



Making
Wildlife Count
2018



www.leicester.gov.uk/promoting-biodiversity



Introduction

**Introduction and foreword by Councillor Adam Clarke
Deputy City Mayor**

Welcome to this edition of Making Wildlife Count. Nature is a vital part of life within the city and we are committed to seeing it grow and thrive.

Making Wildlife Count is one part of the City's Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2021 which sets out a long-term strategy to conserve and improve wildlife and biodiversity in and around the city.

A key part of nature conservation is partnership working and engaging local communities in the green space in which they live. This booklet walks you through some of the work the council is doing to safeguard biodiversity and encourage interest in the habitats and species around you.

This document sets out a series of ways that you can become involved in nature and wildlife set out in the year planner at the back of this document or specific projects. We hope this new format will help you get involved with nature and Make Wildlife Count.

Making Wildlife Count in the Community

Braunstone Park – Greening the Edges



A successful bid to the TESCO Bags of Help initiative has seen the rejuvenation of the large Nature Lake at Braunstone Park. £10 000 of funding enabled the City Council, Buglife and the Soar Catchment Partnership to work alongside Braunstone B-Inspired, Braunstone Angling Club, and Braunstone Blues to improve areas for wildlife and get people involved and caring for their local park.

This ambitious project was aimed at restoring and enhancing the lake's island by creating areas of reed planting to protect the banks and provide a haven for small fish, amphibians and insect such as dragonflies and diving beetles. This work was done with the Leicester Environmental Volunteers (LEV) who also built a huge Insect house that can be viewed from the shoreline and provides habitats for frogs, toads and insects.

Two wildlife events were supported by local residents and Caldecott Primary School. Specialists from Naturespot and the Trent Rivers Trust ran activities to test the water quality whilst the Urban Buzz Officer for Leicester was on hand to lead mini-bug safaris to discover what bugs are living in the water.



GET INVOLVED:

Details on how to get involved visit, the Leicester City Council website:
www.leicester.gov.uk/promoting-biodiversity



BioBlitz

Knighton Park 12th and 13th May 2017



The annual BioBlitz returned to Knighton Park in 2017. Chosen for its mix of habitats including Parkland, Ancient woodland, Heath and sensory gardens, herbaceous borders, Saffron Brook and long grasslands, this mix of habitats provide a unique environment for a range of wildlife species waiting to be discovered.



The event started off with students from Overdale Junior School split into groups and encouraged to take part in 4 tasks: building insect hotels, bug hunts in the woodland, tree identification in the parkland and searching for aquatic invertebrates in the brook. Despite the wet weather all activities were met with great enthusiasm and students received a certificate of completion and a tomato plant for their contribution towards the BioBlitz.

Guided walks and talks found 437 different species of wildlife recorded which included: 128 Invertebrates, 124 Plants, 43 Lichens, 31 Birds, 29 Bryophytes and 17 Moths. Species records within the Park actually count as one of the highest in the city. This could not have been possible without the dedicated help of the many organisations and Naturalists who gave up time to support the event.

GET INVOLVED:

Details on how to get involved visit, the Leicester City Council website
DO IT: www.leicester.gov.uk/promoting-biodiversity



The Leicester Environmental Volunteers



The Leicester Environmental Volunteers is a new and innovative City Council scheme that offers volunteer members all year round opportunities to participate in conservation, horticultural and environmental activities on land and water. The scheme brings organisations together and caters for individual and group bookings attracting volunteers of all ages and abilities.

In early 2017 we launched the new Green Life Boat called Kingfisher, a 35ft narrowboat, which safely conveys volunteers up and down the twelve miles of waterways through the City collecting rubbish, floating debris and reducing invasive aquatic plants to support wildlife. Other water based opportunities include Puddle Ducks, a scheme for enhancing ponds across the city for nature.

Back on dry land, regular gardening activities offer an opportunity for volunteers to improve their plant identification skills. These occur on several sites throughout the week. Volunteers take ownership and feed their ideas into improvement projects to enhance special secluded gardens within larger parks.



GET INVOLVED:

There are a range of ways to get involved with volunteering with the City Council. Please visit the volunteering page to sign up to volunteer or simply find out more: www.leicester.gov.uk/parks-volunteering



Wild about Leicester Project

Welford Road Cemetery

The Wild about Leicester Project is now into its second year and has focused on a handful of sites to further engage the community in these areas. Over 170 volunteers accounting for 700 hours of work have been carried out on the initial stages of this project during 2016 and beginning of 2017. Returning to Welford Road Cemetery for the fourth year the project aims to manage the grassland surrounding the gravestones as a traditional hay meadow. As well as being Grade II listed, the cemetery is also designated as a Local Wildlife Site noted

for its importance as a reservoir of rare, local and declining native species. Consisting of 10ha of species rich wildflower meadow, volunteers help cut the hay and translocate it to different area of the site where the grassland is less species rich. It is hoped that the mown hay will drop its seed in this new area, allowing more plant species to grow the following year. In the coming years monitoring will take place to see what new species of flower will start growing in the translocated area and how the site is improving for biodiversity.



GET INVOLVED:

www.leicester.gov.uk/promoting-biodiversity

Wild about Leicester Project



Evesham Road Community Orchard

Located in one of Leicester's largest Nature Reserves a new community orchard has been established along with plans to improve the area for wildlife. Western Power supplied 12 fruit trees as compensation for essential tree works close by that included 5 apples, 3 pears, 3 plums and a medlar. A large area of 6 foot high brambles has been cleared back in a former area of allotments revealing several existing fruit trees and a patch of species rich grassland. There are further plans to reveal more fruit trees, improve the grassland, control further areas of bramble, create habitat piles and organise a series of guided walks showcasing some of the wildlife associated with the former allotments within the Nature Reserve.

GET INVOLVED: www.leicester.gov.uk/promoting-biodiversity

Making Wildlife Count in Schools

Yellow Fish Campaign at Braunstone Frith Primary

The Yellow Fish campaign was developed by the Environment Agency to increase awareness about the impacts of pollution (rubbish, detergents, oils and chemicals) entering drains and then into watercourses.

At Braunstone Frith Primary School, the City Council worked with children from reception through to Year 6, to think about what should go down the drain and what shouldn't. After each workshop the pupils were given a poster to take home.

Finally, some of the children in Eco-Schools team sprayed yellow fish next to drains in and around the school to raise awareness. This aims to remind passers-by, students and teachers that what goes down the drain can harm the fish in the watercourses. The children were encouraged to look for the yellow fish during playtime and lunchtime and to explain to their parents the significance of the logo.



GET INVOLVED: www.leicester.gov.uk/promoting-biodiversity



Making Places for Nature

Jewry Wall Museum

Landscaping works have been carried out within the grounds of Jewry wall museum to increase the public appeal and better the environment for biodiversity. A series of improvements have been made to the space which include regravelling walkways giving a direction for visitors to observe the site, thinning out thick vegetation along Welles Street and replacing with shade tolerant species providing year round interest for visitors and food sources for pollinating insects. Traditional medicinal plants installed close to the building

adding another layer to the story of Roman Leicester and the trial of a 'Grass Free Lawn'. This is a new concept for increasing biodiversity in an urban environment by replacing grass with species of flowering plants that will tolerate frequent mowing and traffic by members of the public. The next phases of the project include stabilising foundations, installation of an alpine scree garden along St Nicholas' Walk and the potential to extend the use of grass free lawn to other areas of the site.

GET INVOLVED: www.leicester.gov.uk/promoting-biodiversity



Urban Buzz Leicester

Urban Buzz is an ambitious project aiming to create 100 'buzzing hotspots' across Leicester for our much loved bees and other pollinators, providing additional feeding and shelter opportunities. With the help of local partners and various community groups, we can help create a more vibrant buzzing city!

The project will provide resources for pollinators throughout the year benefitting different species including bees, hoverflies, wasps, butterflies, moths, beetles and more.

So far the project has identified a number of key buzzing areas across the city including Aylestone Meadows, Bennion Pools, Western Park, Castle Hill Country Park and number of large roadside verges, to begin creating and enhancing wildflower habitat.

Urban Buzz is looking for volunteers to help with a number of activities from seeding wildflower areas, to plug planting and building bee banks and bug homes all across the city. We plan to create a wide range of habitats for pollinators and need volunteers to help make this happen. The project will run courses on topics from species identification to habitat management.

GET INVOLVED: Nick Packham: 07464 828623. nick.packham@buglife.org.uk



Leicester City Peregrine Project

The last two years have been very eventful for the Leicester Peregrines. In 2016 we saw successful breeding in the city by the pair who brought two newly fledged young to Leicester Cathedral. Naturally, later in the year, the juvenile Peregrines moved on to find new territories leaving the adults in the city. They started taking an interest in the platform and soon were seen perching on the ledge and going into the nest box. All was looking hopeful for the adult Peregrines to take up residence at the Cathedral.

Early in 2017, the female proceeded to make scrapes in the nest box and the pair were seen and heard mating through much of February and March. At the end of March, at least 3 eggs were produced however, unexpectedly

the clutch failed. This was met with disappointment but hope that the pair would try again. As nature would have it, happily a second clutch (four eggs) was produced during May. As the weeks went by despite the adults carefully nursing the eggs it became apparent that this clutch too had failed.

Unfortunately, this marked the end of the breeding season and the start of the search for answers. Luckily, a piece of discarded eggshell was found and was sent off for testing to see if environmental or genetic factors may have caused the failures.

We remain hopeful for a better outcome in 2018 and are forging ahead with the installation of HD cameras for live web streaming and regular 'Watch Points'.

GET INVOLVED: 'Watch points' are held at Cathedral Gardens for viewing the peregrines. See the year planner for further dates.

To find out when and where visit the Leicester Peregrines Page:
<http://leicesterperegrines.org.uk/>
or **Twitter page** @LeicsPeregrines



Mature and Veteran Trees



Mature and Veteran trees are valuable wildlife habitats and relics of the ancient landscape. They provide homes for nesting birds, roosting bats, fungi, lichens and deadwood dwelling (saproxylic) insects. The City Council, as part of the Sustainability Action Plan, aims to designate these mature trees on an annual basis as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) in recognition of their value to wildlife. They are important reservoirs of rare, local and declining native species and are the best examples of typical Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland habitats. Strict criteria have to be met in order for them to be designated; trunks have to be over 3.77 metres in circumference, exhibit habitat features such as deadwood, rot holes or fungi and be native UK tree species. To date, 86 of these trees have been designated and some of the best examples can be found at Braunstone, Western and Abbey parks.

GET INVOLVED:
visit the Leicester City Council's mapping system and see if any have been designated near you.

Working with Partners



A Walk on the Wild Side

The Get Walking – Keep Walking Project aims to get you out and about within the city finding places you never knew existed! A series of walks are planned over the coming year to introduce you to walking with an added twist of finding nature that can be found on your doorstep! Each walk will start off in a central location and last between 30 minutes to an hour and a half. Walks have already taken place at Braunstone and Spinney Hill Park looking at some of the oldest trees in the city and exploring some of the folklor and wildlife they bring to our urban parks. Future walks are planned in a variety of locations including some of our churchyards, cemeteries, waterways and parks led by local experts in nature.

GET INVOLVED:

Check the year planner at the back for dates and contact:

Sarah Coy on:

0116 373 7589 or email:

Sara.Coy@leicester.gov.uk

Castle Hill Country Park Froglife Project



The Council, in Partnership with Froglife are focusing on improving habitats at Castle Hill Country Park for a range of amphibians during the Autumn and Winter 2017/18. Plans include surveying the existing ponds with the help of the local community along the Rothley Brook for frogs, toads and newts to see if these habitats are supporting a range of wildlife and what can be improved. A series of scrapes have been installed along the woodland walk with the creation of hibernacula to provide further habitat for amphibians. These scrapes are planned to take surface water from the track, making it more useable for Park users. The scrapes will be seeded with a wetland wildflower mix to provide further habitat for insects and other invertebrates. As a result of the pond surveys a series of restoration works are going to be carried out such as deepening existing ponds, creating shelves, and removal of invasive vegetation. Further works include creating over 300 square metres of wildflower meadow providing terrestrial habitat for amphibians and an interpretation board advising members of the public of what can be found within the ponds.

GET INVOLVED:

Visit [Leicester City Council Parks pages](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/parks-and-open-spaces/) to find out more:

<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/parks-and-open-spaces/>

January	February	March	April	May	June
	8th Leicester Eco-Schools Winter Teachmeet - Mellor Primary School	5th Biodiversity and Buildings Workshop - Loughborough	4th Urban Buzz Bee Walk Abbey Park (See Page 11)	2nd Urban Buzz Bee Walk Knighton Park (See Page 11)	3rd Walk on the Wild Side Churchyards and Cemeteries - (Cherishing Churchyards Week) (See Page 14)
10th Peregrine watch point Leicester Cathedral (See Page 12)	14th Peregrine Watch Point Leicester Cathedral (See Page 12)	10th Guided Walk - Birds - Aylestone Meadows	11th Peregrine Watch Point Leicester Cathedral (See Page 12)	9th Peregrine Watch Point Leicester Cathedral (See Page 12)	6th Urban Buzz Bee Walk TBD (See Page 11)
15th Bennion Pools plug planting for pollinators (See Page 11)		14th Peregrine Watch Point Leicester Cathedral (See Page 12)	18th Walk on the Wild Side - Goss Meadows (See Page 14)	17th and 18th BioBlitz Belgrave Hall and Gardens (See Page 12)	13th Peregrine Watch Point Leicester Cathedral (See Page 12)
22nd Castle Hill plug planting for pollinators (See Page 11)				TBD Bee home building (See Page 11)	TBD Urban Buzz Expert Bee walk BBCT or Steve Falk (See Page 11)
23rd Western Park plug planting for pollinators (See Page 11)	22nd Leicester Environmental Volunteers The Orchards LNR (See Page 6)	TBD Urban Buzz Bee Bank Creation (See Page 11)	TBD Urban Buzz Habitat Management workshop (See Page 11)	22nd International Day of Biodiversity	23rd- 24th June Moth Breakfast
27th Big Garden Birdwatch Abbey Park	25th Recorders Conference	30th Walk on the Wild Side - Castle Gardens (See Page 14)		29th Walk on the Wild Side - Great British Bee Count - Knighton Park (See Page 14)	(19th May - 30th June) Great British Bee Count - Abbey Park (See Page 14)

Projects and events to be aware of:

27 - 29th Big Garden Birdwatch	14th- 21st BTO National Nest Box Week		- Grazing Project - Longhorn Cattle to Graze Aylestone Meadows LNR	19th May - 30th June Great British Bee Count - Longhorn Cattle to Graze Aylestone Meadows LNR - Local Wildlife Site Surveys	19th May - 30th June Great British Bee Count 3rd - 11th Cherishing Churchyards Week 17th - 18th Wildlife Weekend Bradgate Park 16th - 23rd Swift Awareness Week - Longhorn Cattle to Graze Aylestone Meadows LNR - Local Wildlife Site Surveys
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July	August	September	October	November	December
<p>4th Urban Buzz Bee Walk TBD (See Page 11)</p>	<p>1st Urban Buzz Bee Walk TBD (See Page 11)</p>	<p>5th Walk on the Wild Side - Ellis Meadows (See Page 14)</p>	<p>7th Guided Walk - Fungi - Welford Road Cemetery</p>	<p>7th Leicester Environmental Volunteers The Orchards LNR (See Page 6)</p>	<p>1st Guided Walk - Birds - Watermead Country Park (See Page 12)</p>
<p>7th Peregrine Talk (See Page 12)</p>	<p>4th Walk on the Wild Side - Big Butterfly Count - Aylestone Meadows (See Page 14)</p>	<p>12th Peregrine Watch Point Leicester Cathedral (See Page 12)</p>	<p>11th Leicester Environmental Volunteers The Orchards LNR (See Page 6)</p>		<p>5th Walk on the Wild Side - Spinney Hill Park (See Page 14)</p>
<p>Peregrine Chicks due to fledge</p>	<p>8th Peregrine Watch Point Leicester Cathedral (See Page 12)</p>	<p>20th Leicester Environmental Volunteers Aylestone Meadows Evesham Road (See Page 6)</p>	<p>12th Walk on the Wild Side - The Rally and Stokeswood Park (See Page 14)</p>		<p>8th Peregrine Talk</p>
<p>11th Peregrine Watch Point Leicester Cathedral (See Page 12)</p>	<p>21st Wild about Leicester Welford Road Cemetery (See Page 7)</p> <p>TBD Urban Buzz Expert butterfly walk Butterfly Conservation Trust (See Page 11)</p>	<p>27th Leicester Environmental Volunteers Aylestone Meadows Evesham Road (See Page 6)</p>	<p>TBD Urban Buzz Wildflower habitat creation (See Page 11)</p>	<p>14th Walk on the Wild Side - Braunstone Park (See Page 14)</p>	<p>12th Peregrine Watch Point Leicester Cathedral (See Page 12)</p>
<p>12th Guided Walk - Bats - Western Park</p>	<p>22nd Wild about Leicester Welford Road Cemetery (See Page 7)</p>		<p>19th Leicester Environmental Volunteers The Orchards LNR (See Page 6)</p>	<p>21st Peregrine Watch Point Leicester Cathedral (See Page 12)</p>	<p>TBD Urban Buzz Trees for bees planting (See Page 11)</p>
<p>14th Walk on the Wild Side - Big Butterfly Count - Aylestone Meadows (See Page 14)</p>	<p>23rd Wild about Leicester Welford Road Cemetery (See Page 7)</p>		<p>24th Peregrine Watch Point Leicester Cathedral (See Page 12)</p>		
<p>TBD Monitoring of Urban Buzz Sites (See Page 11)</p>					

Projects and events to be aware of:

<p>14th July - 4th Aug Big Butterfly Count - Longhorn Cattle to Graze Aylestone Meadows LNR - Cut and bale grasslands - Local Wildlife Site Surveys</p>	<p>14th July - 4th Aug Big Butterfly Count - 17th - 19th Birdfair 25th - 26th) International Bat Weekend - Longhorn Cattle to Graze Aylestone Meadows LNR - Cut and bale grasslands - Local Wildlife Site Surveys</p>	<p>- Longhorn Cattle to Graze Aylestone Meadows LNR - Cut and bale grasslands - Local Wildlife Site Surveys</p>	<p>- UK Fungus Day</p>		
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How you can get involved

Visit Leicester the City Council Biodiversity Webpages:
www.leicester.gov.uk/promoting-biodiversity

Visit Leicester the City Council Volunteering Webpages:
www.leicester.gov.uk/parks-volunteering

Visit Leicester the City Council Parks Webpages:
<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/parks-and-open-spaces/>

NatureSpot:
<http://www.naturespot.org.uk/>

The Conservation Volunteers (TCV):
<http://www.tcv.org.uk/>



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