



Nature Recovery
Shropshire and
Telford & Wrekin

Helping nature to recover by...

planting, restoring and caring for native hedgerows



CPRE Hedgerow Heroes

Since 2021, CPRE Shropshire has planted 24km of native hedgerow in the Shropshire countryside with the help of their team of amazing volunteers. They have planted at over 100 sites, including working farms, community spaces and smallholdings.

The project provides free whips (young hedge plants) and the volunteer power to plant them. Sites are carefully selected to ensure their suitability for planting and to restore habitat connectivity.

The project also delivers hedgerow management workshops, hedgelaying and coppice management workshops, biochar sessions, arts and educational activities, webinars and has produced a series of excellent short hedgerow -related films, which you can [view here](#).

A long-time campaigner for our hedgerows, national CPRE is aiming to plant 100 miles of hedgerow in the English countryside by the end of their Centenary year in 2026/27 as part of the Hedgerow Heroes project.



The value of native hedgerows

A healthy native hedge is the perfect home for many of our native farmland birds, small mammals and insects. Well-managed hedgerows provide nest sites, shelter and a regular food source through the seasons (from blossom to berries, nuts and seeds.)

They are also essential as wildlife corridors, linking different habitats and enabling small mammals, such as dormice, to move safely across the landscape.



Inspiring the younger generation

Alongside planting hedgerows, the project is working with schools in Shropshire to share the delights of hedgerows with children (see left) and has produced Hedge Kitbags for use by forest schools in South Shropshire.

The **Youngwilders** came to plant a hedge as part of the project. Youngwilder, Jack Durrant, talks about the importance of hedgerows in the landscape and why it's important that young people get involved... [watch 4-minute film here](#).



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"Creating hedges has been so much more than planting trees. I've discovered a new community of lovely people, sharing knowledge and ideas, with the common goal of wanting to turn the tide for our declining wildlife." (project volunteer)



Cheshire Coppice Farm is one of 30 or so farms that have been involved with the project to date.

Farmer, Steve Rawlings, and his daughter, Steph, welcomed project volunteers to their mixed farm, Cheshire Coppice Farm, near Telford where 300m of new hedgerow was planted and 180m of existing hedge laid as part of a series of hedgelaying workshops. (Steve and Steph are pictured below next to their newly-laid hedge the following summer).

Hedgerows had always been part of the farm here and were fantastic mixed-species examples, full of berries, since Steve allowed them to grow tall for his game bird business. These full, mature hedges were ideal for laying to keep them healthy. Laying a hedge stimulates new growth from the base, which thickens up the hedge. Hedgerow trees were left in the laid hedge for additional habitat.

This newly laid hedge had been planted by Steve and Steph over 20 years ago. Steph had been awarded a Blue Peter badge for her planting efforts and returned home to help lay the hedge and learn this traditional skill!



Conversations over the farm hedge

The project has sparked many conversations between volunteer hedge planters and farmers, who have sometimes wondered, at the start, why people wanted to come and plant a hedge on their farm.

Volunteer reasons for planting may differ, but the outcome is always a positive one - a win for the farm, a win for nature with more native hedgerows planted and restored and a win for the volunteers too!

Not only are hedgerows valuable wildlife habitat, they also help stabilise soils, provide a natural stock-proof barrier and offer shade and shelter for farm animals. They also encourage pollination and natural pest controls.

Looking after our hedgerows

Hedgerows need to be managed on a cycle to keep them healthy and the project has funded several hedgerow management workshops for farmers and land managers. Understanding the lifecycle of a hedge and the different ways to look after your hedge is key to ensuring our hedgerows remain a valued, productive and healthy feature - and important habitat - in our countryside.

Find out more about the project and how to get involved [here](#).



The countryside charity
Shropshire