



**Digging in:** Campaigners and volunteers ready to plant an orchard at Waterloo Meadows.

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## Orchard planting is tree-sy peasy

SNOW flurries fell over Reading on Saturday morning but determined gardeners dug deep to bring a community allotment to life.

Waterloo Meadows, in Katesgrove, was transformed when more than 20 volunteers from groups including Friends of Waterloo Meadows, Transition Town Reading and Katesgrove Residents' Association wrapped up warm to plant 50 fruit trees.

Among those lending a hand was borough councillor and Labour Reading East parliamentary candidate, Matt Rodda, who said: "It is fantastic that so many people have come out in this weather to help. The orchard will help children learn

where food comes from and the community can enjoy locally-sourced produce at a time when food is so expensive. It really brings the community together."

Nearby, Philippe Nozay, from Three Mile Cross, was helping two-year-old son Oliver plant a pear tree. He said: "It's been great, Oliver is really enjoying it - I think he is the youngest volunteer!"

Warming up during a tea break, Rich Waring, from Transition Town Reading, said the group had worked closely with Mike Cox, from Friends of Waterloo Meadows, to make the orchard a reality. He added: "We think it is really important for Reading to be full of community orchards, and we have also worked with the council on this, so it is a case of many hands make light work."

The project has been funded by the Forestry Commission's Big Tree Plant scheme, and Mr Waring added: "The funding covers five orchards over three years, and the plan is to build the skills in the community to allow us to plant further community orchards around the town without the need for further grant money.

"We are already looking at future sites and opportunities where the community can meet environmentalism at work again."

To get involved, email [communications@transitionreading.org.uk](mailto:communications@transitionreading.org.uk)



**Growing enthusiasm:** Philippe Nozay and his son Oliver plant a pear tree.