



SHEFFIELD TREE ACTION GROUPS (STAG)

Press Release

25 November 2018

SHEFFIELD TREE CAMPAIGNERS RECEIVE NATIONAL AWARD

Sheffield Tree Action Groups received a special award at the Woodland Trust's Street Tree Awards

Supporters of the campaign to save Sheffield's street trees were surprised and delighted to receive a special award at the Woodland Trust's inaugural Street Tree Awards on Saturday 25 November.

Sheffield tree campaigners were invited to the event, held at Alexandra Palace in London, but were unsure what to expect when they got there. They discovered that they were there to accept the Woodland Trust Special Award, which was presented by The Woodland Trust's President, barrister turned broadcaster Clive Anderson.

Accepting the award on behalf of all of Sheffield's tree campaigners, STAG co-chair Chris Rust said:

"In 1932 Sheffield Citizens walked out onto the moors at Kinder Scout to challenge rich landlords who wanted to keep us off the hills. They were beaten, vilified and thrown in jail but they started a movement that gave us the right to roam and the national parks. You don't mess with Sheffield people!"

"Those Kinder trespassers and the Chipko women in India, who showed the world how to save trees by putting their bodies in the way of the tree fellers, are our inspiration and I'm immensely proud to be part of such a big, determined brave and creative bunch of people who have stood up to unreasonable authority."

During the event campaigners had the chance to share their experiences with residents, academics and council representatives from across the country. Sheffield tree campaigner Paul Selby said:

"A council officer from Bristol thought we were making it up when we told him about Sheffield Council's behaviour, it sounded so far-fetched. The false allegations of poisoned tea, the numerous arrests for ridiculous reasons such as tooting a trumpet or playing a recorder, the repeated attempts to cut down trees in the night in unsafe conditions, and the false evidence given in court in an attempt to imprison an opposition councilor. We had to assure him that it's all true."

Rebecca Hammond said:

“During the awards ceremony we heard about councils that are working with residents to protect, value and enhance their street trees: particular mention was made of great projects in Bristol, Leeds, Manchester and Helensburgh. It would be fantastic if Sheffield could be added to that list.

But instead STAG received a special award for starting and continuing a long campaign to protect our street trees from Sheffield City Council and Amey.”

Earlier this month SCC reversed a previous decision to fell many of the war memorial street trees in the city. After previously claiming that it would cost £500,000 to retain the memorial trees on Western Road, they have now decided that repair works can be covered within the contract at no extra cost to SCC.

Representatives from STAG have been in a series of mediated talks with SCC and Amey, which resume on Monday 26 November.

Contact:

STAG press team: sheffieldtreeactiongroupsmedia@gmail.com

Photo for press use: please credit STAG

Campaigners with Clive Anderson after the awards ceremony, gathered in front of a display of artwork from STARTS - Street Tree Art Sheffield. Higher resolution copy available at <https://we.tl/t-6aAXmveg5O>



Close-up image of the award: higher resolution image available at <https://we.tl/t-QEewxHCnLq>



Further information about the Street Tree Awards is available from The Woodland Trust:

Press office tel: 0330 333 5313 media@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Joseph Coles, Project Lead - Street Trees. tel: 03437705522 Mobile: 07825823979

JosephColes@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Two other awards were also given at the ceremony:

The Community Action Award was for a group that demonstrated how they have protected and celebrated the trees on their street, educated the public about trees and increased their appreciation, as well as influenced their local councils to better value their street trees. It was won by Save Swansea's Trees, and the other nominees were Helensburgh Tree Conservation Group and Save Our Street Trees - Northampton.

The Local Authority Partnership Award was for a council that has shown engagement with street tree protection and landscape-scale partnership working. It was won by Leeds City Council, and the other nominees were Bristol City Council and Manchester City of Trees.

