



LIFE FOR A LIFE

memorial forests

charity registration no. 1096422

25th Anniversary Newsletter

December 2024

Introduction

This year we celebrated a remarkable milestone – Life for a Life’s 25th year in operation! In this newsletter, we would like to take the opportunity to reflect on our achievements and thank our wonderful community of families, volunteers, supporters, and staff for their involvement in the growth of the charity over the past quarter-century. We’re very proud to say that there have been so many achievements, partners and supporters from our history that we’d never fit everything into a single newsletter, so instead we’ve hand-picked a few notable moments to share with you, and later in this issue we’ll cast a glimpse into the future of the charity.

To mark our special occasion, we celebrated in the best way we know how – by planting a tree and putting down some roots in Oldham, the town where it all started. We were delighted to host a ceremony at our office in Chadderton, welcoming some of our friends and supporters, to plant a pear tree and sow the seeds for a new wildflower patch at our front door, adding some colour and diversity to the area and providing something for our local bees and other pollinators.

Along with our team and board of trustees, the event brought together some of our longstanding friends, including **United Utilities** and Victoria from **Northern Lily**, as well as some new supporters from **Northern Roots** and **City of Trees Manchester**. While we’re passionate about planting trees, we also pour as much support as possible into our local communities, and as such we would like to offer a special thank you to the **Mayor of Oldham**, Councillor Zahid Chauhan OBE, and Shy Bayly of United Utilities, for joining us and presenting our donations of £1,500 to Dr. Kershaw’s Hospice and £1,000 to ‘Truly Wished’, The Mayors Appeal.

Since planting our first Memorial Tree in 1999 with United Utilities at Strinesdale Country Park, Oldham, we have planted over 13,000 Memorial Trees across our 61 locations in the UK, with many more to come. Each tree we plant represents the celebration and memory of loved ones who are no longer with us, offering those left behind an outlet for their grief by planting a new life, and creating a place of solace for families while contributing to a greener, healthier environment that everyone can enjoy.



In Growing Partnership

Throughout the charity’s history we have been proud to support thousands of families in celebrating the lives of those they love, provide funding to other local health and community causes from the surplus we generate, and bring positive environmental change by creating and maintaining diverse forests and wildflower meadows, and fighting invasive species. However, all this would not be possible without the help of our fantastic partners – from the landowners who give us space for our forests, to the volunteers who get stuck in at those forests, adding extra value to our work.

25 Years in Numbers



Over 13,000 Memorial Trees planted



Over £1.6 million donated directly to health-related organisations



Over a mile of hedgerows and 11 acres of wildflower meadows established and managed



Over 160 acres of managed woodland



Over 138,000 individuals helped along their grief journey

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... In Growing Partnership

This year, we have established partnerships with several groups, with the goal of helping them to meet their environmental objectives, bringing with us 25 years of knowledge and experience.

Two new partnerships that we believe highlight these aims are with **Northern Roots**, a local charity whose mission is to “transform neglected land, connecting communities and creating opportunities for all to grow.” With our help, they will restore the neglected wildflower meadows they have inherited and plant a species-rich Memorial Forest, improving the resilience of their woodlands. We are also working with the directors and community at **Plumpton Clough**, who saved this beautiful parcel of land by raising funds to purchase it before developers. We are assisting them with the long-term management of the land, including fighting invasive Himalayan balsam, mowing woodland rides, and collaborating with Northern Lily to plant a community coronation orchard. These partnerships enable us to offer Memorial Trees to their communities while also providing resources to support their efforts. Together, we are giving these spaces the support they need to address climate and biodiversity crises, all while furthering our mission of planting Memorial Trees.

Volunteers have come to play a key role in our work. Through our “Friends of the Forest” scheme, we have received support from a variety of organisations, notably **Crane Payment Innovations**, whose teams have contributed by litter picking, balsam bashing, and maintaining pathways across many of our forests.

Local school students have also played an essential part, along with hundreds of other volunteers over the years. Recently pupils from a local school helped to create a forest garden around the Community Orchards at Clowes Park Memorial Forest and develop a woodland walk within the park. This work is further supported by dedicated individuals like Lucy from **Salford City Council** and Andy from the Community Outreach team at **RHS Bridgwater**, who work tirelessly to bring communities together.

As a charity, we are passionate about the profound impact greenspaces can have on physical and mental wellbeing. Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers who ensure that year after year, our Memorial Forests continue to grow into valuable spaces for everyone to enjoy and benefit from.

All this, and more, has been made possible by the families who support us through the dedication of memorial trees. Their contributions enable us to create lasting positive impacts on both the environment and the communities we work within.

Family Spotlight, Our Work in Action!

Our work focuses on supporting individuals and families through one of the most difficult times in someone’s life, losing a loved one; everyone’s journey through the stresses and strains of grief is different, so it makes it all the more special when families choose to share their story with us. Here are two examples that make the hard work and journey worthwhile.



Spokes family - “A lifelong hill walker, David loved exploring Lancashire and the Yorkshire Dales with the family and our black Labrador, Bess. From local walks on the West Pennine Moors to holidays in Wensleydale, the outdoors was always close to his heart.

Planting a tree with the views of Winter Hill – one of his favourite walks – was the perfect tribute.”



Kearsey family - “Mum and Dad spent many hours walking Anglezarke, Winter Hill and Rivington. The view from Nab Hill across these places made it a perfect choice for us. Dad would approve!”

What’s Next?

We are starting 2025 strong, celebrating the recent launch of several new Memorial Forests in partnership with **Oldham Council** – Besom Hill, Oldham Edge, Mill Brow and Daisy Nook Country Park.

As we go into the new year we can’t wait to share more projects coming through the pipeline; we’re especially excited to announce an expansion to our Chew Valley Memorial Forest, in partnership with **Bristol Water**, and an extension to our Hawkridge Memorial Forest, in collaboration with **Wessex Water**.

And don’t miss the updates coming soon from Half Moon Bay in Lancaster, Northern Roots in Oldham and Ashton’s Field in Walkden—we can’t wait to share what’s next!

Special Thanks and Final Thoughts

Finally, before signing off, we have some people to thank! Life for a Life has a lot going on behind-the-scenes, and our board of trustees are the unsung heroes who offer their time and advice for free; like many charities we’re more than the sum of our parts, partly down the dedication and support that the board give, making our small team more effective and accountable. Emma, Phil, Harry, Janet, Louis, Jack, and Ben, many of whom you may have seen when popping into the office or visiting a Memorial Forest, make up our team, and without them we wouldn’t be able to deliver on our mission and support families in the compassionate way we strive for. Last, but by no means least, we would like to thank **YOU!** Without your support over the years there would be no us, so once again - thank you!

If you or someone you know would be interested in learning more about our work at Life for a Life, please contact us for a free information pack.

If you are a land owner or manager who would like to support our work then please get in touch.



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