



Growing Natural Capital - Natural capital refers to the elements of the natural environment which provide valuable goods and services to people. For example, a woodland can be regarded as a natural capital asset, from which flows valuable benefits, or ecosystem services, such as flood risk reduction and carbon capture.

Morgan Sindall is creating nine new woodlands in an exciting partnership with Blenheim Estate in Oxfordshire, planting more than a quarter of a million trees. This will transform the land and is one of many in an ambitious series of sustainability initiatives.

We have signed an agreement with Blenheim Estate for the project to be delivered in conjunction with 'Grown in Britain' which is an independent not for profit that it helped to set up in 2011, focusing on revitalising and investing in woodlands and certifying British Wood products.

Morgan Sindall will help fund, design and create the woodlands, in collaboration with the Cotswolds based forestry company Nicholson's.

The woods will contain the following carefully selected varieties of trees:



Hornbeam – dark green leaves which turn orange and yellow in Autumn



Sycamore – this has distinctive winged fruits and can live for 400 years



Wild Cherry - This tree grows lovely white flowers with red fruit and grows mainly in lowland woods



Norway Maple – This fast-growing tree can grow up to 200 ft and live for 200 years



Oak – Oak trees provide food for many species and can live for 300 years or more and can drink 50 gallons of water a day



Alder – this is a good food source for butterfly and moth larvae and improves soil fertility

There will also be an understorey of shrubs such as Hazel, Hawthorn, Viburnums, Euonymus and Dogwoods to create a diverse and self-sustaining eco system. Experimental species will be included to assess climate resilience and a small percentage of conifers will be planted to provide winter habitat for wildlife.

This project, which is funded by Morgan Sindall, represents the first scheme planted under the **Forest Canopy Foundation (FCF)** – a not for profit collaboration of private sector forestry companies who have joined forces under the Foundations umbrella to demonstrate technical rigour and quality in woodland creation.

Liz Nicholson, of the FCF, suggested that Morgan Sindall’s investment was pioneering and would blaze a trail for others to follow. The Foundation is working on valuing natural capital to enable companies to invest in environmental projects in a measurable way, developing mechanisms to report ESG investment at board level.

Partnering with **Grown in Britain** for independent audits of both expert providers and woodland schemes, the collaboration measures all-natural capital assets such as cleaner water and richer soil which seeks to share and deepen understanding of the worth of woodland creation.

The project will improve the biodiversity of the area significantly, improving the quality of the soil, air, water, and biodiversity. The project aims to set new standards for auditing and transparency, with changes to the air, water and soil monitored, and carbon levels tracked using state-of-the-art technology - including drones with Artificial Intelligence – to quantify environmental changes.



John Morgan, Chief Executive of Morgan Sindall

“This exciting project is about more than our quest to achieve net – zero though that remains our very valid goal. This is about creating a legacy with an environmental net gain and the creation of substantial natural capital, across the board”

“Our woodlands will provide measurable, demonstrable gains in terms of soil, air and water quality, not to mention the well-being benefits for all those who can visit the forest and enjoy it as it grows”

