

# FPA NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2021

## Insights from our FPA team - Alice Campbell - Student Placement (Geography BA)

Alice, a Geography student from the University of Birmingham has recently come to the end of a Student placement with us at Naturally Birmingham. We're thrilled to hear that she has secured a full time role, but we also wanted to hear about what she learned during her time with us. You can read about her experience below:

### ***Why did you choose FPA as a placement?***

I chose NB:FPA as a placement as I thought it would be a great opportunity to understand and contribute to a part of Birmingham that I'd recently fallen in love with- it's green space! I think this pandemic has really highlighted the significance of parks and the benefits they bring, and FPA's mission to put nature at the heart of Birmingham's decision-making is very important.

I also wanted to understand the every-day work that goes on behind parks. My degree teaches me theory or global case studies, but I really wanted to understand how everything works in the city I live in and care for.

### ***What have you learnt/enjoyed?***

I've really enjoyed working with everyone in the FPA team- everyone has been so welcoming. I especially enjoyed the Green Champions event I attended in which members of the public told their stories on why green space was important to them- hearing such personal stories really emphasises the importance of parks.

I also really enjoyed researching into the concept of 15-minute neighbourhoods and finding out what different cities around the world are doing to try and implement the concept. Connecting these goals to the Sustainable Development Goals was such an interesting task- it really showed that a lot of different cities are working towards the same goals.

### ***Has it made you have different ideas about future careers or specialist studies?***

Working with FPA has confirmed for me that I'd like to go into a future research role, and that I'd like to further my studies by going into an environmental justice related Masters. I think the work that FPA does is truly creating change for the better, and I would love to go into a role in the future that works to diminish environmental inequalities in the same way!



# A GREEN CITY

## A CITY OF NATURE DELIVERY FRAMEWORK

There is now universal acceptance that the key output for the programme is a **Delivery Framework for Birmingham, A City of Nature**.

To prevent this programme coming to an end (March 2022) and all the good work sitting on a shelf somewhere, we are in the process of trying to establish this new governance structure that will embed the change required (see diagram below).

The Delivery Framework will be just that, a delivery mechanism for the Our Future City Plan 2040; so locked into the planning process and helping direct the city's growth agenda going forward. This directly responds to

what citizens have asked for throughout the programme to 'Green the Grey'. To bring nature into the city's decision-making.

You will see three city groups, starting with a City of Nature Board, this would be Cabinet Member chaired and include representation from our external partners. This will seek to ensure decisions and opportunities at a city and regional scale are joined-up and help ensure that the green agenda has a very strong voice. This is still being worked out.

The City of Nature Steering Group will work at a high level, Director/ Assistant Director level across the council, looking to see the potential synergies particularly around place-based planning and service delivery. This will really help to bring nature into the heart of the city's decision-making and bring about those cross linkages we all know make perfect sense but there has been no mechanism in place to make it happen. This was discussed and agreed last week at the Extended City Leadership Team; having identified so many cross-over agendas. This Group will follow shortly.

Below this will be an Operations Group, led by the City's Planning Service again linking the delivery of Our Future City Plan and implementing change on the ground in the most effective way. This will have to be by putting people first. Meeting the underlying principles of the programme tied to environmental justice and levelling-up. The Operations Group has now met for the first time and proved highly effective.

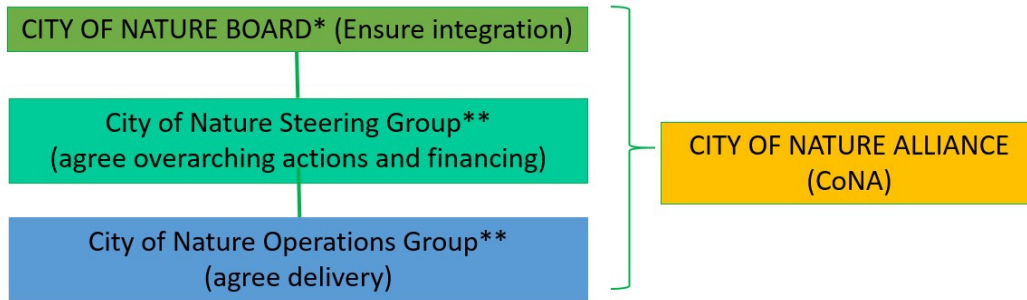
Supporting all this work and delivery will be a Community Alliance; whereby all our core third sector partners and NGO's work together and with the city to influence and help direct future plans and site-based delivery that meets peoples' needs. Their voice and perspectives being vital to correct past errors of a top-down approach or the city not properly 'listening' to community priorities. This Alliance is still in the process of being established.

By making this commitment and undertaking these changes this will be testament to a city serious about its natural environment by introducing new ways of working that can prove to be both responsive and effective.

## WHAT IS A GREEN CITY?

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.



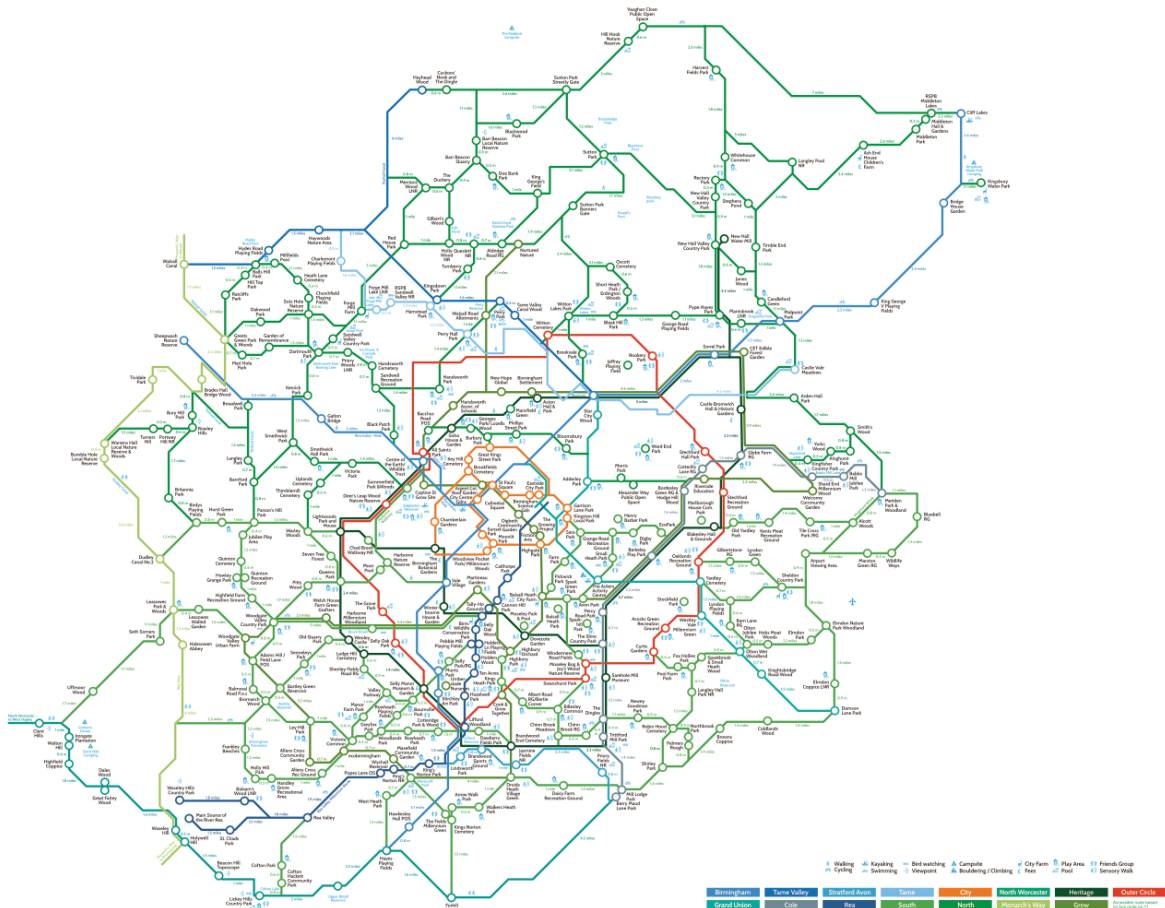
\*Chaired by Cabinet Member for Parks and Streetscene

\*\* Chaired by AD for Development who will bring together other ADs from across the Council and CoNA

\*\*\* Chaired by Principle Planning Officer who will bring together operational officers from across the Council and CoNA

## GREEN GROUND MAP

The 'Greenground Map' is a design project by Helen Illus in collaboration with Birmingham Council/The Naturally Birmingham Project to map Birmingham's green spaces into a creative schematic walking network. The map will include parks, open spaces, nature reserves and woods, that are connected by waterways, canals and creative lines to inspire active travel. The first engagement session with residents and partners took place on August 10th with the introduction of the project and mentimeter session to collect the input from participants on what a Birmingham map should include. A draft version of the map was presented during the second engagement session on September 9th and the map is due to be finished by early October. You can see the progress so far in the image below.





## GREEN PLANNING

A Landscape planning checklist has been worked on with Urban Design Manager and will be open for comment by the urban design and landscape team at their next team meeting, after which it will also go to parks and ground maintenance for a final round of comments. The checklist will be tested with landscape colleagues to use as a guide to give responses to case officers and will eventually be an item that we ask developers to fill in for us.

Planning are also beginning to finalise the city design guide which is being honed to provide more statutory support to points made in the checklist.

Workstreams are now being setup up as part of the City of Nature delivery to develop a suite of planning conditions to support the promotion of green space. This includes Informatives for ensuring our green user guides are delivered for new private housing completions, timing of the delivery of open space, and post development evidence of maintenance being upheld according to the approved management plan.

Work streams are also being set up in regards to service charges and exploring how these could be used going forward in the short term to ensure new open spaces can be supported in the long run.



## A HEALTHY CITY

### 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.

### A GREEN CONNECTION IS A HEALTHIER CONNECTION - WEBINARS FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The FPA team invites you to attend webinars on the positive impact of green spaces on health and well-being. If you are interested in knowing the positive influences of nature on health and well-being for yourself, or if your work involves improving the health and well-being of communities through social prescribing please do sign up through the eventbrite Link [here](#).

The sessions will be delivered by Dr Alex Hickman and Dr Hajra Shah, GP registrars, on four different dates.

## AN INVOLVED CITY

### WHY DOES BIRMINGHAM NEED A BIRMINGHAM CITY OF NATURE ALLIANCE AND DELIVERY FRAMEWORK?

The FPA Naturally Birmingham project completes in mid-2022 so the Birmingham City of Nature (BCoN) Alliance and BCoN Delivery Framework will become the legacy of the work of the project has achieved.

The concept of a collaborative future operating model that address council priorities was visioned in the diagram put forward to the Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Trust in the original FPA bid for Birmingham. Parks and green spaces, including blue infrastructure and water-based assets, provide considerable value and together, they are known as ecosystem services. They sustain the city's wildlife (its biodiversity); improve and sustain health & wellbeing; help community cohesion & quality of life; as well as mitigating and adapting to climate change. However, access to green and blue spaces, these natural services and the benefits they provide, is not equitable across the city. Some sections of our diverse population of over 1 million people face barriers in accessing green spaces, participating in activities, or making full use of facilities on offer. We know that connection to nature not only provides benefits to the individual but also creates place attachment and a greater understanding and care for the wider environment. So to make the changes needed we will have to work together to ensure everyone can be involved in the use, care and maintenance of these places. The Alliance will offer a model where organisations can come to together to discover what people want and what they dream of and collaboratively design and deliver actions with the community.

### 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.



Birmingham is the first city in the UK to develop a tool to highlight these inequalities in accessing green space alongside other key measures and produce an Environmental Justice Map which considers access to green space, health inequalities (through excess years of life lost), flood risk, urban heat island effect and the indices of multiple deprivation. The “Our Future City Plan” (OFCP) [Our Future City Plan \(OFCP\) - Central Birmingham 2040 | Birmingham City Council](#) identifies the wards covered by its vision for the heart of the city and although not all the wards are “red” wards as far as our environmental justice map recognises, Bordesley and Highgate ward has been identified as important both in the City of Nature vision for OFCP and has been identified as a red ward by the Naturally Birmingham Project. The OFCP has a key theme around creating a City of Nature, and our delivery framework and BCoN Alliance will help this vision be realised through a pilot that will take place next year in Bordesley and Highgate ward. Partially funded by the Commonwealth Games Legacy fund the pilot will see real changes start to be made in the five parks in this ward through the collaborative work of the Alliance members. You can find out more about the BCoN Alliance here: [Birmingham City of Nature – Alliance – Naturally Birmingham Future Parks Project](#)

### GREEN CHAMPIONS WHATSAPP GROUP

We have recently created a space for everyone with a passion for green spaces in Birmingham to connect and communicate with each other, whether that’s sharing information, highlighting upcoming events, or even sharing a few pictures of nature. The group is linked to our Green Champions programme that you may have seen in our previous newsletters, but you do not need to have been part of the programme to join! If this is something you would be interested in, you can submit a request to join using the following link:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdGL3jN-cEnsXpefcAw2aDTOLj-whD4pRzEtujTmt41BziSWw/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdGL3jN-cEnsXpefcAw2aDTOLj-whD4pRzEtujTmt41BziSWw/viewform?usp=sf_link)



# A VALUED CITY

## SUSTAINABLE FINANCE MODEL

Those who have been following our Naturally Birmingham programme will be aware that we have devised a 3-part financial model. This ranges from micro funding at the site scale, through organisational capacity building- so working right across the council and its partners; up to macro funding picking up on major scheme funding at the city or regional scale.

To help get this embedded into the city systems we have been working with a Sustainable Finance Steering Group chaired by Councillor Chatfield and supported by both partners and BCC finance officers from across the organisation. Last week saw the 6th of these meetings, where real progress is being made right across this 3-part finance model.

### WHAT IS A VALUED CITY?

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.

The big climate conference COP 26 in Glasgow is just around the corner now. One of the biggest parts of this conference will be how the finance communities globally agree on a way forward to rethink how we can tackle the twin challenges of climate and ecological emergencies. These big future funds are signed up to adopting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and three new strands labelled Environment, Social and Governance. The great news was that at our Steering Group meeting it was agreed that BCC would look to adopt the same measures as from next year, 2022. This would make the city eligible for such future funds, where its focus has to be improving the environment. All our Naturally Birmingham has these measures built in- so that the city's parks will then become eligible for these future funds, as from next year. This also ties the future of parks directly to the Route to Zero climate emergency work and the Nature Recovery Plan





## A FAIR CITY

### WHAT IS A FAIR CITY?

**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.

### SOW AND GROW - WINTERBOURNE GARDENS

We recently hosted our Sow and Grow Course at Winterbourne Gardens to provide 'green fingered enthusiasts' an opportunity to learn more about the green sector. It was a great course and we received some fantastic feedback which you can see below:

#### *Julia*

"The Sow and Grow course has given me a great insight into gardening; how to take cuttings, make mulch, create a hanging basket and create a good network of like-minded people. It's inspired me to create my own space in my garden that's been neglected for years.

#### *Marie*

"Nicola went above and beyond in her planning and thoughtfulness towards her students. This included bringing in plants, from her own garden, for me as she knew I liked them.

I feel that I have developed knowledge in names of plants, healthy benefits of plants, feeding plants and propagation of plants!"

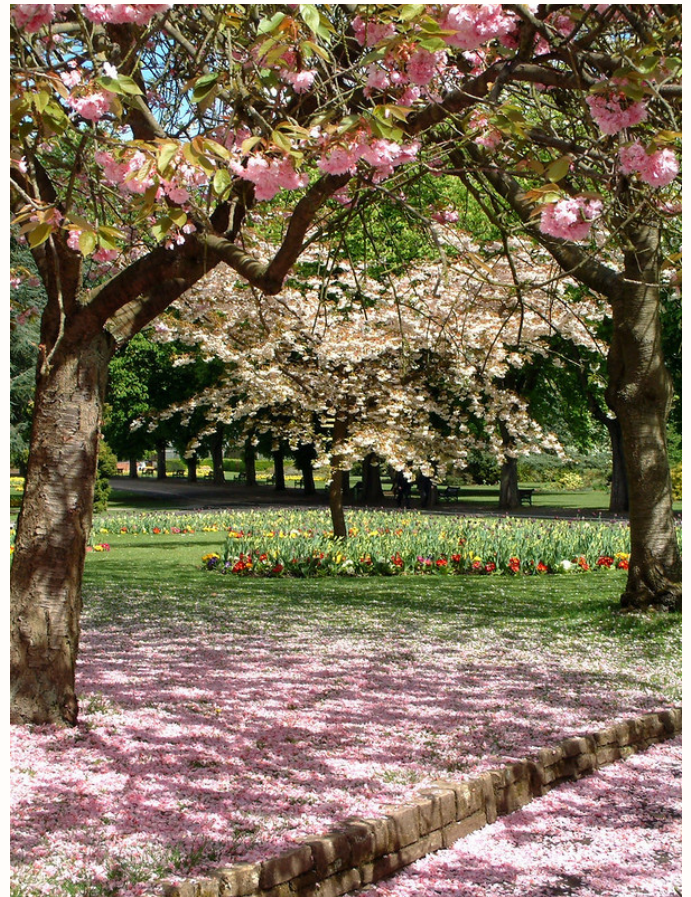
#### *Abdul*

"The course served my purpose. All I really wanted to do was learn basic stuff. I feel a lot more confident for example I went out and bought some beautiful roses and arranged them in my garden. I was able to ask lots of questions on the course and I am motivated make a vegetable plot. I now prefer my outdoor space and use it more."

Once this course started, we started to plan how we could roll the course out to more people across the City and applied for some funding with RHS Flourish Fund. We have successfully secured this funding from the RHS and will be looking to roll this course out on a seasonal basis, to allow over 100 unemployed 19+ year olds to apply and join this fantastic course and explore how fantastic the green sector is – watch this space for more details!







## MATCHING PROJECTS

Birmingham City Council have recently launched the Match My Project portal (<https://matchmyproject.org/birmingham>), a meeting point for the business and community sector, where community organisations can get help for their projects from businesses working in Birmingham

The site is fairly self explanatory however, there is lots of useful help on how to use the site:

- The HOW IT WORKS button on the top right hand side of the front page gives some basic information,
- This video <https://vimeo.com/538742045> (Password Birmingham2021) provides a walk through,
- There is more help available as you use the system and provides detailed instructions and there is a lot more help on the website once users are registered,
- And if all else fails, you can use the contact us button.

The portal is promoted to the Council's contractors as the primary channel for delivering social value. There are some projects on the portal already which you can see once you register. A good project needs to be well defined so that the business can understand their commitment from the outset and should not be open ended. Check it out!



## OTHER NEWS

### WELCOMING A TINY FOREST TO PERRY COMMON

Birmingham's first Tiny Forest was planted earlier this year in Perry Common. It was funded by the OVO Foundation, in collaboration with Birmingham City Council. The design features an outdoor classroom area for use by both schools and local residents.

What is a Tiny Forest? This small woodland has a unique planting design following



principles first developed in Japan by Professor Akira Miyawaki. The forest is made up of 600 UK native saplings, made up of over 15 species that have been selected for this site, densely planted in this 200m<sup>2</sup> plot. These aim to tackle environmental issues such as flooding, heat stress and loss of biodiversity are increasingly affecting urban areas. The Tiny Forest is open and accessible to visit anytime, to enjoy alone or for group activities. You can get involved by becoming a Tiny Forest Tree Keeper. Tree Keepers are local volunteers who act as ambassadors for the forest and help maintain the forest during the first couple of years when the trees are most vulnerable. You can also join in by taking part in Tiny Forest research, including measuring tree height, counting pollinators and testing the soil. To find out more and get involved head to the [Tiny Forest website](https://www.tinyforest.org/).

### THE SHED (COTTERIDGE PARK) – SHORT FILM

And finally, we'd like to share with you a short film about a community project made possible by the fabulous volunteers at Cotteridge Park. 'The Shed' is a fabulous asset to the park and well worth a visit. You can view the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLcZdJQtlI>

Still not had enough of FPA? You can visit our website here:

<https://naturallybirmingham.org/>

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