

Managing for Nature

Nature Nurture Update

As we approach the winter solstice, nature is starting to bed down in preparation for spring. Connecting with the natural world can feel more challenging at this time of year, however, its a great time to get involved in nature conservation and restoration.

It's been an exciting first year for the Nature Nurture group, we have enjoyed getting to know green spaces across the city and working alongside volunteers to create habitats for nature.

Winter is the best time to see the bare bones of woodlands and take part in work that will make a real difference in the spring. Now the birds are no longer nesting, we will be opening paths and woodland glades and doing more coppicing (a traditional skill that reinvigorates woodland and is always a favourite activity for volunteer groups).



Nature Nurture volunteers on site this autumn.

"I've really enjoyed working alongside volunteers, and its great to hear what a difference it makes for them" (Ranger Nicky).

"Volunteering with the Nicky has put me on the path towards a career in wildlife conservation and forestry. I have learned so much from her vast knowledge of local nature. I feel very lucky to have stumbled upon the team and encouraged to keep moving forward with my goals" (Dave Matthews, volunteer).

Nature Nurture sessions are Ranger-led and open to all. If you would like to learn more or get involved please email nicky.hodges@bristol.gov.uk or [visit our Can Do page](#).

This issue:

Nature Nurture Update

Pond creation update

River restoration work - Update

Managing parks for nature - Community Stories

Grassland Management Update



Pond Creation Update

This Autumn, the Green Recovery Fund project team has worked alongside BCC-led Park Work and local volunteers to create new wildlife ponds across the city. At the time of writing, 2 new ponds have been completed in Coombe Brook Valley, Ridgeway Playing fields with another 3 (Horfield Common, Crow Lane Open Space and Arnall Drive) to be created this December.

Digging these large ponds is hard and rewarding work, and we want to thank everyone who has been involved. The ponds will create vitally important habitats for wildlife, and we look forward to watching them flourish!



"I loved bringing my sister and friend to volunteer with me. It's really cool knowing all our hard work will give toads, frogs, newts, and insects a fresh new home. I'm all for boosting Bristol's biodiversity!" Zenith Giddings at Ridgeway playing fields.



Bristol Avon Rivers Trust have carried out Environmental DNA testing along the River Trym in north Bristol.

River Restoration Update

Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) has been busy delivering river restoration projects funded by the Green Recovery Fund project.

Since the last newsletter update, BART has carried out Environmental DNA water sampling on the River Trym to help identify the species present across the catchment.

This involves analysing genetic material shed by wildlife into the water, providing a non-intrusive way to understand which species are present in the river.

BART has also completed an assessment of potential in-channel barriers, such as weirs which may impede the movement of fish and other aquatic species. This work will support a better understanding of the catchment and inform future measures to improve fish passage and ecological health.

Planning for the river restoration works in Manor Woods Valley and Crox Bottom is progressing well and BART remains on track to deliver these improvements early in the new year.

For more information, please contact BART: info@bristolavonriverstrust.org.



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Working together for nature: Community story with Ailie from St George’s Park

Many of the green spaces being enhanced by the Green Recovery Fund project are also being cared for by local residents. We would like to celebrate how we are working together to improve parks and green spaces for all of Bristol’s residents (both human and otherwise!).

Ailie is a local tree champion and member of the brilliant Friends of St George Park. We spoke with her in November and found out what they have been doing to create more space for nature.

You can [read Ailie’s story here](#).

“St George’s park is a thriving community space and the closest point of contact with nature. I feel motivated to protect the park and live in harmony with local nature.” - Ailie

Grassland Management Update

As part of our Grassland Management pilot, we have carried out work to enhance areas of grassland by sowing yellow rattle.

We have recently started managing spaces in Blaise, Elderberry Walk, Victoria Park, Stockwood Open Space, and Craydon Road as wildflower meadows, by carrying out an annual hay cut.

The enhancement work has involved scarifying the grass to create 50% bare ground into which we’ve then sown yellow rattle seeds.



Victoria Park - one of the sites we have enhanced with yellow rattle

This method is in-line with best practice guidance from Plantlife and Natural England.

Known as the ‘meadow maker’ yellow rattle is semi - parasitic and draws water and nutrients from vigorous grasses, reducing their growth and creating more space for wildflowers to grow.



Wishing you all a happy festive period from all of the Managing for Nature Team, we will share our next stakeholder newsletter in March 2026!

