

RBS colleagues branch out at Edinburgh HQ

Royal Bank of Scotland colleagues have planted a new tree nursery at the Gogarburn headquarters in Edinburgh, in partnership with The Conservation Volunteers, whose mission is to connect people to nature and to nurture green spaces for local communities.

This tree nursery is part of the 'NatWest Forest' initiative, which invites colleagues across the business to take part in planting and nurturing trees across Scotland. Since autumn 2021 NatWest Forest has grown to encompass 150,000 trees across the UK, with 3,800 currently onsite at Gogarburn.

Overseen by The Conversation Volunteers, tree seeds that have been collected by colleagues, are being grown in the Gogarburn nursery. They will be tended to for the next two years and will then be planted around Scotland creating a legacy of locally sourced and grown trees for many years to come. All saplings planted at the site are native species to Scotland including Scots pine, field maple, holly and birch. The site will support the biodiversity of Scotland, allowing declining species of trees that are rare and valuable to the environment to be replenished while protecting native habitats for wildlife.

Royal Bank colleagues have contributed more than 26,000 hours

of volunteer time with The Conservation Volunteers in 2023. Together with volunteer effort, this most recent project has been enabled through expert advice from The Conservation Volunteers who have led on the construction of the tree nursery and preservation of the natural environment

The project is another example of the bank's work and commitment to tackling climate change. The financial partner for COP26 in Glasgow in 2020, 16,000 people across the bank will take part in a climate education programme by the end of this year. The training is being delivered in partnership with the University of Edinburgh and gives colleagues the skills to support customers with their own climate ambitions.

Pictured are Michael Duncan, Head of Giving Strategy & Programmes at the Royal Bank of Scotland and The Conservation Volunteers CEO, Rebecca Kennelly MBE alongside special guest Francesca Osowska, CEO of Nature Scot, who champion projects like this to improve Scotland's biodiversity and geodiversity.

Michael Duncan, Head of Giving Strategy & Programmes, Royal Bank of Scotland, said: "We are delighted to launch the Gogarburn Tree Nursery, this new, innovative and forward thinking project with our long standing charity partner, The Conservation Volunteers.

Through this project, our colleagues will support by collecting local native tree seeds and growing these at our tree nursery on our campus. This will enable indigenous trees to be planted across Scotland leaving a true legacy for years to come, while providing colleagues with opportunities to learn more about nature based climate solutions."

Rebecca Kennelly MBE, Chief Executive, The Conservation Volunteers, said: "This new innovative project demonstrates how the teams are constantly renewing and planning for volunteering to leave a lasting impact on climate, wildlife and communities.

“The Gogarburn Tree Nursery project is a brilliant example of volunteers supporting a closed loop; from collecting and propagating seeds, to the trees grown here being planted in local green spaces by more volunteers in years to come. A great new way for NatWest Group volunteers to connect with nature.”



Pictured: Michael Duncan (Royal Bank), Rebecca Kennelly (The Conservation Volunteers)

Native trees for Scotland, grown from seeds which have been collected onsite at Gogarburn by NatWest volunteers.



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