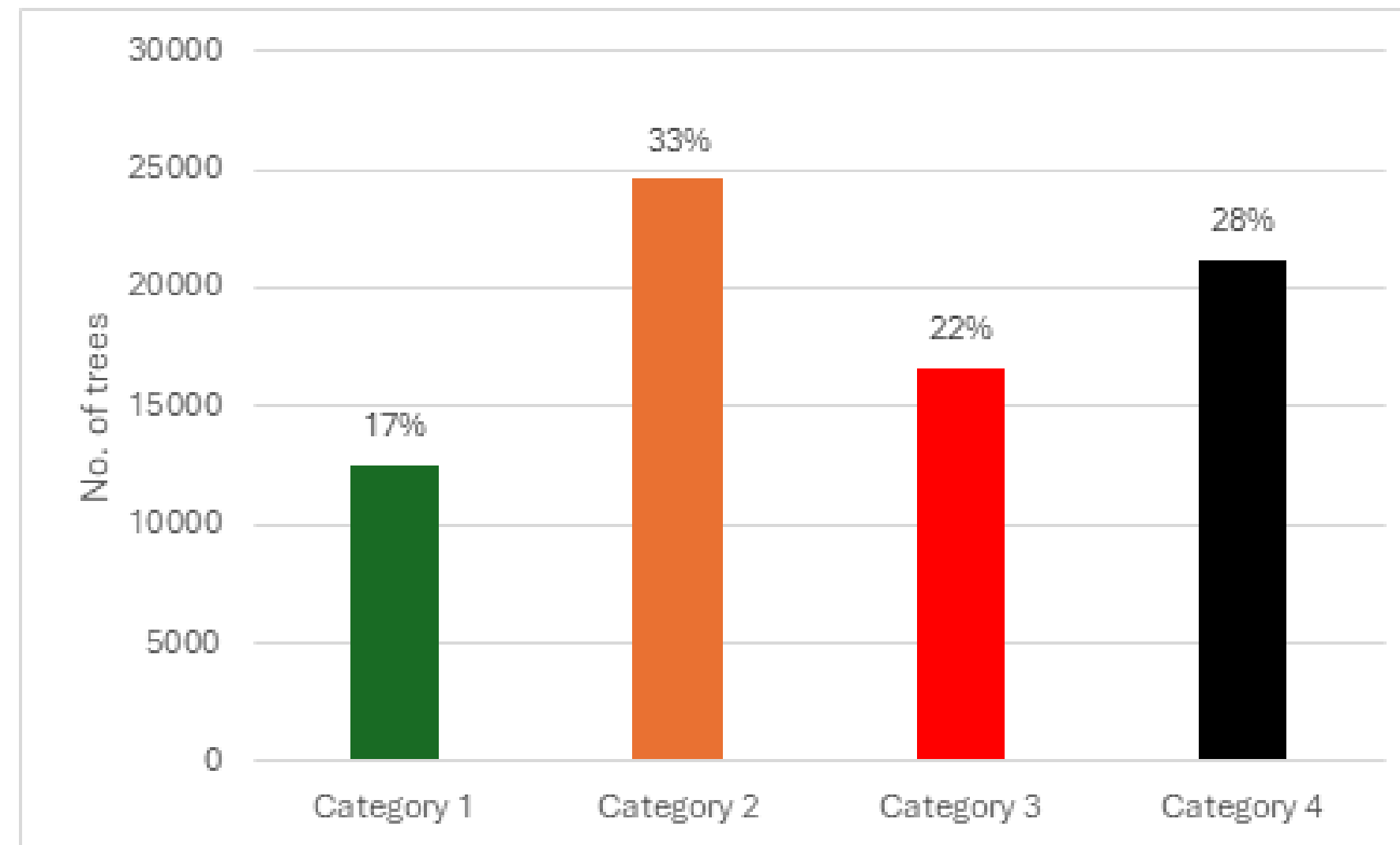
Tree establishment project



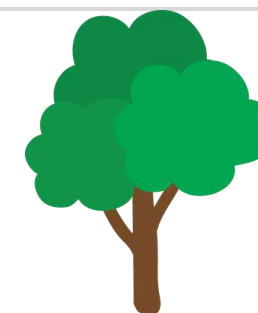
36 sites in Phase 1



Key findings for National Highways planting (2024/2025 planting season)

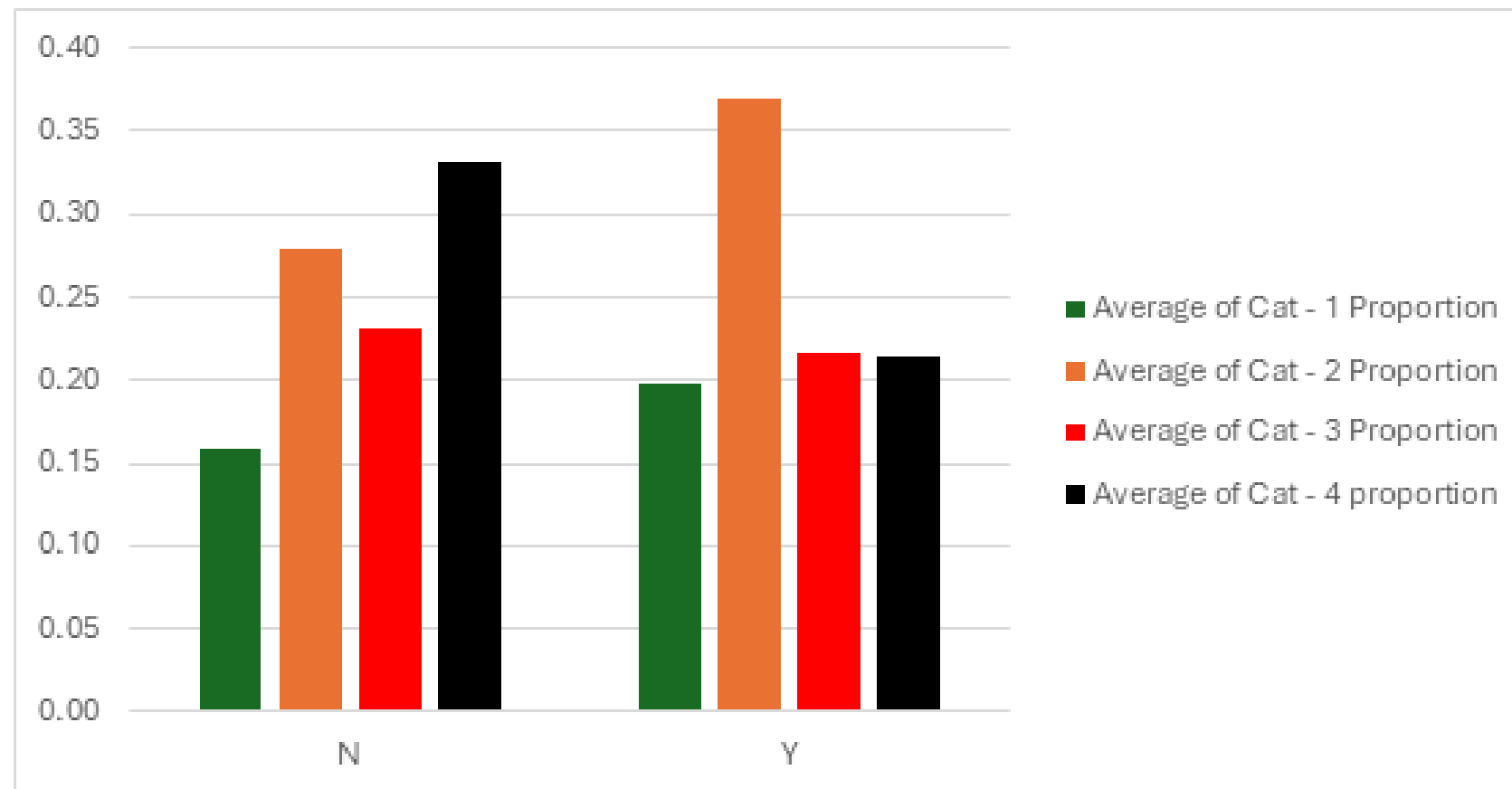


Extremely challenging weather events (drought into very wet)



72% current tree survival (very strong against national trends)

Key findings- Mulching



Mulch can add significant costs to projects, however, does have an impact on establishment if not used.

What is mulch?

Mulch is a material to cover soil to protect or improve it. Usually, it is made of organic matter (wood chips, bark etc).

Why is mulch important?

Mulch has a number of uses but specifically for tree planting it is added to retain moisture, regulate temperature and can suppress weeds.



Contact us

If you have any questions related to your project, the expression of interest, or anything else, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Team Tree Council.

We're happy to help!

Sign up for the local authority newsletter

www.treecouncil.org.uk

The best way to reach us is by email:

grants@treecouncil.org.uk

A member of the team will reply to you as soon as possible, and if necessary, we can organise a call to discuss your project in more detail.