

# **FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**13 January 2022**

### **Fenland becomes home to Japanese Sakura Cherry Tree Project**

Cherry blossoms are set to bloom in parks, gardens, and communities across Fenland thanks to the gift of 24 trees as part of the Sakura Cherry Tree Project.

The trees are among 6,500 Japanese cherry trees – or Sakura in Japanese – given to the UK by the Japanese Embassy, to celebrate Japan’s relationship with the UK.

The trees were received locally by North East Cambridgeshire MP Steve Barclay, who donated them to each of the towns in his constituency. In Fenland, they are now being planted by the town councils with help from Fenland District Council.

Mr Barclay said: “These trees will grow, flourish, and provide enjoyment to many for the next 30 years. I would like to thank the town councillors and Fenland District Council for helping organise, distribute and plant the trees.”

In Chatteris, the trees have been planted in Wenny Rec, Wenny Estate, at St Peter and St Paul’s Church and Glebelands School, with two in Huntingdon Road, and in March, all six trees have been planted at the green area on Suffolk Way/Breton Way.

In Whittlesey, they have been planted at St Mary’s Church, Snowley Park, Pondersbridge Village Hall, Grounds Way in Coates, and Thornham Way play area in Eastrea. Another was aptly planted at Cherrytree Grove, thanks to help and support from Maria Walker and Sharee Jackson at Clarion Housing. Wisbech’s six trees will be planted in due course.

Cllr Peter Murphy, Fenland District Council’s Portfolio Holder for the Environment, said: “The Sakura Project is fantastic; not only does it celebrate the relationship we enjoy with the Japanese people, but these beautiful trees will herald the start of spring each year and bring joy to local people, whilst being a haven for wildlife all year round.”

The project will be a legacy from the Japan-UK Season of Culture 2019 to 2021, which aims to showcase Japan’s multifaceted attractions in the UK. This provides the opportunity to learn more about Japan, its culture, and people. Once the season ends, members of the public will start to witness the thousands of cherry trees blossom in spring 2022 and beyond.

The Sakura Cherry Tree Project has distributed trees to over 400 schools and 160 sites across the UK. All the varieties of cherry trees to be planted as part of the project are of Japanese origin, chosen for their variation in colour, timing, and historical significance. For example, ‘Taihaku’ is a large, single white blossom variety, which became extinct in Japan but was reintroduced to its homeland by Britain’s Collingwood ‘Cherry’ Ingram in 1932.

Yasumasa Nagamine, Japanese Ambassador to the UK said, “We hope that people all over Britain will join with us in embracing this chance to deepen mutual understanding, thus helping to create an enduring legacy.

“Yet the Sakura Cherry Tree Project will not just represent the lasting impact of the Japan-UK Season of Culture but will be a wider celebration of the cordial ties between Japan and the UK. Just like our relationship, these trees will grow stronger as they mature and, each year when they blossom, I hope they bring joy to people across the UK and remind them of the deep friendship between our two nations and peoples.”

**ENDS**

**Press Office**

**For more information contact Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226**



