

GREEN CHAMPIONS

City of NATURE



Noticing Nature

The leaves are fading and falling,
The winds are rough and wild,
The birds have ceased their calling,
But let me tell you, my child,.....
November by - Alice Cary - (1820-1871)

Health - Naturally

Getting out into nature shouldn't stop just because it's cold. Spending time in nature can significantly lower cortisol (stress) levels. Focus on the crunch of autumn leaves, the smell of damp earth, and seeing patches of blue sky through bare branches.

Prevent the chill from cutting your outdoor time short by wearing a moisture-wicking base layer, add an insulating layer, and a windproof waterproof outer. Fuel your body with hearty, seasonal whole foods to provide the necessary nutrients to support your immune system through the colder months. Load up on kale, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and broccoli, which are packed with Vitamin C and antioxidants.

On days when the UK weather is too bleak to venture far, bring elements of the natural world inside to boost your mental well-being. Open curtains wide and look out for bargain house plants.



Learn More About - Poetry



The Alice Cary poem - November, goes on to add:
Though day draws nigh the ember, And earth has lost her bloom, You must not deem November A tree of hopeless gloom. The rosiest bough's forsaken, The wayside is forlorn, But April's buds shall waken, And lovely flowers be born.



As the days grow colder, why not seek out some poetry about nature, settle down and enter the worlds created through other people's words: https://www.bbc.co.uk/poetryseason/poems/nature.shtml There are also places to discover modern poetry: https://internationalwriterscollective.com/12-literary-magazines-inspired-by-nature-place-and-the-wider-world/ Or discover the lives of poets and the worlds that inspired their words: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets



Or connect even further - try writing a few lines yourself, or reading a favourite poem aloud. Poetry doesn't need an audience. According to BBC Maestro and BBC Bitesize, writing poetry is about expressing feelings, playing with language, and experimenting with structure.

November – Making Breathing Space



Last month, we reflected on the harvest, the changing seasons and the things we carry forward. November invites us to think about something closely connected: preparation.

I’m sure you’ve heard the expression “Breathing Space” quite a lot recently. I don’t know how it makes you feel, I think most people still use the phrase **"breathing space"** in everyday language to mean a temporary break, pause, or relief from pressure, stress, work, or financial strain. It refers to getting a little bit of time or room to catch your breath, step back, and figure out your next move before things feel overwhelming again. It can refer to being given time to sort out a debt for example. But it isn’t a time of inaction it’s time to think, plan and act. If you stop to catch your breath and then simply start again, nothing will have changed.



For generations, autumn was a time to gather, store, preserve and prepare for the colder months. People relied on their own knowledge, the resources around them and the skills and support of their communities. Knowing what grew locally, what could be stored and who might lend a hand wasn't simply useful. It was part of everyday life. Winter wasn’t something to fear if you knew how to manage it.



Today, much of what we need arrives through extraordinary networks stretching across the world. These systems have transformed our lives, but they can also be vulnerable to disruption. Rising living costs, climate change and uncertainty remind us how dependent we have become on things we cannot always see or influence. We hear a great deal about being prepared. But perhaps preparation doesn't have to mean sitting around expecting the worst.

It might mean learning to grow something, cook something, repair something or recognise the plants and wildlife around us. It might mean getting to know a neighbour, joining a community group, sharing a skill or simply knowing where to find help.



And it might mean making time for nature, creativity and culture. A walk in the park, a poem, a conversation or a shared meal can give us something just as valuable: breathing space.

We don't need to do everything ourselves, and we don't need to prepare for everything alone.



As we look towards the next chapter of Birmingham's City of Nature journey, perhaps one of the most important things we can do is strengthen the connections between people, places and nature. Not because we know exactly what the future holds, but because we don’t and those connections help us face it together.

Preparation isn't just about what we put away for someday. It's about what we do every day.

World Vegan Day – 1 November 🌱

Long before supermarkets, our diets followed the seasons. Roots, grains, beans, nuts and stored fruits helped sustain people through winter.

World Vegan Day, established in 1994 by The Vegan Society, offers an opportunity to rediscover the variety of plant-based foods available to us.

Eating more plant-based meals doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. Seasonal vegetables, lentils and beans can provide the basis for delicious, warming dishes that are good for us and often kinder to the planet.

Try a warming winter vegetable and lentil soup.

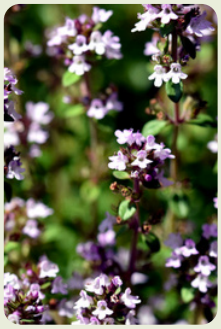
Gently fry an onion, two carrots and a parsnip in a little oil of your choice. Add 150g red lentils, a litre of vegetable stock and a pinch of thyme, paprika, or any herbs and spices you enjoy. Simmer for 25 minutes, or until tender. Blend or leave chunky, and serve with crusty bread or oat cakes. Or just as it is, it’s quite a hearty meal.

Make extra portions to freeze for another day. A little preparation today can provide comfort tomorrow!

If you want to find out more you could visit the Birmingham Vegan Festival event: **https://www.vegansociety.com/news/events/birmingham-vegan-festival-1**

Or discover more at: **The Vegan Society**







World Kindness Day – 13 November 💚

Sometimes the smallest acts make the biggest difference.

Celebrated internationally since 1998, World Kindness Day encourages us to think about how simple acts of compassion and generosity can improve the lives of others.

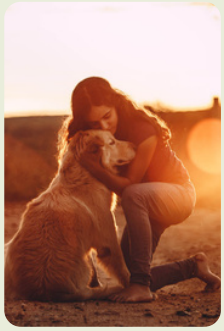
Kindness doesn't have to cost anything. A friendly conversation, sharing a skill, checking on a neighbour or helping someone enjoy their local park can make a real difference.

And kindness needn't stop with people. Caring for wildlife, reducing waste, planting something for pollinators or looking after a shared green space are all ways of showing kindness to the natural world.

As the days grow shorter and colder, it's worth remembering that connections help communities thrive. We don't always know what challenges others are facing, or how much a small gesture might mean.

Perhaps kindness is another way of preparing for the future — creating stronger connections, one thoughtful act at a time.







COP31 – 9–20 November 2026 | Antalya, Türkiye
From Global Conversations to Local Action

This November, world leaders, scientists, organisations and climate campaigners will gather in Türkiye for COP31, the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference.

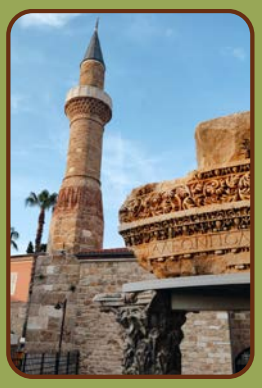
These annual conferences bring countries together to negotiate how we respond to climate change, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect vulnerable communities and prepare for a changing world. International agreements, including the Paris Agreement, have established important shared ambitions. But turning those ambitions into meaningful action remains a challenge.



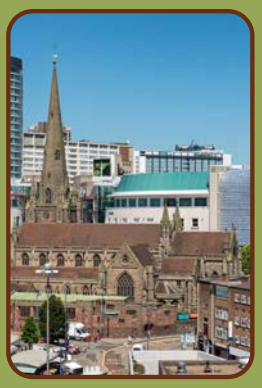
Climate change is already affecting communities around the world, through rising temperatures, extreme weather, flooding and changing ecosystems. The decisions made today will influence the world future generations inherit. But climate action doesn't only happen at international conferences. It happens in our cities, neighbourhoods, schools and homes too.



On Tuesday 17 November, Birmingham City Council and InterClimate Network will host the **Birmingham Climate Conference 2026**. Around 70 students, from Years 8 to 13, are expected to take part in an event that brings international climate negotiations closer to home. During the morning, students will represent different countries in a simulated COP31 conference, debating carbon reduction targets, exploring different perspectives and negotiating collective action. In the afternoon, attention turns to Birmingham itself. A Climate Action Marketplace will give students opportunities to meet local organisations and council representatives, discover green skills and explore what climate action might look like in their schools and communities. The day concludes with a Climate Question Time, allowing young people to put their questions directly to decision-makers.



This year's conference asks an important question: What do young people want to see happen next as Birmingham tackles the climate emergency? It's a question that connects closely with Birmingham's City of Nature ambitions. Our parks, trees, rivers and green spaces have an important role in helping communities adapt to climate change, supporting biodiversity, managing rainfall, providing shade and improving wellbeing. But creating a more resilient city also means listening, learning and working together. Young people will live with the consequences of decisions being made today. Giving them opportunities to understand those decisions, challenge assumptions and contribute their own ideas is essential.



As COP31 brings the world together to consider our shared future, Birmingham's young people will be exploring what that future might look like closer to home. Global challenges need international cooperation, but lasting change also grows from local knowledge, community connections and the willingness to act together.

City of Nature Programme Update - Inside the Process



Behind every successful community project, event or activity in our parks and green spaces, there is often a process that few people get to see.

In our recent Inside the Process article, we explored how understanding what happens behind the scenes can help turn good ideas into practical action.
https://lnkd.in/p/e8gMYxvD



A community garden is a good example. What begins as a conversation about growing food, bringing people together or improving a neglected space soon raises other questions. Who owns the land? Who will look after it? What permissions might be needed? What happens when the original volunteers move on?

These aren't necessarily obstacles. They're questions that help us build something that can last.

The same applies to events and activities in our parks. From a small community gathering to a larger public event, different arrangements may be needed depending on what is planned. Understanding these requirements early can save time, prevent frustration and help everyone involved.



For Friends Groups, the developing Shared Agreement approach offers a clearer way to support regular activities, recognising that not everything requires the same level of permission or paperwork.

And across the City of Nature Alliance, members are already delivering an extraordinary range of everyday activities: caring for green spaces, supporting volunteers, connecting communities, providing opportunities to learn and helping people enjoy nature. This is often described as business as usual (BAU), but there's nothing ordinary about its importance.



As we review and develop the City of Nature Plan for its next five years, we need to recognise what is already working, understand where processes could be improved and identify where additional support is needed.

That doesn't mean stopping everything while we work out what happens next.
We can continue doing the work, while improving how the work gets done.
And perhaps the most important part of that process is conversation. Not just asking people to comment when decisions are nearly made, but involving them early enough to help shape what happens.



Because understanding the process isn't simply about knowing which forms to complete. It's about understanding how we can make things happen together.

In the following pages we continue to meet the City of Nature Alliance member organisations helping to make it all happen.

Meet the Alliance: Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens

A Place to Wander, Explore and Discover

Step through the gates of Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens and discover a little piece of history hidden within the modern city.

These remarkable Grade II* listed gardens are a rare surviving example of early 18th-century formal garden design. Covering ten acres, the walled gardens were once part of the Earl of Bradford's estate and are now lovingly cared for by an independent charitable trust.
With planting inspired by the period 1680–1760, including heritage fruit varieties, a visit offers a glimpse into the Baroque countryside of 350 years ago.

Surrounding the gardens are another 30 acres of historic parkland, now designated a Local Nature Reserve, providing opportunities to explore nature alongside the site's rich heritage. There's something for everyone, from peaceful walks and seasonal discoveries to children's nature activities, craft workshops, blossom picnics, outdoor theatre and music.
The outdoor Courtyard Café is free to visit, offering homemade cakes, locally made savouries and snacks. The gardens also provide a beautiful setting for weddings, celebrations, filming and photography.

Whether you're exploring history, enjoying nature or simply looking for somewhere to slow down and wander, Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens is well worth discovering.
No advance booking is needed for a general visit.
https://www.castlebromwichhallgardens.org.uk/







and - Community Environmental Trust - CET

Inspiring Communities to Protect Their Environment

The Community Environmental Trust (CET) has its roots in the regeneration of Castle Vale, where it was originally established as the Castle Vale Community Environmental Trust. Its role was to ensure that the environment remained an important consideration throughout the regeneration process.
Today, CET continues that commitment, helping to create cleaner, greener and safer places for people and wildlife.
Through environmental education, conservation, volunteering and community engagement, the Trust encourages people of all ages to discover, enjoy and care for their local green spaces.
Its activities include Forest School programmes, outdoor learning, conservation and gardening opportunities, and projects that bring children, young people and families closer to nature.
CET also recognises the importance of green spaces for physical and mental wellbeing, providing opportunities to develop practical skills, build confidence, make friends and contribute to the local community.
At the heart of its work is a simple belief: communities should be empowered to protect and improve the places around them.
As a City of Nature Alliance member, CET demonstrates how environmental improvement and community development can grow together, creating lasting benefits for people, places and nature.
Find out more: www.environmentaltrust.org.uk







and - Naturally Birmingham CIC - Built from Stories, Connected by Nature

Some organisations begin with a business plan. Naturally Birmingham began with stories. Stories about people, places, parks, wildlife and the extraordinary connections between them. Stories about childhood adventures, favourite trees, unexpected discoveries and those moments when being outdoors changes how we feel about the world.

And, if I'm being completely open, it began with something very personal.
Nature has saved me, over and over again. Through difficult times, uncertain times and moments when life simply became too much, nature has always been there. Not necessarily offering answers, but providing somewhere to breathe, think, recover and begin again. So I owe it rather a lot.

Naturally Birmingham grew from that understanding, and from years of working alongside people who care deeply about Birmingham's parks, green spaces and communities. The name is deliberately simple and it grew organically - Naturally Birmingham. Because nature belongs in our city, in our neighbourhoods and in our everyday lives. It's not somewhere else, something separate or something we have to travel to find. It's already here. And so are we.

After years supporting the development of Birmingham's City of Nature Plan and Alliance, my role is changing. I'm stepping back from coordinating the Alliance, but I'm certainly not leaving it. In fact, Naturally Birmingham CIC is joining the Alliance as a member, continuing to support its work and the people who make it happen.

My focus will increasingly be on sharing knowledge, telling stories, encouraging curiosity and helping people discover their own connections with nature. There will be opportunities for learning, conversations, creative activities, community projects and, I hope, plenty of unexpected discoveries along the way. But most importantly, Naturally Birmingham will continue to listen. Because some of the most wonderful moments I've experienced have been watching someone reconnect with nature, or perhaps realise for the first time that they were never really separate from it. A child discovering something beneath a log. An adult remembering a place they loved. Someone finding confidence, friendship or simply a moment of peace outdoors. Those moments matter to me and to the people who shared them.

There's a great deal still to do if Birmingham is to become a city where everyone can enjoy and benefit from nature. But nobody has to do it alone. Naturally Birmingham is built on friendships, partnerships, shared knowledge and a belief that everyone has something to contribute. I don't have all the answers. I don't even know all the questions yet. But I have a lot of wonderful friends, an enormous curiosity about people and nature, and a willingness to help wherever I can. It's a big job. Fortunately, there are lots of us. And there’s “healthy ten-plant cake”!

Deborah Needle
Naturally Birmingham CIC https://naturallybirmingham.org/













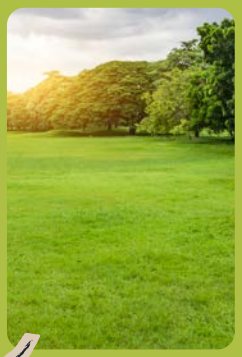
Neighbourhood Parks - What about them?

Every Park Matters



Over recent months, we've been shining a spotlight on Birmingham's Destination Parks, exploring what makes these larger, well-known green spaces special and the opportunities they offer residents and visitors. A new Birmingham City Council Destination Parks Team is helping to develop this work. But what about all the other parks?

Across Birmingham, hundreds of neighbourhood parks and green spaces provide something equally important. They are the places we pass on the way to school, visit with our children, walk through on our way to the shops or simply escape to for a few moments of peace. They may not have the attractions or facilities of a Destination Park, but they are often the green spaces closest to our homes and hearts. And no two are quite the same. Some have playgrounds, sports facilities and open spaces for community activities. Others offer woodland, meadows, ponds or quiet corners where wildlife thrives. Some are small pockets of green in densely built-up neighbourhoods, providing a vital connection to nature.



Different Parks, Shared Benefits



Whatever their size or character, neighbourhood parks provide essential ecosystem services. Trees offer shade and help cool our streets. Green spaces absorb rainfall, support biodiversity, improve air quality and provide opportunities for physical activity, relaxation and social connection. These benefits are particularly important in communities where access to private gardens or other green spaces is limited.

Planning for the Future



Birmingham's **Green Space Development Managers** are helping to consider the future of these spaces, using the Future Parks Standard to assess their condition, management and potential.

The Standard provides a consistent approach to understanding what parks need, while recognising that different spaces serve different purposes. It's not about making every park the same. It's about ensuring that each park can provide the best possible benefits for its community, while meeting appropriate standards for safety, accessibility, environmental quality and management. And, of course, caring for our parks is a team effort. Grounds maintenance teams, Rangers, development officers, Friends Groups, volunteers and local communities all have important roles to play.



As Birmingham continues its City of Nature journey, we must remember that the value of our green spaces isn't measured by size or popularity alone.
A neighbourhood park doesn't have to be a destination to be important. Sometimes its greatest value is simply being there, close to home, when someone needs it.

November – The end of Autumn

If October is autumn in all its colourful glory, November is the month when nature begins to reveal what lies beneath.

The leaves are falling faster now, and the trees gradually surrender their summer clothing. Branches that were hidden just weeks ago become visible again, revealing their extraordinary shapes against the sky. The landscape seems quieter, more open, perhaps even a little empty. But appearances can be deceiving.

Beneath our feet, fallen leaves are becoming part of the soil. Fungi, worms and countless tiny organisms are busy breaking down the remains of the growing season, returning nutrients to the earth. Seeds are settling into their winter resting places, and buds are already waiting on branches for the return of spring.

November is a month of preparation, although much of the work happens out of sight. Wildlife is preparing too. Squirrels gather and bury food, hedgehogs search for suitable places to hibernate, and winter visitors such as redwings and fieldfares arrive from colder northern landscapes. Listen carefully and you may hear the familiar calls of geese passing overhead.

November has its traditions too. Bonfire Night on 5 November brings fire and light into the darkness, while Martinmas on 11 November was once associated with the final preparations for winter, when food was stored and livestock management followed the changing seasons.

Above us, the night sky offers its own spectacle. The Taurid meteor showers bring occasional bright streaks of light, while the Leonids reach their peak around 17–18 November. The full Moon on 24 November will be a super moon is traditionally known as the Beaver Moon, a reminder of the seasonal rhythms observed by earlier generations.

And as the days shorten, November invites us to notice different things. The sound of wind through bare branches. The smell of damp woodland. The shapes of trees against a pale morning sky. The sudden flash of a robin's red breast in an otherwise muted landscape.
There is still so much happening, even when it seems that everything is slowing down.
Perhaps that's November's quiet lesson. Nature isn't simply waiting for spring. It's preparing, recycling, resting and renewing.

Not everything that matters needs to be visible. And not everything that appears still has stopped growing.






Get Your Updates here - Sign Up - 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 Council’s 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 has 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 - Volunteering

Birmingham TreePeople support volunteers across the city to work on tree surveying, tree planting, tree aftercare or in our community tree nursery in Kings Heath park. The charity was originally set up by volunteer tree wardens working with Birmingham City Council's Tree Officers in 2016, but is now separate from the city council, although working in partnership. For more information on how to get involved in their work visit: https://www.birminghamtreepeople.org.uk/support-us

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 - Making It Easier to Make Things Happen



Our parks and green spaces are places where communities come together. From litter picks and wildlife walks to gardening, volunteering and small community celebrations, much of what happens is made possible by local people giving their time, enthusiasm and skills. But knowing what you can do, who you need to tell and when permission is required hasn't always been straightforward.

Working with Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF), the Ranger Service and the new BCC Community Activator & Volunteer Officer are helping to introduce a clearer approach through the new Friends Groups Shared Agreement. The aim is simple: to make it easier for groups to carry out regular activities while ensuring that parks remain safe, welcoming and well cared for. There are four levels of activity.



DO – Just get on with it!
Everyday activities that don't require specific permission, such as enjoying nature, walking or informal wildlife watching.

TELL – Keep us informed.
Activities that can usually go ahead but where letting the relevant people know helps everyone stay informed and avoid clashes.



DISCUSS – Let's work it out together.
Activities that may need additional planning, support or consideration. An early conversation can help identify what's needed.

AUTHORISE – Formal permission required.
Larger events, activities involving particular risks or those requiring formal agreements or licences need approval before proceeding.



Supporting Our Friends Groups: The Shared Agreement recognises the important role Friends Groups play in caring for Birmingham's parks. BOSF supports groups through registration, advice, training and insurance arrangements, while the Ranger Service provides local knowledge to all groups and practical support where possible.

The intention isn't to remove necessary safeguards. It's to make requirements proportionate to the activity and easier to understand. Not everything needs a formal application, and not every good idea needs to become a complicated project. As we continue developing the City of Nature approach, we want more people to feel confident about getting involved, sharing ideas and making things happen.



Sometimes the most useful first step is simply a conversation. Because our parks work best when the people who care about them are supported to play an active part in their future.

Meet the Alliance: ecobirmingham

Sustainable Living, Stronger Communities, Greener Futures



Creating a greener, healthier and more sustainable Birmingham isn't simply about changing the environment around us. It's also about how we live, the choices we make and the opportunities we have to do things differently. Ecobirmingham has been part of the City of Nature Alliance since the early days of the Future Parks Accelerator programme, and its work has continued to evolve alongside Birmingham's ambitions for people and nature.



Today, the organisation is helping communities explore what sustainable living means in practice, recognising that meaningful change begins with people's everyday experiences, knowledge and aspirations.

Learning by Doing

At the heart of ecobirmingham's approach is a belief that people learn best through experience. Rather than simply telling people how to live more sustainably, the organisation creates opportunities to explore, experiment and develop practical skills.



Whether through connecting with nature, exploring sustainable travel, reducing waste or making more environmentally conscious choices, the emphasis is on making change accessible, relevant and achievable. And importantly, this isn't about expecting individuals to solve the climate crisis alone. Human behaviour plays an important role in both the challenges we face and the solutions we develop. But individual choices are shaped by the places we live, the resources available to us and the systems around us. Lasting change needs action at every level, from policy and infrastructure to community initiatives and everyday decisions.

A Model for the Whole City



One of the most encouraging developments has been ecobirmingham's growing approach to sustainable living, bringing together practical learning, community knowledge and opportunities for people to take action. It's a model with real potential to support communities across Birmingham, recognising that different neighbourhoods will have different needs, opportunities and starting points.

As the City of Nature Plan moves into its next five years, approaches like this will become increasingly important. Connecting people with nature is not simply about encouraging more visits to parks and green spaces. It's also about helping people understand their relationship with the natural world and how everyday activities can contribute to a healthier, more resilient city.



Ecobirmingham demonstrates how environmental action can grow from curiosity, participation and shared learning.

Because sustainable living isn't about asking everyone to do the same thing. It's about giving everyone the opportunity to discover what they can do, where they are, with what they have. https://ecobirmingham.com/projects/

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

Get Active in Aston, Newtown & Nechells Parks!



A fun programme of activities is being delivered by the Council's Park Rangers 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 improve physical activity levels and 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 November 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 every month is full of opportunities to get involved.

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

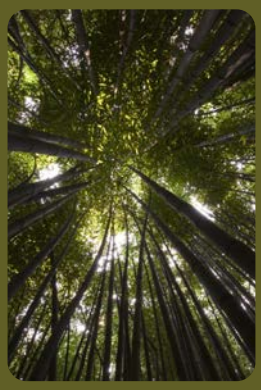


- Birmingham Open Spaces Forum - Birmingham Friends of Open Spaces Groups volunteer days - Various and BOSF events: **https://bosf.org.uk/bosf-events/**
- Activities at Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens - **https://www.castlebromwichhallgardens.org.uk/events-calendar/**
- Ecobirmingham - **https://ecobirmingham.com/events/**
- 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.

National Tree Week – 21–29 November 2026



How many trees can you see from your window? How many do you pass on your way to the shops, school or work? And have you ever noticed the places where there are no trees at all?

This year's National Tree Week, organised by The Tree Council, celebrates Trees Near You, encouraging us to appreciate the trees that are part of our everyday lives. Trees do extraordinary things. They provide shade during hot weather, absorb carbon dioxide, help manage rainwater, support wildlife and improve our health and wellbeing. They also give our streets, parks and neighbourhoods their character. But not everyone has equal access to these benefits.

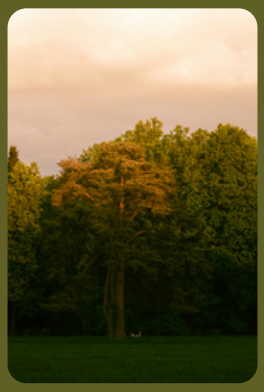


The 3-30-300 Principle

An increasingly influential approach to urban greening is the 3-30-300 rule, developed by Professor Cecil Konijnendijk. It offers three simple ambitions:

- 3 trees: Everyone should be able to see at least three trees from their home, school or workplace.
- 30% canopy cover: Neighbourhoods should aim for at least 30% tree canopy coverage.
- 300 metres: Everyone should live within 300 metres of a good-quality public green space.

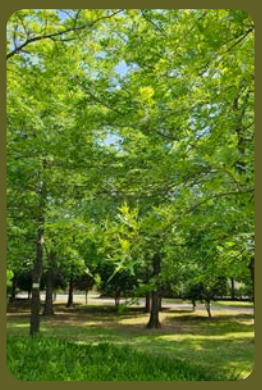
It's a useful way to think about tree equity: not simply how many trees a city has, but how fairly their benefits are shared.



Birmingham's Urban Forest

Birmingham's Urban Forest Master Plan 2021–2051 sets out a long-term vision for protecting, managing and developing the city's trees.
Our urban forest includes every tree, whether growing in a public park, along a street, in a school playground or in a private garden.

The plan recognises that planting new trees is only part of the story. Protecting mature trees, caring for young ones, improving biodiversity and ensuring our urban forest can adapt to climate change are equally important. And every tree has a guardian, whether that's a landowner, organisation, community group or individual.



Take a Tree Walk This November

National Tree Week marks the beginning of the winter tree-planting season, but you don't have to plant a tree to take part. Walk around your neighbourhood and notice the trees. Look at their shapes, bark, branches and the wildlife they support.
Then notice where trees are missing. Could your street, school, workplace or local green space benefit from more trees?



Sometimes the first step towards creating a greener city isn't planting something. It's noticing what is already there, recognising what's missing and starting a conversation about what could grow.

https://treecouncil.org.uk/seasonal-campaigns/national-tree-week/

Wildlife Watching in November – New Arrivals, Hidden Homes and Winter Preparations



By November, the landscape is changing again. The bright colours of October are fading, leaves are gathering beneath our feet and the trees are revealing branches that have been hidden since spring. Robins become particularly noticeable as they defend their winter territories, while blackbirds search through fallen leaves for food. Mixed flocks of tits move through trees and shrubs, sometimes accompanied by tiny goldcrests.

But while some wildlife is preparing to rest, other creatures are just arriving. Look for redwings and fieldfares, winter visitors that travel to Britain from northern Europe and beyond. These colourful thrushes gather in fields, parks and hedgerows, feeding on berries and searching the ground for worms and insects. Listen too. Redwings often make a thin, high-pitched seep call as they migrate overhead, sometimes during the night.



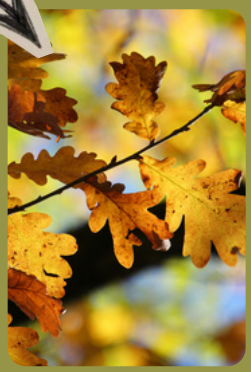
November is also a good month to notice the wildlife preparing to disappear. Hedgehogs are building up their energy reserves and searching for safe places to hibernate. Piles of leaves, logs and undisturbed corners of gardens can provide valuable shelter. If you find a hedgehog nesting, leave it undisturbed. Bats are becoming less active as temperatures fall, seeking sheltered places where they can spend the coldest months in torpor or hibernation.



And beneath the fallen leaves, an extraordinary amount of life continues. Woodlice, millipedes, worms, fungi and countless microorganisms are breaking down dead plant material and returning nutrients to the soil.
Perhaps November is the perfect month to discover that a fallen leaf isn't waste. It's part of a living system.



Look more closely at the trees too. As leaves disappear, birds' nests become visible among the branches. You might spot the round, leafy dreys built by squirrels, or the distinctive clusters of mistletoe growing high in some trees. And on a damp morning, watch for fungi emerging from fallen wood, moss-covered logs and woodland floors. Remember that the mushrooms we see are only the fruiting bodies of much larger fungal networks. November also offers opportunities to contribute to the Woodland Trust's Nature's Calendar. When did your local oak lose its last leaves? Have you noticed the first winter visitors arriving? Are there still flowers blooming in sheltered places? Choose a familiar tree, park or patch of green space and visit it regularly. Record what changes, what disappears and what remains.



Explore Nature's Calendar
Stop, look, listen, record and share.
Because November isn't an empty season. It's a time of arrivals and departures, hidden activity and quiet preparation. And sometimes, when the leaves have fallen, we can finally see what was there all along.

The Garden in November - Preparing for Winter, Making Room for Spring

By November, much of the garden has settled into its winter rhythm. The last leaves are falling, summer crops have disappeared and the shorter days remind us that the growing season has changed. But there's still plenty to do, and plenty happening beneath the surface. November is traditionally a month for preparing the garden for winter, protecting what we've grown and giving next year's plants a good start. It's also an opportunity to look after the wildlife that shares our gardens.

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

🌷 Planting tulip bulbs. November is an ideal month for planting tulips, helping reduce the risk of tulip fire disease. There's still time to plant other spring-flowering bulbs too, provided the ground isn't frozen or waterlogged.
🌳 Planting trees, shrubs and hedges. The dormant season is particularly suitable for planting bare-root trees and hedging plants. Their roots can begin establishing before spring, provided soil conditions are suitable.
🌹 Planting bare-root roses. November marks the beginning of the traditional planting season for roses, fruit bushes and other dormant plants.
🧄 Planting garlic and broad beans. Some varieties can be planted in autumn for an earlier harvest next year. Choose varieties suitable for overwintering and avoid waterlogged soil.
🍂 Collecting fallen leaves. Make leaf mould or use leaves as mulch around established plants. Keep paths clear and avoid leaving thick layers on lawns, **but remember that leaves are a valuable natural resource.**
🥕 Harvesting winter vegetables. Leeks, parsnips, kale and Brussels sprouts can provide fresh produce through the colder months. Some crops even improve in flavour after a light frost.
🌱 Protecting the soil. Add compost or well-rotted organic matter to empty beds, or cover exposed soil with mulch to protect its structure and support soil life.

And once again, don't be too tidy! We do need to keep reminding ourselves of this important message. Leave some seed heads standing for birds. Allow hollow stems to remain for overwintering insects. Keep a few quiet corners undisturbed, and check piles of leaves or logs carefully before moving them. November is also a good time to clean bird feeders and provide fresh water, particularly when natural food sources become harder to find. And perhaps this is the month to think about what worked in the garden this year. What grew well? What struggled? What attracted wildlife? What might you do differently next year?

Gardening isn't simply about growing plants. It's about observing, learning and adapting to the conditions around us. Even in November, a garden is full of possibilities. Beneath the soil, roots are developing, organisms are recycling nutrients and bulbs are waiting for their moment. Sometimes the most important gardening happens when we appear to be doing very little at all.

No garden? Birmingham's parks, allotments, community gardens and public gardens offer plenty of opportunities to enjoy the season and get involved. Contact Cityofnature@birmingham.gov.uk to find out more.






Young Green Champions: Nature's Fireworks – A Celebration of Colour!



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





Who doesn't love the colours of fireworks? Bright reds, golden yellows, sparkling greens and brilliant blues lighting up the night sky! But fireworks and bonfires can also affect wildlife, pets and the environment. Loud bangs can frighten animals, smoke affects air quality, and bonfire piles can become temporary homes for hedgehogs and other creatures. So this November, why not create your own spectacular fireworks display – without a single bang?



🍁 Make a Nature Firework Picture

You will need:

- Fallen leaves, twigs, seeds and other natural treasures
- A large piece of paper or cardboard
- Paint, crayons or coloured pencils
- Glue (optional)
- A little imagination!

Here's what to do:

1. Take a walk and collect fallen natural materials. Look for different colours, shapes and textures. Leave living plants and wildlife undisturbed.
2. Arrange your finds into exploding firework shapes. Try placing twigs like rays of light, with colourful leaves spreading outwards.
3. Add painted stars, swirling colours and sparkling patterns around your natural fireworks.
4. Create a whole display together. Every firework can be different!

Try something extra!

Make a night-time version using dark paper and bright chalks, or create a temporary outdoor artwork using fallen leaves and sticks. Take a photograph, then leave the materials where nature can recycle them.

A Little Green Champion Challenge: Can you think of other ways to celebrate with light and colour that are kinder to wildlife? Perhaps a lantern walk with reusable LED lights, a colourful window display or a shadow-puppet show!

Remember: You don't need a bang to make something brilliant! Sometimes the most spectacular fireworks are the ones created by our own imaginations.

One Planet - Wildlife Around the World in November

An Extraordinary World Worth Protecting. From the depths of our oceans to the forests of South America, November offers opportunities to discover some remarkable creatures and consider the challenges facing wildlife around the world.



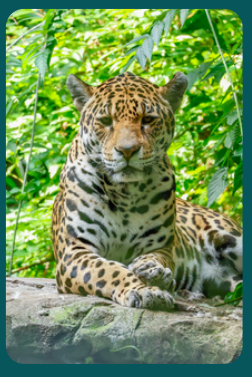
🦈 World Basking Shark Day – 3 November
Imagine encountering a shark almost the length of a bus! Basking sharks are the second-largest fish in the world, yet these gentle giants feed mainly on tiny plankton, filtering enormous quantities of seawater through their gills.
Found in British waters, basking sharks are endangered globally, threatened by fishing pressures, accidental capture and changes to marine ecosystems. Protecting them means understanding the oceans they depend upon.



🌊 World Jellyfish Day – 3 November
Jellyfish have been drifting through our oceans for hundreds of millions of years, long before dinosaurs appeared.
Despite their delicate appearance, these fascinating animals are important members of marine food webs, providing food for creatures including sea turtles.
Changes in ocean temperatures, pollution and fishing pressures can affect jellyfish populations, reminding us how interconnected marine ecosystems really are.



🐟 World Fisheries Day – 21 November
Healthy oceans support wildlife, provide food and sustain the livelihoods of millions of people. World Fisheries Day highlights the importance of protecting fish populations, preventing overfishing and supporting sustainable fishing communities.
It's a reminder that caring for nature also means considering the people whose lives depend upon it.



🐆 International Jaguar Day – 29 November
The jaguar is the largest wild cat in the Americas and a powerful symbol of healthy forests and wetlands.
These magnificent animals play an important role in maintaining balanced ecosystems, but habitat loss, fragmentation and conflict with people threaten their future.
Protecting jaguars also helps conserve the extraordinary biodiversity of the landscapes they inhabit.



🌍 Remembrance Day for Lost Species – 30 November
Perhaps the most thought-provoking date of the month. Remembrance Day for Lost Species invites us to remember animals and plants that have disappeared forever, and consider what we can do to prevent further losses. The Slender-billed Curlew (Numenius tenuirostris) is widely recognized as one of the most recently declared extinct animal species.

Extinction is part of Earth's natural history, but human activities are accelerating the loss of biodiversity. Every species has a place in the extraordinary web of life, including those we may never see or even know exist. And whether we're protecting sharks in our oceans, jaguars in tropical forests or wildlife in Birmingham's parks, the message is the same.
We share one planet, and its future depends on the connections we choose to protect.

Earth Stories – Memories, Hopes and Happenings

November has a reputation for being a rather drab month. The spectacular colours of October are fading, the days are shorter, and the weather seems increasingly determined to remind us that winter is coming. But I'm not sure November deserves its reputation. There are still wonderful little explosions of colour everywhere. A bright yellow leaf clinging stubbornly to an otherwise bare tree. Red berries against dark branches. The sudden flash of a blue tit or the cheerful red breast of a robin. Sometimes I think the colours are even more beautiful because there are fewer of them. They make you look twice.



And speaking of explosions of colour, there's Bonfire Night. I used to love fireworks. The excitement, the colours, the smell of bonfires and the anticipation of something spectacular lighting up the darkness. I still understand that excitement, and I wouldn't want to take those memories away from anyone. But I think differently about fireworks now. I notice the frightened animals, the smoke, the noise and the wildlife that doesn't understand why the world has suddenly become so alarming. That's not a criticism of anyone who enjoys them. It's simply something that has changed for me. Perhaps that's part of getting older, or perhaps it's just what happens when you spend more time noticing the world around you. I still love colour and sparkle. I just wonder whether we might find different ways to celebrate them. Our Young Green Champions have been making fireworks from fallen leaves and chalk drawings. No bangs required, and rather beautiful.



November also brings one of my favourite pleasures: hot drinks on cold days. There is something wonderfully satisfying about wrapping your hands around a warm mug when the air is chilly. Coffee, tea, hot chocolate – I'm not particularly fussy, although a good hot chocolate does feel like a small celebration. And then there are the evenings. We often complain about the darker nights, but I've been thinking that more darkness also means more opportunities to notice the stars and the Moon. Not necessarily more stars, of course, just more time when we might be able to see them. A clear November evening can be extraordinary, especially if you can find somewhere away from the brightest lights. I rather like the idea of looking up instead of always looking forward.



November also gets me thinking about making things rather than buying them. With Black Friday approaching and the encouragement to buy more seemingly everywhere, perhaps we could try a little Buy Nothing November. Not necessarily buying absolutely nothing – that would be rather difficult – but questioning what we really need and rediscovering the pleasure of making, repairing and sharing. For me, that might mean pasties. I love making pasties, particularly vegan ones packed with root vegetables. Potatoes, carrots, parsnips, swede, onions – whatever is available. Wrapped in pastry, baked until golden and delicious hot or cold. They're wonderfully practical too. Make a batch, freeze a few and there's something comforting waiting for another day.



Perhaps that's my version of preparing for winter. A freezer with a few homemade pasties, a warm coat, a travel mug and enough curiosity to keep going outside. And maybe that's what November is really about. We don't have to fill every darker evening with activity or every quiet moment with something new. We can make things, notice things, remember things and enjoy what we already have. There's still colour outside. There's still wildlife to discover. There are stars above us, even when the clouds hide them. And there are people, places and small pleasures worth making time for.



Perhaps November isn't drab at all. Perhaps it simply asks us to look a little more carefully. And if all else fails, there's always a homemade pasty and a hot chocolate.
Best wishes,
Deborah Needle – Editor

Birmingham City Council's Route to Net Zero

Nature recovery and climate action are part of the same story. Birmingham's journey towards Net Zero is another part of building a greener, healthier and more resilient city.

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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