

Case Study: Micro Tree Nursery at Hamoaze House, Devonport



Green Communities is an exciting, Plymouth based partnership project which is shaping nature neighbourhoods in Devonport, Central Park, Keyham and the West of the City.

We have written a series of case studies to highlight the breadth of work taking place with these nature neighbourhoods. You can read these case studies at greenmindsplymouth.com/greenhubs

Overview

Urban Micro Tree Nurseries can offer a sustainable and engaging solution to sourcing UK native trees.

By training people in growing, collecting, and planting trees, they can provide a supply of tree species with a local provenance, whilst increasing community cohesion and nature recovery networks.

The Green Communities team has been working to establish a Micro Tree Nursery in Devonport. We have been using Hamoaze House - a local drug and alcohol rehabilitation charity- as a base. This tree nursery will simultaneously create capacity for green projects whilst enabling service users to participate in the wider community as part of their recovery.

What were we trying to do?

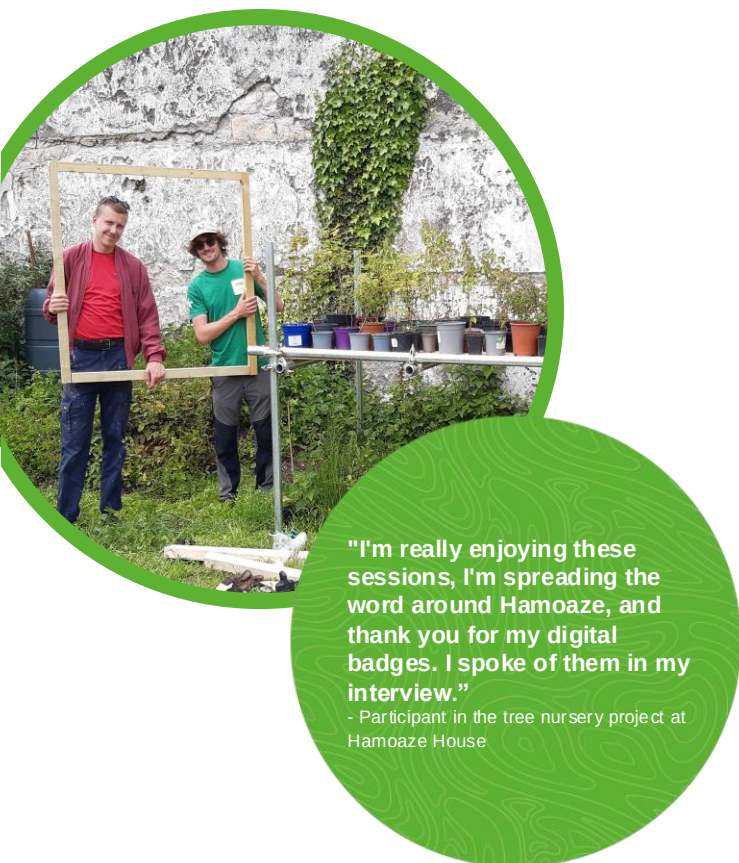
- Create accessible, meaningful nature-based work with a tangible output for service users
- Increase nature connection through improved green skills
- Contribute to service users' recovery goals
- Build capacity for local green projects
- Create better links between Hamoaze House and the wider community

Why did we do it?

We wanted to work with new audiences and help improve health and wellbeing whilst increasing capacity for local nature recovery.

Who was involved?

- Plymouth City Council's Green Communities team
- Hamoaze House
- Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest at Poole Farm
- Devon Wildlife Trust
- Community Builders
- National Trust



"I'm really enjoying these sessions, I'm spreading the word around Hamoaze, and thank you for my digital badges. I spoke of them in my interview."

- Participant in the tree nursery project at Hamoaze House

ABOVE: Elliott and Henry (the Green Communities Devonport team) construct the tree nursery

Who funded it?

Plymouth City Council funded this project with support from Urban Nature Development Grant. Devon Wildlife Trust provided additional tree care kit through Saving Devon's Treescape funding.

When and where did it happen?

We started working together in November 2023 with no end date agreed.

The project is based within the grounds of Hamoaze House, a support centre for adults, families, individuals and young people whose lives are affected either directly or indirectly by problematic relationships with alcohol and other substances.

What did we do?

- Built a relationship with the Hamoaze House team. Clients then initially engaged through consultation within the charity's wider group support sessions
- Built two tree nursery structures with service users
- Hosted weekly tree care and planning sessions at Hamoaze house. Sessions were tailored following service users' interests through relationship building
- Trees grown in the tree nursery were given to local schools and to residents of a nearby residential tower block
- Co-led a nature Wellbeing Walk to Mount Wise Park with opportunities for service users to take part in small scale nature recovery activities
- Through collaboration with Poole Farm and donations of trees through the Community Builders, we worked with Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest to increase canopy cover and improve the tree equity score in Devonport.



How successful was it?

- **163 trees planted in Devonport**
 - 120 trees from the nursery planted in the grounds of Marlborough Primary School
 - 43 trees planted around local residential tower blocks
- **522 native trees** present within nursery
- **49 engagements with clients** from Hamoaze House, including the issuing of Nature Connectedness Digital Badges
- The project has helped to build relationships and increase good will between Hamoaze and local residents, helping to reduce some of the negativity that the charity sometimes faces.

Key learnings

- Need to deliver well planned and resourced sessions to encourage engagement and manage expectations
- Need for accessibility and a variety of activities for service users to keep up attendance
- Regular check-ins with centre staff to discuss progress and promote opportunities for service users, recognising sensitivities and reflective working practice
- The importance of building community cohesion between Hamoaze and the wider Devonport Community.

Next steps

- Explore other locations within the 3 Green Communities neighbourhoods which could host micro tree nurseries
- Collaborate closely with Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest to explore opportunities to enhance and grow the community tree nursery scheme.

LEFT: Setting up the tree nursery at Hamoaze House.