

# Allestree Park Community Rewilding Project

Spring Newsletter



We are now 2 years into the Allestree Park Community Rewilding Project and the project team are delighted that the community are being recognised and rewarded for their dedication and hard work. The Friends of Allestree Park have been featured on Radio Derby and the Derby Telegraph, a worthy park volunteer, Rachel, became a 'Room to Reward' winner and 2 awards were scooped up at the Derby Green Heart Awards. The award ceremony, hosted by the Derby Parks Team, was held at Derby Arena and was attended by over 80 volunteers from parks across the county. Congratulations to Estelle and Gail who won the **Biggest Heart** award for their endless effort caring for the lake waterfowl and to the Junior Rangers who earned the runners up place for the **Young Volunteer of the Year** award.

## Be a Beaver

286 volunteers from local schools, groups and members of the community, stepped into the role of 'ecosystem engineers' and became beavers for the day. By mimicking the techniques of the aquatic rodents, many leaky dams were constructed around the park, helping to slow the flow of the brooks and expand wetland areas. Their skills brought instant results, with the newly created pools offering a habitat for many species. Please take a look at some of our dams (and add a stick or two) by following the What3Words - [///bank.kite.papers](http://bank.kite.papers)

The Junior Rangers were joined by artist Rebecca Howard for their 'Be a Beaver' session back in February who depicted their hard work on canvas. Rebecca is currently touring the UK and creating an exhibition of artworks to highlight the positive changes currently happening to rewild, renature and recover pockets of land. The exhibition, being held at the Knepp Estate this Autumn, aims to highlight the diversity of habitats we have across the UK and bring together the rewilders who have made it their mission to restore these places.



## A big thank you to our busy beavers:

Keeping it Wild Group, Curzons Primary School, Portway Juniors, Portway Infants, Dale Primary, Bemrose Primary, Derby Home Ed Group, 151st Derby Beavers Group, Allestree Park Volunteers & Members of the Public



## Be an Auroch



Grazing the landscapes of Europe, the aurochs – Europe’s original wild bovine species – once played a vital role in maintaining biodiversity through dust bathing. The dust baths (very similar to the existing sand bunkers) supported many other important species. We were joined by a herd of volunteers, who cleared some of the vegetation off the cliff faces of the bunkers to create bare areas for solitary bees, wasps and beetles to nest in.



Both the bunkers and one of the beaver pools have dead-hedges around them. This is to limit park user activity within them and ensure wildlife can thrive without disturbance. Next time you're walking past them, please do have a look to see if you can see any amphibians or aquatic invertebrates in the pools or solitary bees and wasps in the bunkers!

## #RunWalkTalk

We recently teamed up with local fitness groups to showcase how Allestree Park is the perfect place to spend time and move more for health and wellness. A collaboration with Jog Derbyshire saw us hosting Allestree Park’s first #RunWalkTalk event where 29 individuals came together to sample different activities available at the park. Whether strolling to scatter wildflower seeds, joining Ramblers Wellbeing Walks Derby’s taster walk or joining in a jog to test the waymarked routes, participants were able to find a way to exercise in the park to suit their own fitness needs.



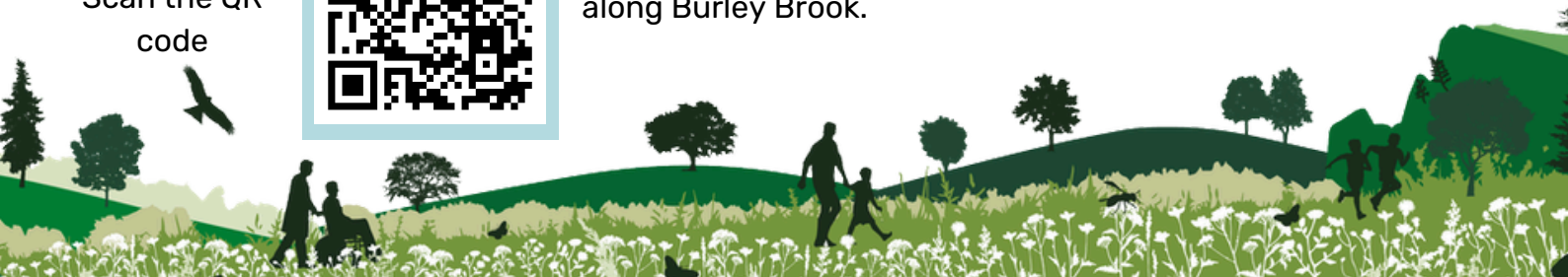
After sampling an introduction to the science behind nature connection for wellbeing before setting off on their routes, attendees gained a better understanding of how exercising in the great outdoors can super boost the positive impacts of movement. As a direct result of this session, new members will now be joining Ramblers Wellbeing Walks Derby and Nordic Walk groups based on Allestree Park, and individuals made new friends ready to buddy up to exercise together.



## Allestree Volunteering – Regular Group Launched!

In early 2026 we launched our new regular volunteer sessions at Allestree Park, and the team have already completed lots of tasks to help improve the park for wildlife and people! Our twice monthly sessions have seen volunteers already complete scrub and vegetation clearance from the A6 Fields, teaming up with the public to protect ephemeral pools with a fabulous dead hedge for Be a Beaver and helping to remove self-set trees and build up of sediment on the balancing pond along Burley Brook.

Interested in joining us?  
Scan the QR code



## Y2 Celebration Event



At the end of March, we held a workshop at Allestree Park to celebrate 2 years of the Allestree Park Community Rewilding project, to recognise everyone's incredible work to help get us where we are today, and plan for the year ahead and beyond. We were joined by representatives from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Derby City Council, the University of Derby, Friends of Allestree Park, the National Trust, AceNature, and the National Lottery. The morning saw us come together and take a collective walking tour across the site, giving everyone the opportunity to showcase their remarkable work across the last 2 years and plans for the future. We then held a workshop under the temporary parachute shelter to plan for the year ahead and beyond. What an inspiring day out on site at Allestree Park. Thank you to everyone who has helped to get us to where we are today and where we hope to go in the future.

## Lead by Example

Lead by Example is a positive behaviour change approach, helping dog owners to protect nature whilst enjoying the outdoors with their four-legged friends. We are looking for a team of volunteers to help to trial this initiative for 6 months around the lake, a space where wildlife can thrive if left free from disturbance. If you'd like to get involved or find out more, please scan the QR code.

**Join the pack today!**

**Or to find out more,  
please email -**



**[allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk](mailto:allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk)**



**Join our volunteer team at Allestree Park and help to keep the park welcoming for dogs, people and wildlife.**

### What You'll Do

- Walk your dog at Allestree Park and promote wildlife-friendly behaviour
- Positively engage with fellow dog walkers, sharing information and handing out rewards

### What's in it for You?

- A bandana for your Ambassador dog
- Meet new people & be part of a friendly pack
- Make a real difference for wildlife & your community

### Time Commitment

- As few or as many walks as you & your Ambassador dog can afford

### Volunteer Role



**Join the pack today**

**Or to find out more,  
please email -**



**[allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk](mailto:allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk)**



## Allestree Park Community Engagement Evaluation

Members of the Nature Connectedness Research Group, University of Derby have reported back on the impact of the project so far.

The first report conducted by Dr Fiona Holland analyses data captured through a mixture of interviews and community conversations. People aged 18 and over were invited to share their thoughts and feelings about community rewilding for nature, for themselves and for local people. Four key themes were developed from the data. Theme 1 focussed on understanding rewilding as an asset for Derby with people discussing the need for redressing the imbalance between people and nature, improving understanding of rewilding and being aware that rewilding is working. The second theme, rewilding for human health and wellbeing was focussed on the connection between nature, human health and wellbeing, the links with emotional and physical wellbeing and the personal impact of spending time in Allestree Park. Theme 3 highlighted the potential positive impact of the project noting, increasing awareness, with people becoming more aware of what was available to them through Allestree Park. Finally theme 4 highlighted some of the concerns people had about the project and noted future considerations for the project team to take into account.

### Take a Look - Report 1



The second evaluation report conducted by Dr Kirsten McEwan and Dr Caroline Harvey explores the ways in which people have engaged with the project and the impact for them, of the various activities they have taken part in at Allestree Park. Participants completed a short questionnaire before and after taking part in the activities and a total of 178 participants provided matched data at both time points. Overall, the project is having a positive impact for people engaging with the events. A significant increase of 13% is seen in feeling happy when spending time at Allestree Park. There was a significant increase of 7% in how supportive people were of the Community Rewilding approach to managing Allestree Park and a significant increase of 20% is seen in how close people feel to nature.

As a result of this evaluation the project team are now considering providing more of the events that saw the largest changes across the measures taken and to consider what it was about these events that resulted in the changes seen.

### Take a Look - Report 2



DWT delivered a successful Winter Tree Identification training session in February on a cold winter's day! Attendees put their skills to the test, and we all had an enjoyable few hours learning lots. Then in March, DWT collaborated with Butterfly Conservation to deliver a Butterfly Identification and Transect Training session. At Allestree Park, we have three butterfly transects that are monitored by volunteers, and we are starting a Purple Hairstreak transect too - if you'd like to be involved (support is given) then please get in touch!

If you want to learn a new skill, then this month on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April, 10am-12:30pm or 1:30-4pm, we are delivering a healthy soils training workshop in collaboration with the University of Derby. We will be talking about why healthy soil is important and showing you how to carry out physical (colour, texture) and chemical (pH, carbon & water content) tests on soil samples. No experience is needed, just an interest to learn something new!

Booking is essential, please email [allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk](mailto:allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk) if you'd like to attend with your preferred timeslot. We hope to see some of you there!

## Introduction to Healthy Soil

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April**  
10am-12:30pm or 1:30pm-4pm **Free!**

Join us for a Healthy Soils Workshop as part of the Allestree Park Community Rewilding Project.

Learn why healthy soils are important and how to carry out physical (colour, texture) and chemical (pH, carbon & water content) tests to determine soil health. This training is beginner friendly, no experience is needed, just an interest to learn more!

Spaces are limited. To secure your place, please email with your preferred timeslot - [allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk](mailto:allestreepark@derbyshirewt.co.uk)

Meet at 10am or 1:30pm at the Main Car Park off Duffield Road, DE22 2EU




### Friends of Allestree Park Events



<b>Pond Dipping</b>	May 16 <sup>th</sup> (1.30pm - 4pm)
<b>Painting in the park</b>	June 13 <sup>th</sup> (In Big Wood)
<b>Mini-beast hunt</b>	August 1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Summer event</b>	August 2 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>Bat walk</b>	TBD in Sept

## Be a Wolf

**Saturday 2nd May**  
2pm - 4pm **Free!**

Before their extinction in the UK, wolves carried seeds in their fur, spreading them across large areas and helping native plants to flourish.

Join us for a guided walk, where we'll be inviting your four-legged friends to wear a seed pouch and mimic the behaviour of their ancestors by scattering some wildflower seeds across Allestree Park. Who said you can't teach an old dog new tricks!

**All four-legged friends (on leads) welcome!**

Meet at 2pm in the Main Car Park off Duffield Rd (A6), DE22 2EU