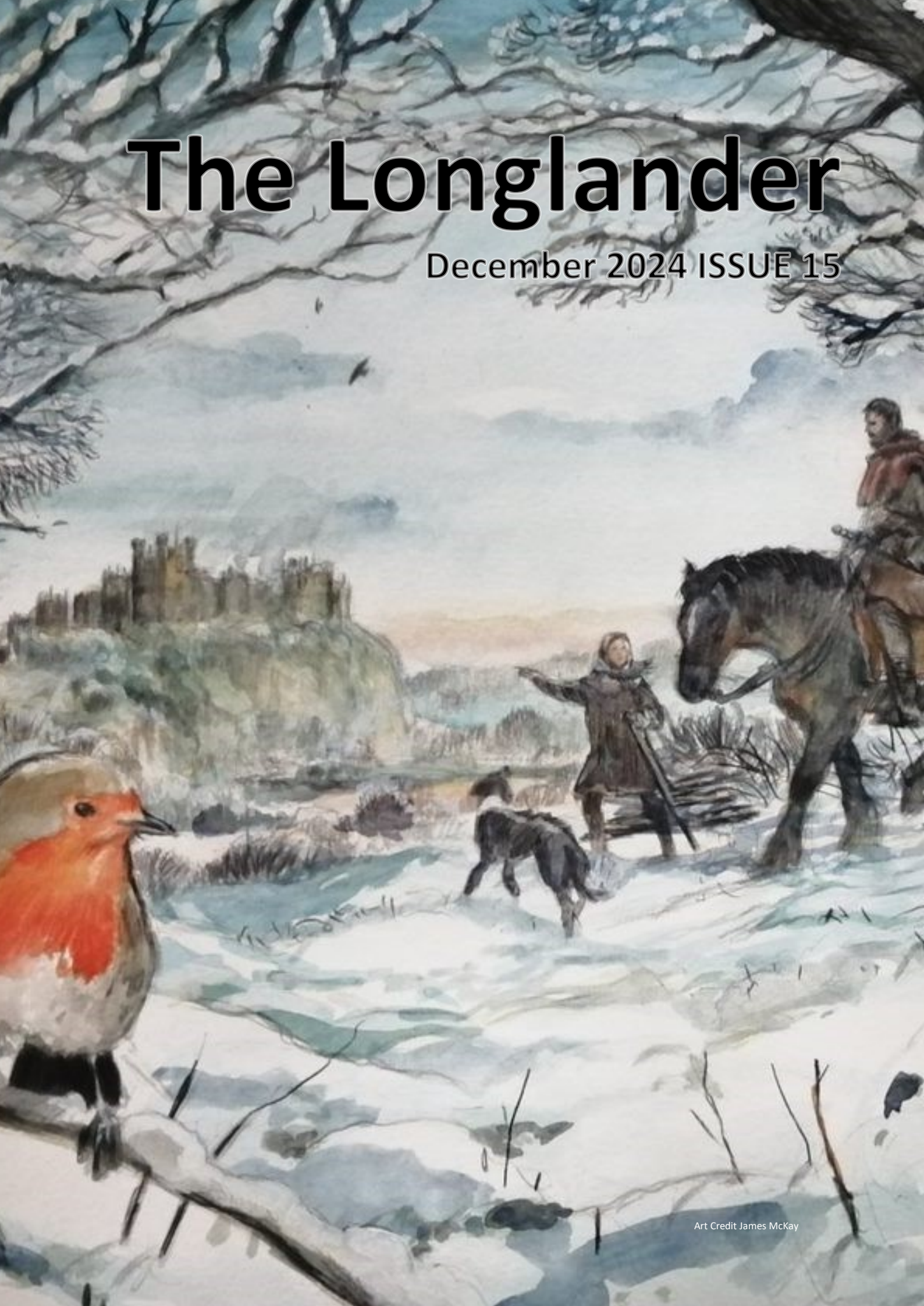


The Longlander

December 2024 ISSUE 15



Art Credit James McKay

WELCOME

Buy your loved-ones (and future generations) a most precious and long-lasting gift this Christmas! ...a share of our beautiful Yorkshire landscape!

Yuletide greetings Longlanders!

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter, as we approach the end of another momentous and groundbreaking year for our expanding community powered project.

We hope you like the special Christmas card cover picture, painted by our Chair, James McKay, depicting a wintry Knaresborough Forest Park in 1324 ...and recently available on special edition Christmas cards in 2024!

This festive season, the big news is that we are nearly there with our fundraising campaign for Knaresborough Forest Park and our ambition to secure all of our newly-acquired 60 acres of historic green belt land in community ownership before the end of the year.

Following a successful December fundraise, and our 'Don't Buy Junk, Buy A Trunk' gift share sales campaign, we now need to raise only £40,000 more, having now paid off more than 95% of the original £900,000 cost! A monumental achievement for our wonderful community of volunteers as we look forward to getting onto the land and creating another protected green haven for people and wildlife and establishing the permanent, community-owned wildlife corridor between Harrogate and Knaresborough.

So, if you're still looking for last-minute gift inspiration this Christmas, consider buying your loved ones community shares in Long Lands Common to help us create Knaresborough Forest Park, the Long Lands Community Food Forest and raise the last £40,000.

If you would like to help us get over the line before the new year, please visit <https://www.longlandscommon.org/donate> to see the many ways you can buy shares, for yourself or a loved one, or make a donation.

Inside this edition you'll find out what's been going on behind the scenes this year in the Long Lands Community. We hope you feel inspired to get involved!

Thank you for all your wonderful support in 2024.

We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year!

The Long Lands Community Team



CONTENTS

- 02 - Welcome
- 04 - The Long Lands Common Henge
- 05 - Knaresborough Forest Park December Update
- 08 - Veloheads Work Experience Activities
- 11 - Two New Films Launched
- 12 - National Tree Week at Long Lands Common
- 14 - Site Rangers' Corner
- 16 - The Story of Nichola's Tree
- 17 - Upcoming Events

KEEPING IN TOUCH

The Long Lands Community has a number of social media channels and email contact addresses (and we'll probably be spawning more over the next few months!). Please feel free to follow them all, and contact us with enquiries too.

LONG LANDS COMMON



[FACEBOOK LINK](#)



[YOUTUBE LINK](#)



[EMAIL LINK](#)



[INSTAGRAM LINK](#)



[TWITTER / X](#)

KNARESBOROUGH FOREST PARK



[FACEBOOK LINK](#)



[EMAIL LINK](#)



[TWITTER / X](#)

The Long Lands Common Henge

...The first new earthwork henge in Yorkshire since the Brigantes!

We are very excited to announce the imminent completion of the groundworks that have created the earthwork boundary for our new human activity area on Long Lands Common.

The Long Lands Henge is the culmination of two years of Permaculture design work to create an imaginative space where human creativity and relationships can flourish and where multiple yields can be provided for both humans and wildlife.

The roughly circular enclosure, with bank and ditch boundary and entrance gates, was inspired by our pre-Roman tribal ancestors who built neolithic henges and iron-age hill forts in Yorkshire as places for gathering, celebration and protection.

Our henge, measuring roughly 60m across by 35m wide, features a new, additional pond and a water filled boundary ditch that will provide an extra water supply, additional wildlife habitat and a new location for pond-dipping and education.

Whilst we have many ideas of the activities and structures that we would like to see within the henge, the internal design has yet to be decided.

Now that we have a space and blank canvas to work on, more Permaculture design workshops will be held to allow members to get involved and collaborate on the plan.

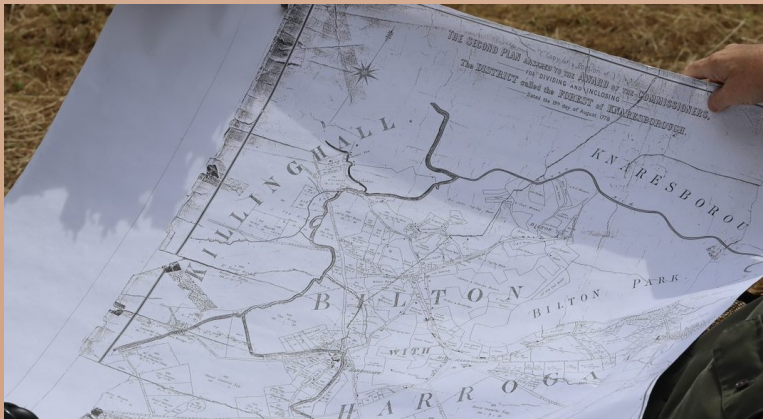
If you are interested in getting involved please watch out for further announcements in the new year.



Knaresborough Forest Park December Update

It's been quite a trek! We found there was land for sale over two years ago, and the journey has been full of hazards.

However, we can now declare that Knaresborough Forest Park (KFP) is a reality, and Long Lands Common has tripled its size. It came into the ownership of the LLC community in August – some of you probably came to the ceremonial tree planting, which was a wonderful celebratory day.



Knaresborough Forest Park December Update

We still owe money to pay off a loan to We Have the Power, but this is already down to less than £40K, thanks to the generosity of over 1000 supporters. It is wonderful how the community has really come together over this project. Not only are people buying shares and gift shares, they are donating what they can afford, helping in all kinds of ways, and making suggestions. We welcome volunteers for admin, fundraising, events management etc as well as work on the land.

Our story has been covered by the [BBC News](#), [Look North](#) and [BBC Radio York](#) as well as the local press.



NEWS

Home | InDepth | Israel-Gaza war | War in Ukraine | Climate | UK | World | Business | Politics | Culture

England | Local News | North Yorkshire

Community group buys land to create nature reserve



We've even had our first working parties on the new land, attended by 12 volunteers. We cleared the area around the farm buildings, making it usable as a base for further working parties.



Knaresborough Forest Park December Update

Opportunities to help on the new acquisition will be available soon, so be alert for postings – **starting with an invitation to join a guided walk of the full KFP site on Sunday 5 January 2025.**

Meet at 10am at the map by the river (just along the Ringway footpath from High Bridge, on the other side of the river from Conyngham Hall car park, opposite the Ugly Duckling café).

You will be met by members of the KFP team who will lead you up and round KFP, ending up with a glass of mulled wine or apple juice. Do come along!



Veloheads Work Experience Activities

By Chris Kitson

Since our last update, the Veloheads Land-based Work Experience students have carried out a variety of helpful tasks on their weekly visits to Long Lands Common...



Spring/Summer Term

Following on from his compost bin construction, Billy continued to apply his wood-working interests to the building of a tree nursery to house and protect the potted saplings provided by Long Lands member and prolific tree grower, Janet Willoner. He was also on hand to help out with fixing

up the sign for Carl's Shed, crafted by our resident woodworker Ian Fraser



Alex had a very varied term applying his practical talents to lawn tractor mechanics, floor-laying in Carl's Shed and hedge maintenance, whilst also taking responsibility for the watering and general care of our celebration trees.

Veloheads Work Experience Activities

By Chris Kitson



Autumn/Winter Term

Since September, and the arrival of new students, our three groups have been busy focusing on the construction of a dead hedge to screen off the recycled IBC water tank, installed by our maintenance team for watering the celebration trees in the west field.

All students have had the opportunity to coppice and fix hazel poles and transport brush with the lawn tractor to gradually build the spiral-shaped hedge that both reduces the visual impact of the water tank and provides extra habitat for wildlife.

Many thanks to Mitchell, XiJun, Tristan, Tom, Cody, Billy, Lucas and Lincoln for making a difference!



Veloheads Work Experience Activities

By Chris Kitson



Two New Films Launched

The Long Lands Community have been very fortunate to recently recruit the voluntary services of professional photographer and filmmaker, Gary Lawson, of Gary Lawson Media, to film and edit two new promotional films to promote our ongoing share sale campaign.

In October, we released 'The Destiny Of Our Greenbelt', a guided history walk through the medieval deer park of Bilton Park, showing the encroachments of recent housing developments into this area and highlighting the ongoing threat to the greenbelt posed by developers.

This was followed, in December, by 'The Everlasting Christmas Present', a short film to support our 'Don't Buy Junk, Buy A Trunk' Christmas appeal, that looks at the many reasons why buying community shares as Christmas gifts this year, is the most special and unique present that money can buy.

Both films feature stunning aerial footage of Long Lands Common and Knaresborough Forest Park. The Destiny Of Our Greenbelt also features a remarkable artist's impression of KFP and Knaresborough Castle in medieval times, when the land was within Bilton Park, drawn by our acclaimed resident artist and Chair, James McKay.

Both films have been viewed thousands of times on Facebook and are now available to view on our YouTube channel...



[The Destiny Of Our Greenbelt](#)



[The Everlasting Christmas Present](#)

National Tree Week at Long Lands Common

By Barry Slaymaker

It was a wonderfully heartwarming sight to see dozens of volunteers planting trees in the mild winter sunshine at Long Lands Common over the final weekend of National Tree Week. More than 100 of you came out to help over the weekend, a magnificent testimony to community action, a real coming together of children, teenagers, young adults, older adults, and even older adults, all keen to be part of the development of Long Lands Common.



Also lending a hand the following day was a group from the Biodiversity Team at the Environment Agency with a DEFRA colleague, organised by one of our Site Rangers, Andi Shaftoe.

We were assisted by YorGreen CIC a small West Yorkshire based company in the White Rose Yorkshire partnership. This partnership is the Yorkshire side of the Northern Forest that is seeking to plant 50 million trees across northern England over 20 years. Planting costs were funded by White Rose Forest, and the project funding also supports accessibility so it will allow us to install a professionally designed compost toilet in the new year.



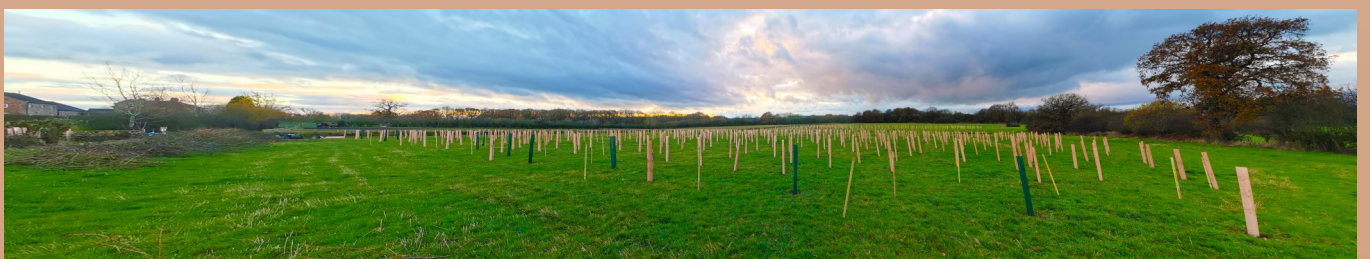
We planted 1800 trees, all broadleaves in what will become a mixed woodland of dominantly oak with 17 other species that include birch, rowan, hazel, hawthorn, holly, alder, aspen & cherry, with some hornbeam, sweet chestnut and lime. The latter three species are not normally found growing naturally in our area but are included with a view to their adaptability to future changes in climate.

National Tree Week at Long Lands Common



The tubes that we have to use round each tree to protect them from browsing by rabbits and deer are biodegradable: they are made from vegetable matter and starch and can be composted when they have served their purpose in a few years time when the trees are taller and stronger.

Huge thanks to all who have helped make this such a success, another big stride in our journey to improve the local biodiversity, restore nature, and bring the community together to work for a better future.



Site Rangers Corner

The early summer is always an exciting time for the rangers, change on The Common happens so rapidly there is something new to see at every visit. This year we noted that the skylarks are nesting in the West Field in addition to the East Field and the first damselfly we spotted in May was one not previously seen on site! Barn owls are spotted most evenings and we have had several sightings of a long eared owl. Buzzards, red kite and kestrel are regular visitors. Also of note are sightings of snipe, curlew, green sandpiper and meadow pipits.

Observing our insect life is such a pleasure. We have (at least) 13 species of butterfly, 7 types of bee, 4 species of damselfly and 4 species of dragonfly. As the ponds are becoming more established we are noticing how much more life they are supporting.



On 11th May we had our first site ranger workshop with a focus on bird and tree ID. A group of 10 rangers led by Ian Morris and Barry Slaymaker met on a glorious Saturday morning and spent a very enjoyable few hours walking round the common looking at the birds and trees on site and anything else that caught our eye..... Oh and eating loads of cake and strawberries!

We have been working closely with Linda Nelson to develop Carl's Shed. We now have some great photos (all taken on LLC) on display and a small gallery of 'Ranger Art'. We have been extending our range of ID resources and were pleased to welcome people attending the AGM to have a look round.



We dipped all the ponds on the day of the AGM to enable us to display our finds to visitors and were very excited to discover that we had newt larvae in all three ponds – not great crested but still something to celebrate. Ranger Anna ran some great craft activities for our younger visitors.



It's always great to chat to visitors to the common. A group of ten walkers arrived during one of the working party days – we were able to tell them a little about the Common and developments with KFP and talk to them about our dragonflies as they settled to have their picnic at the top pond.

The rangers have regular social evenings. In September, Chris updated us with KFP progress over a pint at The Gardeners Arms, and we have a Christmas meal planned. Rangers are regular attenders at the Sunday working parties and its always great to catch up for a chat over a cup of tea.



In September we welcomed two new Rangers Sue and Matt to our team – if you are interested in being a Ranger at Longlands Common please contact us on rangers@longlandscommon.org we would be pleased to show you round and explain what is involved.

The Story of Nichola's Tree

If you have visited Long Lands Common this year you may have noticed a small, valiant cherry tree emerging from a tree guard about halfway up the east field track, close to the large remains of the ash tree trunk. This is Nichola's Tree, planted by Roy, one of our Community Food Forest volunteers...

Our Story...

Mine and Nichola's story, is an epic one. The story of two disabled people who eventually meet, race and travel together, fall in love, get married, then relocate to Harrogate, just before the first "Lockdown".

Leading up to our first Christmas in Harrogate, Nichola asked me, what I wanted as a present? I replied, a share voucher in Longlands Common's first initial land offer. So that Christmas, that is what I got. Our relationship with "Longlands" began.



We got married in 2018, By 2023, Nichola was taken from us. Early January of that year We were informed that her cancer had returned, we never realised how little time we had left. We were fast approaching our 4th wedding anniversary, we never got to see it. Nichola died 19th February, 2023. Some of you will know the enormity of personal bereavement, and how your world shrinks beyond thought.

It just so happened that Nichola and I had attended an event in the Longlands Common field just the year prior. During the visit Nichola bought me a gift. It was a Cherry Tree sapling off one of the stalls there. we kept it, potted, and nurtured it.

That little thing became the obvious path for my wife. Thanks to the Longlands people, who got to meet Nichola, and thought it fitting to let her live there. So we dug a hole, we spread Nichola's ashes in that hole and firmly we planted the cherry tree sapling on top. The hope obviously being Nichola would continue in the form of that living tree. The good news is, that sapling is a metre tall, and doing well. Lately, a memorial stone has been placed at it's base in her honour.

Rest In Peace, Nichola.

If you would like to plant a Celebration Tree at Long Lands Common or Knaresborough Forest Park, please visit our webpage:

<https://www.longlandscommon.org/celebrationtrees>



Upcoming LLC & KFP Events

Puzzle night at Knaresborough House, Friday 17 January, 7:30pm.

Tickets £12 on sale soon.

Ceilidh at St Andrew's Church, Starbeck, Saturday 1 February, 7:30pm.

Tickets £15 also on sale soon.

Guided walk of the full KFP site, Sunday 5 January, 10am.

Meet at the map by the river Nidd - just along the Ringway footpath from High Bridge, on the other side of the river from Conyngam Hall car park, opposite the Ugly Duckling café.