



Derbyshire
Wildlife Trust

WILDER **COMMUNITIES** **TOOLKIT**

www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk



WHAT ARE WILDER COMMUNITIES?

Wilder Communities make the spaces where we live, work or study wilder. From neighbours working together to create greener streets, to a group of friends doing a litter pick or starting a community allotment, to a bunch of enthusiastic volunteers coming together to make their village or town centre greener.

These are your communities and it is up to you how you make them wilder, all groups are different. You don't have to be a wildlife expert, anyone who is passionate about making a difference for wildlife in their local area can be part of a wilder community.

This handy booklet contains some ideas to get you started as a group and help you decide what you would like to do.



Whatever action you pick, always be mindful of whether it is right for the space and ensure you get the permission of whoever owns the land first.

Being part of a Wilder Community is a fantastic way to connect with people locally and improve your well-being by connecting with nature. Perhaps even more crucial is that it's fantastic for your local wildlife. From providing food for the bees, to improving biodiversity or reducing flooding, there are so many benefits a wilder community can have.

So what are you waiting for? Mobilise your community to act and start creating a wild space for nature.



SET UP A GROUP



Setting up a group is a great way to get started. By recruiting volunteers to help, you can help spread the load and do much more for wildlife than you could do alone. Starting a group doesn't have to be scary, it can be as formal or as informal as you like.

5 SIMPLE STEPS

1. Talk to your neighbours or local community to find others who share your passion
2. Find your local Council Voluntary Service (CVS). There's one in every area of Derbyshire and they offer free support and resources for groups.
3. Decide what type of group you want to set up and what the mission and aims of the group are.
4. Recruit some volunteers that are enthusiastic about helping local wildlife and nature.
5. Set up a Facebook group . This is a great way to find new members, communicate with each other and inspire others by sharing photos



WORK WITH OTHERS



Depending on what action you want to take, it's a good idea to work with other people outside of your group to help you achieve your goals. Not only will it increase your network of people but can also help spread the word about your group and what you are doing.

5 SIMPLE STEPS

- 1.** Find out if there are any other local groups you could partner with. Partnerships allow you to achieve more together than you would individually.
- 2.** Try contacting the Scouts or Rotary Club who might help you volunteering for a day.
- 3.** Don't forget to talk to the local schools who might be keen to partner up with you.
- 4.** Try approaching your council for their support or permission to use council own land. Write to your councilor or even better arrange a meeting.
- 5.** Consider feeding into your neighborhood plan to help shape development in your area. Neighborhood planning is a right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011.



#GROW DON'T MOW



Help the wildlife in your community by locking away your mowers with our #GrowDon'tMow campaign! By not cutting the grass you help wildlife, save time and enjoy visits from bees, butterflies, hedgehogs and all sorts of other wonderful wildlife

5 SIMPLE STEPS

- 1.** Pick a patch, large or small
- 2.** Leave it and let the grass grow....easy!
- 3.** Leave the grass to grow for a minimum of 4 weeks, the best time to cut it is late August, early September once all the flowers have gone.
- 4.** Watch areas transform and brim with wildlife and flowers. Why not do some bug hunts before and after to see the difference you have made?
- 5.** Inspire others by sharing before and after photos on social media.



MANAGE ROAD VERGES FOR WILDLIFE

It's not just individuals that can take part in #GrowDon'tMow. From verges at the side of a business to council owned road verges, any space where the grass can be left to grow will be beneficial.

5 SIMPLE STEPS

1. Before you begin, assess what plants and animals are currently growing and living on it.
2. Check with the road verge owner before you begin any work. In most cases the grass verges are part of the highway and managed by the council.
3. Contact the Highways team at your local council and ask them to take part in #GrowDon'tMow.
4. Cutting at the wrong time can cause considerable harm to the wildlife in verges. [Click for specific advice on when and how to cut it.](#)
5. [Click to download our signs and let the neighbours know you're supporting wildlife.](#)



PARDON THE WEEDS
WE'RE FEEDING THE BEES

#GO POTTY FOR WILDLIFE

Get your whole community to #GoPottyforWildlife on their balconies, window ledges, patios and in their gardens or community areas, use whatever space there is. Increasing the number of pots in the community will help create wildlife corridors and provide food for wildlife and insects.



5 SIMPLE STEPS

- 1.** Find an old container, anything will do. You don't have to use a traditional pot. Why not use an old pair of wellie boots, a cracked teapot or even find an old tyre?
- 2.** Add some peat free soil.
- 3.** Plant some seasonal seeds or bulbs.
- 4.** Water them and watch them grow.
- 5.** Download our 'I support a Wilder Derbyshire' sign to let your neighbours know what you are doing and encourage them to do the same.



COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT



Growing your own grub can be great for nature and great for you. If the thought of your own allotment is daunting, why not start a community allotment? As well as coming together and sharing produce, allotments can be havens for insects.

5 SIMPLE STEPS

- 1.** Plant nectar and pollen rich plants and bulbs. Avoid traditional bedding plants which don't contain much nectar such as busy lizzies and petunias.
- 2.** Decide what produce you want to plant and what time of year it needs to be done. Grow organic and avoid pesticides.
- 3.** Avoid planting all the same plants together or in rows; pests find their favorite plant and spread quickly.
- 4.** Have your own compost heap, this won't only benefit your plants but can provide a home for bugs such as worms, centipedes and woodlice as well as frogs and toads.
- 5.** When it's ready, pick your grub and get cooking!



COMMUNITY ORCHARD



Trees have a vital role to play in protecting the environment, including reducing the effects of flooding. If you're planning to plant a number of trees, it's important to follow the "right tree, right place" principles to ensure you don't plant on other important habitats. [Click to find out more.](#)

5 SIMPLE IDEAS

- 1.** Decide where to plant your trees, ensuring you have permission from the landowner.
- 2.** Limit the risk of spreading disease by only buying native trees from reputable, local tree nurseries.
- 3.** Consider if you need stakes and tree guards, these are often made of plastic and are not always needed.
- 4.** Cover the area around your tree with mulch material such as decaying leaves, bark or compost.
- 5.** Plant at the right time of year. Bare rooted trees must be planted when they are dormant, November to March.



WILDER STREETS



Coming together with other people to create positive changes for your street, community and future is just as important as joining up the small spaces for wildlife. Gardens in Britain cover an area larger than all of the country's nature reserves combined, an amazing opportunity to create a network of connected wild spaces that allow wildlife to move freely.

5 SIMPLE STEPS

- 1.** Download our sign here to show that you support a Wilder Derbyshire.
- 2.** Get your community involved, from bin shelters with green roofs to a plant and seed share.
- 3.** Remove fences and replace with hedges or trellises that allow wildlife to travel through.
- 4.** Create a hedgehog highway by cutting holes in your fences that allow them to travel between gardens.
- 5.** Reach out to schools, churches, shops, and other businesses with space that could help.



GO PESTICIDE FREE



Pesticides kill insects, including bees. 41% of insects are in decline. Becoming a pesticide free town, street or village will help to put insects back into recovery, ensuring that the plants you grow are free from harmful chemicals.

5 SIMPLE STEPS

- 1.** Take part in [The Wildlife Trust's Action For Insects Campaign](#) .
- 2.** Start your own local campaign encouraging councils, universities, car parks, hospitals, private housing developments, shopping centres and schools to go pesticide free.
- 3.** To naturally manage insects, such as greenfly, encourage wildlife like hedgehogs and toads into your garden.
- 4.** [Find out about companion planting to aid pollinators and help keep the number of unwanted insects down.](#)
- 5.** Hold a pesticide amnesty. Get your community to clear out their sheds and give up their pesticides.

CAMPAIGN TOGETHER



Start a campaign and make your voices heard. Call for your local council, the government and key decision makers to play their part and help towards nature's recovery.

5 SIMPLE STEPS

- 1.** Take part in an ongoing Derbyshire Wildlife Trust campaign or decide on a local issue that you are passionate about and start your own campaign.
- 2.** What is your campaign going to achieve? Have a clear plan of what your aims are and the reasons why.
- 3.** Set up a group. Facebook is usually a good place to start. For support join the group Campaign Champions for Wildlife.
- 4.** Start a petition or encourage people to write to their MP or council.
- 5.** Celebrate the small wins and share updates with supporters.

#GROW
DON'T MOW

WILD SCHOOLS



Wilder schools creates environments for children to explore and learn outside, helping to connect them with nature.

5 SIMPLE STEPS

- 1.** Carry out a school grounds audit using our downloadable activity sheet. Get students to identify which areas are good for wildlife, which aren't and suggest improvements.
- 2.** Take part in #GrowDon'tMow. Pupils will enjoy spotting and recording wildlife in the grounds, from bees and butterflies to ladybirds and worms.
- 3.** #GoPottyforWildlife. Get the children to recycle items in to plant pots and plant some wildflower seeds.
- 4.** Join one of our accredited courses: Being a Leader in Outdoor Learning, Using and Improving School Grounds or Forest School Training starting in Spring 2022.
- 5.** Want to get even Wilder? Watch this space for details that will help you get wilder across the whole curriculum. Email dianeg@derbyshirewt.co.uk for more information.



CITIZEN SCIENCE



Record and share your sightings of wildlife. By doing so, you will help us build valuable county records that we can use to monitor species increase or declines and help us advise on planning applications. It may even help protect your site from development.

5 SIMPLE STEPS

1. Let us know what you have been lucky enough to see, whether it's on one of our nature reserves, in your back garden or out in the community.
2. Help us build a picture of who is taking action for wildlife in Derbyshire. Visit our Team Wilder web pages and plot your action on the map.
3. Take part in the RSBP Big Garden Bird Watch in January to help build an overall picture of wildlife in the UK .
4. Take part in the BBC Radio 2 Big Bee Count in June or the Big Butterfly count in July.
5. Start a Froglife Toad Patrol.



COMMUNITY EVENTS



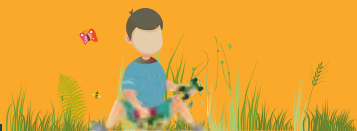
Community events are a great way to engage people and raise awareness around your wildlife objective, whilst bringing the community together. Before you start, decide who the event is aimed at, what it is and what you want to achieve.

5 SIMPLE STEPS

- 1.** Set up an events team to help share the workload and make sure the event is a success.
- 2.** Get stuck into the nitty gritty planning, from venues to licenses and risk assessments to activities.
- 3.** Think about funding & budgets. Could you approach local businesses or council?
- 4.** Promote your event through posters, social media, local newsletters, schools and community groups or the local press, the more publicity the better.
- 5.** Deliver a successful, fun filled event. Use this success to build on creating a wilder community. Make sure you take photos and videos to share.



NATURE TOTS GROUP



Nurture 3-5 year olds in your community to care about the environment and wildlife by setting up a Nature Tots group. It's great for their health, wellbeing and development and really focuses on creating a nature connection from an early age.

5 SIMPLE STEPS

- 1.** Join one of our existing nature tots groups. [Click to find one in your area.](#)
- 2.** Not a group in your area? Why not set one up? Decide if you can run it from an existing community group or whether you will need to start a new one.
- 3.** Look for a suitable venue. Nature Tots can take place indoors or outdoors.
- 4.** Join our accredited OCN Level 1 Inspiring Nature Connection in the Early Years course running throughout the year.
- 5.** Email dianeg@derbyshirewt.co.uk for more information.



SET UP A JUNIOR RANGERS GROUP



Inspire young people in your community to be more involved with local wildlife and the environment.

Junior Rangers groups are a great place for 11-18 year olds to gain practical conservation skills that will help them with future employment as well as being a space for them to meet peers with the same interests.

5 SIMPLE STEPS

- 1.** Do some research and find out if there is the demand for a Junior Rangers group in your area.
- 2.** Would you need to start a new group for scratch, or could it form part of an existing community group?
- 3.** Think about a venue for the group. Junior Rangers needs to take place outside.
- 4.** If there isn't a demand in your area for a group, you could join an existing group.
- 5.** Contact dianeg@derbyshirewt.co.uk for more information and training.



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