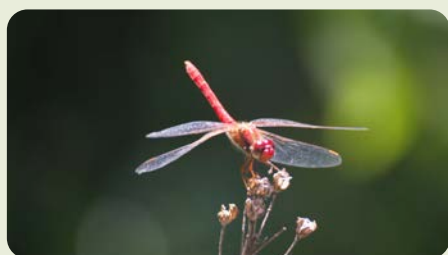


GREEN CHAMPIONS



Health - Naturally

New research indicates that rising temperatures due to climate change could lead to people moving less in the heat and consequentially result in a negative impact on health and wellbeing.

So how do you safeguard your long-term health by staying active when it gets really hot? Here are some things that might help you stay cool while staying active:

Exercise earlier The single most impactful change most people can make is to exercise when it is cooler, such as in the morning or evening, if this is possible.

Humidity matters too. Your body's primary way of losing heat is through sweat evaporating from the skin, which helps to lower your body temperature. But in humid conditions, that process is affected as the evaporation that cools your body reduces.



Noticing Nature

They don't ask permission.

*They simply appear-
small flashes of scarlet dancing among the grasses,
catching the morning light,*

"Out beyond the ring road"- D. Cartwright 2026

Learn More About - Going Plastic Free

Plastic-free living helps protect the environment by reducing waste that pollutes oceans, landfills, and ecosystems, and it safeguards wildlife from ingestion or entanglement in plastic debris

It also reduces exposure to microplastics, which are found in food, water, and even human tissues, potentially affecting health through inflammation and hormonal disruption.

Additionally, switching to reusable products can save money over time by eliminating the need for single-use items.

Living plastic-free can be challenging due to the prevalence of plastic in packaging, hygiene products, and everyday. Start small by focusing on high-impact areas like the kitchen, bathroom, and shopping routines. Gradually expand your efforts and use community support, online resources, and digital tools to stay motivated.

<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/plastics/living-without-plastic>



This Month's Hot Topic - The Weather

It would be strange to begin this month's newsletter by talking about anything other than the weather. June brought record-breaking temperatures to many parts of Europe, including the UK. Scientists continue to report that global average temperatures are rising, and the evidence that human activity is the primary driver of this warming is now overwhelming. The science is no longer the biggest question. The question is what we do next.

Climate change is often described in terms of two complementary approaches.

Mitigation means reducing the greenhouse gases we release into the atmosphere. This includes using cleaner energy, improving the efficiency of our buildings, changing the way we travel, restoring habitats that store carbon and making more sustainable choices in our everyday lives.

Adaptation means preparing for the changes that are already happening and those we know are coming. We need cooler neighbourhoods, more resilient communities, better flood management, healthier rivers, greener streets and places where both people and wildlife can cope with hotter summers and more extreme weather. Both matter.

Sometimes people say that the UK's contribution to global emissions is relatively small. Taken in isolation, that is true. But climate change is not solved by one country acting alone. The United Kingdom is part of a much larger European and global community. Every nation, every city, every organisation and every individual has a role to play. Progress emerges through the combined actions of millions of people. Here in Birmingham, we may not be able to change the world's climate on our own, but we can change the experience of living in our city.

Every tree planted creates shade. Every wetland restored stores water. Every meadow buzzing with pollinators strengthens biodiversity. Every volunteer hour helps nature recover. Every child who discovers the wonder of wildlife grows up understanding that they are part of the solution. These actions are not symbolic. They are resilience in action.

The word emergency often makes us think of fear and urgency. Yet emergencies also reveal something remarkable about people. They bring neighbours together. They inspire creativity. They remind us that communities are often stronger than we realise. Nature has always been one of our greatest teachers of resilience. Woodlands recover after storms. Meadows return after disturbance. Rivers reshape themselves around obstacles. Life adapts, connects and begins again. We can learn from that.

Hope is not pretending everything will be fine. Hope is recognising that our actions matter. A greener Birmingham will not emerge from one grand gesture. It will emerge from thousands of people, taking thousands of small actions, together.

Because resilience isn't something we have.
It's something we do.



What a Wild 30 Days That Was

Thirty days ago, on 1st June, I set myself a simple challenge: to notice, and to share one moment from nature every day. It sounded straightforward.

Thirty days later I realise that noticing is anything but simple.

Over the past month I've watched butterflies and jackdaws, wandered through botanical gardens, stood in the rain on Outdoor Office Day, celebrated volunteers, reflected on resilience, explored festivals and community events, admired the rose family growing in my own garden and, perhaps most importantly, met so many people quietly making Birmingham a better place.

It has been a reminder that nature isn't somewhere else. It isn't only found in nature reserves or national parks. It is woven through our streets, our schools, our workplaces, our churchyards, our parks and our neighbourhoods.

It has also been a month of contrasts. The hottest days reminded us that climate change is no longer a distant prediction. Around the world communities are asking how we adapt, how we become more resilient and how we create places where people and wildlife can thrive together. Yet alongside those challenges has been something equally powerful: people choosing to work together. Sometimes the biggest changes begin with the smallest acts of care.

As July begins, perhaps the most important question we can ask isn't how we save the world, but how we care well for the small part of it that has been entrusted to us.



One Journey - Many Communities

One of the most rewarding pieces of work so far this year has been creating a family of practical guides for schools, community groups and churches. Although each audience is different, something interesting happened as we developed them. The same five simple ideas kept appearing:

- We need to connect
- We need to act and be active.
- We must take notice, noticing is vital.
- We must all keep learning - start by being curious.
- We must give and share to feel less isolated.

These are, of course, also the Five Ways to Wellbeing. But they are also remarkably good principles for caring for nature. Healthy people help create healthy places. Healthy places help create healthy people. Perhaps we've been looking at the same journey from two different directions all along.

For our health the Five Ways to Wellbeing are five key actions people can do to support their own mental wellbeing. Everyone has mental health, and the five ways to wellbeing are designed to be flexible so people can adapt them to fit into their lives and the things they like to do. It is important to say here that they are not designed to be a replacement for mental health care. People with mental health conditions might find the five ways to wellbeing helpful as part of their self-care, but, depending on their diagnosis, they'll probably also get support through talking therapy and sometimes medication. And the five ways to wellbeing are not designed to be a solution to everything. Some things obviously also need to be tackled on a bigger, societal level alongside people's everyday actions - <https://bestforyou.org.uk/guides/self-care-and-wellbeing/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>

Over the coming months we'll continue sharing these guides, adapting them for different communities and supporting organisations that would like to use them.



Connect

The Five Ways to Wellbeing have guided health practitioners for many years. This month we've discovered they also provide a wonderful guide for caring for nature and the communities around us.

Everything begins with connection. Connection to nature. Connection to neighbours. Connection to place.

Whether through a local Friends group, volunteering, a community event or simply stopping to talk to someone while out walking, every relationship strengthens the resilience of our communities. Just as isolated habitats make it harder for wildlife to flourish, prolonged isolation can affect people too. We know that friendships, family and supportive communities are important for our wellbeing. Research suggests that feeling close to others, knowing that someone values us and having people we can rely on is a fundamental human need.

Strong relationships with a few people give us security, while the wider network of familiar faces, neighbours, fellow volunteers and people we meet through shared interests helps us feel that we belong. Sometimes it isn't the length of a conversation that matters, but the simple recognition of being seen, welcomed and included.

This is one of the quiet strengths of community action. A volunteering session may improve a park or create space for wildlife, but it also creates opportunities for people to laugh together, learn together, solve problems together and form friendships that continue long after the work is finished. Nature has a remarkable way of bringing people together. A shared interest in birds, flowers, trees or simply enjoying time outdoors often becomes the beginning of conversations that might never otherwise have happened.

Cities are connected by paths and roads. Communities are connected by relationships. The stronger those relationships become, the more resilient our communities become too.



Be Active

Being active doesn't always mean getting your running shoes or hiking boots on. Although those are great ways to exercise. Sometimes being active means planting a tree, caring for a wildlife area, joining a litter pick, maintaining a churchyard, creating space for pollinators or simply choosing to cycle or walk from the train station or bus stop rather than driving there.

Being active is one of the Five Ways to Wellbeing, and research consistently shows that moving our bodies is good for both our physical and mental health. It isn't only about improving fitness. Gentle movement can lift our mood, help us step away from the pressures of everyday life and remind us that we are capable of making a positive difference.

The good news is that being active doesn't have to mean running a marathon or spending hours in a gym. A short walk through your local park, joining a volunteer session, tending a community garden or simply taking ten minutes to stretch your legs outdoors can all be worthwhile. Small moments of movement soon add up.

Many of the best activities combine several of the Five Ways at once. Volunteering in a park or churchyard, for example, helps us to be active, connect with other people, learn new skills, take notice of the changing seasons and give something back to the community, all at the same time.

Of course, we are all different. What feels active for one person may not be right for another, and our health, mobility and circumstances all influence what is possible. The important thing is not to compare ourselves with others, but to find ways of moving that are safe, enjoyable and sustainable for us.

Small actions, repeated by many people, become something much bigger. Resilience isn't something we have. It's something we do.



Take Notice

Perhaps this has been the greatest lesson from 30 Days Wild.

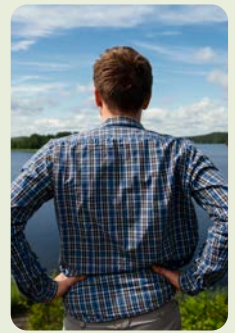
When we slow down, we begin to see. The scent of a rose. The cooling shade beneath a tree. A bee visiting lavender. The sound of rain. The changing seasons.

Our lives are often so busy that it's easy to miss the small moments happening all around us. Yet taking time to notice the world through our senses can have a remarkable effect on our wellbeing. Many people know this practice as mindfulness, but at its heart it is simply about paying attention to the present moment.

When we pause to really look, listen, smell, touch or even taste, we begin to feel more connected – not only to nature, but to ourselves as well. We notice birdsong we hadn't heard before, the changing colours of the seasons, the scent after rain or the movement of clouds across the sky. These moments don't solve every problem, but they can help us find a sense of calm, perspective and appreciation in the middle of busy lives.

Taking notice can be wonderfully simple. You might go for a walk and focus on what each of your senses is telling you. You could lose yourself in a creative activity, keep a nature journal, spend time cooking and noticing the colours, textures and aromas of fresh ingredients, or simply sit quietly for a few minutes beneath a tree and watch the world go by. This month has reminded me that noticing isn't a luxury. It's the beginning of caring. The more we notice, the more we value.

And what we value, we are far more likely to care for.



Keep Learning

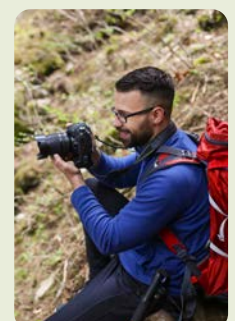
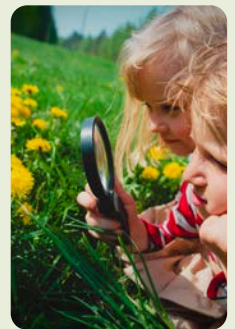
Nature never stops teaching us. And every conversation, every volunteer session, every school visit and every community project adds another piece to the picture. Learning doesn't always happen in classrooms. Sometimes it happens on a park bench, beside a canal, in a community garden or while sharing stories over a cup of tea.

One of the wonderful things about learning is that there is no finish line. Throughout our lives we continue to discover new ideas, develop new skills and see familiar things from fresh perspectives. Research suggests that lifelong learning can support our wellbeing by giving us a sense of purpose, building confidence and reminding us that we are capable of growing and adapting.

Perhaps the best learning is driven by curiosity rather than obligation. When we choose to learn something that interests us, the experience becomes enjoyable as well as rewarding. Better still, learning with other people gives us the opportunity to connect, share ideas and encourage one another along the way.

Nature offers endless opportunities to learn. You might discover the names of the trees in your local park, identify birdsong, try wildlife photography, follow a new recipe using seasonal ingredients, borrow a book from your local library, or learn a practical conservation skill through a volunteering session. Every new experience helps us see the world a little differently. One of the greatest lessons nature teaches us is that nothing thrives alone. We learn from one another just as much as we learn from books, courses or websites. Every shared conversation and every shared experience adds another thread to the story of our communities. Curiosity is one of our greatest renewable resources.

The more we learn, the more we realise there is still to discover—and perhaps that's one of nature's greatest gifts.



Give

Giving comes in many forms. Every act of generosity strengthens the community around us.

- Time.
- Encouragement.
- Skills.
- Experience.
- Listening.
- Sharing knowledge.
- Welcoming new people.

Research suggests that giving to others is good for our own wellbeing too. Acts of kindness can activate the brain's reward system, giving us a sense of purpose and reminding us that we can make a positive difference. Whether it's helping a neighbour, supporting a local project, sharing your experience or simply taking the time to listen, even small acts of generosity can have a lasting impact.

Giving also has a wonderful way of bringing together the other Five Ways to Wellbeing. We connect with people, learn new skills, become more active and often take greater notice of the communities around us. In helping others, we often discover strengths and friendships we didn't know we had.

Of course, giving doesn't mean giving until there is nothing left. Looking after ourselves is just as important as looking after others. The most sustainable acts of generosity come from a place of balance, where we care for our own wellbeing as well as supporting those around us.

There are countless ways to give. You might volunteer with a local community group, thank someone whose kindness has made a difference, encourage a friend, share your knowledge, welcome a new volunteer, or simply spend time with someone who would appreciate your company. Often the smallest gestures are remembered the longest.

The wonderful thing about giving is that it often creates more than it costs. Communities grow stronger. People feel valued. Nature benefits. And the person giving usually discovers they've received something too.

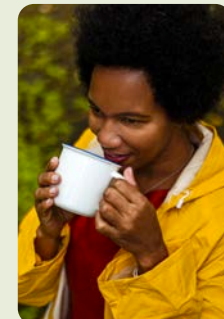
As another month begins, I'd like to thank everyone who continues to make Birmingham a greener, healthier and more connected city. Whether you've volunteered for an hour, planted a flower, joined a community event, supported a local project, welcomed someone new, or simply taken a moment to notice the world around you, you are helping to shape the future of our city.

Perhaps the most important question we can ask isn't how we save the world, but how we care well for the small part of it that has been entrusted to us.

Thank you for everything you do.

- Keep noticing.
- Keep connecting.
- Keep growing.

Small things matter. Together, they become something extraordinary.



Love Parks Week - Get Ready

Love Parks is **Keep Britain Tidy**'s annual campaign celebrating parks and green spaces, the people who care for them, and the countless benefits they bring to people, communities and our planet. <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/loveparks>

In 2026, Love Parks Week runs from 24 July to 2 August.

During this special week, hundreds of park managers and 'friends of' volunteer groups across England welcome their communities, hosting a diverse range of inclusive events.

From high-energy sports activities like Parkrun to calming mindfulness sessions such as Yoga and Pilates, there is something for everyone.

You might also find arts and crafts workshops or live music events, all with the shared purpose of celebrating our magical green spaces.

Why do we Love Parks?

Parks are so much more than just patches of grass — they're essential for our wellbeing and the health of our environment.

1. For your personal wellbeing: Parks are a sanctuary for both your physical and mental wellbeing. Spending time in them offers opportunities for exercise, social connection and stress reduction through a simple dose of nature.
1. For our communities: Parks are the heart of our communities, fostering social cohesion and giving everyone a place to come together. They also stimulate local businesses and economies by hosting a wide range of recreational and cultural activities.
1. For the planet: Parks are powerful tools in the fight against climate change. They help to sequester carbon, reduce the 'urban heat island effect' by providing natural shade, lower flood risks by absorbing rainwater and support biodiversity by creating essential habitats and wildlife corridors.

How do I get involved

Here's how you can get involved and show your love for parks:

- Check back nearer the time to [find your nearest events](#).
- Share your photos and stories on social media using #LoveParks to tell us why you love parks!
- Get hands-on by joining your nearest 'friends of' group and helping to care for your park. <https://bosf.org.uk/members/>



City of Nature Programme Update - Building the Operating Model

One of the quieter pieces of work taking place behind the scenes this year has been the development of Birmingham's future Parks & Green Spaces operating model.

That might sound like an organisational or management term, but an operating model is much more than a structure chart or a list of job titles.

It is the blueprint for how an organisation delivers its purpose. It describes not only what people do, but why they do it, how different teams work together, how services are delivered and, most importantly, the outcomes they are trying to achieve.

For Birmingham's Parks & Green Spaces Service, those outcomes are clear: healthier parks, richer biodiversity, stronger communities, improved health and wellbeing, greater climate resilience and a city where everyone has the opportunity to connect with nature.

Over recent months, Birmingham City Council has advertised a wide range of new roles across the service. While the recruitment process for the first posts has now closed, they represent an important milestone in bringing the 25-Year City of Nature Plan to life.

The new roles span many different areas, from biodiversity and conservation to park operations, community engagement, events, allotments and green space development. Each role is different, but together they form part of one connected system, supporting the care, management and future development of Birmingham's remarkable network of parks and green spaces.

Many of these opportunities have grown from the collaboration between Birmingham City Council, the City of Nature Alliance and partners involved in the Future Parks Accelerator and Urban Nature Development programmes, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the National Trust. They demonstrate what can be achieved when organisations work together around a shared vision.

A huge thank you goes to the Birmingham City Council officers who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to develop these new roles, navigate the many processes required to bring them forward and, at the same time, continue delivering day-to-day services across the city.

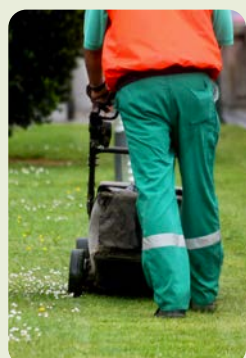
Transformation is rarely built through one big announcement. More often, it happens through hundreds of thoughtful decisions, careful planning and dedicated people working together. This is one of those moments.

While the early vacancies have now closed, we hope they are just the beginning. As Birmingham continues its journey as the UK's first accredited Nature City, we look forward to seeing the operating model continue to grow, evolve and support a greener, healthier and more connected future for everyone.

Jobs are advertised on WM Jobs: <https://www.wmjobs.co.uk/> where you can set up job alerts. And on BCC Parks and Green Spaces social media.

As the operational core grows, the next stage will be developing jobs and skills pathways in partnership with the City of Nature Alliance and education and training partners.

This will in turn allow us to deliver another City of Nature - Fair City aim which is to: Create a training and employment showcase of opportunities in the 'green sector' (F5).



Active Birmingham - Activity Finder (ABAF)

The Active Birmingham Activity Finder (ABAF) is a website that makes it easy to find physical activity sessions anywhere in Birmingham. <https://activebirmingham.co.uk/search>

You can search for:

- a specific sport or activity
- anything close to your location
- all of the sessions at a particular venue

You can also search for sessions provided for specific ages, genders, or different access needs.

The activity finder will show both free and paid sessions. Use it to:

- find activities online and in-person that suit your needs and preferences
- get directions for walking, cycling, or using public transport to reach parks, community centres, and other activity locations
- access information about local physical activity services and facilities
- discover what's happening in green and urban spaces, including activities run by local groups - such as the Active Wellbeing Society (TAWS)

For more information about getting active your way visit Birmingham City Council's website: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50356/creating_an_active_birmingham/2992/getting_active



Get Active Outdoors

Being active outdoors is one of the simplest ways to support both our physical and mental wellbeing. Whether you're taking a gentle walk, joining a local sports club, cycling with friends or trying something completely new, Birmingham's parks and green spaces provide fantastic places to get moving.

Research shows that spending time in green spaces can help reduce stress, improve mood and increase our sense of connection to the places where we live. Outdoor activities also bring people together, helping to reduce social isolation and create opportunities to meet others with shared interests.

Being active doesn't have to mean organised sport. It might be joining a walking group, taking part in a guided cycle ride, volunteering to care for your local park or simply making time to explore somewhere new. Every step outdoors is an opportunity to enjoy nature while investing in your own health and wellbeing.

If you're looking for somewhere to play sport, Birmingham's parks offer a wide range of outdoor facilities. You can search by activity, including football, tennis, bowls, athletics, cycling, cricket, basketball, outdoor gyms and much more.

Please note: when you visit the [Birmingham City Council Parks Sports Facilities](#) page, scroll down the page to where you can browse the type of sport or activity you're interested in.

There are so many ways to enjoy Birmingham's parks. Why not discover a new activity, visit a park you've never explored before, or encourage a friend to come along too? Nature, movement and community are a powerful combination for improving our wellbeing.



Birmingham Destination Parks Feature - King Heath Park

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."

The white house in Kings Heath Park was built in 1832. Next to the house is **Cartlands Tea Room** an independently run Victorian style tea room serving sandwiches, cakes and hot drinks. For opening times and menu: <https://www.cartlandsindependent.com/>

The Television Gardens at Kings Heath Park started in 1972 as a partnership between Birmingham City Council and television company ATV (which later became Central Television). The programme, Gardening Today showed viewers how to design and maintain their gardens. In 1996, Gardeners World moved to Kings Heath Park. Over the years they developed gardens with top designers like John Brookes, Robin Williams, Dan Pearson and Bonita Bolitis. The "TV Gardens" are now used to provide social and therapeutic horticulture programmes to people with a health, social or educational need. **Visit the [Thrive charity website](#) to find out more.**

The park covers around 35 acres. It has two playgrounds one by the Lodge at Vicarage Road is designed for 1 to 5 year olds. The second playground is by the Avenue Road entrance is designed for 5 to 12 year olds.

The Park provides good roosting, nesting and feeding opportunities for many birds, such as wintering Fieldfare and Redwing along with with mixed flocks of finches including, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Bullfinch and Goldfinch provide a healthy list for a relatively small area of green space Great Spotted Woodpeckers can be found nesting in the large Oaks and Poplars, alongside other hole nesting birds such as Blue, Great and Coal Tits, Nuthatch and Tree Creeper, with Blackbirds, Robins, Wrens and Dunnock flourishing in the undergrowth.

The park contains a diverse mix of vegetation and habitats with woodland plantation, a good number of mature and veteran oaks, open grass, a large pond with muddy margins, hedgerow and mature woodland bordering the green railway corridor.

[Kings Heath Plant Nursery](#) sells high quality seasonal bedding, shrubs, patio containers, hanging baskets and pot plants to the public.

There's a 2 kilometre walking route through the park. Find out more about [walking and jogging routes](#) in Birmingham.

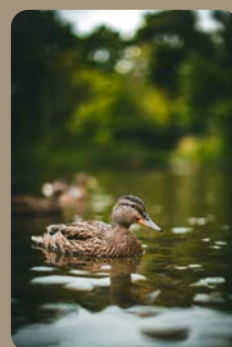
The Kings Heath Park Friends Group was established in November 2017 in collaboration with the Birmingham Open Space Forum and the Moseley and Kings Heath Shed. More information can be found on the [Birmingham Open Spaces Forum website](#).

Moseley and Kings Heath Shed

The Moseley and Kings Heath Shed's main purpose is to help reduce loneliness, isolation or social exclusion, among older men and women. There's an accessible, friendly, warm and welcoming place to gather, chat, share, socialise and enjoy a hot drink. [Find out more about the Shed on their website](#).

Find out more about the park here:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20089/parks/1679/kings_heath_park



Planning for a Climate Resilient Birmingham

Creating a greener, healthier and more resilient city takes action at every level.

Across Birmingham, community groups are planting trees, restoring habitats, improving parks and helping neighbours connect with nature.



At the same time, researchers, universities, local authorities and organisations are working together to understand how our city can adapt to a changing climate over the coming decades.

One example is the CARMINE project, a European collaboration bringing together science, technology and local knowledge to help metropolitan areas prepare for climate change. Birmingham is one of eight European case study areas, helping to develop practical tools that support better decision-making and strengthen climate resilience.

The project explores how nature-based solutions, digital modelling, artificial intelligence and local knowledge can work together to answer important questions. How can we create cooler neighbourhoods during heatwaves? Where should new trees be planted to provide the greatest benefit? How can green spaces help reduce flooding while supporting biodiversity and improving health and wellbeing?

What makes CARMINE particularly exciting is that local people are part of the process. Through Living Labs and workshops, residents, community organisations, land managers and professionals can help shape ideas, share local knowledge and contribute to future solutions.

There are two opportunities to get involved this summer:

10 July 2026 – Geodesign Workshop

Hosted at the University of Birmingham, this interactive session will explore climate justice, tree equity and urban greening in East Birmingham. Participants will use mapping tools to identify opportunities for trees, pocket parks and other nature-based solutions that could help shape future projects across the city and contribute to tools being developed for use across Europe.

10 September 2026 – Birmingham Living Lab

This free workshop will explore how Birmingham can become a more climate resilient city through urban greening. It is particularly relevant for anyone interested in urban trees or responsible for managing green spaces in their community. A vegetarian lunch will be provided, and the event is open to anyone with an interest in helping Birmingham prepare for warmer summers and more extreme rainfall.

If you would like to learn more, follow the latest developments through the [CARMINE project newsletter](#), explore practical climate adaptation guidance from [WM Adapt](#), or discover ideas for local environmental action in [Eco Birmingham's Sustainability Toolkit](#).

Climate resilience isn't built by one organisation or one project. It grows through thousands of decisions made by communities, businesses, researchers and individuals working together. From local parks and neighbourhood planting projects to European research partnerships, Birmingham is helping to shape a future where nature, people and climate resilience are all part of the same conversation.

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 to 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 - Five Ways to Wellbeing - Linking People and Nature

When most people think of Rangers, they often picture practical conservation work – managing habitats, maintaining footpaths, planting trees or caring for wildlife. These are all important parts of the role, but there is another side to Ranger work that is just as valuable: helping people connect with nature and with each other.

Long before the Five Ways to Wellbeing became widely recognised, Rangers were creating opportunities for people to Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give through time spent outdoors.

Every guided walk, volunteer session, school visit and community event is an invitation to connect – not only with the natural world, but with neighbours, friends and local communities. Whether someone joins a conservation task, attends a family event or simply stops to ask a question while out in the park, these conversations help build relationships that strengthen both people and places.

Ranger activities also encourage us to be active in ways that feel natural and enjoyable. Caring for a woodland, planting wildflowers, helping to manage habitats or exploring a country park all involve gentle physical activity while contributing to healthier, greener neighbourhoods.

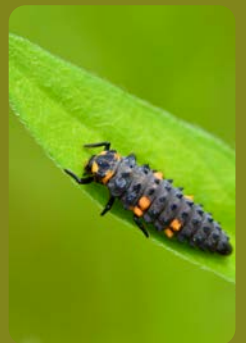
One of the greatest gifts Rangers offer is the opportunity to take notice. A walk led by a Ranger might reveal the call of a bird you had never noticed before, the tiny flowers hidden in the grass, the insects visiting a meadow or the changing colours of the seasons. These moments of discovery help us see familiar places with fresh eyes and often inspire a lifelong appreciation of nature.

Learning is woven into everything Rangers do. From helping children discover pond life for the first time to sharing traditional countryside skills or explaining how habitats support biodiversity, every activity offers the chance to learn something new. That learning builds confidence, curiosity and a deeper understanding of the world around us.

Finally, Rangers create countless opportunities for people to give. Volunteers contribute thousands of hours each year caring for parks, woodlands and green spaces across Birmingham. In return, they gain new skills, friendships, confidence and the satisfaction of knowing they are making a positive difference.

Healthy parks need healthy communities, and healthy communities need welcoming green spaces. Rangers help bring these together, creating places where people and nature can thrive side by side.

In many ways, the Five Ways to Wellbeing are simply another way of describing what Rangers have always done: creating opportunities for people to enjoy nature, care for the places they love and discover that, by looking after the natural world, we also look after ourselves.



Out and About in July 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

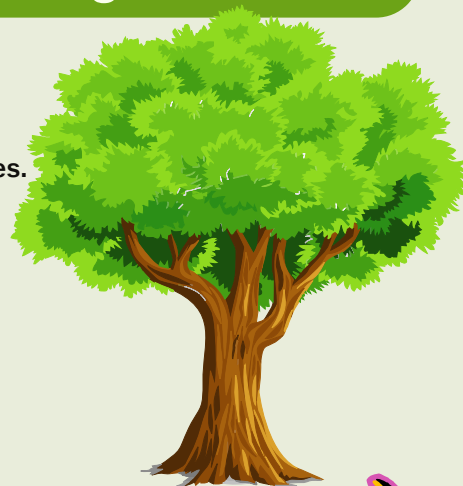
- No experience needed – just enthusiasm!
- Wear suitable outdoor clothing and footwear.
- **Check for cancellation in bad weather.**

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 this month.

Check out your park's notice board.

Or visit the Naturally Birmingham Website: <https://naturallybirmingham.org/out-and-about-with-birminghams-park-rangers/> to see all the dates for Ranger led activities in Aston, Newtown & Nechells Parks



Get Involved in July 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/>
- Birmingham Settlement - <https://www.birminghamsettlement.org.uk/>



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.



More Canals Than Venice?

Perhaps. But Birmingham's real network is something much bigger. People often say Birmingham has more canals than Venice. Whether that's technically true or not, it reminds us that Birmingham has always been a city connected by routes.

We have over 600 parks and green spaces linked by rivers, footpaths, cycleways, tree-lined streets and hidden corridors of nature and the Greenground Map helps people discover green and blue spaces across the city

<https://naturallybirmingham.org/birminghams-greenground-map/>

ecobirmingham has developed walking and cycling routes that encourage us to explore under our own steam: <https://ecobirmingham.com/project/69wards-by-bike-or-foot/> and Chris Millward has helped many of us see the invisible lines that connect neighbourhoods together using the Brum biosphere to highlight the ecological networks that support wildlife.

There are tree trails, Slow Ways, canal towpaths, nature reserves, botanical gardens, community gardens and countless local walks - with wild wanders waiting to be found. There are also train tracks and roads that allow us to travel further and find even more. Every one of these is an invitation to explore. And yet...

There are still gaps. Biodiversity continues to decline. Many people still don't know that there is nature just a few minutes from their front door. Some communities have wonderful green spaces but not enough safe or welcoming routes to reach them. Others have routes but little opportunity to stop, connect and become involved. So yes, Birmingham is brilliant. But it can become even brillianter.

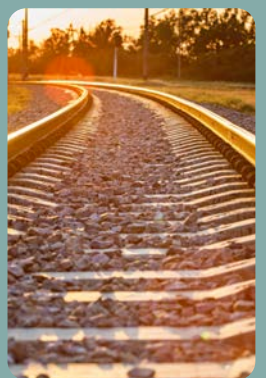
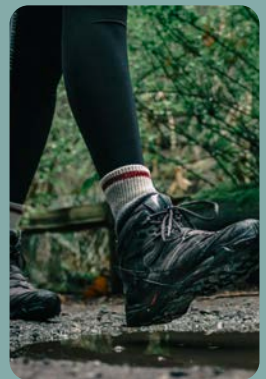
Not because we need to start again, but because we need to keep joining the dots. The city isn't simply a collection of parks. It's a living network. Places are connected by routes. People are connected by relationships. Nature is connected through habitats. Communities become stronger through shared purpose.

And resilience? We're talking about resilience a lot recently. Resilience isn't something we have. It's something we create through thousands of everyday actions.

- Planting a tree.
- Joining a Friends group.
- Walking instead of driving.
- Helping a school improve its grounds.
- Volunteering for a few hours.
- Stopping to notice the kingfisher on a canal, the bee in a verge, or the shade cast by a mature oak on a hot day.

Each action strengthens another connection. Together they create a city that is healthier, greener and fairer. A city that can breathe a little easier. A city where more people can breathe a little easier too. That's the Birmingham many of us are working towards. Not simply a city with remarkable parks and canals. A city where every route helps someone discover nature, every relationship helps someone feel they belong, and every small action contributes to something much bigger.

Because the strongest networks aren't just the ones shown on maps. They're the ones we create together. - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/deborah-needle-53399471/>



Wildlife Watching in July – Marvelous Meadows

July is the height of summer, and while trees often take centre stage in conversations about nature, this month belongs to another remarkable habitat – the meadow.

A meadow may appear, at first glance, to be simply long grass. Pause for a little longer and an entirely different world begins to emerge. Every square metre is alive with movement as flowers, grasses, insects, birds and mammals interact in thousands of tiny ways.

Meadows are among our richest habitats for biodiversity. They provide nectar for pollinating insects, seeds for birds, shelter for small mammals and hunting grounds for predators. Their deep-rooted plants also help improve soil health, store carbon and slow the movement of rainwater, demonstrating that beautiful places can also play an important role in creating healthier, more resilient landscapes.

Look closely and you may spot the gentle fluttering flight of the Meadow Brown butterfly, one of our most familiar summer butterflies. Although often overlooked because of its subtle colours, it is an important pollinator and a familiar sight in flower-rich grasslands. Among the grasses, patches of vibrant knapweed begin to flower, attracting bees, hoverflies, butterflies and countless other insects. Sometimes called the "butterfly supermarket", knapweed provides an abundance of nectar throughout the summer and becomes one of the busiest plants in any meadow.

Across Birmingham and the Black Country, **Marvellous Meadows**, led by the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust, is helping people discover, restore and celebrate these important habitats. Every meadow, whether in a country park, local nature reserve, roadside verge or community green space, contributes to a growing network supporting wildlife across the region. <https://www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/magnificentmeadows>

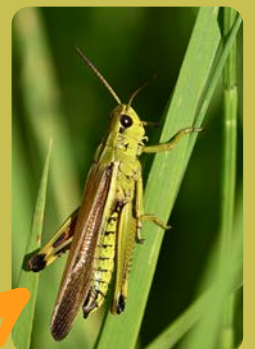
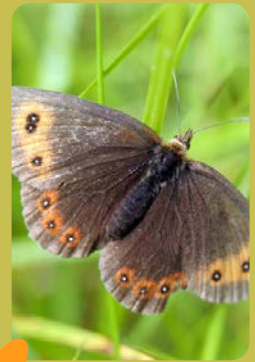
July also includes Plantlife's - **National Meadows Day**, an opportunity to appreciate these colourful landscapes and the remarkable variety of life they support. <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/national-meadows-day/>

Listen carefully and another layer of meadow life begins to reveal itself. Grasshoppers provide the soundtrack to warm summer afternoons, while high above, skylarks may still be singing as they hover almost invisibly in the sky before returning to nests hidden deep within the long grass.

These places remind us that nature is rarely still. Every flower supports an insect. Every insect feeds a bird or mammal. Every species plays its part in a much larger story. In a City of Nature, every observation matters. These moments of shared noticing are a form of micro-volunteering, contributing to the knowledge that helps guide conservation. You can help create small areas of wildflower meadow on your doorstep, you can find out more from **The Patchwork Meadow** - <https://www.thepatchworkmeadow.co.uk/>

This July, why not take a slower walk through a local meadow? You may see rabbits emerge during the quieter hours of the day, grazing the edges of meadows and creating the varied vegetation that many other species depend upon.

The more closely we look, the more we discover that some of nature's richest places are not the grandest landscapes, but the ones quietly flourishing beneath our feet.



Things to Do in the Garden in July

July is a month of abundance in the garden.

Borders are full of colour, vegetable plots begin rewarding our efforts with regular harvests and wildlife is everywhere. Bees move busily between flowers, butterflies drift through sunny borders and birds continue feeding recently fledged young.



As summer reaches its height, gardens often need a little extra care. During hot weather, watering thoroughly but less often encourages plants to develop deeper, stronger roots. Adding a layer of mulch around plants helps conserve moisture, suppress weeds and improve the health of the soil beneath our feet.

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

- 🌱 Harvesting courgettes, beans, peas, tomatoes, potatoes and other summer vegetables
- 🍓 Picking soft fruit such as raspberries, currants and the last of the strawberries
- 🌻 Deadheading annuals and perennials to encourage flowers to continue blooming well into late summer
- ✂️ Lightly trimming lavender after flowering and pruning summer-flowering shrubs where appropriate
- 🌿 Continuing to tie in climbing plants and supporting heavy crops
- 💧 Watering containers, hanging baskets and newly planted shrubs during prolonged dry spells, especially in the early morning or evening

July is also one of the best months to enjoy pollinator-friendly gardens. Knapweed, lavender, echinacea, verbena, oregano and flowering herbs become magnets for bees, butterflies, hoverflies and other beneficial insects. Allowing a few herbs to flower provides an important source of nectar while adding beauty and fragrance to the garden.

Gardens remain an important part of Birmingham's wider ecological network. Whether you have a large garden, a courtyard, an allotment or a few pots on a balcony, every space can contribute by:

- growing nectar-rich flowers throughout the seasons
- providing fresh water for birds and insects
- leaving seed heads and some untidy corners for wildlife
- reducing or avoiding pesticides and peat-based composts
- planting a diversity of trees, shrubs and flowering plants to support a wide range of species

Gardening doesn't have to be something we do alone. Sharing plants with neighbours, swapping seeds, visiting community gardens or joining a local gardening group helps build friendships as well as greener neighbourhoods. Gardens have a remarkable way of bringing people together, reminding us that growing plants and growing communities often go hand in hand. If you don't have your own garden there are lovely gardens to visit across the city. From community gardens to botanical gardens and everything in between. You can contact us at Cityofnature@birmingham.gov.uk to find out about gardens to visit or get involved in your local garden space.



Young Green Champions: Education Nature Park



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



The National Education Nature Park programme empowers children and young people to make a positive difference to both their own and nature's future.

Go on a journey to get to know your outdoor space and use creative decision-making to improve your grounds for both people and nature. This free programme provides all educators with the resources, support and guidance to embed climate and nature into learning in a way that suits your setting and learners.

The benefits of taking part:

For young people

- Build a connection to nature through discovery and learning
- Improve physical and mental wellbeing through spending time outdoors
- Feel empowered to voice their concerns and gain the vital skills needed to take action for their future

For staff

- Access free, high-quality resources and support to embed climate and nature across the curriculum
- Develop skills and confidence in teaching in and about nature
- Take part in activity that supports [Climate Action Plans](#)

For nature

- New or improved green spaces in education settings across England for nature to thrive
- Contribute to real scientific research into nature recovery, and boost biodiversity locally and across the country
- Promotes caring for nature across generations

Mapping your site

Mapping your site is a one-off activity that guides you and your students through creating a detailed baseline map of the habitats on your site, from playgrounds and grass to trees and flowerbeds.

Whether your site is buzzing with life or is perhaps a little greyer than you'd like, it's the essential first step in your Nature Park journey that helps you understand your starting point and sets you up for curriculum teaching for years to come.

Earth Stories – Memories, Hopes and Happenings

If there is one thing this month has reminded me, it is that summer isn't something we simply observe. It's something we experience.

The sweetness of the first home-grown strawberry. The familiar excitement of Wimbledon appearing on our television screens and the reminder that our own parks have tennis courts, cricket pitches, walking routes and places to enjoy being active outdoors.

The cheerful bunting of a community event. Friends gathering in a garden, choosing to celebrate with a little less plastic and a little more thought for the world around us.

Summer has a way of bringing people outside.

And when we spend more time outside, something interesting happens. We notice more. This month I've found myself pausing to admire beautifully planted flower beds. They may not be wildflower meadows, but they are no less wonderful for the joy they bring. Like the magnificent displays at Kew Gardens or our own beautiful Birmingham Botanical Gardens, they remind us that there are many ways to celebrate beauty, creativity and the skill of those who care for plants.

I've also been lucky enough to spend time beneath big skies, watching extraordinary sunsets that seem to stretch on forever. Those moments have a way of putting everything else into perspective. They remind us that nature doesn't always ask us to do something. Sometimes it simply asks us to stop for a moment and appreciate where we are.

Perhaps my favourite image this month is a simple one: a bright red poppy with a bee hovering just above it. A tiny interaction lasting only a second, yet one that represents millions of years of partnership between plants and pollinators. It is both ordinary and extraordinary at the same time.

Looking back over this newsletter, I realise it has really been about one simple idea. Caring. Caring for ourselves, caring for one another, caring for the places we share. Whether we see that as a street or the planet.

Whether we've been talking about the Five Ways to Wellbeing, Rangers, volunteers, meadows, gardening or climate resilience, they all lead us back to the same place. They remind us that every small act of care matters, and that together those small acts become something much bigger.

So, wherever this summer takes you, I hope you find time to pick a strawberry, visit a park, admire a flower bed, walk beneath a wide evening sky or simply pause to watch a bee at work. Thank you for reading, for supporting Birmingham's journey as a City of Nature, and for everything you do to make our city greener, healthier and more connected. Have a wonderful July.

Keep noticing. Keep connecting. Keep growing.

See you next month.

Deborah - Newsletter editor



Net Zero Week - 4th to 10th July 2026

Birmingham City Council's approach to Climate Change

Mitigation and adaptation

To respond to climate change, BCC need to:

- reduce emissions to prevent the worst effects of climate change – known as mitigation
- prepare for the impacts which are likely to happen – known as adaptation

How BCC go about mitigating and adapting to climate change is based on understanding their role and influence as a council.

On average, local councils and their activities are directly responsible for around 2% of UK emissions but can influence a further 33% through their place shaping powers, like planning and transport policy. Because of this, we can have the most impact by focusing on the emissions within our direct control and those influenced by our place shaping powers.

They need to prepare their organisation, people, and services to be resilient to impacts like flooding and heatwaves, which are made more likely by climate change. To protect people against these, we can use our place shaping powers.

We also provide leadership by bringing people and organisations together to help tackle mitigation and adaptation challenges which lie outside of our direct control or influence. Our approach to adapting to and mitigating against climate change falls into 3 categories:

Adapting to and mitigating against climate change

- Taking direct action
- Place-shaping powers
- Partnerships and engagement

You can find out more here:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50282/climate_change/2644/climate_change_advice_for_community_groups

Launched in 2001, Net Zero Week is the UK's official national awareness week, backed by both government and industry.

Net Zero Week 2026 is scheduled to take place from July 4 to July 10, 2026. This week is dedicated to raising awareness and promoting action towards achieving net zero emissions.

The event will feature a series of webinars, events at the UK Parliament, and a large online conference with over 300 speakers [netzeroweek.com](https://www.netzeroweek.com). Additionally, the Net Zero Nations Projects Conference will also take place in 2026, focusing on key dates, networking events, and workshops aimed at driving the UK's net-zero transformation [net-zeronations.co.uk](https://www.net-zeronations.co.uk). Overall, it is a significant event aimed at fostering collaboration and action towards sustainability

You can find out more about the conference here: <https://www.netzeroweek.com/event-agenda/>



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.



Follow Naturally Birmingham on social media: @NaturallyBirmi1

For More Information visit the Naturally Birmingham Website :

<https://naturallybirmingham.org/>