

Whitwell church tree is a symbol of peace

Lord Lieutenant Dr Sarah Furness leading the ceremony in Whitwell

An olive tree has been planted in Whitwell as part of a green initiative in Rutland and as part of a wider scheme to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee...

Lord Lieutenant of Rutland Dr Sarah Furness recently attended a tree planting ceremony in Whitwell churchyard as a part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative campaign designed to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The Benefice Vicar, Pippa Madgwick, and Whitwell villagers gathered around on the morning of All Saints Day 1st November to show their support for the planting, the first of two planned in support of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Green Canopy Project (GCP). The new trees will replace two horse chestnut trees that stood either side of the entrance gates which had to be felled due to disease some years ago. The second tree, which will be a native species, is scheduled to be planted in the spring of 2022, the year of the Platinum Jubilee.

Helping the planet

The Lord Lieutenant is keen that this event in Whitwell will encourage the planting of many more trees in Rutland, meeting the Queen's wish to leave a lasting beneficial legacy of the Jubilee. Dr Sarah Furness said: "I hope that this event is followed by hundreds more such events and that thousands more trees are planted for every Rutland citizen."

An olive tree was chosen as an age-old symbol of peace, in this case between humankind and the planet, to encourage a sustainable future for all. The GCP initiative



Robin Church and Dr Sarah Furness planting the olive tree

also supports her Majesty's concern about climate change and the planting date coincided with the first day of the COP26 Summit in Glasgow. An Olive tree growing in central England is also a visual reminder that Climate Change is with us and demands our transition to a harmonious existence with nature. The tree that was planted was 'recycled' from a local house clearance and funded from donations in memory of people recently interred in the churchyard.

Caring for the church

St Michael and All Angels dates to the 13th century and remains open for worship sustained by village fundraising events. There is an on-going programme of repairs to the fabric assisted, where appropriate, by grants from the Rutland Historic Churches Preservation Trust. Most recently the South Aisle Roof has been re-covered with stainless steel following lead theft and the nave roof repaired and gutters repainted.

Whitwell village is part of the Rutland Climate Action Network convened by Councillor Lucy Stephenson, which supports biodiversity and encourages tree planting, and the Parochial Church Council hopes this event will inspire more tree planting in the village.

Everyone from individuals to villages, cities, counties, schools and corporates are being encouraged to play their part in enhancing our environment by planting trees in the months until March, and again next October through to the end of the Jubilee year. For more information visit the website queensgreencanopy.org