

# Stratton St. Margaret



## **Big dig will breathe new life into town**

Stratton residents and Honda workers dug deep on Saturday to plant what will be the first of 10,000 trees in Swindon. The effort, part of a national community forest project, took place on a grass bank by the A419 sound barrier in Godwin Road. A total of 750 saplings, including oak, ash, bark and other indigenous woodland species, have been planted on the verge. Stratton St Margaret Parish Council also supported the work and local police community support officers turned out to lend a hand.

The day was part of the national Big Tree Plant, run by a partnership of national organisations and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Its aim is to plant at least one million trees in streets, green spaces and neighbourhoods to improve the quality of life. Swindon Council has been involved through the Western Community Forest scheme, a partnership between local and regional organisations which has a dedicated team at the local authority. Jonathan Wilshaw, community forest officer, helped with Saturday's planting. He said: "The Big Tree Plant taking place over the next three years will make a big difference to the town. It will take place in areas mainly in the south east of Swindon, in green spaces and parks, and will mean big improvements in those areas. "Trees are good for wildlife, they are good for people's health and at the A419 sound barrier they will act as a buffer between the road and residents' homes. "Trees also help improve the environment because they lock up carbon. There are a whole host of reasons to do this." The scheme has been funded by the Forestry Commission and will involve as many community groups as possible.

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