



Trees and woods have a strong contribution to make to well-being

Woodland Trust responds to the Government's announcement of well-being measures and encourages everyone in Cheshire to ensure woods and trees are part of their neighbourhood plan

The Government's proposed well-being measures, announced on July 23, showed that people in rural areas appeared happier than those in urban areas but that just 53% of people access green space at least once a week.

76% of people in Cheshire East and 73% of people in Cheshire West and Chester were generally happy, compared to 81% of people in Rutland, the happiest county in England. The Woodland Trust is encouraging people in Cheshire to help green their local area and improve their own well-being by getting involved in drawing up a neighbourhood plan that includes trees and woods. A number of neighbourhood plans already exist in the Cheshire area; interested members of the public can find out more by contacting their council's planning office, or doing an internet search.

Woodland Trust Head of Government Affairs James Cooper, said, "Trees and woods provide a huge variety of benefits - shade in summer, shelter from rain and wind; they help to keep the air clean and breathable, support wildlife and add value to the culture and economy of our towns and cities. They help to make communities healthier, wealthier and happier places to live and work.

The measures provide great evidence for the Government to realise the need to expand green space and trees and woods are an important part of that. Given the wealth of evidence of the positive contribution they make to people's well-being including recommendations in the recently published report by the Independent Panel on Forestry, we should all now work together to ensure the benefits of trees and woods are maximised."

The value of UK woodland in public access benefits alone is estimated to be £447m a year¹ and the value of living with a view of green space is estimated at £300 per person per year². The Government's own public health white paper 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People' (published last year) recognised the health benefits of trees, highlighting the quality of the environment within which people live as being an important factor in ensuring good physical and mental health.

For more information about how you can ensure trees are part of your neighbourhood, visit www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/neighbourhood-planning/

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

For the full statistics, go to <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>

The domain on the Office of National Statistics website entitled 'Where we live' contains a proposal by government to measure 'access to and quality of, the local environment' by using data on how frequently people access local green space and how they feel about its quality. The data showed that people in rural areas appeared happier than those in urban areas but that just 53% of people access green space at least once a week.

¹ CJC (2008) *The value of benefits arising from trees and woodland in the UK*, a report to the Woodland Trust by CJC consulting, Woodland Trust, Grantham.

² Fielden, T. (2011) *Putting a price on nature*: BBC Online <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-13627055>

For more on the health benefits of trees, see:

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/why-woods-matter/what-are-they/benefits/for-health/Pages/health.aspx>

About Woodland Trust

The Woodland Trust is the UK's leading woodland conservation charity championing native woods and trees. It has more than 200,000 members and its three key aims are: i) to enable the creation of more native woods and places rich in trees ii) to protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future iii) to inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees. Established in 1972, the Woodland Trust now has over 1,000 sites in its care covering approximately 20,000 hectares (50,000 acres). Access to its sites is free.