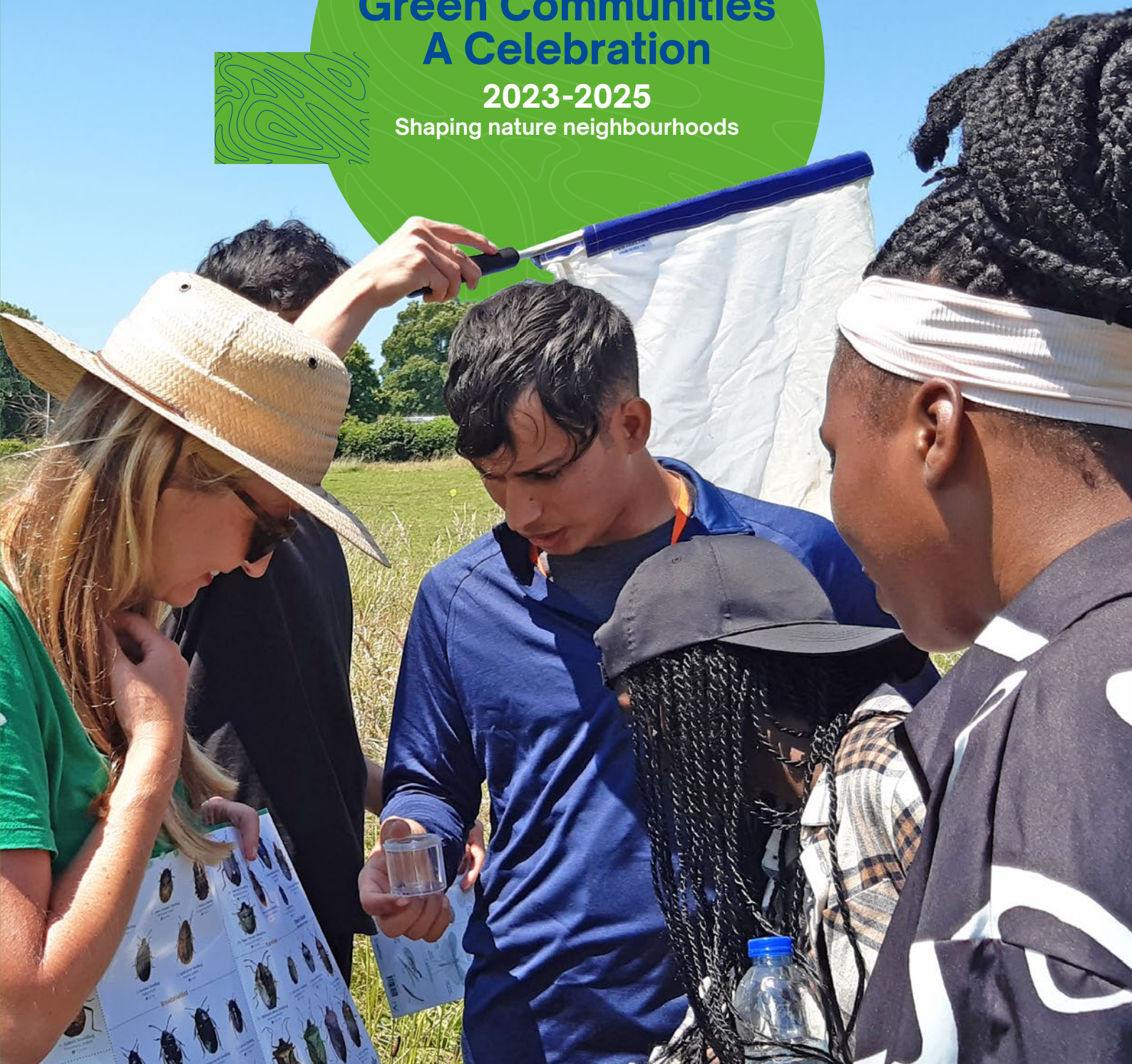


Green Communities A Celebration

2023-2025

Shaping nature neighbourhoods



What we do

Green Communities is a partnership between Plymouth City Council and the National Trust, supported by local partners Zebra Collective, Real Ideas Organisation, and Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest. For the first 12 months of the project we also worked closely with Devon Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

We are a place-based initiative, working alongside community groups, VCSE organisations, residents and individuals, taking an asset-based approach to enjoying, understanding and improving local green spaces. Our projects are in areas of the city with low tree equity, fewer greenspaces, and greater levels of social and economic disadvantage.

Green Communities is based around 4 key themes

- 1 Co-creating and co-designing nature-based activities to connect with more diverse and harder to reach communities
- 2 Increasing health and wellbeing through connecting people with nature
- 3 Changing behaviours and attitudes to nature
- 4 Building an evidence base for hyper-local nature recovery contributions to strategic plans

A locally based PCC Officer and a National Trust Urban Ranger is embedded in each of the 3 neighbourhoods.

Working together we:

- co-design bespoke nature themed activities, often at non-nature focused community events
- co-host practical nature recovery and citizen science activities in urban landscapes
- listen to local stakeholders and prompting discussions around caring for nature in their neighbourhoods
- promote green skills and digital badges

The embedded teams are in a prime position to reach out to new audiences, meet new people, and hear new voices. They do this by being on the ground, having a presence, regularly being seen out and about, joining in with all sorts of local activities, and by having lots of conversations and contact with the communities.

Social and Ecological Indicators developed from a Theory of Change help to evaluate success and measure impact.

For the first time, hyper-local data sets and evaluations are used in citywide strategic plans for nature e.g Plymouth Plan for Nature & People, Local Nature Recovery Plan, Nature Towns and Cities Accreditation.

The project is currently funded through a combination of external local and national grants and S106 developer contributions.



Highlights

1468

The number of children aged 0-10 engaged in libraries, Family Centres, and the Next Generation Nature programme.

9238

engagements with Green Communities

772

engagements on local climate action and nature-based co-design.

03

One new Green Devonport Plan and two new Nature Neighbourhood Plans. All promoting hyper-local nature recovery.

MORE THAN



200m

of hedge planted, 115m of hedge laid, and 10m of drystone wall repaired, promoting rural skills.



24

urban grassland sites regularly monitored and ecological data recorded.

96%

Agreed that Green Communities activities deepened their connection with nature.

956

between the ages of 11-17 have engaged with the project. We regularly help at 4 different youth clubs.

2960

people between the ages of 0-24 have been involved in our Children and Young People Programme



300

300 streets surveyed to explore opportunities for new urban tree locations

364

local residents involved in ecological monitoring and citizen science



07



new, innovative Nature Connection digital badges written and published, with 46 badges issued to local Plymouth residents

507

nature events that we co-created engaging new & hard-to-reach communities



260.5k

260,486 unique views online through our digital platforms



People, places, and partnerships

Green Communities is shaping nature neighbourhoods, connecting people and wildlife in 3 areas of Plymouth - Devonport, Central Park and West of the City (primarily Keyham, Weston Mill & Barne Barton)

COMPOSTING We have collaborated with Generous Earth to set up 3 new composting sites in Central Park, Devonport Park, and Knowle Avenue allotments. People bring their food waste to compost it quickly and safely. We are supporting Generous Earth with volunteer workshops and activities. We have engaged with over 100 people and our compost has helped produce locally grown food!

BLOSSOM Green Communities has led the Blossom celebrations in Plymouth, as part of the National Trust's Festival of Blossom. From hosting the poet Laureate, Simon Armitage, for a world premiere of his Blossomise work, to teaming up with over 50 community organisations to deliver blossom-inspired, creative activities, we have engaged with over 1500 people. We have also collaborated with local artists to create artworks with our communities. This artwork has toured the city and local National Trust properties.

GREEN DEVONPORT PLAN Devonport is a proud, vibrant community working to make its neighbourhood more nature friendly. The Nature Neighbourhood Plan, led by Zebra Collective, reflects residents' calls for more trees, planting, and access to green spaces. The Green Devonport Landscape Plan envisions a greener future through community co-design. Together they make up the 'Green Devonport Plan' and support Plymouth's Plan for Nature and People.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE This programme works with schools, colleges, and youth centres, running workshops and activities. We deliver climate education linked to the National Curriculum and the Government's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy. Partners include City College's ESOL group, Wellbeing Warriors, Mount Wise Youth Club, and local schools. So far, we have engaged 2,983 students across 19 educational institutions.

CENTRAL PARK GOLF COURSE BIODIVERSITY IMPROVEMENTS. Central Park Pitch and Putt wanted to redesign their golf course with nature. Through our partnership with Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest, we worked with local communities to co-design a planting plan. Between Jan - Mar 2025, we held 9 community planting events, and planted over 1000 trees, 70m of edible hedgerow, and sowed over 1000m² of wildlife meadow.

KINTSUGI AND KEYHAM GREEN PLACES. We have supported Kintsugi community garden and Keyham Green Places to help their green spaces flourish. With weekly volunteering, we have helped to plant, maintain, and harvest their crops to provide a delicious variety of vegetables for their community fridges and food banks, improving food security and healthy living in the Keyham area. Leftover produce goes to our community composting scheme.

GREEN SKILLS. Bringing rural heritage skills back into our urban parks is a passion for one of our National Trust Rangers, and in partnership with Devon Rural Skill Trust we have upskilled colleagues in the art of both hedge laying and dry-stone walling. The 175m of laid hedge and 10m of repaired wall in Central Park have been admired by regular park visitors.

DIGITAL BADGES Our team has led a project to develop and test a set of Nature Connectedness digital badges, supported by Natural England. Working alongside the University of Derby Nature Connectedness Research Group, the National Trust, and local organisations, the team has authored 7 unique digital badges. The badges encourage pro-environmental behaviours and support new skills for future employability.

MINI MEADOWS. We collaborated with Pollenize, the Wolseley Trust and Ford Primary School, to plant 'mini wildlife meadows' in the Wolseley Trust Business Park. As well as developing beautiful, colourful spaces for Keyham's community to enjoy, we created much needed new habitats for insects and pollinators.

IMPROVING LIVES. In partnership with Sensory Solutions & Central Park Interest Group, we co-designed 2 bespoke heritage walks for people with sensory impairments. Feedback from the groups was that all participants enjoyed the opportunity to visit the Central Park in a totally new way, supported by a BSL interpreter and a mix of tactile props and large print images.

"I can't believe we're in the centre of the city (walking through the woodland walk), with birds singing around us!"





Barne Barton



St Budeaux



CENTRAL PARK



Keyham



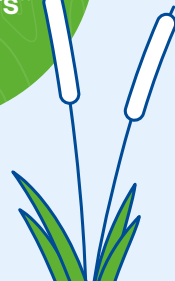
Devonport

Plymouth City Centre

HOE PARK

The Barbican

"This turned a bad day to good: you're the best plant teachers"



A38 Devon Express Way

The Green Communities approach

The Green Communities model champions connecting people and wildlife at a local level in urban neighbourhoods. It is built on active listening, learning and evaluations from urban community activation over the last 10 years.

“I’ve never been to Central Park before this, now I’ve been here 3 weeks in a row going to your events - it’s so nice to be outside”



Our approach is place-based and uses a hyper-local, community-led approach to build on existing strengths and assets, rather than on focusing on problems and needs.

The project helps to empower local people to have a voice by building bridges, sharing experiences, and widening horizons between local communities, VCSE's and statutory bodies. This cross-sector working prompts changes in values and attitudes towards nature in areas where the environment is not normally a priority.

The team works alongside communities which are based within some of our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the city to increase pride of place and raise local aspirations around nature equity, climate awareness, and wellbeing.

Creating stronger, broader partnerships and networks has been central to the success of the project. From housing associations, CICs and VSCE organisations, to Friends Groups, youth clubs and student volunteers, everything we do is based on partnerships, working together and sharing knowledge and aspirations.

Central to all delivery, however, is recognising the importance of community empowerment, collaborative working, and supporting improvements at a community pace. By taking time, building trust, and really understanding local needs and desires we have worked alongside local people to identify, co design and co-deliver a localised programme of events, activities, nature improvements and green skills opportunities for local people.

Green Heroes

Our Green Heroes Gallery is a celebratory exhibition of some of the wonderful people who are helping to make their communities better for people and wildlife. They come from all walks of life and have rich and wide experiences and knowledge to share. Their interest, dedication, and passion are an inspiration us all.



Steve

Steve works with the Men's Shed at Keyham Green Places, building a community garden, and helping to develop local people's gardening and building skills. He also volunteers with Kintsugi.



Mike

Mike is the chairman of Friends of Devonport Park and a key representative within the Green Devonport Partnership. His knowledge and passion for Devonport Park is clear to see.

Realising our vision

① Over the coming years we will:

- continue to strengthen our local partnerships, join and build new networks, and empower the people we work with to become nature leaders in their own communities
- explore how a Green Communities approach can be adapted and adopted in new neighbourhoods both within Plymouth, and more widely across the country.

② We are always looking for new supporters, resources, and opportunities to grow and develop:

- If you would like to find out more about how you could support us and our many partners, please do get in touch via the contact form on our website: greenmindsplymouth.com/greenhubs
- If you would like to find out more about any of our events, activities or workshops, check out our website and social media platforms.



“This group feels like my family. The community garden is my peaceful, safe space”



Deirdre

Deirdre volunteers with St Luke's Hospice, and attends the Compassionate Café sessions to support those experiencing loss. She helps run birdwatching events, fosters connection with nature, and a community spirit.



Tess

Tess helps wildlife bloom in Plymouth! She runs activities like foraging, helping people with composting, and teaching permaculture.



Sarah

Sarah runs Devonport Live Café, a community space. She has helped organise new nature initiatives meaning that people in Devonport get more opportunities to get out and enjoy nature



Hannah, Matt, & Cyrus

Hannah, Matt, & Cyrus visited our Blossom art events at Central Park. They created beautiful artworks, spending quality time together and connecting to nature through creativity!



FIND OUT MORE

