

# FPA NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2021



## A word from our FPA Team:

### Sophie Hislam - Public Open Space Innovator

A belated Happy New Year to you all! Here's to 2021. Perhaps not the start we had all hoped for but January is still a great month. Why? – you may ask – well the Winter Solstice took place on 21st December which means the sun is coming back to us, the warmer weather is on it's way and we will have an additional hour of sunlight by the end of January, and every month thereafter until the Summer solstice. Lockdown 3.0 is horrible, I'm not going to lie, I've been struggling with how long it stays dark in the morning and how early it goes dark in the evening compared to the first lockdown. Meaning that lunchtime exercise and fresh air is more important to me than before, so I have blocked out an hour every day to go and enjoy the fresh air during the daylight.

I have recently started running, something I thought I'd never do but with hockey cancelled it seemed like the perfect opportunity to try it, I'm not sure I'm a running fanatic yet but let's see what happens over the next couple of weeks.

I'm excited for the longer days, some warmer weather and Spring. A beautiful season where everything comes to life, feels new and the excitement for Summer starts. As a kid, my friends and I used to love the blossom trees as we would pretend the falling petals were wedding confetti.

So as I get excited for Spring, I am also looking forward to the next few months of the FPA project as we have plenty planned, but for now, I recommend you download a Green Passport as part of our Park Stars Initiative and get outdoors.

To become a 2021 Park Star all you need to do is [download the Park Stars Passport](#) to remind you what 6 activities you need to complete to become one of Birmingham's Park Stars and then tell us you have completed all the activities and we will send you your certificate. The 6 activities include Grow, Observe, Trail, Quiz, Move, Reflect – how long will it take you to complete the activities?

We also have new videos up on [Jobs and Skills YouTube Channel](#), go and take a look and if you're interested in finding out more or want to contribute a video yourself, please get in touch. There is a lot more to come for 2021, so watch this space and stay safe. Soph x

## A NEW GOVERNANCE MODEL FOR BIRMINGHAM'S GREEN SPACE

The team have been working hard to produce a Green User Guide template (GUG) for housing developers to incorporate within their Handover Packs for new residents and tenants. The GUG will not only help residents to feel more confident in looking after their gardens with tips and images of plants, but inspire them to discover their local green spaces and related activities they can take part in. Almost like a tourist guide, for Parks and other green spaces! Birmingham Municipal Housing trust (BMHT) will be trialling the GUG at one of their developments soon! If you would like further information please contact Rupinder Chawlia via email [rupinder.chawlia@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:rupinder.chawlia@birmingham.gov.uk) or call 07548 122584

### WHAT IS GOVERNANCE?

A core part of our FPA programme is ensuring that green spaces are at the forefront of decision making across all areas of the Council and the wider community. To do this requires a huge shift in the way we think about and value our green spaces, and we hope to facilitate this change through our FPA programme by connecting others to the green agenda.

Visit our [website](#) for more information on our frameworks.

We are focusing our communal garden activities around Cornerway Sheltered Housing Scheme in Kings Norton. Site plans have been drawn up and we're working with tenants to agree what kind of communal garden they would like - we're excited to see what they come up with! The learning from this pilot will be used to develop other green spaces for the use and benefit of tenants across the city.

We are also continuing to test new draft government tools for green space; we have hosted our 3rd Landscape led workshop with our city planners and housing colleagues and their partners about greening the built environment; and we are increasingly linking up with people and partners over the city's efforts to reach net zero for climate change.





## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FRAMEWORK

A big part of Environmental Justice involves measuring how 'liveable' everybody's neighbourhoods or places they live are. Berlin have a mechanism in place to gauge this, and they have shared this with us; we are planning to test this across Birmingham this Spring to see if we can make a similar map for Birmingham.

Our Jobs and Skills pilot is also moving forward. Our skills showcase is going from strength to strength with over 30 videos of people describing their jobs in the green sector now live - with over 600 Youtube hits. Five young people have got in touch with us to tell us how much this helped them to decide about their future career path into green spaces, which is great to hear. Take a look at our skill showcase [here](#).

We have also created a series of 3 'Green Bitesize Learning' videos aimed at showcasing the skills often used in the green sector and encouraging people to have a go at home, these include:

1. A Soil Jar Test
2. Measuring a Design Space
3. How to estimate the height of a tree

We encourage any students studying maths, geography, art or science and those that have an interest in the green sector to have a go! - [you can find the videos here](#).

We have created support packs to compliment the videos and highlight the relevant careers that apply to the activity and when or why you might use the activity.

If you would like to know more about any of this, please contact Sophie at [Sophie.J.Green@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Sophie.J.Green@birmingham.gov.uk)

Naturally Birmingham is also working with the Birmingham City Council procurement team to trial a 'matching project' which joins up community groups who would like some support with businesses that are interested in helping out via Corporate Social Responsibility, such as sponsorships, green financing, and other methods of collaboration. If you're interested in any support for green activities, please contact [socialvalueparks@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:socialvalueparks@birmingham.gov.uk)

### WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?

**We believe that access to green spaces is a fundamental right.**

People living in more deprived areas have poorer health, access to work/education, and often cannot access good quality green spaces.

This theme connects Climate Change, ecological decline, and the Covid-19 pandemic workstreams to ensure the enormous benefits of being in nature are available to those who need them most.



## HEALTHY CITY FRAMEWORK

### WHAT IS A HEALTHY CITY?

Birmingham aspires to be a healthy city as well as a green city. Part of this means recognising the overwhelming health benefits of the natural environment to people's lives. Our Naturally Birmingham Programme will aim to re-connect these agendas once again in Birmingham so that we clearly link health and wellbeing to green space nature, helping our residents to live healthier lives.



Residents in Supported Living taking part in a 'Grow your own sunflower' project hosted by Witton Lodge Community Association

Our green spaces offer is fully up and running in Witton Lodge (See [here](#) for more details). If you'd like to find out how you can do something similar, pls contact Hamira or Rob at [Hamira.Sultan@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Hamira.Sultan@birmingham.gov.uk) and [Robert.Netherway@wittonlodge.org.uk](mailto:Robert.Netherway@wittonlodge.org.uk).

We are also working closely with [The Active Wellbeing Society](#) to see if we can support even more local residents to access green social prescriptions. We'll be evaluating this in a workshop in late February, contact Hamira at [Hamira.Sultan@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Hamira.Sultan@birmingham.gov.uk) if you'd like to know more!

We're delighted to be working with the Town and Country Planning Association and Cllr Paulette Hamilton who is chairing our Healthy city framework meetings - the first of which will take place on the 9th February. We'll be focusing on how we ensure health and wellbeing is at the heart of developing our version of the 20 minute neighbourhoods concept - see [here](#) for more details.



Local volunteering group 'Red Hot Chilli Steppers' leading sensory walks for residents.



## SUSTAINABLE FINANCE FRAMEWORK

Under our Finance Framework, the city has started to look at the Doughnut Economics Model created by Kate Raworth, which examines the ability of a city or place to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This is a way of capturing wider values than just financial value and fundamentally requires us to re-shape how we value parks and green spaces ([find out more here](#)). This is a very important next step towards addressing the climate emergency response and funding future green spaces, differently.

### WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE FINANCE?

Any change or improvement we make to parks and green spaces has to be financially viable. Our new finance framework will re-calculate all the benefits green space brings to the whole City. We will look at ways to bring extra money in where possible. By focusing on money and budgets, we will grow a greener future with confidence.

We have been working with the Birmingham City Council Corporate Sponsorship Team to see if local businesses will sponsor our local parks to help make them even better for our residents. If you have any ideas on what you'd like to see more of in your local parks, please get in touch at [socialvalueparks@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:socialvalueparks@birmingham.gov.uk).

Our first ever crowdfunding appeal for a local park is here! If you want to help support the habitats of the slow worms and common lizards of Dawberry Fields, please consider making a donation to the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust by clicking [here](#) to learn more and donate, or Text DAWBERRY to 70085 to donate £10. Texts cost £10 plus one standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising via telephone and SMS. Help us reach our goal of £2000!



Support the Dawberry Fields  
**REPTILE  
PROJECT**

Image © 2020Vision

**NATURALLY BIRMINGHAM: FUTURE PARKS ACCELERATOR**

**Birmingham City Council**

In partnership with the Birmingham City Council's Naturally Birmingham Future Parks Project.

## CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT FRAMEWORK

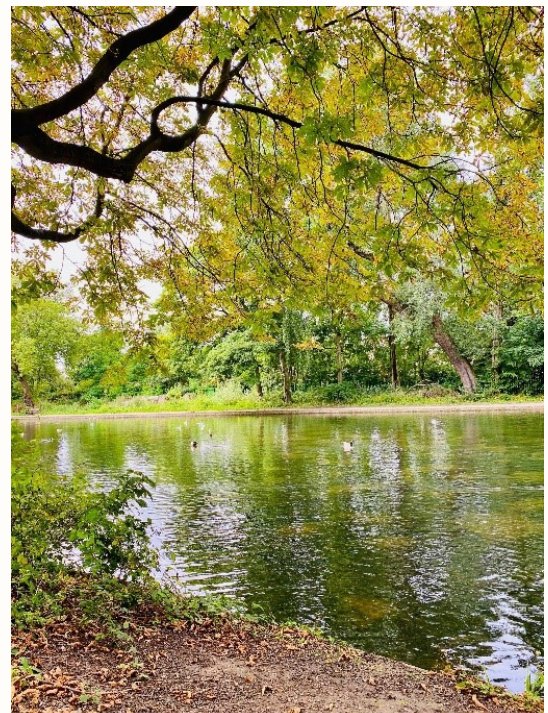
### WHAT IS CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT?

The world's greenest cities make it very easy for their citizens to make a difference through contributing their ideas, their endeavour, and their time. Birmingham needs such a support system for its citizens and under FPA we intend to create such a platform - where everybody's voice can be heard.

We want your Earth Stories! We have launched the next phase of our engagement with the residents and workers of Birmingham, asking them to share their first memories of a green space and their hopes and dreams for the future of these wonderful assets. If you'd like to take part, please send a blog, vlog, video, poem, picture, story (in any format you wish) to Debbie at [futureparks@bosf.org.uk](mailto:futureparks@bosf.org.uk), you can also read more about this work [here](#).

At Naturally Birmingham, we felt that despite the wealth of information available online about green spaces and the wide range of opportunities and activities associated with them, it can be a bit spread around a difficult to access quickly. We are hoping to develop a new website that links all of these fantastic resources together by working collaboratively with our partner organisations and interested groups to form a 'Green Hub', that allows users to plan days out in nature, explore volunteering opportunities and community groups, and just generally get more involved with nature. We have now finished three engagement sessions on 'The Green Birmingham Website', but if you'd like to speak more with us about this, please contact Dan on [daniel.lloyd@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:daniel.lloyd@birmingham.gov.uk).

We are also planning to host more early years webinars that aim to improve understanding of how the use of local green spaces contributes greatly to our children's wellbeing and the EYFS 7 areas of learning, whilst providing practical tips and tools using the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to strengthen practice and improve outcomes for children. We've had some great feedback for our previous sessions so far - so if you work with young children either in a children's centre, a nursery or as a childminder, or you're a parent with a young family, you can register for any of the next three, using the eventbrite link [here](#).





## CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT FRAMEWORK

And finally, some more good news to end on. The photos to the right show the delivery of some railway sleepers donated from McLaughlin and Harvey (Alexander Stadium) to one of Birmingham Children's Trust Residential Homes - collected and delivered by Cadent Gas.

The sleepers are being used as part of a project for the young people in the home to extend their vegetable growing area - creating two more beds for them to plant in. The new sleepers will ensure the beds stable and durable!

Big thanks to Matt (left) and Mick (right) from Cadent for providing us with the photos of the delivery - all adhering to PPE and social distancing requirements.

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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