

Network Rail Southern – plans to plant 100,000 trees and shrubs by 2024

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Network Rail Southern region is working with national conservation charity The Tree Council to plant more than 100,000 trees and shrubs by 2024.

Last year Network Rail pledged £1 million to set up local planting schemes across Hampshire, Surrey, South London, Kent, and Sussex as part of its commitment to create more green spaces for local communities.

Ellie Burrows, Network Rail's managing director of Southern region, said: "We're really pleased to be involved with such a great initiative for the second year running.

"Last year, we planted 22,000 trees, more than double our original target of 10,000 trees. This year alone we've planted 46,000 trees and we're now aiming to reach 100,000 by March 2024."

"It's great to be working so closely with The Tree Council and our local communities in the south to improve biodiversity across the Southern region."

Sarah Borien, Network Rail's head of environment and sustainability, added: "This pledge is part of our wider sustainability strategy which aims to give back to local communities by creating more green spaces and protecting biodiversity.

"We're committed to delivering our work in a way that uses less energy, cuts carbon emissions and waste and creates cleaner air for people and passengers for generations to come.

"As well as planting trees with local communities, we're also lining the tracks with a mixture of wildflowers, hedgerows and grassland which is helping us strike a balance between creating rich and diverse habitats and reducing the delays caused by leaves on the line and fallen trees."

The partnership with The Tree Council will give local people the money, materials, and guidance they need to plant and nurture thousands of trees in their communities, on third-party land, while encouraging Network Rail colleagues to volunteer at these local projects.

Sara Lom, The Tree Council CEO, said: "We're delighted to be working alongside Network Rail Southern helping them deliver their exciting sustainability aspirations.

"Together, we are empowering communities and landowners who have local knowledge and skills to plant in the areas where trees will have the most impact, boosting biodiversity and enhancing local lives. Thanks to those involved, the trees will also receive the vital care and long-term attention they need to establish and thrive.

"From fruit trees in the streets of Portsmouth to hedges in Wiltshire and Dorset and schools in London, together we are connecting and improving landscapes and communities for a greener future."

Photo credit: Network Rail