

Allestree Park Community Rewilding Project

Spring 2025

We are now 1 year into the Allestree Park Community Rewilding Project and we have accomplished some amazing achievements so far:

The project has supported 4 new full-time staff across Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and Derby City Council and various part-funded staff, to help deliver a broad range of activities across 5 different workstreams, each looking at a different area of community rewilding.

Over 20 events have taken place as part of the project, with over 1200 attendees from various community groups, schools and members of the public coming along to take part in various activities such as wellbeing walks, building leaky dams and planting trees on the old golf tees.

We have hosted 15 events to share knowledge and learning to over 300 people, including children from local schools, Natural England and Derby University students and as of March this year, 334 photos have been uploaded through the 10 fixed point photography posts, helping to capture the rewilding progress on site. Follow the QR code on the right to view the fixed-point photography images on Wildmap.

Keep Britain Tidy - Climate Action Award

We were nominated for Keep Britain Tidy's Climate Action Award 2025. The Climate Action Award recognises innovative projects that achieve a significant reduction in resource-use or carbon emissions, especially initiatives that support net-zero goals, engage with local communities and businesses or reduce consumption-based emissions. Although the project didn't win, to be nominated and shortlisted into the top 3 applications from projects across Britain at such an early stage, shows great promise.



Be a Beaver Day

Over 2 days, 120 volunteers stepped into the role of 'ecosystem engineers' and became beavers for the day. By mimicking the techniques of the aquatic rodents, leaky dams were constructed upstream of the ephemeral pools, helping to slow the flow of the brook whilst creating some new wetland areas. Their skills brought instant results, with the newly created pools offering a habitat for many creatures on the park, including frogs, who have already moved in and laid their frogspawn. Please take a look at our dams (and add a stick or two) by following the What3Words - [///bank.kite.papers](https://www.what3words.com////bank.kite.papers)



Some Constructed Dams



Portway Junior School



Frog Spawn

Be a Boar Day

180 volunteers turned out for 'Be a Boar Day', mimicking the actions of wild boar rootling around in the ground for food, using tools not snouts, turning over the invasive grass and giving dormant wildflower seeds a chance to waken and grow. They wallowed in some wild boar wellbeing activities before exploding a seed bomb on their rootled patch, which can be found by following the What3Words to - [///towers.buzz.cakes](https://www.what3words.com////towers.buzz.cakes)



135th Derby Scouts



Derby West Indian
Community Association

Both events really demonstrated 'community rewilding' at its best with the groups developing a sense of ownership of their dam or rootled patch. A small space that will make a big difference to nature and a space where the groups can return to time after time to enjoy positive changes taking place.

A big thank you to our busy beavers:

Curzons Primary School (Year 6)
Portway Juniors Eco Committee
135th and 151st Derby Scout
Groups
25 Members of the Public

A big thank you to our brilliant boars:

St Edmunds preschool
Lawn Primary Eco Bugs
Portway Juniors Eco Committee
Derby West Indian Community Association
135th and 151st Derby Scouts
Local Home Education Group
32 Members of the Public



Allestree Junior Rangers

We launched our new Junior Rangers group with a taster session, led by 3 community volunteers and supported by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and Derby City Council staff. A group of enthusiastic 11 – 18 year olds participated in tree planting, a species ID walk, bushcraft (whittling a tent peg) and of course – hot chocolate and biscuits. Our regular Junior Rangers sessions will officially begin in May and will continue to run on the first Saturday of each month, from 10am – 12pm.

To discover more about our Junior Ranger groups, please visit –

www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/junior-rangers



Woodlands School - Leading a Project for Positive Change

Year 12 students at Allestree Woodlands School are continuing to work towards their Leading a Project for Positive Change course, a UKAS accredited qualification which builds environmental awareness and leadership skills. Their program culminates in the design of their own environmental projects based around Allestree Park and the surrounding communities. In January the class visited the park for a guided tour with staff from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and Derby City Council to learn more about community rewilding and spark inspiration for their projects. Since then, learners have been developing their plans and have already formulated some fantastic ideas, including improving interpretation around the park and educating other local primary schools to support habitat creation and to improve areas for pollinators. Their projects will come to fruition over the next few months so keep an eye out in the next newsletter!



Wellbeing

We already know that Allestree Park is well loved by many, and for very good reason! We want to share this hidden gem with residents across Derby and beyond, helping individuals of all abilities and backgrounds to access the beautiful park to benefit their mental and physical wellbeing. Our Wild Wellbeing work helps us to do just this. We look for new ways to inspire groups and individuals to get involved and become part of the Allestree Park story, whether that's physically stepping into the park, visiting through digital technology, or by using the theme of Allestree Park as inspiration for their existing activities, we seek innovative ways to weave the people and nature of the area together into a thriving tapestry of community activity.



Our current wellbeing offer includes funded activity sessions lead by our Wild Wellbeing Officer Kirsty, which can be booked for any local group. These sessions are co-designed around the needs of participants, and are suitable for all abilities and backgrounds, so get in touch to see how we could work together to offer some Wild Wellbeing to your group! For those who feel particularly inspired, we also have funded places available for community leaders to complete a Level 1 Understanding Nature Connection for Wellbeing accreditation, which would enable you to lead your very own nature connection activities at Allestree Park, and give you the skills to be used in any green space at any time!

If you already love spending time outdoors and would love to support others to do the same, our new Nature Buddy volunteer role could be for you. We are looking for volunteers to support individuals at a personalised level to help gradually increase their confidence and ability to enjoy engaging with nature. Many people experience challenges which mean that they find it overwhelming or impossible to take part in life as they would like. Nature buddies can support a variety of different people with different needs, and particularly people experiencing anxiety, loneliness or social isolation to have the confidence to start taking part and to continue taking part. By overcoming barriers to accessing activities, with support from a Buddy, people can improve their mental and physical health, boost their sense of enjoyment and their quality of life.

Find out more by searching our current volunteer opportunities at derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/support/volunteer

If you'd like to try some Wild Wellbeing for yourself, we'll be announcing public events during spring and summer.



Nature Recovery Update

The in-house ecology team at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Wild Solutions, has been hard at work over the past year, laying the groundwork for nature recovery at Allestree. Through a series of detailed surveys, they have built a comprehensive baseline of the site, giving us a fantastic understanding of its current ecological state. This valuable data will allow us to track changes over time and ensure that future decisions are guided by robust evidence. Alongside this, the project team has been continuing to carefully assess which natural processes we should prioritise to bring the greatest benefits for both wildlife and people, as well as working closely with the university to identify potential student-led projects that will help us explore key areas of interest.

Looking ahead, we're excited for the next phase of the project. As the new season begins, we hope to collaborate closely with local biodiversity groups and nature enthusiasts, developing a long-term monitoring plan that will involve citizen science. By working together, we can create a thriving, sustainable environment at Allestree that benefits nature and the community alike.



Derby Parks Volunteers

With the support from our friends, the Derby Parks Volunteers (DPV), a variety of works to make Allestree's woodlands and meadows healthier has been continued. With various work parties in the woodlands removing large areas of invasive Rhododendron and Cherry Laurel in large quantities, to help light reach the woodland floor so that native plants and trees can regenerate.

DPV also worked alongside the grazing herd of cattle at Burley Top Field to remove scrub and self-set trees from the meadow areas to improve the regrowth of native flowers and grasses.



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 Keep an eye out for the following events this summer:



Every Dog has its (Seed Dispersal) Day
Saturday 5th April 2025
Guided Walk from 10am - 12pm

Saturday 5th April

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!

Meet at **10am** in the **Main Car Park** off Duffield Rd (A6), DE22 2EU.

FREE NO BOOKING REQUIRED

All four-legged friends (on leads) welcome!

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust Derby City Council COMMUNITY FUND DERBY PARKS

Community Celebration Event

We'll be supporting the Friends of Allestree Park and the Earl of Harrington Angling Club to celebrate the 200th birthday of the lake.

What's all the buzz about?

Pollinators are absolutely vital at Allestree Park. At this event we will be running educational activities whilst tracking their populations.

Have a Bash!

Join us to control the spread of the invasive Himalayan Balsam on site through the process of 'bashing', helping to protect our valuable native plants.

The Friends of Allestree Park Events

Painting in the Park - Sat 24th May
Mini-beast hunt - Sat 19th July
Bat walk - Fri 19th Sep
Fungi walk - Sat 4th Oct

Keep up to date
with our timeline
and next steps -

