

## An FPA Christmas!

**Name:** Hamira Sultan

**Role:** FPA Director

Hi everyone, and it's my pleasure to welcome you to our final newsletter of 2020. The work of the FPA team has gone from strength to strength, and the team have shown how much is possible despite the challenges that Covid-19 has brought. It is clear more than ever how important our green spaces are, and we as a team are so pleased to see how much they have been used. FPA is really challenging the wider system to consider how we value these green spaces, and importantly, helping other parts of the Council make good use of them too. We've got some great things planned in 2021, including fundraising for one of our pilot sites, helping volunteers capture their important work in an easier way, developing a Green Birmingham Website, and much more! We had a fantastic virtual Christmas party which was a chance for me to thank my brilliant team for all their hard work. I hope you enjoy this lighter, more festive version of our FPA newsletter - there'll be lots more to share with you in January! Wishing you all a happy festive break, and a healthy 2021.



As always, if you have any suggestions for our newsletter or items to include, please contact Dan at [Daniel.Lloyd@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Daniel.Lloyd@birmingham.gov.uk)



## A Christmas Poem from Sophie Hislam – FPA Jobs and Skills

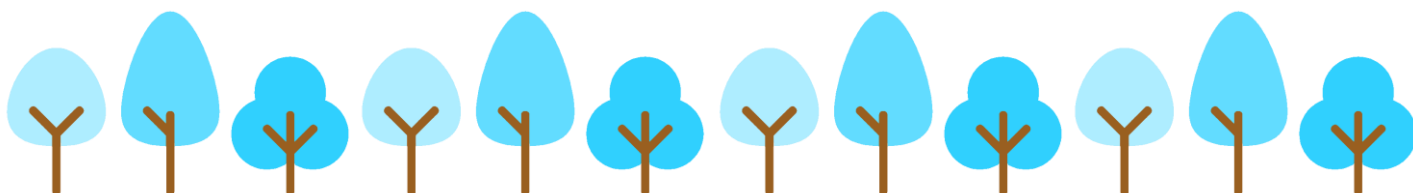
It will be fresh outside and my cheeks will be rosy, the ground beneath my boots will be crisp but I will be wrapped up warm and cosy.

The holly berries shine bright red and the cobwebs glitter ice white, as we put up the fairy lights at home, the stars fill the winter night.

The animals will settle in their homemade beds and I will light the fire and pour a warming glass of red.

The sky above will hold a winter shimmer and as I finish the Christmas chocolates and New Year approaches - I think to myself, I best get walking again to get slimmer!

Soph x



## The 12 'days' of FPA

After a difficult year for everyone, we decided to focus on the good things that have come out of 2020, and so, as part of the festive season we put together a little adaption of the '12 days of Christmas' with our own FPA twist. All together now!

**On the first day of Christmas, the FPA came to be...** And we created our FPA team!

**On the second day of Christmas, FPA gave to me...** two webinars for Early Years teams

**On the third day of Christmas, FPA gave to me...** Online nature sessions for those in need.

**On the fourth day of Christmas, FPA gave to me...** Community conversations on our FPA Proposals

**On the fifth day of Christmas, FPA gave to me...** Five framework themes!

**On the sixth day of Christmas, FPA gave to me...** A green user guide for housing schemes

**On the seventh day of Christmas, FPA gave to me...** A nature trail for Dawberry Fields

**On the eighth day of Christmas, FPA gave to me...** A health boosting walking buddy scheme

**On the ninth day of Christmas, FPA gave to me...** A skills showcase for all things green.

**On the tenth day of Christmas, FPA gave to me...** A wildlife fundraising trial

**On the eleventh day of Christmas, FPA gave to me...** Treasure hunt and Teeny Explorer days

**On the twelfth day of Christmas, FPA gave to me...** The world's largest Holly Wreath! (see later!)

**And so much more!**



## Happy Holidays from the FPA Team!

We would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a fantastic New Year! Hopefully you all get some well needed rest and relaxation as we draw this strange year to a close. Below is a selection of photos from all of us in the FPA Team, including some images from our virtual Xmas party – we even managed to get some (*interesting*) carol singing in!



Elves getting up to mischief in our Treasure Trails  
<https://twitter.com/samanthahall374/status/1337069872854032391?s=12>





## Perry Common World Record!

An amazing moment from our friends at Witton Lodge Community Association earlier this month - local residents, volunteers, schoolchildren, organisations and community groups worked together for three days in order to create the largest holly wreath in the world. Decorating the railings around The Ring on Witton Lodge Road with boughs of holly, the gigantic effort seems certain to win a place in the record books.

An independent surveyor measured the final wreath as being 358.3-metres in circumference. This is almost 40-metres longer than the existing record as listed in the Guinness Book of World Records. Confirmation that the world record attempt was successful is expected shortly.

Organised by Witton Lodge Community Association, the project united the local community in an unforgettable show of pride and spirit as people from all walks of life across all generations - from 9 to 99 years of age - joined forces to make history.

The holly used in the record breaking attempt was supplied by Birmingham City Council. Rob Netherway, Flourishing Community Services Manager at Witton Lodge, paid tribute to the organisations who backed the project.

"Without the holly we wouldn't have been able to achieve anything so the council played a massive and integral part in this unique initiative," he said.

"Part of a fantastic campaign, Light Up Christmas in Erdington, the project was supported by many organisations and we must say a massive thank you to all those who supported us or came out to help including The Active Wellbeing Society, Erdington Police, Story Wood School, Wilson Stuart School, Friends of Witton lakes, Naturally Birmingham and Active Arts.

"This event shows the power of connecting to nature in bringing people and communities together to enjoy green spaces, have fun and improve their wellbeing."





## A letter from Ron

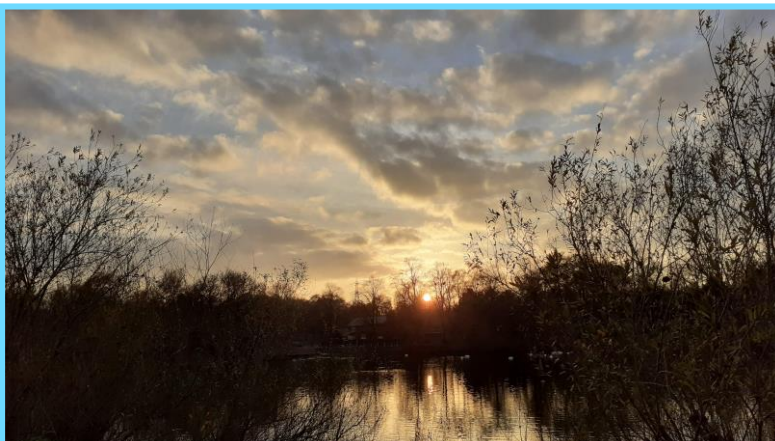
We thought it would be nice to finish on a letter received from one of our residents at Witton Lodge, describing how he feels when he goes on a walk to his local park and some lovely photos he took during his trip.

“Firstly, I go there as that is the most beautiful place for views and walks nearest to my house. Also, it gives me a chance to be close to nature, to have some fresh air, vitamin D and exercise which my body so badly needs. It is also an opportunity to look at some beautiful sights including various types of birds, squirrels etc and there is also a chance to say hello to some passers-by or to have a little chat. All these things are missing when you are stuck at home on your own. It is easy to forget what life should be like.

Finally, I feel very happy while I am walking to think I am out in a lovely place and I try to go as far as I can without having to stop too many times or sit down. I feel content if I complete the circle with minimum breaks.

There is another mixed feeling at the back of my mind, happy for getting the vital physical movements and exercise which are necessary to keep me alive, at the same time a sad feeling knowing that I won't be able to do it as often as I should due to my health issues.

Best wishes  
Ron.”



**Merry Christmas One and all – we look forward to seeing you again in the New Year!**

Still not had enough of FPA? Why not check out our blogs here?

<https://naturallybirmingham.org/blog/>

You can also read our previous newsletters, which provide more detail of our 5 frameworks:

<https://naturallybirmingham.org/read-our-newsletters/>

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