

GREEN CHAMPIONS



Noticing Nature

*Soft dews descend upon the flowers
And kindly rest awhile;
'Tis sweet to wait upon these hours,
To see the roses smile.*

The Approach Of June - Eliza and Sarah Wolcott (c.1838)



Health - Naturally

Loneliness Awareness Week 15th to 21st June 2026 - Giving loneliness a voice. Do you feel uplifted when you exchange a smile with a stranger in a park? 'Weak ties' can have a significant affect on our happiness and sense of belonging.

Start new rituals and routines

Go on a daily walk along the same route at the same time - you're more likely to see the same faces. If physical activity is a challenge, is there a bench you can regularly go and sit on? Or think about new 'social spots' you can create – could you sit in your front garden and say hello to passers-by? Take a book or a magazine if you feel a bit self-conscious: even enjoying a cup of tea by a window could open you up to more interactions.

<https://www.lonelinessawarenessweek.org/micro-connections>



Learn more about - Your Footprint

Our greatest ally in the fight against climate change is the natural world. The 5th June is World Environment Day and a reminder of why we need to protect our living systems. From the air we breathe, to the water we drink and the food we eat, nature is vital for life on our planet.

Our environmental footprint includes more than carbon alone. It also includes the impact we have on nature, biodiversity, water, resources. What we eat, how we travel, the products we buy, how land is managed and how organisations operate all influence the environment around us. **Everyone is part of the system.**

Learning more about both carbon and nature footprints can help individuals, communities and businesses make more informed and sustainable choices. Small actions may seem limited on their own, but collectively they can help create healthier, greener and more resilient places for people and wildlife. Learn more here:

<https://www.wwf.org.uk/learn/world-days/environment-day>



June's "Micro" Edition: Small Actions effect Large Systems

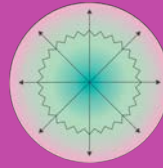
One of the ideas quietly running through this month's newsletter is the power of small, or micro, things. Nature itself is built this way.

Forests grow from tiny seeds.

Soil is alive with microscopic organisms.

Pollinators move between individual flowers.

Rivers are formed from countless droplets of water.



Even our own bodies are made from billions of tiny cells working together as living systems. Individually, these parts could seem almost insignificant. But we know they aren't. Together, they create extraordinary complexity, resilience and life. Cities work in similar ways.

A conversation between neighbours.

A child noticing a bee.

A volunteer in a local park.

A bike ride instead of a car journey.

A handful of seed.

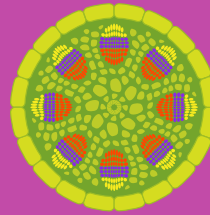
A shared knowledge.

A kind word.

Picking up a piece of litter.

Creating a space for nature.

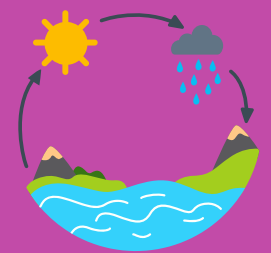
Attending a local event.



On their own, these may seem like very small - micro actions. But when connected across communities, organisations, parks, schools, waterways and neighbourhoods, they begin to form something much larger: a living network of participation, stewardship and care.

The City of Nature journey was never intended to rely on a single actions, or a single project, organisation or solution. It acts through relationships, connections, and people doing what they can, where they are, when they can and helping others do the same.

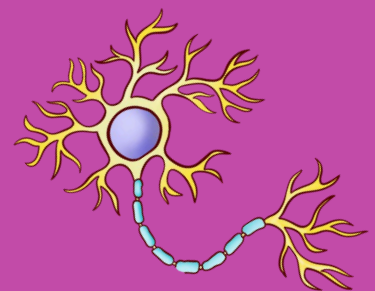
In a world that can sometimes feel overwhelming, it is easy to underestimate the power of small positive actions.



But living systems remind us constantly - We are all connected to the whole planet.:

micro interactions effect macro systems

This month's edition celebrates some of those small actions, ideas and connections already happening across Birmingham and the wider world and what a difference they can make when they begin to join together.



How can you make a difference?



The Wildlife Trusts 30 Days Wild - Take action for nature

Get ready to embrace nature like never before! 30 Days Wild is The Wildlife Trusts' annual challenge event, where we ask you to take on wild activities throughout June.

From planting wildflowers for bees, to listening to bird song, there's endless ways to spend your wild month! Whether you complete an activity a day, or a couple in a week, you'll be connecting with wildlife, boosting your well-being and making a positive impact on the planet at the same time.



Sign up today to receive your FREE goodies in the post and receive daily emails full of fascinating facts and inspiring activities to help you achieve your wild challenge.

Ready to sign up? We're excited to have you on board! There's only a limited number of postal goodies available, so be sure to get in early.

If you're taking part with children, whether as part of a family, school or group, make sure to choose the kids' option.

How will you be taking part in 30 Days Wild?

[I'm taking part without kids](#)

[I'm taking part with kids](#)

More about 30 Days Wild

30 Days Wild is a free, month-long challenge designed to inspire people of all ages to connect with nature during June.

From birdwatching in your garden to exploring a local nature reserve, every action — big or small, daily or weekly — helps you get closer to nature.

Last year marked the 10th anniversary of 30 Days Wild, so the Wildlife Trust took the time to speak to participants about what they liked about 30 Days Wild and what they thought could be improved. As a result of the feedback they received, they simplified the sign-up options.

If you are taking part with a school, children's activity group such as Scouts or a home-schooling group, choose the 'taking part with kids' option. You'll still have access to 30 Days Wild lesson plans when you sign up along with the full suite of digital resources.

If you're taking part with a care home or business, we recommend choosing the 'taking part without kids' option. You'll get access to a whole range of digital resources and ideas via email, which can be adapted to suit your needs.

Volunteers Week - Monday 1st – Sunday 7th June 2026

Volunteers' Week is an annual UK-wide campaign held from the first Monday in June to celebrate and recognise the contributions of volunteers. Launched in 1984, this initiative has been running for over 40 years, providing organisations and communities a platform to thank current and past volunteers for their invaluable efforts. The campaign highlights the diversity and unity of volunteer work across the UK. In its 40th year, the campaign underwent a rebrand, introducing a vibrant identity to inspire continued engagement. Volunteers' Week fosters connections between national organisations and grassroots groups, celebrating the spirit of volunteering that enriches communities each year.



Across Birmingham, thousands of people give their time, energy, knowledge and care to support communities, green spaces, health, culture and local neighbourhoods. Some volunteer every week through Friends Groups, conservation activities, food projects, youth work or community organisations. Others contribute in smaller ways:

- helping at an event,
- joining a litter pick,
- sharing local knowledge,
- supporting a walk,
- recording wildlife,
- checking on neighbours
- or promoting activities online.

Volunteers
needed



Together, these actions help create stronger and more connected communities. Organisations and networks across the city continue supporting volunteering in many different forms.



BVSC's Volunteer Brum platform: <https://www.bvsc.org/volunteer-brum> helps connect residents with opportunities across Birmingham, while groups linked to Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF) <https://bosf.org.uk/> Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust and many City of Nature Alliance partners support volunteers involved in parks, wildlife, waterways, wellbeing and neighbourhood projects.



There is also growing recognition of the value of "micro-volunteering" those small actions that fit around everyday life but still contribute positively to communities and the environment. In many ways, Birmingham's volunteer networks reflect the wider City of Nature idea itself: small actions, shared effort, many different people, all helping strengthen the living systems of the city.

Volunteers' Week is an opportunity to say

THANK
YOU

to everyone who helps make Birmingham a greener, healthier and more connected place through acts of care, participation and community spirit.



World Bicycle Day - 3 June

Regular physical activity of moderate intensity – such as walking, cycling, or doing sports – has significant benefits for health. At all ages, the benefits of being physically active outweigh potential harm, for example through accidents. Some physical activity is better than none. By becoming more active throughout the day in relatively simple ways, people can quite easily achieve the recommended activity levels.



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), safe infrastructure for walking and cycling is also a pathway for achieving greater health equity. For the poorest urban sector, who often cannot afford private vehicles, walking and cycling can provide a form of transport while reducing the risk of heart disease, stroke, certain cancers, diabetes, and even death. Accordingly, improved active transport is not only healthy; it is also equitable and cost-effective.

World Bicycle Day draws attention to the benefits of using the bicycle — a simple, affordable, clean and environmentally fit sustainable means of transportation. The bicycle contributes to cleaner air and less congestion and makes education, health care and other social services more accessible to the most vulnerable populations. A sustainable transport system that promotes economic growth, reduces inequalities while bolstering the fight against climate change is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Acknowledging the uniqueness, longevity and versatility of the bicycle, which has been in use for two centuries, and that it is a simple, affordable, reliable, clean and environmentally fit sustainable means of transportation, fostering environmental stewardship and health, the General Assembly decided to declare 3 June World Bicycle Day. <https://www.un.org/en/observances/bicycle-day>

It encouraged stakeholders to emphasize and advance the use of the bicycle as a means of fostering sustainable development, strengthening education, including physical education, for children and young people, promoting health, preventing disease, promoting tolerance, mutual understanding and respect and facilitating social inclusion and a culture of peace.

Within the City of Nature Plan, active travel links closely to both Fair City and Healthy City aims of helping improve access to green spaces, supporting physical and mental wellbeing, reducing inequalities, and encouraging more people to experience nature as part of everyday life.

As Birmingham continues developing green and blue routes, active travel networks and healthier public spaces, cycling can play an important role in helping people experience the city differently - more slowly, more locally and more connected to the living environment around them.



The Big Lunch and The Big Help Out are teaming up on 5-8 June 2026

This year, The Big Lunch and The Big Help Out are teaming up on 5-8 June for a weekend of friendship, food, fun and action – and everyone's invited! It's one big do – a chance to meet, eat and lend a hand locally in the UK's biggest celebration of community. Big or small, what you do is up to you – a garden party with the neighbours, a local litter pick or helping a good cause for the day – we can all do something!






If you're a seasoned Big Luncher - how about getting ready for plastic free July with a waste free picnic: <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/get-involved/what-you-can-do/plastic-free-picnic/>

And why not get everyone together to lend a hand at your event this year? That might be setting everyone to scrub down the benches in your park, doing some gardening for someone who'd appreciate it, or asking people to bring food to donate to a food bank. It's sure to give everyone that feel-good feeling!






Or if you're part of a community group or organisation which has amazing volunteers, you could hold a Big Lunch to say a big thank you for their time. It's a perfect event to hold as part of Volunteers' Week (1-7 June 2026) as part of the Month of Community.

Across Birmingham, The Big Lunch could act as a simple but powerful reminder that stronger communities often begin with small moments of connection. Whether it's a street gathering, picnic in a park, community garden event, shared lunch at a local centre or neighbours chatting over tea and cake, these moments help build relationships, trust and belonging.

Big Lunch events can happen almost anywhere:

-  parks and green spaces
-  school grounds
-  canal-side spaces
-  neighbourhood streets
-  community venues and gardens

Within a City of Nature, these shared community moments matter. They help people feel more connected not only to each other, but also to the places where they live. If you are thinking of organising something locally, a few simple steps can help:

-  choose a date and time that works for your community
-  invite neighbours, local groups or friends to help shape the event
-  find a welcoming space where people can gather comfortably
-  spread the word through conversations, posters and local social media groups
-  keep food simple and shared then everyone can contribute in their own way

Sometimes healthier, greener and more resilient communities begin with something very simple. People gathering together and feeling welcome.



City of Nature Programme Update - The Five Themes

Over recent months, work linked to Birmingham's City of Nature Plan has continued developing across all five themes: Fair, Healthy, Green, Involved and Valued. What has become increasingly clear is that these five themes are not separate areas of work. They are deeply connected and often overlap through projects, partnerships, conversations and everyday activity happening across the city.

A significant milestone has been the development of handbooks across all five themes. Together, these provide practical frameworks, examples and shared language to help connect strategy with on-the-ground action. Helping every one to see where they can take action.

Alongside the handbooks, a growing collection of visual posters and summary graphics is helping make some of these ideas more accessible and easier to share across communities, organisations and networks.

Fair City

Conversations continue around access, environmental justice and the importance of ensuring all communities can benefit from quality green spaces and healthy environments close to where they live.

Healthy City

The relationship between nature, wellbeing and prevention remains a strong area of focus, with increasing recognition of parks and green spaces as part of wider public health infrastructure supporting physical, mental and social wellbeing.

Green City

Work linked to biodiversity, connectivity, climate resilience, active travel and green infrastructure continues to develop across the city, with growing interest in how individual sites and projects connect into wider ecological networks.

Involved City

Partnerships, volunteering, Friends Groups, Green Champions and community-led activity continue playing an essential role in building stewardship, local participation and shared ownership of green spaces and neighbourhood projects.

Valued City

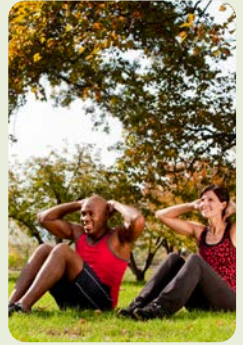
Ongoing discussions around natural capital, funding, investment, skills, growth and long-term sustainability are helping strengthen understanding of how green spaces contribute socially, environmentally and economically to the city.

Across all five themes, the emphasis is increasingly shifting from isolated projects towards a more connected living system approach:

linking people,
place,
nature,
health,
learning,
governance
and long-term stewardship.

Progress is rarely linear and much work remains ongoing, but there is growing evidence of relationships, ideas and practical activity continuing to connect across Birmingham in positive and encouraging ways.

For more information you can visit the Naturally Birmingham Website - <https://naturallybirmingham.org/>



World Ocean Day - 8th June 2026

World Ocean Day unites millions, across the globe on the 8th of June (and throughout the year) to protect our blue planet.

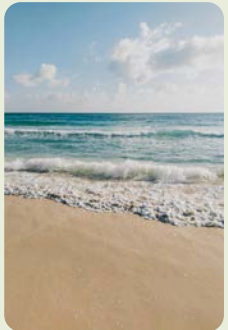
One Ocean, One Climate, One Future — Together

The World Ocean Day 2026 Action Theme – Strong Marine Protected Areas for Our Blue Planet – will guide global action over the coming years. It brings together the momentum of recent multi-year action themes – Catalyzing Ocean-Climate Action and Protecting at Least 30% of Lands, Waters, and Ocean by 2030 (30×30) – and aligns powerfully with the recent ratification of the High Seas Treaty to protect biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction.

The Action Theme is universal. Whether coastal or landlocked, every nation depends on a healthy ocean for climate stability, biodiversity, and human well-being. Protection of the ocean – including the High Seas – is a shared responsibility for our blue planet.

Get ready! Early each year, WorldOceanDay.org features new tools, resources, and messaging for you to use as you wish, for World Ocean Day and throughout the year. They invite you to join them and others around our blue planet to make World Ocean Day 2026 the most impactful yet – and to help turn global commitments into lasting protection.

<https://worldoceanday.org/take-action/action-theme/>



World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, 17th June

Rangelands: Recognize. Respect. Restore.

Rangelands are among the **world's most extensive** yet most overlooked ecosystems. Covering more than half of the Earth's land surface, they play a vital role in food security, water cycles, biodiversity conservation and climate resilience. **They support the lives of around two billion people worldwide**, including many pastoralists and Indigenous Peoples whose knowledge and stewardship have sustained these landscapes for generations.

In 2026, Desertification and Drought Day put rangelands at the centre of global attention. Held under the theme "Rangelands: Recognize. Respect. Restore.", this year's observance calls for greater recognition of the economic, ecological and cultural value of rangelands, respect for their traditional stewards and stronger investment in restoring degraded rangelands.

This year's event aligns with the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, helping to underscore the need to raise awareness, encourage responsible investment and strengthen policies that safeguard rangelands and pastoralist livelihoods.

Up to half of the world's rangelands are degraded or at risk, with serious consequences for food and water security, biodiversity, climate resilience and rural livelihoods. Yet viable pathways for action already exist. Investing in sustainable land and water management, improved drought preparedness and community-led restoration can help secure these landscapes and the people who depend on them. Now is the time to recognize the value of rangelands, respect their traditional stewards and restore these landscapes for future generations.

Birmingham Destination Parks Feature - Sheldon Country Park and Farm

Birmingham has over 600 parks and green spaces that are managed by Birmingham City Council. From small Public Open Spaces to Recreation Grounds (Recs) and include seven "Destination Parks."

Sheldon Country Park is a great example of a destination park with a "**countryside in the city**" experience. It covers 300 acres and contains grassland, wetland, old hedgerows and mature woodland making up wonderful natural landscapes. There is also a small farm with pigs, goats and Jersey cows. All this sits alongside Birmingham International Airport and there is a viewing point on to the runway for aircraft enthusiasts. It lies just under a mile away from the farm buildings, and can only be accessed on foot (no motor vehicles).

How to get there and parking:

Sheldon Country Park is situated on the eastern edge of Birmingham, seven miles from the city centre. The main entrance is on Ragley Drive - B26 3TU

Free parking off Ragley Drive, opposite the entrance.

Pedestrian entrances on Church Road and Holly Lane (via the Marston Green station car park).

Buses 60 and 72 pass near the country park.

King George V Playing Field (B26 3XX) is also part of Sheldon Country Park

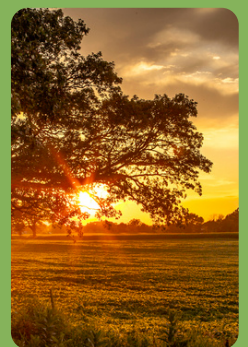
The country park and farm are managed by Birmingham's Ranger Service and a team of volunteers. Sheldon Country Park and Farm has won gold at Solihull College & University Centre and Trafford-Upon-Avon Colleges' brand-new Social Value Excellence scheme. As a direct result of the park rangers' commitment to 'giving back' and working in partnership with the colleges to offer hands on experiences for animal care courses, they got the points needed for gold. A big well done to our rangers who support a huge number of learning and volunteering opportunities at the farm.

There is also a children's play area and a small friendly independently run Tea Room on site.

The seventeenth century Old Rectory Farm, a former dairy farm within the park, has been superbly restored and now functions as a Demonstration Farm showcasing traditional methods of farming. Old Rectory Farm was home to clergyman Thomas Bray from 1690 to 1721

Other features

- Community orchard
- Broad paths, relatively flat, have been cut throughout the park to improve accessibility
- Hard-surfaced nature trail suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs – accessible from main car park
- Five kilometre walking route (Solihull Way)
- Local cycle route passes through the park
- Westley Brook and Hatchford Brook run through the country park
- The Sheldon Ward Millennium Woodland is planted on the site,



Friends of Sheldon Country Park friends group: [Friends of Sheldon Country Park](#)

Outdoor Office Day - 11th June

Work, well-being, and urban nature are inseparably connected. What if urban nature is your office? Experience how working outdoors, nature connectedness and staying active enhances your well-being and productivity. On June 11, 2026, join thousands of like-minded people to celebrate healthier working in the city. Outdoor Office Day is an open invitation. For everyone. And until the annual celebration of [#OutdoorOfficeDay](#) don't forget to make nature and outdoor movement a regular part of all your workdays. Follow [#OutdoorOfficeDay](#) and get inspired every single day.



Across Birmingham, more people are starting to rethink where work happens. Every day people are:

- Making a phone call while walking through a park.
- Arranging meetings beside a lake or reservoir.
- Reading outdoors during a lunch break.
- Taking a notebook, laptop or conversation into a garden, balcony or green space.



Even a short pause outside between meetings can change the rhythm of a working day. Outdoor Office Day invites people to explore the relationship between work, wellbeing and nature connection. Within a City of Nature, green and blue spaces are not only places for leisure. They can also support creativity, reflection, movement, mental wellbeing and healthier ways of working.



As Birmingham continues developing greener neighbourhoods, active travel routes and connected public spaces, there is growing recognition that everyday contact with nature can positively support both wellbeing and productivity. On 11 June, why not try connecting with outdoors while you work:

Are you working at the office?

- have a walking meeting
- discover the urban nature in the vicinity of your office
- replace a coffee break with a walk outdoor
- discover the greenest routes to your office
- change a parking place into an outside terrace
- organise your own outdoor event for your colleague



Are you working remotely or from home?

- place tables and chairs and work outside
- have your lunch walking outside
- do some of your phone calls during a walk
- discover the urban nature in the vicinity of your home
- create your own nature desk



International Day of Play - 11th June 2026

Play is sometimes spoken about as though it is separate from learning, wellbeing or development. But for children, play is often how learning begins.



Through play, children explore the world around them, test ideas, build confidence, develop relationships and make sense of experiences.

Play supports physical health, emotional wellbeing, creativity, resilience and social connection. It helps children develop imagination,

problem-solving skills and independence, while also creating joy, curiosity

and belonging. Importantly, play is not only about equipment or organised activities. It can happen:

- in parks and green spaces
- in school grounds
- on journeys and neighbourhood streets
- through den building, climbing, digging, imagining and exploring.

Outdoor play and nature connection are especially important. Contact with the living world gives children opportunities to take manageable risks, notice wildlife, experience changing seasons and build direct relationships with place and environment. Research increasingly shows that play supports healthy brain development, emotional regulation and social learning. Through play, children learn how to cooperate, negotiate, adapt, communicate and recover from setbacks. They test boundaries, solve problems creatively and build confidence in their own abilities. Play also helps children process the world emotionally. Moments of imagination, movement and exploration can provide comfort, freedom and reassurance, particularly during periods of stress, uncertainty or change. This became especially visible during and after the pandemic, when access to outdoor spaces and opportunities for informal play became even more important for many families and communities.

As adults, it is easy to underestimate how significant simple experiences can be:

- mud between fingers,
- climbing trees,
- watching insects,
- building dens,
- running freely across open grass, or having time and space to explore without constant structure.

These experiences often become part of the deepest layer of memory and belonging children carry into adulthood. Play also matters for adults and communities. Shared play and playful interaction can strengthen family relationships, support mental wellbeing and help create more welcoming and connected neighbourhoods. Across Birmingham, there is growing interest in how cities can better support children's freedom to play, move and explore safely within everyday environments.

This conversation will continue through events such as the upcoming Play Makers Conference in July - More information here: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/roam1/2165171> Play Makers Brum is a one-day conference bringing together grassroots play organisations, play work practitioners, and local authority leaders to explore the vital role of outdoor play in our communities. This is a space to share stories, build connections, and — together — strengthen the collective voice for play across the region.

Within a City of Nature, play is not an optional extra. It is part of how children build relationships with the world they will grow up to care for.

Regular Feature Reminders - Don't miss out!

Many member organisations of the City of Nature Alliance have regular newsletters and updates that you can sign up to receive. They all cover different aspects of living in a Nature City, wildlife, friends of green space groups, tree people, nature and health, therapeutic horticulture and gardening and much, much more. Below you can find links to some of their websites to catch up with what is happening and sign up to their publications - so you never miss out. **Find out how you can get involved.**



Birmingham Parks and Green Spaces - Green Champions

If you want receive this Green Champion Newsletter and online meeting invites directly via email please complete this form: <https://forms.office.com/e/Va1UFkAe4B> or email the City of Nature Team: Cityofnature@birmingham.gov.uk

Visit the Naturally Birmingham website: <https://naturallybirmingham.org/> To find out more about:

- Birmingham City Councils City of Nature Plan
- Green Champions Volunteering Programme
- Young Green Champions for Schools
- The City of Nature Alliance
- Ranger Service Healthy Parks Programme



Natural England - Health and Environment

Natural England have Health and Environment Lead roles to support and create connections between any Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprises, health practitioners, Community Wellbeing Roles, or local authorities interested in increasing the offer of Green / Blue Social Prescribing. To receive the West Midlands Natural England newsletter please contact: Natalie.Kenn@naturalengland.org.uk



BOSF - Birmingham Open Spaces Friends Groups

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. Find out more here: <https://bosf.org.uk/>



Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust

Works with BCC 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 here: <https://www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/about>



Birmingham TreePeople - Urban Forest Volunteers

Birmingham TreePeople, organise and oversee the Urban Forestry Volunteer Scheme in the city. It was originally set up as part of the Tree Council's Tree Warden Scheme by Birmingham City Council's Tree Officers in 2016, and is now one of the largest group of its kind in the UK. For more information contact: <https://birminghamtreepeople.org.uk/about-us/urban-forest-volunteers/>



Thrive - In Kings Heath Park

Thrive has been using social and therapeutic horticulture and gardening to change people's lives since 1979. Discover the different ways to follow what's happening at Thrive, from news and campaigns to advice and developments in social therapeutic horticulture <https://www.thrive.org.uk/get-involved/keep-in-touch>



Birmingham's Park Ranger Service – Climate Action

Linking People and Nature

World Environment Day - June 5th & the Role of Rangers

Climate action is often imagined as something large-scale:

- international agreements,
- renewable energy infrastructure,
- major policy shifts or technological change.

But across Birmingham, some forms of climate and environmental action happen much more quietly through the everyday work of caring for green spaces and helping people connect with nature. Micro actions, on a world scale, but they happen everyday and they add up. It's the message that keeps being repeated.

This includes work supported through Birmingham's Ranger Service and its wider partnerships across the city. Rangers help manage habitats, support biodiversity, work alongside volunteers and Friends Groups, encourage outdoor learning, improve access to nature and help people better understand the living systems around them. These actions all contribute towards wider environmental resilience. Healthy soils, trees, wetlands, meadows and connected green spaces help support biodiversity, cooling, flood management, pollinators and healthier urban environments. At the same time, helping people build stronger relationships with nature can also support long-term environmental stewardship and awareness.

Across the UK, Ranger Services increasingly play important roles in nature recovery, visitor engagement, conservation education and community participation.

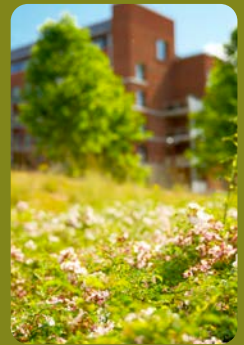
Often this work happens quietly and locally:

- through walks,
- conversations,
- volunteering,
- practical management,
- shared learning
- and helping people notice the natural world around them.

They aren't always flagged as climate action. But climate action is not only about changing technologies and systems. Perhaps it is also about strengthening relationships between people, place and the living environment we all depend upon.

Working with partners like ecobirmingham: <https://ecobirmingham.com/> and The Active Wellbeing Society: <https://theaws.co.uk/> Urban sustainability is advancing in the city.

But we need to keep moving forward - through small actions - together.



Out and About in June with the City's Park Rangers

Get Active in Aston, Newtown & Nechells Parks!

A fun programme of activities are being delivered by the Council's Park Rangers help to help improve your health and wellbeing as well as caring for your parks and open spaces. Activities support volunteering, deliver nature based health interventions to increase physical activity levels and improved mental health.



Come along, get stuck in, and help make our parks better for both people and wildlife

- No experience needed – just enthusiasm!
- Wear suitable outdoor clothing and footwear.
- **Check for cancellation in bad weather.**

For more information please email Lickey.hub@birmingham.gov.uk

Follow Birmingham Parks and Green Space, Birmingham Open Spaces Online or Naturally Birmingham on social media to keep up to date with what's happening in May.

Check out your park's notice board.



Or visit the Naturally Birmingham Website: <https://naturallybirmingham.org/out-and-about-with-birmingham-park-rangers/>

To see all the dates for Ranger led activities in Aston, Newtown & Nechells Parks in June

Get Involved in June with the City of Nature Alliance

The City of Nature Alliance brings together a wide range of organisations, groups, and individuals who care about Birmingham's green and blue spaces and June is full of opportunities to get involved.

Across the city this month you'll find activities you can join including:

- Birmingham Open Spaces Forum - Birmingham Friends of Open Spaces Groups volunteer days - Various and BOSF events: <https://bosf.org.uk/bosf-events/>
- Activities at Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens - <https://www.castlebromwichhallgardens.org.uk/events-calendar/>
- Ecobirmingham - <https://ecobirmingham.com/events/>
- Thrive - <https://www.thrive.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer>
- The Field Studies Council - <https://www.field-studies-council.org/courses-and-experiences/>
- The Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust - <https://www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/events>
- Birmingham Botanical Gardens - <https://birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk/whats-on/>
- The Active Wellbeing Society - <https://theaws.co.uk/activity-and-support/>

JUNE



From wildlife watching and volunteering to walks, workshops, and community events, there's something for all ages and interests. Events and activities are regularly updated, so please check all social media channels for the latest information and joining instructions.

There's always something happening and everyone is welcome.

Clean Air Day - 18th June 2026

Public Health England described air pollution as the single biggest environmental risk to public health. And air pollution contributes to between 28,000 and 36,000 premature deaths across the UK every year through conditions such as cancer, heart and lung disease.

- In the UK, cars and vans are the biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to climate change.
- Burning fossil fuels for transport produces a variety of emissions which damage the planet, our health, or both.
- By travelling in cleaner and greener ways, we can directly reduce both air pollution and carbon emissions – and therefore help protect the planet.

<https://www.actionforcleanair.org.uk/campaigns/clean-air-day>

The Government and local authorities are working to tackle this issue in a number of ways. In Birmingham the air pollutant of greatest concern is nitrogen dioxide. And around 80% of the pollutant is created by internal combustion engines.

We know the public are concerned about the impact of air pollution on their health, but many people across the UK don't feel like they have the choice to travel in cleaner and greener ways. We need investment in cleaner and greener travel options so that as many people as possible can benefit. If more of us can walk, wheel, cycle or use reliable public transport, it will make the air cleaner for us all and help to protect our health and the planet. It will also improve local economies, reduce noise pollution and congestion, and make our communities more attractive to travel around.

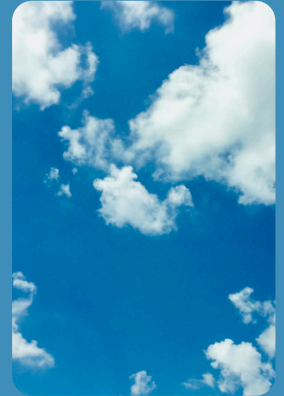
25% of the trips we take in England are under one mile – which can be walked on average in around 15 minutes. If everyone switched just one car journey a month for a bus trip, there would be a billion fewer car journeys each year in the UK.

50% of short urban trips in England walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030 would avoid 107,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂ equivalent), which would power more than 244,000 houses with electricity for one year.

Taking the train also produces nearly 80% less carbon emissions than driving, helping to protect the environment.

We need to take action to make walking, cycling, and wheeling safer and ensure that everyone can access public transport that is reliable, affordable, and efficient.

That's why this Clean Air Day, we're asking the public to use your voice to call for cleaner and greener transport to protect our health and the planet.



Wildlife Watching in June – Natures Calendar

June continues the great unfolding of summer, but this month's theme perhaps sits not only in what we can easily see — but also in the countless small things we cannot. The living world is full of micro activity.

Beneath our feet, soils are alive with fungi, bacteria, insects and microscopic organisms quietly supporting fertility, decomposition and plant growth. Rivers carry tiny aquatic life almost invisible to us. Pollinators move from flower to flower while birds search constantly for food to feed growing young.

Much of this activity goes unnoticed, yet it underpins the health of the whole system. June is also a month of movement and emergence.

Painted Lady butterflies may begin appearing after extraordinary migrations from North Africa and mainland Europe. It is remarkable to think that such delicate insects can travel such vast distances before arriving in gardens, parks and green spaces across Birmingham. <https://butterfly-conservation.org/butterflies/painted-lady>

Foxgloves are biennial or perennial and flower from June to September. Flowers are pink-purple in colour, tube-shaped and grow on a tall spike occasionally white and showing darker coloured spots on the lower lip of the flower. The plant itself can grow up to 2m tall. The species grows particularly well in acidic soil. Look out for it on woodland edges, roadside verges, heathland and in gardens and hedgerows. Foxglove contains a chemical called digitalis that can be used to treat heart failure and high blood pressure by raising blood flow and increasing the body's defence mechanisms. **However, the plant is poisonous if consumed directly, and can cause a number of health problems.**

Along rivers and canals, damselflies and dragonflies become more active while, beneath the surface, fish such as perch move quietly through deeper water, often unseen. The perch is a medium-sized fish with a characteristic humped shape. A predator, the perch feeds on invertebrates, crayfish and other fish. It lives in large ponds, lakes, reservoirs, canals and lowland rivers, and is often seen in shoals.

As bird nesting season continues, extra care is important in parks, meadows and open grassland. Fledgling birds may be on the ground nearby while species such as skylarks nest in longer grass and can be extremely difficult to spot. **Please keep dogs on leads**

As evenings grow warmer, bats may also become easier to notice moving against the twilight sky. For anyone interested in learning more, a bat detector can open up an entirely new layer of the nocturnal world that normally remains hidden from human senses.

June reminds us that living systems are built from countless tiny interactions happening continuously around us.

In a City of Nature, every observation — whether of a butterfly, a bat, a flower or a fledgling bird — helps build a wider understanding of how these connected systems are functioning over time. **Helping to record wildlife is micro volunteering and can have a huge impact.**

The small things matter. And often, they are supporting everything.



Things to Do in the Garden in June

June is a month of growth, colour and increasing abundance in the garden.

Borders begin to fill out, vegetables establish quickly, and pollinators become a constant presence around flowers, herbs and fruiting plants.

Longer daylight hours and warmer temperatures mean gardens often need more regular attention, particularly during dry periods. Watering deeply and less frequently can help encourage stronger root growth, while mulching around plants helps retain moisture and support soil health.



According to seasonal guidance from the Royal Horticultural Society, June is a good time for:

- 🌱 Continuing to sow quick-growing crops such as salad leaves, beetroot, carrots and beans
- 🍓 Harvesting early strawberries, herbs and summer salads
- 🌸 Deadheading flowers to encourage continued blooming through summer
- ✂️ Trimming spring-flowering shrubs once flowering has finished
- 🌿 Supporting climbing plants and tying in new growth
- 💧 Keeping containers and hanging baskets well watered during warmer weather

June is also one of the richest months for pollinators. Lavender, foxgloves, alliums and many cottage garden flowers become busy with bees, hoverflies and butterflies throughout the day.

Gardens continue to play an important role as part of Birmingham's wider ecological network. Even small outdoor spaces can support biodiversity through:

- nectar-rich planting
- pollinator-friendly herbs and flowers
- avoiding pesticides where possible
- shallow water for birds and insects
- leaving some quieter areas for wildlife

As gardens become fuller and more active, this is also a wonderful time to slow down and notice the smaller details: damselflies near ponds, young birds exploring boundaries, bees sleeping inside flowers at dusk, and the evening scent of roses, jasmine and honeysuckle drifting through warm air.

Visit the Thrive website to find out: [How gardening can make you feel part of a community](#)



Gardening doesn't have to be a solo activity. Sharing tips with others or joining gardening groups brings the joy of being part of a community.



Young Green Champions: National Insect Week - Stand Tall for the small



Birmingham's youngest nature heroes are stepping up — and they're bringing big ideas in small wellies!



The Royal Entomological Society is devoted to the understanding and development of insect science.

They support international collaboration, research and publication and aim to show every person how remarkable and valuable insects are and want to enrich the world with insect science.

What are insects?

Insects are everywhere.

Insects are creatures that have bodies with three segments that are protected by a hard shell. They have three pairs of legs and a pair of antennae. A lot of insects also have two pairs of wings.

Insect Week 2026 will take place on 22-28 June.

Organised by the Royal Entomological Society, and supported by partner organisations throughout the UK and Europe, Insect Week is a celebration of all things insect.

Wherever you live, it's an opportunity to take part in insect science, get to know insects, learn from experts, and have fun.

The Royal Entomological Society has a collection of educational resources relating to insects and entomology, Insect Week partners and other sources.

<https://www.insectweek.org/learning-resources/>

Over one million species of insects have been described and named worldwide. There are more than 24,000 species in the UK alone and we can find insects in almost every habitat. They can be pollinators, predators, pests, parasites and prey and their study is an important part of conservation, food production, medicine and ecology.

<https://www.insectweek.org/discover-insects/>

Today, 41% of insects face extinction. BUT it's not too late. You can take action today, and The Wildlife Trusts are here to help with a free downloadable Action for Insects guide with all the information and support you need to start helping insects where you live - including tips on insect-friendly gardening, going chemical-free and small actions that can make a big difference.

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/take-action-insects>

Summer solstice - Sunday, June 21 2026 (9:24 am BST)

The summer solstice in 2026 occurs in the UK on Sunday, June 21 at 9:24 am BST. It marks the official start of astronomical summer and the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere, bringing over 16 hours of daylight to Birmingham.

The Science: It occurs when the Earth's tilt toward the sun is at its maximum (23.5 degrees).

Daylight Hours: At the latitude of Birmingham, you can expect the sun to rise around 4:45 am and not set until roughly 9:45 pm.

Many cultures celebrate the solstice with mindful walks, outdoor adventures, and gatherings around bonfires.

Stonehenge: The most iconic gathering in the UK takes place at the ancient stone circle in Wiltshire. Open access is permitted by English Heritage, allowing the public to watch the sunrise align perfectly with the stones.

Since humans began using the Sun as a timekeeper, particularly when it came to the cycle in farming, the summer solstice has been marked with varying degrees of importance. Perhaps most famously, the ancient monument Stonehenge has for some time been the centre of a ritual celebration.

This comes from the fact the stones are lined up to frame the rising of the Sun on the solstice, perhaps suggesting a connection to the day and as a celebration of Sun. However it isn't clear if marking summer solstice was indeed its purpose. The stones also mark the position of sunset on the winter solstice, and so may instead indicate a place to request the return of the summer months. In any case, many modern day religions gather at the site to mark the occasion: it is also one of the rare times visitors are allowed to walk right up to the stones themselves.

Elsewhere around the world, celebrations range from the biannual appearance of the feathered serpent shadow on the pyramid at Chichén Itzá in Mexico to a range of floral-themed events in countries like Sweden and Latvia. In the southern hemisphere, where the summer solstice occurs in December, the day is instead strongly associated with Christmas, having once been the day of its celebration until various calendar changes shifted the dates apart.

What is the difference between Midsummer's Day and the summer solstice?

Midsummer's Day occurs annually on 24 June and is one of the four Quarter Days in the UK Legal Calendar. The other Quarter Days are Lady Day (25 March), Michaelmas (29 September) and Christmas Day (25 December). Quarter days are four traditional dates in the calendar year marking the divisions between the seasons. Historically, they were significant for legal, agricultural, and financial matters—such as paying rent, settling debts, and starting employment contracts



Earth Stories – Memories, Hopes and Happenings

The scent of pink roses is drifting across my patio as I write this. The dogwood is alive with the sound of bees and their movement sends flurries of tiny white petals down onto my writing pad. The shadows of birch leaves dance across the table and I turn my hand over to try and hold them for a moment. Little things - they are so important.

As we head into the month that includes the longest day, I have found myself thinking about all the small things that will fill those 16 hours of daylight and how they change as we move into dusk and night time. Not dramatic announcements or grand declarations. Just the things that quietly continue shaping the world around us every single day. A blue damselfly moving so lightly above the river that it almost seems suspended between water and air. Bees buried deep within lavender while the city carries on around them their work continuing almost unnoticed. The soft pink and purple light of the solstice sunrise slowly finding its way across rooftops, trees and water returning colour to the landscape once more.

June has a way of making the living world feel close again. Not distant and not abstract. But present. Almost insisting on our attention - scents, sights, sounds seem to come and seek us out whether we are looking for them or not. Reminds me of that song “June is bustin’ out all over” from Carousel. A full on production of nature. And perhaps that is why this month’s “micro edition” feels so important to me. Because when we talk about climate action, biodiversity, sustainability or healthier cities, it is easy to imagine change only in terms of vast systems and impossible scale. But living systems rarely work that way. Life is made of tiny parts and the relationships between them. It works through countless micro interactions repeated over time.

Change happens when someone decides to walk today instead of drive. When neighbours share food outside. When a conversation happens that changes how someone sees their place in the world. On their own, they can seem so small. And yet perhaps that is how real change finally happens. Not when one single action transforms everything overnight, but when enough small actions begin accumulating until they quietly become culture.

I will be baking my two favourite muffins - fruit and nut and chocolate chip - for the Big Lunch. And probably having that conversation about why tea tastes better when you drink it outside. I might try making lavender shortbread, but that’s not to everyone’s taste. “oh no! makes me think of Parma Violets” to save you Googling it - *an iconic British, violet-flavoured sweet first introduced in 1946. Hard, chalky, pale purple discs known for their distinctly floral, perfumed, and slightly soapy taste - a nostalgic flavour profile that famously divides opinion.*

The turning point of the year is certainly a time for reflection but also celebration of how well we have done so far, the work of volunteers, getting back on your bike, learning about environmental footprints, joining the Rangers or another organised walk, spotting the successful return of butterflies and birds home again from their winter in Africa. Baking cakes, making tea, taking time to talk and smell the roses. Lots of little things that make a massive difference.

Well done!

And don’t forget to enjoy some rest and relaxation this month as well.

See you soon - Deborah Needle - Editor



Birmingham City Council's Route to Net Zero

Net zero is the idea of reducing our emissions down to zero or as close as possible to prevent further temperature increases.

To find out more about BCC's Net Zero journey visit BCC website:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50282/climate_change/2641/what_is_climate_change_and_net_zero/4

To keep up to date you can receive the BCC **Greener Birmingham Bulletin** by email go to :

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20179/news_and_media/201/sign_up_for_regular_email_updates_from_birmingham_city_council#:~:text=Subscribe%20to%20the%20Birmingham%20Bulletin,on%20a%20range%20of%20topics



Scroll down and select the **“Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero”** option.



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