

The Wildlife Lover's Guide to Changing Communities & Influencing Decision Makers

*Be INSPIRED
Join the MOVEMENT
Take ACTION*



Wildlife is in trouble - globally animal populations are roughly half the size they were 40 years ago, 56% of all UK species are in decline and precious habitats such as wildflower meadows have been nearly wiped out, with only 3% remaining of those we had in the 1930s.*

Birmingham and the Black Country itself is home to 131 threatened species including water vole, otter, skylark, kestrel, orchids and native bluebells.

Now climate change is happening faster than previously thought and with 80% of our environmental laws being enshrined in EU law, we have to fight for rigorous and enforceable environmental protections as we leave the EU.

But the Government HAS promised a new Environment Act. This is a once in a generation opportunity to get the strong legal protections our environment needs and our wildlife deserves.

We will only get a strong Act, with proper enforcement and regulation, if our decision makers and political leaders know that enough of us care and are willing to hold them accountable. **That's why we're asking for your help to create a wild neighbourhood as part of a national Nature Recovery Network.**

If you don't already receive our E-bulletin, please sign up at www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/SignUp, we may need to ask you to take actions at specific times so our voice united, is loud.

Together, we CAN reverse wildlife decline.

**Georgia Stokes, CEO
The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country**

* State of Nature Report



"As we prepare to leave the
European Union, I believe there
is more urgency than ever to
make our environmental laws
ambitious and meaningful."

Sir David Attenborough
President Emeritus,
The Wildlife Trusts



Why do we need a Nature Recovery Network?

The UK today is a human-dominated landscape. Most original habitats have gone, and natural ecosystems are fragmented. Woods, meadows, ponds and other places with lots of wild plants and animals are getting smaller, fewer, more polluted, and more cut-off from each other. Most of our plants and animals are declining. One in ten face extinction.

Given the pressure on land for food, roads and housing, this is not surprising. However, our separation from nature has led to other unintended negative effects.

Our lifestyles are unsustainable and overlook the value of natural systems. We need healthy soil to grow food in, clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, and green space for exercise and relaxation. No one disputes this – yet our farming and planning systems have often taken us in the opposite direction.

Wildlife can be brought back when the will and the space is there. Previous generations lived with clouds of butterflies, snowstorms of moths, and hedges shaking with dense flocks of farmland birds.



A Nature Recovery Network is a joined-up system of places important for wild plants and animals, on land and at sea.

It allows plants, animals, seeds, nutrients and water to move from place to place and enables the natural world to adapt to change. It provides plants and animals with places to live, feed and breed.

It can only do this effectively if, like our road network, it is treated as a joined-up whole.

Nature conservation in the last century succeeded in protecting some vital wildlife sites. But wildlife has still declined.

Protected wildlife sites alone cannot meet the needs of wildlife or our society. To achieve that, we also need to provide effective protection for the many other places in the landscape that are still rich in wildlife despite the many pressures they face.

And we must invest time, effort, commitment and money into bringing wildlife back across a far wider area – stitching back together Britain's tattered natural fabric of wild land.

We need to create a Nature Recovery Network that extends into every part of our towns, cities and countryside, bringing wildlife and the benefits of a healthy natural world into every part of life. Letting flowers bloom along road verges, installing green roofs across city skylines, planting more street trees to give people shady walks in the summer, encouraging whole communities to garden for wild plants and animals.

A network that brings wildlife into every neighbourhood would also provide fairer access to nature for people. Studies have shown the benefits of living close to nature, but many people are deprived of these benefits.

Wild neighbourhoods are vital connectors for a Nature Recovery Network, but they need the people that live in them to fight for them.



My Wild Neighbourhood

It takes just one person to start a local movement. Will you take the first steps to make your neighbourhood wild? Here are some ideas to help make sure that both people and wildlife can share space, travel safely and thrive.

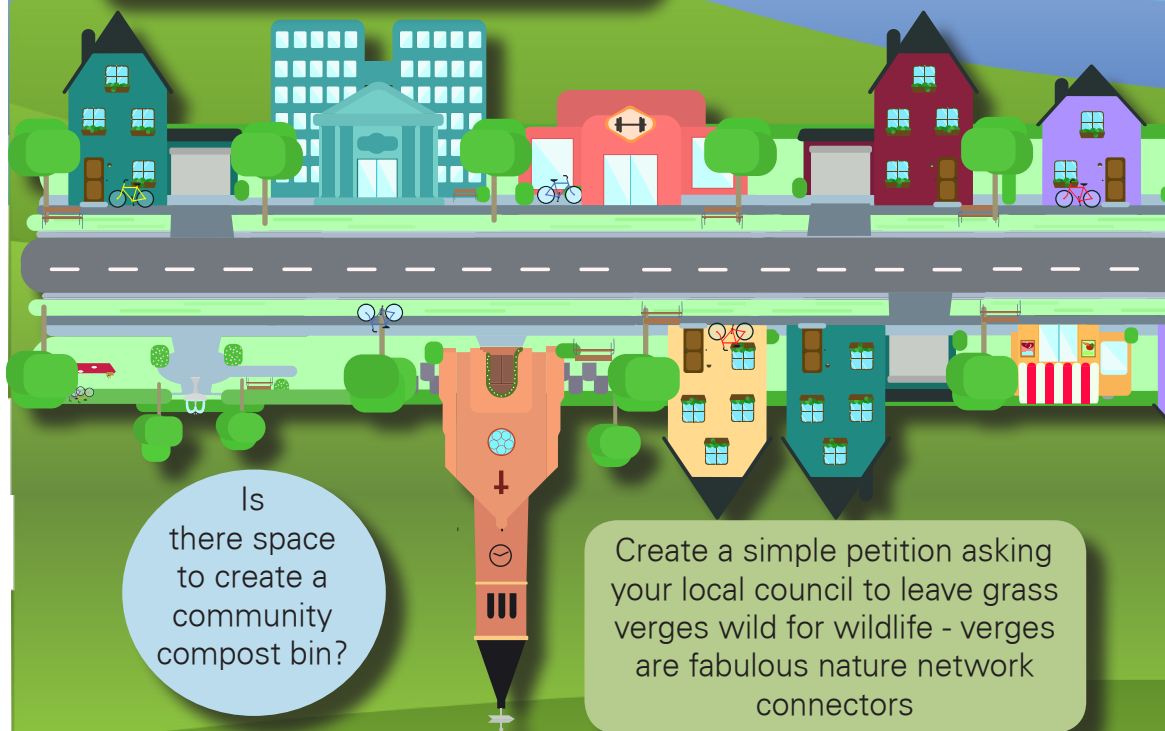
Create a mini wildflower meadow in your garden by planting a native seed mix. This will encourage pollinators and birds to visit!


Use your bike! Are there safe places to cycle near you? Ask your local councillor to join you and your friends for a ride and work with you to make routes green and safe.

Be a lazy gardener - leave leaf piles & piles of stones, sticks and twigs for wild homes. Leave your strimmer in the shed and have long grass strips for wildlife to hide. Don't cut back seed heads, leave them for the birds!

Is there space to create a community compost bin?

Create a simple petition asking your local council to leave grass verges wild for wildlife - verges are fabulous nature network connectors





Could you replace front garden walls with hedges, or even allow climbing plants to cover them and create a green wall?

Organise a monthly litter pick in your street - contact your local councillor for help getting litter pickers and collecting rubbish

Ask your neighbours over for coffee and cake - ask them to commit to building a hedgehog highway by each cutting a hole the size of a cd case in their garden fence

Hang bird feeders & bat boxes from street trees!

Don't use slug pellets or glysothates in your garden

Refuse single-use plastic. Tweet companies that use plastic packaging telling them why you won't buy. Or post it back to them and ask your friends to do the same

Use your Influence

The best way to influence law is to **lobby your Member of Parliament** to make sure they know exactly what enforcement and regulation is needed and the consequences of failing to create a strong and robust Environment Act.

Any contact with MPs is important, but some is more effective than others.

1

Make an appointment at your MP's advice surgery and go and talk to them. You don't need to know a lot of facts and figures, just tell them why it matters we have a rigorous, enforceable Environment Act. A face to face conversation is a thousand times more effective than a letter.

2

Although not as impactful you can write to your MP at *MP NAME*, House of Commons, London, SW1A 1AA. A handwritten letter in your own words is more likely to elicit a response than a copied template letter.

3

Tag your MP on social media, engage them in conversation, use your own words. Tell them what you need them to do. Tag us @WTBBC or Facebook.com/WTBBC so we can join the conversation too.

Find your MPs details at www.TheyWorkForYou.com



Make your Meeting MATTER!

Share your story:

MPs love personal stories. Share yours with them, choosing experiences that have taken place in your local area and meant a lot to you. This way you can show your MP how much the natural environment in your area matters. Perhaps there are some moments shared with your Wildlife Trust or events you've attended that stand out? Can you think how even more wildlife in your area would help to improve it? Local examples will help your MP add flavour to letters, speeches and press releases.

Have a clear ask:

To make your meeting as successful as possible, make sure you have some clear things to ask your MP to do for you. See next page for a list of ideas! **Don't worry if you're not an expert:** It's your MP's job to listen to you and you will probably know far more than them - just be passionate about the issue.



Take a photo:

Ask your MP if you can take a photo with them - this is a great way to let others know that people have been speaking to them about nature's recovery, and to encourage them to do the same. MPs often like the publicity too!

NEXT STEPS

Following up with your MP is a good way to keep your meeting fresh in their mind – sending them a quick 'thank you' email with the photo is a nice way of doing this.

It might also help to take brief notes on what was said in the meeting so you can remind them of anything they have committed to and hold them to it!

But what can your MP DO!!

There are lots of ways your MP can help ensure we get an Environment Act that will support nature's recovery. Here are some of the things you can ask them to do

Ask if they'll table a parliamentary question to the Prime Minister or Environment Minister, thank them for their support on social media

Will they write and tweet a blog post in support you can share? Don't forget to tag us @WTBBC so we can share it too!

Invite them to come along to one of our events, as well as great learning opportunities they can get promotional pictures for use in their work!

Will they pledge to join us and thousands of Birmingham and Black Country residents in a Day of Green Action on 5th June 2019?

Ask them to write to their Party Leader e.g. Theresa May or Jeremy Corbyn, and their environment team to support an ambitious Environment Act

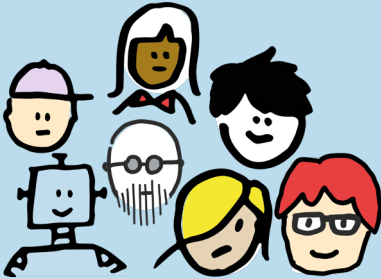
Can they email or write to constituents with a survey telling them about the issues and asking what they think? They can contact us for help with local facts and figures.

Don't forget to tell them what you are doing as an individual for nature's recovery - ask what they are doing as a leader and decision-maker

You can also ask them what they think they can do to help make this happen too!

Extending your influence

Your Member of Parliament is influenced by all kinds of people, we need them to join our movement and use their influence too! So how can you influence your MPs network?



Get your friends involved, show your passion, ask them to contact their MP too, the more voices united, the louder and stronger we are.

MPs staff, both in their parliamentary and constituency office may have control over their MPs diary and call schedule, as well as having the ear of the MP themselves.



Look out for community meetings where your MP will be speaking, go along and ask for their support.



Write to your MPs constituency party and ask them to support the campaign, and formally ask their MP to back it too. Who are the local councillors they work with and listen to, make an appointment to see them too!



Who are the local business leaders and employers your MP is in touch with? Do you have personal contacts you can tell about the campaign and ask them to contact your MP in support?

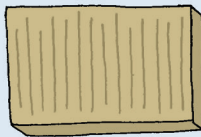
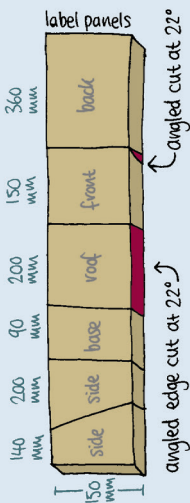


Make your own bat box

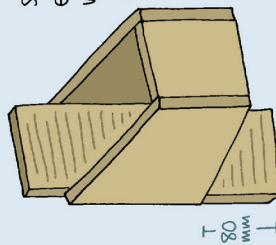
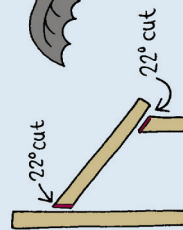


What you need:

- an adult to help you
- rough cut, untreated timber
- tape measure and pencil
- saw
- hammer and nails
- rubber flap
- odourless wood glue (optional)

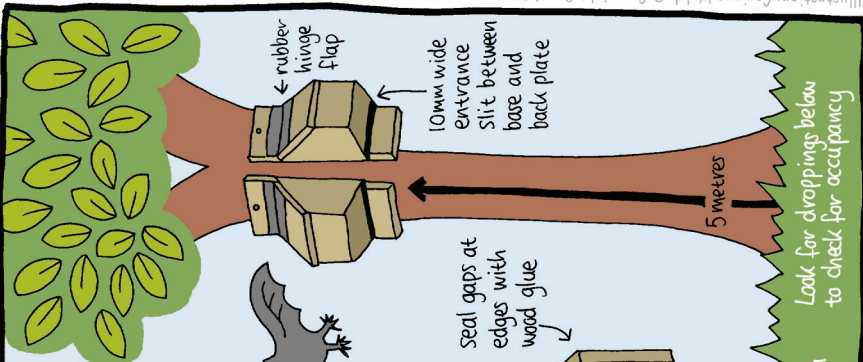


roughen back plate with 1mm deep cuts every 10mm



Seal gaps at edges with wood glue

IMPORTANT
Do not use wood containing oil



Look for droppings below to check for occupancy

IT IS ILLEGAL TO DISTURB BATS WITHOUT A LICENSE - DO NOT INSPECT BOXES IF YOU THINK BATS ARE USING THEM

wildaboutgardens.org.uk

See our website for lots more actions and ideas!
www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/MyWildNeighbourhood

Make a wildlife pond



You will need

- A big patch of garden
- Spade
- A plank of wood
- Spirit level
- Butyl pond liner
- Sand
- Water (use rainwater for best results)
- A variety of pond plants
- Large rocks

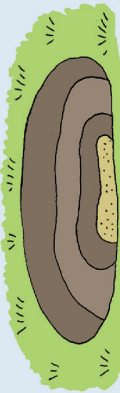
Remember: don't add fish or a pump. The fish will eat smaller life forms (including frog and newt larvae) while the pump may suck them up!

- 1 Choose your spot.* Draw your pond outline and dig out, including some shallow areas.

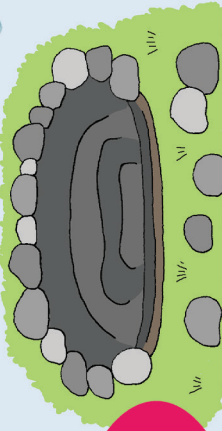


Use a plank and spirit level to ensure that the edges are level.

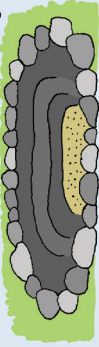
- 2 Put a layer of sand at the bottom (don't use it all, you'll need some later).



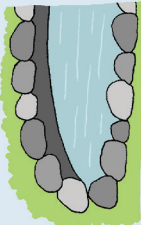
- 3 Make a trench all around the edge of your pond, and lay the edge of the liner into this. Weigh it down with large rocks.



- 4 Fill the bottom with the remaining sand.



- 5 Fill the pond up with water.



If you fill it from a tap or hose your water might turn green - don't worry, this is just the minerals.

- 6 Leave your pond to settle for about a week before adding your plants.



- 7 Watch and see what wildlife visits.

Consider adding a plank of wood to help any wildlife that may have fallen in.



www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

* Look for a spot with plenty of sun, ideally with some shade in the afternoon. Try to avoid trees nearby, as fallen leaves can pollute the pond.

See our website for lots more actions and ideas!
www.bbcwildlife.org.uk / MyWildNeighbourhood

The Facts and Figures

You don't need to know a lot of facts and figures, but having a few at your disposal can help persuade people to your cause

**90%
decline in
the number
of water voles
since the
1990s**

Birmingham and the Black Country is home to 131 threatened species including water vole, otter, skylark, kestrel, orchids and native bluebells

The climate of the West Midlands changed in the 20th century, the annual average temperature rose by 0.6°C, the growing season lengthened by 30 days, summer rainfall decreased and winter rainfall increased

90%
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number of
common
frogs
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1980s

Over
80%
of the UK's
environmental laws
come from the
European Union

56% of all UK species are in decline and precious habitats such as wildflower meadows have been nearly wiped out, with only 3% remaining of those we had in the 1930s

Good
access to quality
greenspace could save
the NHS £105m per year
in the West Midlands

Birmingham's city centre is already on average four degrees warmer than the surrounding countryside

There are more than 150 million tonnes of plastic in our oceans - the CO2 saving of recycling 1 million tonne of plastic is the equivalent of taking 1 million cars off the road

900 deaths per
year are linked
to air pollution
in Birmingham





My Promise for a WILD neighbourhood

I believe all our lives are better when
they're a little bit WILD so I pledge to...

What will YOU pledge?

#MyWildNeighbourhood



/WTBBC



@WTBBC



'The Wildlife Trusts play a very important part in protecting our natural heritage. I would encourage anyone who cares about wildlife to join them'

Sir David Attenborough
President Emeritus, The Wildlife Trusts

JOIN US

We are a local charity and our members are our lifeblood. Join us today and help us protect wildlife where you live
www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/JoinUs
0121 523 0094
membership@bbcwildlife.org.uk

HELP US

www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/Volunteer
0121 523 0094
info@bbcwildlife.org.uk

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www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/SignUp



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www.bbcwildlife.org.uk

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