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Young tree advocates sought

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The creators of Epsom's **Centenary Wood** at **Langley Vale** will award youth projects to tackle climate change.

Young people across the UK have been given an exciting opportunity to win funding to help tackle climate change as part of a ground-breaking initiative from the **Woodland Trust**. The **Youth Innovation Competition** offers young people the chance to secure part of a £20,000 prize to support their own environmental projects.

The competition comes against the backdrop of an alarming Met Office announcement that 2022 was the warmest year in the UK on record, highlighting the desperate need for climate change action.

Nine individuals or small groups (aged between 16-25) will win up to £5,000 project funding each, along with mentorship from leading industry experts to deliver projects which directly fight the climate crises.

The projects will need to fit into three categories: inspire, protect and create. This could include anything from tree planting projects and championing ancient trees to innovative ideas that aid farming and the protection of UK rivers and wildlife.

Woodland Trust chief executive **Dr Darren Moorcroft** said: "Young people can often feel very anxious and helpless about climate change but want the opportunity to make a difference. We know trees are one of our best defences against the climate crisis – and getting more trees in the ground is vital if we are to see a positive future for people and wildlife.

"As the UK's largest woodland conservation charity, who has been planting and protecting trees and woods for more than 50 years, we are perfectly placed to provide this opportunity.The next generation will inherit the impacts of climate change, so it is crucial they are given the chance to bring their energy and innovation to the fight in tackling it now."

The top 18 applications will be invited to take part in workshops that will teach them how to professionally pitch their project idea and the finalist will go on to present their environmental innovations to a panel of celebrity judges and experts.

Grace Howourth, Head of Youth Re-imagined at the Woodland Trust said: "We need more young people to become advocates for woods and trees and we are excited to be able to open this opportunity to help fund important projects which will directly address the climate and nature crisis. You don't have to be from an experienced environmental or conservation background or have academic qualifications to enter, as we are looking for people from all backgrounds and walks of life to enter with a great idea that can impact woods, wildlife and people."

Applications are now open and will close on 7th February 2023 at 4pm.
For more information on how to apply, please visit www.woodlandtrust.org.uk or email youth@woodlandtrust.org.uk.

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