

47 Trees for Sir Gerald Kaufman dedication

A community project to honour our late MP Sir Gerald Kaufman came to fruition on what would have been his 91st birthday with a dedication event and the planting of the 47th tree by Sir Gerald's nephew, Brian Selby. And the event kicked off the next project in the neighbourhood, Rusholme 470 – planting a further 470 trees in the area over the next three years.

Inspired by [Creative Rusholme](#), community organisations and Manchester City Council have worked over recent years to plant one tree for each of the 47 years Sir Gerald was our MP. The final tree, a hawthorn, was planted in the grounds of Birch Community Centre on Monday 21st June, the summer solstice.

Local artist and environmentalist [Phil Barton](#) of Creative Rusholme who led the project with his civil partner, Helena Kettleborough, was inspired by Joseph Beuys' seminal social sculpture "[7,000 Oaks: City Forestation not City Administration](#)" created in Kassel, Germany during the 1980s. Barton said: "At a time of overwhelming evidence of our need to change our economic and social behaviours in order to limit climate change and widespread ecological destruction, 47 Trees for Sir Gerald Kaufman gave citizens and organisations in Rusholme the opportunity to think globally and act locally whilst coming together in appreciation of Sir Gerald's lifetime contribution to the people and landscape of Rusholme."

Jane Morris, speaking on behalf of the Friends of Platt Fields and the Friends of Birchfields, said: "As Friends of the Parks we were pleased to support this project and built it into our programme of improvements which include food growing, forest gardening and, as part of developing the Northern Forest and Nature Recovery Plan, much more tree planting and maintenance together with protection of existing trees".

Speaking at the event, Rusholme councillor Jill Lovecy, one of the principal champions of the project, said: "We are delighted to welcome members of Sir Gerald Kaufman's family to this dedication event. Most of us have fond memories of Sir Gerald and remember his life in gratitude. Planting trees in this way is a fitting tribute as he always supported the Friends of Birchfields and Platt Field Parks and championed greenspace throughout his constituency."

Afzal Khan MP, Sir Gerald's successor, thanked all those who had successfully delivered the project and welcomed this local boost to nature and the move to plant a further 470 trees around Rusholme. He formally initiated the Rusholme 470 Project by planting a small leaved lime in Birchfields Park. "Like Sir Gerald, I am so proud of the residents of Gorton constituency and am constantly impressed by their creativity and resilience." Said Afzal Khan. "Projects like this one are critical to our future wellbeing in Rusholme and across the world. I am delighted to launch Rusholme 470 Project and look forward to supporting it to grow from this lime tree. I extend my congratulations to the community of Rusholme, which gives me real hope for the future."

Many organisations and neighbours have supported the event and planted trees over the past three years, including: *Friends of Birchfields Park, Friends of Platt Fields Park, Trinity House, Manchester City Council, Anson Youth Group, West Point Residents Association, Schuster Road and Park Range Residents Association, Victoria Park Residents Association, New Apostolic Church, Birch Community Centre, neighbours on Norman Road, Kelstern Square & Hall Road and Rusholme ward councillors.*

For more details visit: <https://creativerusholme.c4cp.net/project/47-trees-for-sir-gerald-kaufmann/>

CREATIVE
RUSHOLME