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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**PHOTO OPPORTUNITES –** *Contact to arrange Photo Calls in Dumfries, Stranraer, or Moffat.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 29 November 2023**

**TITLE: Four Hundred Trees to be Planted Across D&G**

**SUBTITLE: Marking the impact of the pandemic as part of a Community Covid Memorial**

**Four hundred trees will be planted across Dumfries and Galloway as part of a project to mark the impact of the COVID pandemic, and to honour those lost to COVID in the region.**

The planting of a **Dispersed Memorial Forest** is part of **Remembering Together Dumfries & Galloway** which is this region’s contribution to the Scotland-wide memorial project funded by the Scottish Government. Remembering Together Dumfries & Galloway is led by **DG Unlimited, D&G Council,** and ***greenspace scotland***.

The tree planting plans for the memorial have been developed for **Remembering Together Dumfries & Galloway** and are part of the Scotland-wide development of memorials which will honour those we have lost, mark what has changed in our lives, and preserve the best of what we learned and created together during the COVID pandemic. Artists and creative organisations have been commissioned in each of Scotland’s 32 local authority areas, and the memorials created in each area will be locally co-designed and unique to each place.

Artists **t s Beall** and **Katie Anderson** will be working with communities across Dumfries & Galloway to collaboratively design and plant the **Dispersed Memorial Forest** across five sites - **Castle Douglas, Dumfries, Moffat, Sanquhar, and Stranraer**. The forest comprises the central part of the Covid Memorial for Dumfries & Galloway, which will also include **community events** in all five locations, and a permanent archive **sharing stories** from the community**.**

**Councillor Ian Blake, Chair of Dumfries and Galloway Council’s Communities Committee said:**

*‘During the pandemic many of us found that doing something creative helped us to cope with very difficult experiences. It’s great to see how communities and individuals from across Dumfries and Galloway have helped shaped this COVID memorial project for our region’.*

**Councillor Jackie McCamon, Vice Chair of Dumfries and Galloway Council’s Communities Committee said:**

*‘COVID-19 had a huge impact on the lives of people across our region and this project is an important opportunity to create something positive to pass on to future generations’.*

**Lucy Bell, Interim Chair of DG Unlimited said:**

*‘DG Unlimited is proud to be working with Dumfries & Galloway Council and greenspace scotland, to help and support the project artists and communities to realise the collective vision for this region’s Remembering Together memorial. This is an important project for this region and for Scotland, and we are all thrilled to see the plans coming to fruition and the tree planting commencing.’*

Artists **t s Beall** and **Katie Anderson** began working in Dumfries & Galloway in summer 2022 during the first phase of the project which began by exploring how communities and individuals might want to remember and honour those impacted by COVID. Between July and December 2022, the artists spoke to over 835 of the region’s residents right across Dumfries and Galloway from Kirkcudbright to Annan, Stranraer to Sanquhar and many other locations. Through these conversations and by using bespoke engagement tools, t s and Katie identified key ideas and themes for Dumfries & Galloway’s region wide memorial.

One of the most prominent ideas which emerged from the discussions during the first phase was the importance of spending time outdoors during the lockdowns we all endured because of the pandemic. A focus on connecting with nature and a renewed appreciation for our local green spaces emerged as a strong theme in all the community discussions.

**Artists t s Beall and Katie Anderson explain:**

*“We want to plant one tree for each person we lost to COVID in the region, and additional trees to represent other types of loss and resilience; to highlight the different ways communities ‘grew together’ over the pandemic.”*

Members of the public are warmly invited to connect with the project, comment on the works and ideas in development, and to volunteer and get involved in co-designing specific aspects of the Community Covid Memorial for Dumfries & Galloway. Over the coming months, through to Spring 2024, there will be opportunities to plant trees, attend creative workshops, and contribute to community events which will launch the Dispersed Memorial Forest sites. The project will be completed in June 2024.

**Remembering Together Dumfries & Galloway** is commissioned by *greenspace scotland*, DG Unlimited, and Dumfries & Galloway Council with funding from the Scottish Government.

Members of the public who are interested are encouraged to get in touch and help shape the Community Covid Memorial for Dumfries & Galloway by emailing rememberingtogetherdg@gmail.com or you can follow news and developments on the project by linking with their socials:

[Linktr.ee/rememberingtogetherdg](https://linktr.ee/rememberingtogetherdg) | fb & insta [@rememberingtogetherdg](https://www.facebook.com/rememberingtogetherdg) | twitterX [@covidmemorialdg](https://twitter.com/covidmemorialdg)

========= ENDS ========

**INFORMATION FOR EDITORS**

More information on the Scotland-wide Remembering Together project is available at: <https://www.rememberingtogether.scot/>

Information on the Dumfries and Galloway portion of the project can be found at: <https://www.rememberingtogether.scot/dumfries-galloway>

As part of Remembering Together D&G, the artists warmly invite anyone interested in contributing to the process of co-creating a Community Memorial for D&G, helping to plant trees, or working to create community events in each of the five sites (Castle Douglas, Dumfries, Moffat, Sanquhar, and Stranraer) to get in touch through links listed via [Linktr.ee/rememberingtogetherdg](https://linktr.ee/rememberingtogetherdg), or by emailing [rememberingtogetherdg@gmail.com](mailto:rememberingtogetherdg@gmail.com).

Updates on Remembering Together D&G are available on the project’s social media:

FB [@rememberingtogetherdg](https://www.facebook.com/rememberingtogetherdg)

insta [@rememberingtogetherdg](https://www.instagram.com/rememberingtogetherdg/)

twitter [@covidmemorialdg](https://twitter.com/covidmemorialdg)

**Remembering Together D&G** is commissioned by [*greenspace scotland*](https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/remembering-together), DG Unlimited, and Dumfries & Galloway Council with funding from the Scottish Government.

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