



Vade Mecum

Banbury, Oxfordshire, is a historic market town with abundant opportunities for enhancing its green spaces. Tree planting initiatives can transform the environment by focusing on:

- 1. Verges and Roadside Areas**
 - a) Planting trees along roads to create shaded, picturesque routes.
 - b) Using native species to encourage biodiversity.
- 2. Hedgerows and Field Boundaries**
 - a) Restoring traditional hedgerows with mixed trees and shrubs.
 - b) Supporting wildlife corridors for birds and pollinators.
- 3. Parks and Public Gardens**
 - a) Increasing canopy cover with specimen and ornamental trees.
 - b) Creating shaded seating areas and natural play spaces.
 - c) Transforming unused corners and grass strips into thriving mini-woodlands.
- 4. Community Orchards**
 - a) The planting of orchards in public spaces.
 - b) Local schools to help determine varieties of trees.
- 5. Advice to residents about tree planting in their own gardens.**
 - a) Local horticultural societies to be involved.
 - b) University of Oxford Botanical Gardens.

Initiate a junior tree guardian scheme and place carved wooden plaques on each tree with the name of the junior guardian.

5. Celebrating Trees through British Cultural Lenses *exempli gratia*:

i. Beltane Tree Ceremonies

Honouring ancient Celtic traditions, Beltane festivals can include tree-adorned maypoles, symbolic offerings to oak and hawthorn trees, and community storytelling sessions beneath the branches.

ii. Anglo-Saxon Inspired Woodland Gatherings

Banbury was founded by Saxons. Recreating historical woodland moots or open-air feasts where local storytellers and musicians celebrate the cultural significance of ash and elm trees in early English life.

iv. Contemporary Global Culture Tree Day

Bringing together diverse British communities to plant trees in public spaces, share cultural cuisines under shaded canopies, and display tree-themed art reflecting heritage from around the world.

v. Annual Wassailing in Community Orchards

Wassailing in community orchards is a joyous seasonal tradition that can bring together residents of Banbury to celebrate local nature and ensure the vitality of fruit trees. This ceremony, typically held in late December, early January (traditionally Twelfth Night), involves singing traditional wassail songs, making loud noises, and offering toast soaked in cider to the trees to encourage a bountiful harvest. Given my *terra patris*, it would be remiss not to include wassailing.

We should consider an event for:

- A. Arbor Day (Dec 1st)
- B. Christmas season.
 - Plant a permanent Christmas Tree - somewhere in central Banbury. To be decorated and lit every year.
- C. May Day.
- D. Lammas (August).

6. Providing Cool Places

Trees play a vital role in mitigating extreme heat events, particularly in urban areas like Banbury. Their presence can significantly reduce

temperatures (by as much as 8°C), benefiting both the environment and the community.

i. Shade Provision

Trees create extensive shaded areas that block direct sunlight. Streets, pavements, and playgrounds under tree canopies can be several degrees cooler than unshaded areas.

ii. Evapotranspiration

Through evapotranspiration, trees release moisture into the air, effectively cooling their surroundings. This natural process can reduce local air temperatures on hot days.

iii. Heat Island Mitigation

In towns, heat tends to accumulate due to concrete, tarmac, and buildings – a phenomenon known as the urban heat island effect. Planting trees along verges, in parks, and other public spaces helps absorb solar radiation and lower ambient temperatures.

iv. Enhanced Comfort in Public Spaces

Shaded seating areas, tree-lined paths, and mini-woodlands make outdoor spaces usable even during heatwaves. This encourages walking, cycling, and community gatherings without the discomfort of excessive heat.

v. Protecting Vulnerable Populations

Trees offer crucial relief for children, the elderly, and those with health conditions who are more susceptible to heat stress. By integrating tree planting with community spaces, Banbury can provide natural cooling refuges.

vi. Long-Term Climate Resilience

Establishing well-planned tree cover not only cools the town today but builds resilience against the increasing frequency of extreme heat events due to climate change.

By strategically integrating trees throughout Banbury—road verges, parks, hedgerows, and community spaces—the town can experience a measurable cooling effect, enhancing health, comfort, and sustainability during periods of extreme heat.

Through coordinated planting, Banbury can grow into a greener, healthier, and more sustainable town for residents and visitors alike.

However, Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue and the Forestry Commission should be involved in design relating to wildfires.

Tree specimen selection is vital, and where necessary, root deflectors should be constructed.

7. Economic Activity

The Forest of Banbury should have economic generation at its heart. The project would fail if the GRP of the Banbury Sub-region did not grow as a result. GRP calculates the total value of all goods and services produced within a specific, smaller geographic area like the Banbury Sub-region over a specific time period.

Alongside an Artisanal Incubator Scheme (see paper: Proposals for a Banbury Artisanal, but in summary, the scheme, would provide workshop and studio space for young artists, jewellers, bakers, brewers, chandlers, furniture makers, saddle makers, wood turners, and those who sculpt in stone, wood, and metal. Banbury used to have a typically local set of specialised delicacies, including cheeses, beers, cakes, and bread.

Redundant shop space could then be provided as start-up retail spaces for products. The condition is that work is not sold on the internet. People would have to visit Banbury for its unique retail offer. Additional footfall would make local butchers, fishmongers, and green grocers more viable.

This incubator scheme would be something the King's Trust and Business in the Community would be interested in.

How does this relate to the Forest of Banbury?

Wood products: furniture making, sculpting, forest management skills, hedge laying, and hurdle making are all products/services that could be established locally.

Forest Food products: nuts, fruits, fungi, meats of animals reared in a woodland environment e.g. cattle, pigs, and deer.

Inward tourism would increase as the town's unique retail offer draws in more people. The artisanal workshops and studios themselves could be a tourist attraction if purpose-built with viewing areas.

8. Agricultural Advisory Service

Advising farmers on the benefits of planting hedges with interspersed standard trees to help with pollination, reduction in wind and rain erosion, and shading for cattle. The service could be income-generating.

9. Social Care

1. Social prescribing of arboriculture projects, wildflower planting and woodland/tree stewardship.
2. Involving veterans in projects through out the project, but perhaps more focussed on the artisanal incubators and how a trade may be developed following service.
3. Care Homes to be involved in a specific, hyperlocal project - planting and stewardship of trees.
4. There should be scope for all three life stages.
5. There has to be a role for Public Health as much of what the project is about is promoting positive, active lifestyles.
6. I'm sure this would contribute to Marmot Place - can it be described as *Marmoty*?

9. The role of Council Officers

Initially crucial in building the strategic framework in partnership with local people. I would like Jamie Kavanah to be a prime mover as much of what the Forest of Banbury should be about is community cohesion and reestablishing a sense of place for Banbury based on its rich history and tapestry of ethnicities. Could this be co-produced? Should it be co-produced? Marc Borja should be consulted. A Theory of Change should be constructed at the very least. I'm happy to help facilitate a TOC.

It maybe that when the spine or mainframe is in place, the individual projects are co-produced. This would be perceivably easier.

It is vital that officer time is reduced at strategic milestones if the DNA of The Forest of Banbury Project is to survive LGR and to successfully carry over, along with the Banbury Masterplan, into the orbit of the new unitary authority.