



PRESS RELEASE

Date: 09 September 2010

Funding Helps Add a Splash of Colour to the Countryside

A project to bring the native bluebell back to our spring woodlands is able to bloom once again thanks to a recent cash boost.

The English Bluebell, *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, famous for carpeting our woodlands in swathes of colour in April and May has been suffering a decline across the UK.

Funding from the landfill communities funds of Waste Recycling Group Ltd (administered by WREN), the Linley Shaw Foundation, The Mersey Forest and Cheshire West and Chester Council have given the Cheshire Bluebell Recovery Project a boost to continue propagating native bluebell bulbs from seed and enable the propagated bulbs to be planted out into community woodlands across the Cheshire region.

The Cheshire Bluebell Recovery Project was set up in 1996 in direct response to the increasing loss of one of our most beautiful woodland wildflowers.

The loss of woodland habitat has meant that whole areas of bluebells no longer exist whilst they continue to decline in the countryside due to wild bulbs being dug up for sale and the damage done to them by trampling their leaves.

The non-native Spanish Bluebell, *Hyacinthoides hispanica*, is also a threat to the English Bluebell by cross-breeding and producing hybrid plants.

This unique community led project has helped to conserve the native bluebell by propagating thousands of new bulbs from seed at Barrowmore Estate in Cheshire over the last six years. Volunteers have helped the seeds grow and turn into bulbs, a process that can take up to 7 years. The first bulbs are now ready to be planted out into local community woodlands in the countryside.

Sarah Bennett of the Cheshire region Biodiversity Partnership said “Through years of dedication and a renewed funding boost the project is now ready to move on to the next step and plant these local provenance bluebells out into our local community woodlands. This is a real example of local communities helping wildlife.”

To find out more about the Cheshire Bluebell Recovery Project visit www.record-lrc.co.uk.

To find out more about the Cheshire Bluebell Biodiversity Action Plan visit www.cheshire-biodiversity.org.uk.

Editors Notes

1. Voted the nations favourite wildflower in 2002 in a poll organised by conservation charity Plantlife
2. The Cheshire region Biodiversity Partnership was established in 1997 bringing together over 40 organisations, groups and individuals to work collectively towards a common vision of ‘a Cheshire region richer in Wildlife by 2020’. This Partnership coordinates the Biodiversity Action Plans for the Cheshire region. For more information and images please contact Sarah Bennett, Cheshire region Biodiversity Manager on 01948 820 728.
3. **WREN** is a not for profit business that awards grants to community, environmental and heritage projects across the UK from funds donated by Waste Recycling Group (WRG) as part of a voluntary environmental tax credit scheme called the Landfill Communities Fund. Since 1998, WREN has granted over £133m to more than 5,100 projects which benefit people living within 10 miles of a WRG landfill site. www.wren.org.uk
4. **The Landfill Communities Fund (LCF)** is a voluntary scheme which enables landfill operators to contribute some of the tax raised on the disposal of waste in landfill to Environmental Bodies (EBs) who can then fund community, heritage and environmental projects which comply with the Landfill Tax Regulations. Since 1996 over £880m has been spent on more than 34,000 projects helping to improve the environment in which we live.
5. **Waste Recycling Group Limited (WRG)**, a leading UK waste management and energy recovery company, is part of FCC the international environmental services, infrastructure and energy group (www.fcc.es). FCC in the UK comprises WRG and Focsa Services (UK) Ltd. Focused on delivering integrated waste management and energy recovery solutions to meet national, regional and local needs, WRG operates facilities for the reception, recycling and disposal of waste, including a network of waste transfer and recycling centres and a regional network of landfill sites. WRG donates the LCF tax credits that are generated by its operations to Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd (WREN), in order to add value to the environmental and social infrastructure of the communities around landfill sites. www.wrg.co.uk.

