



GREEN CHAMPIONS



Noticing Nature

On other days. The things I see
Are mostly old, Except for me.
But this green spike, So new and small
Had never yet. Been seen at all! - Barbara Baker

Health - Naturally

As the Earth tilts closer to the Sun, spring brings longer, brighter days that have a profound impact on both human health and the natural world.

Sunlight helps our skin produce vitamin D, which strengthens bones, boosts immunity, and supports mental well-being. Even 15-30 minutes of sun exposure on the skin can help maintain healthy levels.

Practice yoga or simple stretching exercises in the fresh air. Choose a quiet spot in a park or garden for gentle sun salutations. Breathing in fresh air enhances relaxation and focus. Increased sunlight leads to higher UV levels which is good for our general health but don't forget your sun protection.



Learn more - Change and Adaptation

British Science Week 2025 will take place between 7 to 16 March. Free activity packs are available to download now! You'll find activities for children and young people from under 5s to around age 14, and this year there are also activities for community groups.

The theme for 2025's packs and poster competition is '**Change and adapt**', and the packs provide fun and engaging ways to introduce this theme to the children. Changing and adapting plays a big part in science; not only do plants and animals change and adapt to their surroundings to survive, cities, towns and other areas where people live have to change and adapt as the world's population grows.

[Learn more about British Science Week](#)



Hawk Moth



Caterpillar

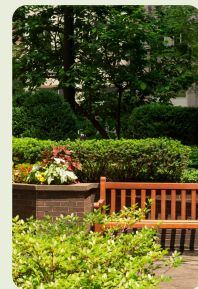
City of Nature Programme update

As spring breathes new life into our urban spaces, we are excited to share the latest developments from the City of Nature Alliance members in the programme of projects that have been delivered. These initiatives aim to transform Birmingham's green and blue spaces into thriving, accessible, and biodiverse environments that support both people and wildlife.

Project Progress: A Greener, Healthier City

Over the past few months, significant strides have been made in reimagining urban spaces:

- New Pocket Parks – By partnering with the National Trust several underutilized areas have been turned into small, welcoming green spaces, providing residents with places to enjoy, relax and reconnect with nature.
- Pollinator Corridors – The Parks Service has changed the management in some of our green spaces to create wildflower meadows and hedgerows that will support bees, butterflies, and other vital pollinators.
- Community Planting Initiatives – Birmingham Treepeople have been joined by volunteers who help support their tree-planting efforts, increasing canopy cover and improving air quality.
- Nature-Friendly Walkways – New pedestrian pathways through green spaces encourage active travel while enhancing biodiversity, we are working to increase and improve this network.



Health & Wellbeing at the Core

Urban nature isn't just about greenery—it's about people's wellbeing. Research shows that spending time in nature reduces stress, improves mental health, and encourages physical activity. Our project is embedding these benefits by:

- Expanding outdoor wellness programmes, including guided walks and nature-based mindfulness sessions.
- Creating inclusive play spaces that help children and families engage with the natural world.
- Improving accessibility so that everyone, regardless of ability, can enjoy urban green spaces.



Community Collaboration: Get Involved!

This project wouldn't be possible without the support of local communities, businesses, and volunteers. There are several ways to get involved including:

- Join or form a Friends Group for a Green Space – Help care for a local park or public space.
- Join a Nature Walk – Discover the city's green spaces with expert guides.
- Volunteer for Planting Days – Get your hands in the soil and contribute to a greener city.



https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20010/parks_leisure_and_wellbeing/1158/improving_your_health_with_nature/3



Please contact us at Cityofnature@birmingham.gov.uk if you would like to find out more about the City of Nature Programme, Green Champions, Young Green Champions, the City of Nature Alliance or the Ranger Service Wild Heart - Healthy Parks Programme.

Come and Connect with City of Nature Team online

**Please come and join us online on Friday 28th March 2025
1pm - 2pm for a catch up on what happened last month and what is planned for this year.**

If you receive this Newsletter by email you will be sent the link to join, please don't forget to put a note in your diary :)

If not you can get the link by emailing us on Cityofnature@birmingham.gov.uk and we will email you the link.



World Wildlife Day

3rd March 2025

On 20 December 2013 at the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), March 3 was declared United Nations World Wildlife Day (WWD).



This day holds significance as the day that the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was signed in 1973. The UNGA Resolution designated the CITES Secretariat as the facilitator for the global observance of this special day for wildlife on the UN calendar.

UN World Wildlife Day has now become the global annual event dedicated to wildlife. People everywhere rely on wildlife and biodiversity-based resources to meet our needs - from food, to fuel, medicines, housing, and clothing. For us to enjoy the benefits and the beauty that nature brings us and our planet, people have been working together to make sure ecosystems are able to thrive and plant and animal species are able to exist for future generations. So, let's celebrate wildlife and the important conservation work being done around the world!

For World Wildlife Day 2025, the UN are exploring Wildlife Conservation Finance: Investing in People and Planet. Our planet's magnificent biodiversity is priceless, but conserving it comes at a cost. Each year, hundreds of billions of dollars are needed to close the global wildlife conservation finance gap—a gap we must bridge to ensure the survival of species and the ecosystems that sustain us all. Find out more here:

<https://wildlifeday.org/en/about>



International Women's Day - 8th March



International Women's Day (IWD) has been around since 1911, as have many of the issues still impacting women's advancement. The IWD campaign theme in 2025 is 'Accelerate Action'. The idea is that collectively, everyone can Accelerate Action for gender equality.

At the current rate of progress, it will take until 2158, which is roughly five generations from now, to reach full gender parity, according to data from the World Economic Forum. Focusing on the need to Accelerate Action emphasizes the importance of taking swift and decisive steps to achieve gender equality. It calls for increased momentum and urgency in addressing the systemic barriers and biases that women face, both in personal and professional spheres.

So, together, we can Accelerate Action to speed up the rate of progress worldwide. One of the best ways to forge gender equality is to understand what works and to do more of this, faster.

Accelerate Action is a worldwide call to acknowledge strategies, resources, and activity that positively impact women's advancement, and to support and elevate their implementation. Significant barriers to gender equality remain, yet with the right action and support, positive progress can be made for women everywhere.

<https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>



Global Recycling Day - 18th March 2025

Global Recycling Day was created in 2018 to help recognise, and celebrate, the importance recycling plays in preserving our precious primary resources and securing the future of our planet. It is a day for the world to come together and put the planet first.

Every year, the Earth yields billions of tons of natural resources and at some point, in the not too distant future, it will run out. That's why we must think again about what we throw away – seeing not waste, but opportunity.

The last decade has been the hottest on record, and we are now facing a climate emergency of unparalleled proportions. If we don't make significant and rapid changes, there is every reason to believe that we could see continued rising global temperatures, the melting of icecaps, wild fires and rapid deforestation.

This directly affects humanity with increased poverty, immigration from displaced communities, job losses, waste mountains and natural habitats disappearing. We have the power to make lasting changes to combat this, and with recycling being recognized in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 2030, we are already seeing many individuals, governments and organisations taking direct action to support the global green agenda.

Recycling is a key part of the circular economy, helping to protect our natural resources. Each year the 'Seventh Resource' (recyclables) saves over 700 million tonnes in CO2 emissions and this is projected to increase to 1 billion tons by 2030. There is no doubt recycling is on the front line in the war to save the future of our planet and humanity. The Global Recycling Foundation theme for Global Recycling Day is #RecyclingHeroes. This will recognise the people, places and activities that showcase what an important role recycling plays in contributing to an environmentally stable planet and a greener future which will benefit all.

<https://www.globalrecyclingday.com/about/>



Despite the current industrial action BCC wants to improve the efficiency and reliability of the services they provide, so they are changing the way they collect Birmingham's residential waste and recycling. This will include a series of programmes which will make up their 'waste transformation agenda' for the next 18 months. These include:

- tackling missed collections and contamination through enhanced, new, innovative IT and a redesign of collection rounds
- introducing a weekly food waste collection service
- moving to alternate fortnightly collections for recycling and household (residual) waste collections
- engaging with residents about environmental matters through community engagement.

As part of the plans, the way your rubbish and recycling are collected will change.

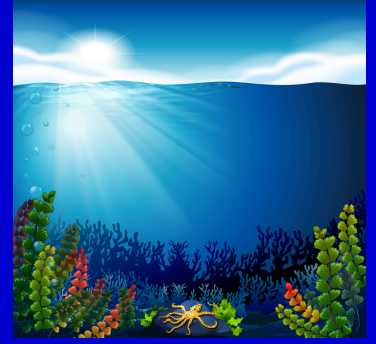
Find out more here: <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/wastechanges>



World Story Telling Day - 20th March

World Storytelling Day is a global celebration of the art of oral storytelling. It is celebrated every year on the March equinox, on (or near) March 20.

On World Storytelling Day, as many people as possible tell and listen to stories in as many languages and at as many places as possible, during the same day and night. Participants tell each other about their events in order to share stories and inspiration, to learn from each other and create international contacts.



The significance in the event lies in the fact that it is the first global celebration of storytelling of its kind, and has been important in forging links between storytellers often working far apart from each other. It has also been significant in drawing public and media attention to storytelling as an art form.

The theme for 2025 is "Deep Water". So why not dive in and have a go at story telling. The best way to start is with something to capture your audience's imagination. Like this - *"Far beneath the surface, where sunlight faded into eternal darkness, the ocean whispered secrets only the fearless dared to uncover. Would she take the plunge today knowing it could change everything, forever."*



Whether it's a new one or an old one why not share a story with someone today.

World Poetry Day - 21st March

There are often world days and national days and sometimes weeks and whole months that celebrate the same thing but are on different days in different months.

In the UK we do have a national poetry day in October but there is also a world poetry day and a poetry month. When it comes to World Poetry Day, people can take part in a wide range of activities together. That is the beauty of the day, as it is an opportunity to appreciate how poetry can capture the hearts and minds of the masses.

It has been a part of every classroom around the world since 1999, which is why celebrating can be made simple and easy. Regardless of whether you are talking about famous poets or discovering the different types of poetry for the first time, there is truly something for everyone. Whole-class discussions and creative writing can be a great way to begin any celebration. You could simply talk about why poetry is important to you or what your favourite poems is or why you fell in love with the art form. You don't have to write a poem but it's always a good opportunity to give it a go if you have never tried before. Nature has always been an inspiration for poets and it's a good place to start. You can find out more about starting to write poetry here:

<https://nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/writing-hub/the-art-of-writing-poetry-a-journey-into-creative-expression/>

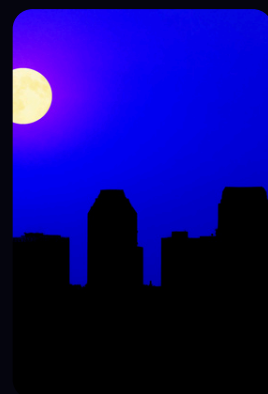
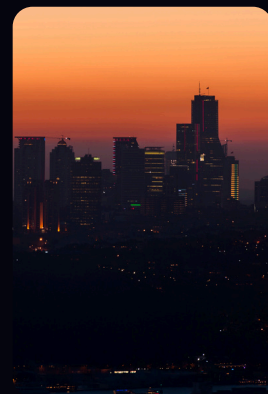
Earth Hour - 22nd March 20:30 to 21:30

Since the beginnings in 2007, Earth Hour has been known for the “lights off” moment, with individuals from around the globe switching off their lights to show symbolic support for the planet and to raise awareness of the environmental issues affecting it.

More than 15 years later, we are now at a tipping point with our climate and nature crises, putting at risk the fate of our one home and all our futures. We are on course to breach by 2030 the 1.5°C global temperature increase limit set by the Paris Climate Agreement, and nature - the source of our very livelihoods and one of our biggest allies against the climate crisis - is also under severe threat, facing alarming and unprecedented rates of loss globally.

The next 7 years are therefore crucial to all our futures - we have to stay under the 1.5°C climate threshold to avoid irreversible damage to our planet, and we need to reverse nature loss by 2030, ending the decade with more nature than we started, not less. To make this happen, individuals, communities, businesses, and governments must all urgently step up their efforts to protect and restore our one shared home.

With this 2030 goal in mind, we too must step things up. So in 2025, they have breathed new life into Earth Hour and are hoping to create the Biggest Hour for Earth. How? By calling on supporters across the globe to switch off their lights and give an hour for Earth, spending 60 minutes doing something - anything - positive for our planet.



Spring Forward - 30th March

In the UK the clocks go forward 1 hour at 1am on the last Sunday in March, (and back 1 hour at 2am on the last Sunday in October).

The period when the clocks are 1 hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) is called British Summer Time (BST). There's more daylight in the evenings and less in the mornings (sometimes called Daylight Saving Time). Several billions of timepieces and computers, are adjusted twice every year in over 70 countries around the world. Few of the billions of people directly affected by this clock change know why we do it. It is a fact of nature that in countries to the north and south of the tropics, the sun rises much earlier and sets much later in summer than it does in winter. In agricultural communities, this has not been a problem – people and animals simply shift their habits to match. But in countries such as the UK at the end of the 19th Century, where more people were working and living in towns and cities such a personal response to nature was not feasible when it came to office or shop hours. While many people had suggested over the years that people should change their routines, it was a Chislehurst builder, William Willett who first proposed a national response in 1907. He enjoyed an early morning ride over the Commons, and had often noted that “shutters and blinds were still drawn well after the sun had risen in spring and summer”. He also noted that especially in the spring the evenings were dark relatively early, so that the warmer evenings were wasted. If only people could be persuaded to rise from their beds earlier....

What will Spring bring for delivering action in the City of Nature.

As spring unfolds, bringing longer days, warmer weather, and nature's vibrant renewal, the City of Nature initiative is set to embrace the season's energy to drive forward meaningful action. This is a time of fresh beginnings, not just for the natural world but also for our collective efforts to connect people and places through nature.

Renewed Momentum for Green Initiatives

With the arrival of spring, projects focused on urban greening, biodiversity enhancement, and community engagement will gain new momentum. From tree planting schemes to wildflower meadow restorations, this season presents the perfect conditions for tangible improvements to the city's green spaces. The longer days also allow for more outdoor activities, creating opportunities to involve local communities in nature-based initiatives.

Health and Wellbeing Through Nature

Spring is an ideal time to promote nature-based health interventions. As parks and woodlands burst into life, outdoor wellbeing programmes—including guided nature walks, green therapy sessions, and physical activity in natural settings—will become more accessible and impactful. These initiatives aim to improve mental and physical health while fostering a deeper connection with the environment.

Expanding Partnerships and Community Involvement

Collaboration remains at the heart of the City of Nature. This season, we will continue strengthening alliances with local organisations, businesses, and community groups to expand participation. Through workshops, volunteering opportunities, and educational events, we will encourage more people to engage with their natural surroundings and take an active role in shaping a greener, healthier city.

A Season of Action and Growth

As wildlife awakens and nature flourishes, so too will our commitment to creating a more sustainable urban environment. Spring brings not only the promise of renewal but also the drive to accelerate action. By harnessing this seasonal energy, we can ensure that the City of Nature continues to grow, thrive, and inspire positive change for all.

This is just the beginning of what promises to be a transformational year—let's make the most of this season of opportunity!



March Wildlife: A Season of Awakening

As winter fades and spring takes hold, March marks a time of renewal in the UK's natural world. Wildlife is stirring, landscapes are transforming, and the lengthening days bring new energy to both flora and fauna. Whether you're exploring woodlands, wetlands, or urban green spaces, there's plenty to observe this month.

Birds in Full Song

March is a key time for bird activity. Many species begin their breeding season, filling the air with their melodic dawn choruses.

Look out for:

- Robins and blackbirds singing at first light as they establish territories.
- Great tits and blue tits calling persistently, often from blossoming hedgerows.
- Lapwings and curlews returning to moorlands and wetlands, performing their acrobatic courtship displays.



Mammals Emerging from Winter Rest

As temperatures rise, hibernating and less-active mammals begin to appear:

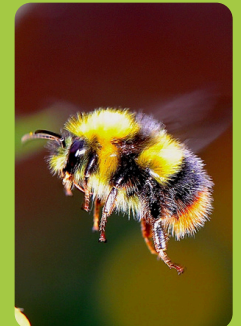
- Hedgehogs wake from hibernation and begin searching for food—keep an eye out in gardens and parks.
- Badgers become more active at dusk, emerging from their setts to forage.
- Foxes are often seen as cubs begin to explore their surroundings under the watchful eyes of their parents.



Early Signs of Insect Life

The return of insects signals the changing season and provides essential food for birds and bats:

- Bumblebees emerge from their winter nests, seeking early nectar sources like crocuses and primroses.
- Butterflies, including the small tortoiseshell and brimstone, are among the first to be spotted in sunny clearings.
- Ladybirds wake from their winter hiding spots, preparing for a busy season of feeding and breeding.



Spring Blooms and Budding Trees

March is a time of transformation for the UK's plant life, with the first bright colors appearing:

- Snowdrops and daffodils carpeting woodlands and gardens.
- Hawthorn and blackthorn blossoms beginning to appear in hedgerows.
- Willow catkins offering an early pollen source for bees.



Amphibians and Pond Life

With rising temperatures, ponds and wetlands come to life:

- Frogs and toads lay their spawn in still waters, forming jelly-like clusters.
- Newts return to breeding ponds after overwintering under logs and stones.
- Dragonfly and damselfly larvae start developing in pond ecosystems, preparing for their summer emergence.



Springtime and Mother's Day: A Celebration of New Beginnings - Sunday 30th March

As the days grow longer and the first blossoms of spring begin to emerge, March in the UK is a time of renewal, warmth, and celebration. One of the most cherished occasions in this season is Mother's Day, a heartfelt tribute to mothers, grandmothers, and maternal figures who bring love and care into our lives.

The Arrival of Spring

Spring officially begins with the vernal equinox, usually around March 20th, when daylight and nighttime are nearly equal. This shift in seasons brings an explosion of life—daffodils, crocuses, and tulips burst into bloom, birds sing in full chorus, and wildlife stirs from winter's rest. It's a time for new beginnings, fresh air, and reconnecting with nature after the cold months.

Mother's Day: A Time to Celebrate

In the UK, Mother's Day—also known as Mothering Sunday—falls on the fourth Sunday of Lent. Unlike other parts of the world where it has fixed dates, its timing changes each year based on the Easter calendar. Originally a religious tradition in the 1600s where people returned to their 'mother church.' Children would place posies of violets on the altar and young women would pick violets that were growing wild on their way home to present to their mothers. Violets are a symbol of love, dreams, healing, and determination. It has since evolved into a celebration of motherhood, love, and gratitude. On this special day, families honour mothers with flowers, gifts, and heartfelt messages, while many take the opportunity to enjoy springtime walks in parks and gardens.

Springtime Activities to Enjoy

Whether celebrating Mother's Day or simply embracing the season, there are many ways to enjoy the beauty of spring:

- Take a nature walk – Visit a local park, nature reserve, or countryside trail to admire the fresh blooms and listen to birdsong.
- Have a picnic – Pack a basket and enjoy an outdoor meal surrounded by the sights and scents of spring.
- Plant something new – Spring is the perfect time to plant flowers or herbs, a wonderful activity to do with loved ones.
- Support local wildlife – Set up bird feeders, leave water for hedgehogs, or create a bee-friendly garden to welcome the season's returning wildlife.

Embracing the Season

Spring and Mother's Day remind us to appreciate the changing seasons and the special people in our lives. Whether through a simple walk in nature, a thoughtful gift, or a moment of reflection, this time of year is about renewal, love, and gratitude. As flowers bloom and the world awakens, it's the perfect opportunity to pause, celebrate, and cherish the joys of spring.



Healthy City: To establish at least one Community Growing Space in every ward (17).

Establishing at least one Community Growing Space in every ward in Birmingham requires a collective effort, bringing together the local authority, residents, and organisations. Here are some key actions to make it happen:

- Identify Suitable Land – Work with landowners, and community groups to locate underused or vacant spaces that could be transformed into thriving gardens.
- Secure Permissions and Support – Gain the necessary approvals from landowners and planning authorities while building partnerships with local stakeholders.
- Engage Local Communities – Encourage residents to get involved in designing, developing, and maintaining the growing spaces, ensuring they meet community needs.
- Secure Funding and Resources – Apply for grants, sponsorships, and donations to provide essential tools, seeds, and infrastructure such as raised beds and water access.
- Provide Training and Support – Offer gardening workshops, sustainability education, and skills training to empower community members.

By taking these steps, Birmingham can cultivate a network of thriving green spaces that foster wellbeing, strengthen communities, and enhance the city's environment for future generations.



Earth Stories - Memories, Hopes and Happenings

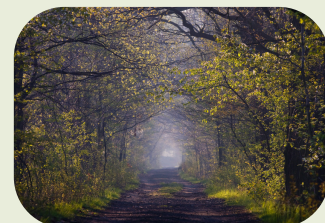
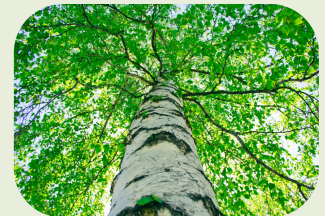
March is a month of change and possibility. As winter fades and the familiar signs of spring emerge, nature reminds us of its resilience and the power of renewal. This is a time to step outside, breathe in the fresh air deeply, and embrace the opportunities that come with longer, brighter days. Whether it's spotting the first daffodils, hearing birdsong return in full force, or witnessing trees burst into bloom and leaf, the energy of the season is all around us.

In the City of Nature team, we see this season as the perfect moment to invigorate our work, from expanding our partnerships to supporting community-led projects that bring people closer to the green spaces around them. I have filled this month's newsletter with ways to get involved, from urban greening initiatives to wellbeing programmes that make the most of the natural world. However this is the last time I will be signing this as Community Facilitator for the City of Nature Team as the UND project comes to a close at the end of March.

BUT! - This is not the last City of Nature Newsletter because I am going to carry on writing and sending them out to you as a City of Nature Green Champion practicing what I preach. So look out for the next edition with all the same nature notes and updates, to read during April's showers.

For World poetry Day and in remembrance of my mother I'll quote from one of her favourite poems, "*The road will go on and get smoother, And after we've stopped for a rest, The path that lies hidden beyond us is often the path that is best.*" From "*The Bend in the Road*" by Helen Steiner Rice. So let's take inspiration from poetry and nature's awakening and make March a month of action, growth, and reconnection with the world around us.

Debbie Needle - Community Facilitator for the City of Nature Plan
Editor, City of Nature Newsletter



Birmingham's Route to Zero- World Water Day Action

Glaciers are melting faster than ever.

As the planet gets hotter, our frozen world is shrinking, making the water cycle more unpredictable. For billions of people, meltwater flows are changing, causing floods, droughts, landslides and sea level rise. Countless communities and ecosystems are at risk of devastation. As we work together to mitigate and adapt to climate change, glacier preservation is a top priority. We must reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow down glacial retreat. Saving our glaciers is a survival strategy for people and the planet.

The theme of World Water Day 2025 is 'Glacier Preservation'. Rapidly melting glaciers are causing uncertainty to water flows, with profound impacts on people and the planet. Global reductions in carbon emissions and local strategies to adapt to shrinking glaciers are essential. This World Water Day, we must work together to put glacier preservation at the core of our plans to tackle climate change and the global water crisis. Be part of the global campaign on 'Glacier Preservation'. They need everyone – from individuals and families to companies and governments – to do what they can to reduce global warming and adapt to shrinking glaciers. Spread the word with the UN- Water material!!

To find out more about BCC's Route to Zero Plan you can contact the team on:

routetozeroarbon@birmingham.gov.uk



Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust

Works with us for nature's recovery across Birmingham and the Black Country; protecting, restoring and creating wildlife-rich, accessible spaces that benefit people and wildlife. Get involved and find out more about their events in Birmingham and the Black Country.

<https://www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/>



BOSF - Find you local Friends of Open Spaces Group

BOSF offers opportunities for those interested in open spaces to share knowledge and experience. You can register your group to receive regular updates about funding sources, training opportunities, events in open spaces and lots of useful information. If you want to start a group to care for a green space near you they can support you to do that.

<https://bosf.org.uk/>



Follow us on:

@NaturallyBirmi1



Check our website: <https://naturallybirmingham.org/>



Heritage Fund

