

CSR DAYS: BLUEBELL WOODS, AINTREE HOSPITAL



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Abstract:
In this article, we speak to Claire Aberdeen, Contract Manager for the areas of Merseyside and Cheshire. She and the local team recently took part in a corporate social responsibility (CSR) activity, clearing up a communal woodland area on the grounds of Aintree University Hospital in Liverpool.

Claire Aberdeen is the Contract Manager for the North West regions of Merseyside and Cheshire. In June, she and some of the local team took part in a ‘woodland clear-up’ in Bluebell Woods, an expansive green space on the grounds of Aintree University Hospital in Liverpool. The day marked the first of the team’s two corporate social responsibility (CSR) days in 2025, contributing to Abbott’s ongoing commitment to giving back to the communities in which we operate.

The beautiful stretch of woodland at Aintree Hospital acts as something of a sanctuary for staff and patients alike. The hospital uses Bluebell Woods as a wellbeing space for some of their oncology patients to practice mindfulness and stress release as part of their therapy.



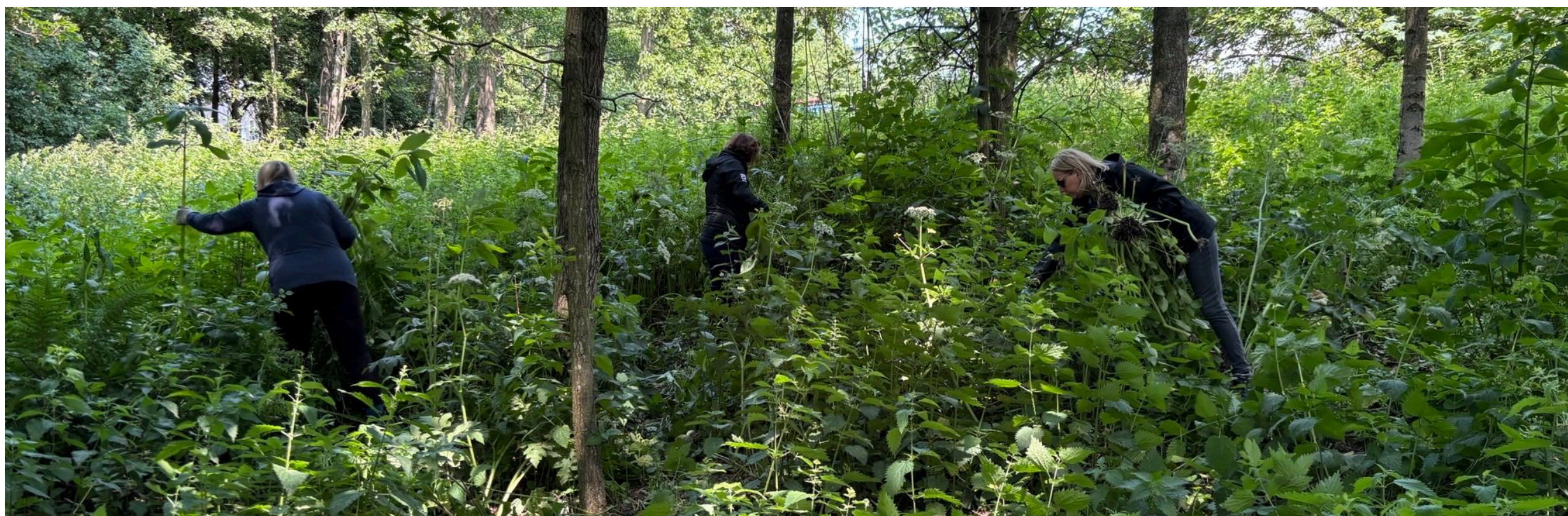
What prompted your decision to have a woodland clear-up as your CSR activity?

I wanted to do something which was connected to healthcare, and our customers specifically. I approached one of our major local contracts (Liverpool Hospital NHS Trust) to see whether our team could dedicate one of our CSR days within the Trust, engaging in something related to the hospital and its patients. I spoke with their sustainability team, who put me in touch with the ranger who looks after Bluebell Woods. He told me how he ran “Woodland Clear-Up” CSR days, and so it all came together perfectly.

In hindsight, I’m really glad I took this approach as I recently shared photos of what we’d been doing with the leads of the four main Liverpool Trusts and they were absolutely delighted to see what we’d been doing.

How many people were involved?

There were four of us in total. A few others had planned to participate; however, due to unavoidable work commitments in the hospital, they unfortunately weren’t able to join us. Between the four of us though we banded together and got into the thick of it.



Tell us about the day itself. How did it go?

We began by clearing one area of rubbish and stolen office furniture, which some local young people had used to make a sort of ‘den’. We also cleared the chopped wood from a tree that had fallen across a pathway.

We then moved on to the main part of the day, which was spent ‘Himalayan balsam bashing’ as the ranger referred to it. Himalayan balsam is a non-native, invasive plant which can take over and make it difficult for native plants to thrive. We spent much of our time pulling out huge clumps of the balsam. Thankfully, it’s shallow-rooted, so it didn’t require a lot of force to pull out. It was quite therapeutic to tear them from the ground though, and then to see the difference in the surrounding area before and after. By the end of the day, we were all aching – but it was well worth it.

The weather was lovely, so it was a great time to be outdoors. We even bumped into some of our customers from the hospital who were enjoying a stroll through the woods over lunchtime.

Do you feel that it was a good bonding experience for the team?

Very much so. While we regularly speak on Teams calls, the nature of our roles means we don’t often get to spend time with each other in person. Having the opportunity to get together face-to-face was lovely. We had a good chat and put the world to rights while balsam bashing.



What are your plans for your next CSR day?

We don’t have it formally planned in yet, but I’m keen to do something similarly linked to our customers. While the day at Bluebell Woods was in the Merseyside region, I’ve been speaking with some of our customers in Cheshire about doing something there, and we have an idea for restoring flower beds in a communal garden. I’m hoping to get the team together again for that in autumn.

Do you have any words of inspiration or encouragement for other people looking to take part in CSR activities?

I think it goes without saying that there’s a feel-good factor and satisfaction in doing something that makes a positive impact, beyond what we’re already doing on a daily basis. The biggest thing for us though was being able to go back to our customers and share what we’d done. It resonated even more because it was directly related to them. So I would recommend doing something that links with the field you’re in and the people you work with, if at all possible.