

Allestree Park Community Rewilding Project

Summer 2025

Spring was a busy season at Allestree Park, with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Derby City Council, the University of Derby and the Friends of Allestree Park, all delivering a wide range of activities and events that have successfully engaged members of the community in the rewilding project.

The season began with an opportunity to bring together project partners and community groups, involved in the delivery of the project, to celebrate the successes of the first year and workshop ideas for the project moving forwards into Years 2 and 3.

The morning included a guided tour of the site and project activity locations, a KPI review delivered by the project manager and workshoping, where ideas were developed for nature recovery, engagement, access and recreation.

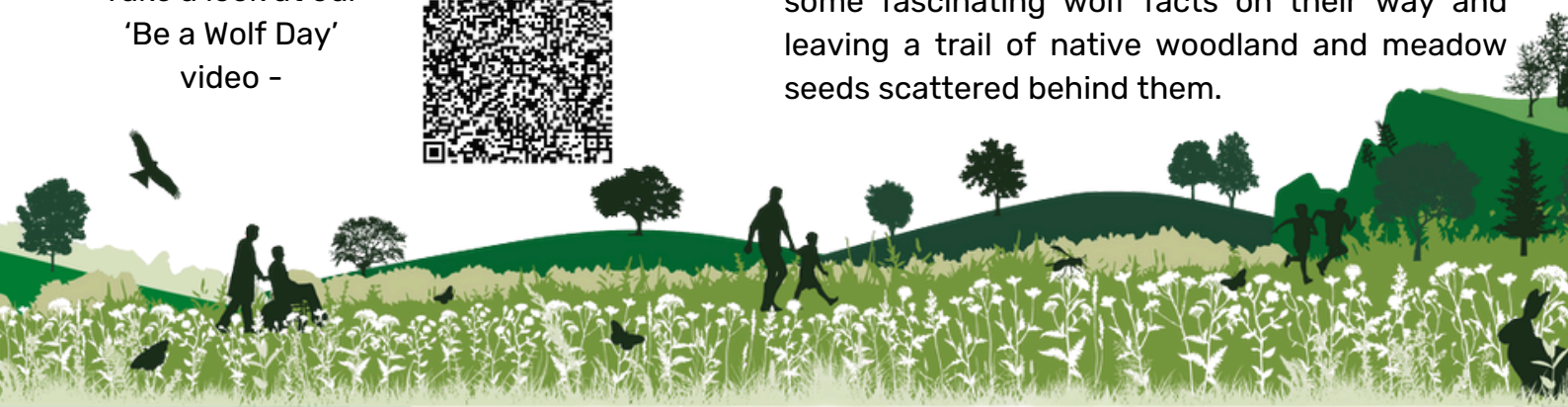


Take a look at our
'Be a Wolf Day'
video -



Be a Wolf Day

Our first event of the spring was 'Be a Wolf Day' when four-legged friends (and their owners) were invited to wear a seed pouch and mimic the behaviour of their ancestors by scattering wildflower seeds across Allestree Park. As keystone species, wolves once had a large impact on ecosystems in the UK by controlling herbivore numbers, providing food opportunities for many creatures through their kills and carrying seeds in their fur, spreading them across large areas and helping native plants to flourish. 25 dog walkers joined us for this event and were taken on a guided walk through Allestree woodlands and meadows, learning some fascinating wolf facts on their way and leaving a trail of native woodland and meadow seeds scattered behind them.



Careers Day

On a sunny day in May, we invited year 12 students from local Derby secondary schools and colleges to attend a Careers Day at Allestree Park to find out about the career pathways available in our worthwhile sector. The day began with a session about Green Skills and Jobs before moving onto a range of interactive sessions that the students took part in with enthusiasm.

The sessions were varied, demonstrating the diversity of careers available in the sector, and included: Invasive Species Removal, Wellbeing and Nature Connection, Habitat Creation (which resulted in the creation of a hibernaculum for slow worms), Natural Flood Management, Pollinator ID skills and Communications & HR.

We received positive feedback from the students who attended from Derby Cathedral School, Ecclesbourne School and Derby College and hope to run similar events in future years to engage more young people in pursuing careers that support nature's recovery.



"It was so informative, and I got a lot more out of it than I thought I would. Especially on the careers side I've been looking at either something in biology or business and today showed me that you can put the two together!"

Lake 200

A big shout out to the Friends of Allestree Park and the Earl of Harrington Angling Club who organised a series of activities during June to celebrate the 200th anniversary since the construction of Allestree lake.

Guests of all ages turned up to immerse themselves in events across the week, including: a painting & photography exhibition, pond dipping, painting beside the lake, underwater lake footage, lake history walks, litter picking, school nature walks and much, much more.

The week concluded with local community & wildlife groups collaborating to host a wide variety of nature and history themed activities, all set to solar-powered music from local artists.

A big thank you to everyone who came together to make this event a huge success - here's to the next 200 years!



Have a Bash

You may have seen squashed piles of Himalayan balsam around Allestree throughout June thanks to an ever-growing number of volunteers who have given up their time to remove this rapid-spreading invasive plant.

Since its introduction in 1839, Himalayan balsam has fast become widespread in the UK, partly due to its effectiveness at producing and dispersing seeds. A single plant can produce hundreds of seeds, and its explosive, easily triggered seed pods propel seeds up to 7m from the parent plant. New plants outcompete our native plants for space, light, moisture and nutrients, overall reducing species diversity. There have been 25-30 Himalayan balsam bashes this summer - more hands certainly make lighter work!



Huge thanks go to many local groups, who include -

The Friends of Allestree Park, Junior Rangers, University of Derby students, Portway Junior School, Lawn Primary School, Derby Home Ed Group, St Benedict's Secondary, Toyota, Rolls Royce, Derby YMCA, Derby Parks Volunteers, Members of the Public and Cubs & Scouts groups from Allestree, Duffield and Belper.



School Engagement

We have been working closely with neighbouring Allestree schools over the course of the project, who are all very keen to engage their students in rewilding activities. We have recently established a 'Community of Practice' with the schools, giving the opportunity for outdoor learning teachers to network and share their practices and expertise. Through termly twilight sessions, we are offering ongoing support and training to the schools, hoping to make their school grounds (and children) wilder, extending the Allestree landscape for the benefit of both the local community and the local wildlife.

The schools are starting to work more with one another; groups of Year 12 students from Woodlands School have been visiting Portway Juniors to grow wildflowers and to teach them about bees, Portway Juniors will be swapping seeds with Curzon's Primary who have recently constructed planters for each of their classes and Eco groups from Portway Infants & Juniors will be joining forces to plant some meadow plug plants on Allestree in the Autumn.

As the schools break-up for a well-earned rest over the summer, we'd like to thank them for helping us to rewild Allestree Park through being beavers, boars, balsam-bashers, lake citizen scientists, pollinator-planters, tree-planters and more!

So far, the following local schools have engaged with the APCR Project -

Portway Infants
Portway Juniors
Lawn Primary
Curzon's Primary
Allestree
Woodland's
Walter Evans
Saint Benedict
St Andrews
Derby Cathedral
Ecclesbourne
Derby College



Nature Recovery Update

As part of the Allestree Park Community Rewilding Project, we have a new Urban Rewilding Programme Officer now in post, Emily Hughes, who will be working to deliver nature recovery at Allestree Park. This summer and autumn, we are drawing our attention to the grasslands at Allestree Park. We know that people are keen to see more wildflowers at Allestree Park, so we are exploring ways in which more areas of the park can become species-rich grasslands, to create more space for nature.

This autumn, we will be planting some wildflowers in an existing meadow to further enhance the species richness there. To do this, we are inviting schools to help us. In preparation for the planting in September, we delivered some pollinator-friendly school sessions at Curzons Primary, Lawn Primary & Portway Juniors for the students, called 'What's all the buzz about' to highlight the importance of pollinators. We also planted some wildflowers in their school grounds, expanding Allestree Park into the wider landscape and creating additional stepping stones of flower-rich habitat, helping our pollinators move more freely throughout the landscape.



This summer the in-house ecology team at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Wild Solutions, are carrying out a number of surveys at Allestree Park. These include habitat condition assessments (looking at how the habitats have improved since the project began), water vole assessments (to confirm their presence or absence) and reptile and amphibian surveys (to find out what species are present at Allestree). In addition to this, the University of Derby are carrying out plant biodiversity surveys at the park and there are a number of fantastic wildlife groups that have surveyed the site for years that will be carrying out monitoring this summer too. These include Derbyshire Ornithological Society (DOS), Derbyshire Bat Group, Mid Derbyshire Badger Group, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomological Society (DANES), Butterfly Conservation and lots more. If you'd like to join their groups, volunteer with them or find out more, then please get in touch at allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk.



Alongside the potential habitat works, we are looking for volunteers to help survey the grasslands for species diversity. There is no prior experience needed, as we will be delivering a grassland identification training workshop on **Wednesday 23rd July, 10am-1pm** at Allestree Park, which will provide volunteers with all the knowledge they need. If you're interested in volunteering or simply interested in learning more about how to identify different meadow plants, then please come along on the 23rd of July. Places are limited so, if you'd like to attend this training or have any questions, please get in touch at allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk to secure your space

If you are interested in the volunteering, to apply for this opportunity, follow the QR code and create an account on Team Kinetic.




Grassland Identification Training
Wednesday 23rd July 2025
10am-1pm

Join us for a grassland plant identification training session, to learn how to identify common plants you can see in the flower-rich meadows at Allestree Park.

We will also be showing you how to carry out an easy surveying method which we will be using at Allestree Park for ongoing monitoring. If you'd like to volunteer for this, please get in touch at allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk

FREE

This training is free but places are **limited** so, please email allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk to secure your space!

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust Derby City Council COMMUNITY FUND DERBY PARKS



MEADOW SURVEYOR VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT ALLESTREE PARK

Are you interested in helping your local wildlife at Allestree Park?

Would you like to be involved in the Allestree Park Community Rewilding Project and help us monitor the meadows on site?

....then carry on reading!

As part of the Allestree Park Community Rewilding Project, we are looking for interested people to help us monitor the species diversity in the grasslands at Allestree Park.

Species-rich grasslands are a very important habitat for lots of species and at Allestree Park, we want to monitor the meadows with your help!

Grassland monitoring will take place between June-August, once a year.

NO prior experience is needed as we will be delivering a plant identification training session on Wednesday 23rd July, 10am-1pm, at Allestree Park to provide all volunteers with the knowledge they need to carry out this monitoring.

Whatever your interest, we'd love to hear from you. Please get in touch!

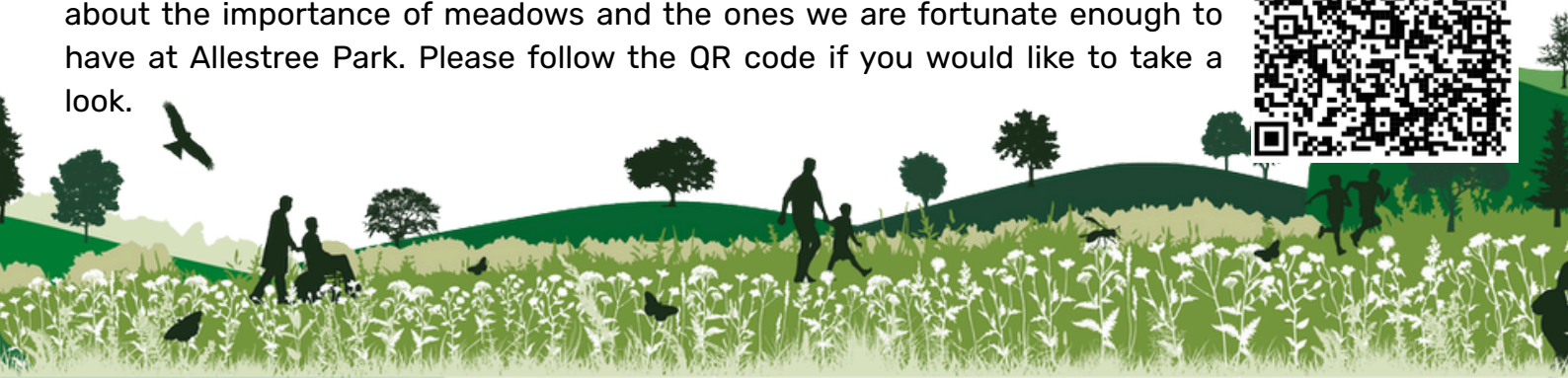
WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Email allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk for any queries or scan the QR code below to sign up to Team Kinetic to apply for the volunteer opportunity directly!

SCAN TO APPLY!

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust Derby City Council COMMUNITY FUND DERBY PARKS

With all the buzz around meadows at Allestree Park, coincidentally it was National Meadows Day on the 5th of July. So, Emily wrote a fascinating blog all about the importance of meadows and the ones we are fortunate enough to have at Allestree Park. Please follow the QR code if you would like to take a look.



Junior Rangers and Nature Tots

Our Junior Rangers Group is now fully up and running at Allestree. Claire, Rachel and Lucien, our volunteer community leaders, have received accredited training and will continue to receive further training as the seasons progress. All 15 places are currently full and any new interested rangers are being added on to a waiting list. The 15 rangers have been busy over the past few months, getting to know the Allestree flora and fauna, tree planting, balsam bashing, delivering activities at the Lake 200 celebration event and most recently, creating a dead hedge around the new bird-hide screen.

Our Nature Tots group will be launching this September. Members of staff at St Edmund's church toddler group and preschool have all undertaken (and successfully passed) the accredited 'Inspiring a Nature Connection in the Early Years' course. Caroline from St Edmunds toddler group will be running their first Nature Tots session on Thursday 18th September, from 10am – 11.30. For further information, please email Caroline at steds.stmatts@outlook.com. St Edmund's preschool will soon be using Allestree Park for their nature learning and in 2026, St Edmund's will be holding a Messy Church session on the park.



Derby Parks Volunteers

Our friends from the Derby Parks Volunteers have been back on site completing a variety of tasks for people and wildlife. They started the summer with butterfly bank clearance, followed by a couple of weeks repairing the well-loved duck feeding platform at the upper lake alongside continuing the removal of invasive shrubs in the woodland and the annual battle with Himalayan balsam. Most recently, they have created a bird hide screen by the lake. The screen will allow visitors to observe birds and waterfowl discreetly without disturbing them.

If you'd like to become a Derby Park Volunteer and support with future practical projects at Allestree Park, please visit www.derbyparksvolunteers.co.uk for further information.



YMCA Volunteering Group

We have a second group of volunteers who will soon be starting at Allestree - Derby YMCA. We are currently mentoring leaders to be able to bring young people from their association to the park once a month to carry out a range of practical tasks to support the rewilding project.



We need your feedback!

Throughout the project, the University of Derby is collecting feedback to show how the project is impacting local people and visitors to Allestree Park. Postcards are completed at events and community conversation sheets are provided at knowledge sharing opportunities. We are really excited by some of the community feedback we've received already but we'd love to receive more.

Postcards

If you are hosting an event at Allestree Park, please ask your guests to complete a postcard to help us to track changes over time. Your guests simply scan the QR code before your event and scan the follow up code after your event to provide their feedback. We can send the QR codes to you, just email us - **allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk**

Before

After



Community conversations

If you'd like to contribute to a community conversation, please take the time to answer the following questions and email your answers to - **allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk**

Community Rewilding is enabling nature to lead the way within green spaces in our towns and cities; to bounce back and become stronger; to adapt to the changing climate; and enrich our lives by reconnecting us with nature.

- What are your thoughts on this?
- What impact, if any, do you think community rewilding has on **nature**?
- What impact, if any, do you think community rewilding has on **you**?
- What impact, if any, do you think community rewilding has on **local Derby people**?

Allestree Park Rewilding Project presented to the Nature Connections 2025 Conference

Katherine Clarke and Dr Caroline Harvey provided an overview of the Allestree Park Rewilding Project at the conference and shared the latest findings from the evaluation data. This showed that although there were some initial reservations about what impact the project might have for the park and the people who use it, the project team have worked hard to engage with local community groups, Friends of Allestree Park and the people who visit Allestree Park. Most recent feedback shows the positive impact people are seeing as a result of the rewilding with comments such as *"It makes me feel part of something special"* and *"Huge impact, Supports nature to return"* and *"I think it can really bring the community together and can encourage people to kind of take pride in their local green spaces and just look after it"*



Access and Recreation Working Group

In May we launched our newest working group, Access and Recreation. With the support of the project partners plus Natural England, local community groups and the Midlands Access Association we are now working towards improving accessibility and recreation opportunities at Allestree Park. The working group has agreed three initial workstreams to work within including Media Creation, Infrastructure and Barriers to Access. Initial ideas are progressing with a variety of site visits undertaken with suppliers and stakeholders as well as engagement with the public at the recent Lake 200 Celebration.

Future Events

Allestree Park Community Rewilding events for 2025 are well underway and we would love to engage as many people as possible. Events are advertised on the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust website, through social media posts and on the Friends of Allestree Park noticeboards as well as community group invitations. If you are a community group that would like an invitation to our rewilding events, please email allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk

Superhero Picnic at Allestree Park Derby Parks Event



Bring a picnic to Allestree Park on Tuesday 29th July to DCC's award winning event which is expanding to hold its first year at Allestree Park. Enjoy a variety of family friendly activities, wear your own superhero costume for our best dressed competition and learn about the superheroes of the natural world.

**Keep up to date
with our timeline
and next steps -**



The Friends of Allestree Park

Mini beast hunt – Saturday 19th July



Friends of Allestree Park *Mini-beast Hunt*

*Enjoy an afternoon discovering a fascinating array
of insects and other small creatures*



Saturday 19th July
Meet at the Woodlands Road Car Park

2pm

All equipment will be provided

ALL ARE WELCOME

FREE

Children must be accompanied

www.friendsofallestreepark.org.uk
www.facebook.com/FriendsOfAllestreePark

Bat walk – Fri 19 Sep
Fungi walk – Sat 4 Oct

