NOVEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

Managing for Nature



Welcome and reflections

Ponds

Nature Nurture Volunteering

Grazing feasibility study and Grassland management pilot

River restoration

Woodland management

What next?

Welcome to our final Managing for Nature newsletter

As autumn arrives, the Managing for Nature programme draws to a close. In this edition, we reflect on the achievements, lessons learned, and the lasting impacts, while celebrating the fantastic people who helped make it a success.



A note from Tom Wood (Project Manager) *"I'm incredibly proud of what we've achieved together through the project. Delivering a £1 million programme across multiple sites, partners and workstreams over two years was no small task, but the collaboration and shared commitment to nature recovery made it a real success. This would not have been possible without the dedication of my project team colleagues, whose expertise and commitment were instrumental throughout the project.*
Working closely with local partners, contractors, consultants, community groups, and volunteers, we've delivered lasting improvements for nature across the city. Together we've introduced a mosaic of nature friendly grassland regimes, restored sections of Bristol's rivers through our delivery partner Bristol Avon Rivers Trust, begun restoration work in 10 woodland Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs), created seven wildlife ponds, facilitated a conservation volunteering programme, and brought 12 SNCIs into positive management.
It's been fantastic to see everybody come together around a shared goal. While the habitats we've created and restored are important, the community partnerships, knowledge and momentum built through the project will be invaluable in the years ahead.
This project has made a significant contribution to Bristol's nature recovery journey and has shown what's possible when you combine expertise, ambition, and collaboration."



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Ponds: habitat created for Bristol's aquatic residents

Over the course of our project, we have worked with volunteers and parks colleagues to create and restore wildlife ponds across the city. This year's extreme weather and severe droughts have proved challenging, highlighting the importance of providing a network of wetland habitats across our green spaces. The project has provided some valuable learning opportunities around the design and placement of wildlife ponds.



7 new ponds created



3 ponds restored



603 volunteer hours

Our latest and final pond project, completed in October, involved restoring an existing scrape (a shallow pond) at Okebourne Road Open Space. Over time, the scrape had become silted up and self-seeded trees had reduced the amount of water it was able to hold. Last spring, it was sadly observed that a large amount of frogspawn was unsuccessful after the scrape dried out earlier than expected.

The restoration work aims to help the scrape retain water for longer, creating more reliable breeding habitat for amphibians and supporting a wider range of wildlife. We will continue to monitor the site and look forward to seeing how it develops over the coming seasons.

It has been wonderful to see such a collaborative effort between operational teams, rangers and local volunteers throughout the project. We are already seeing dragonflies and amphibians making use of several of the ponds, and we are excited to watch these new habitats mature and become increasingly important spaces for nature.

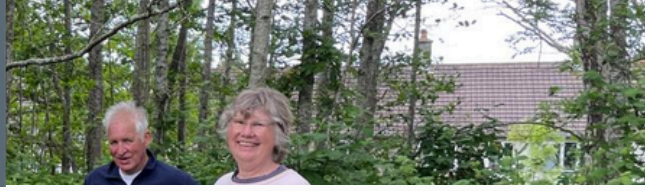
We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed their time and skills to make the pond creation project possible. A special shout-out to Rich Scantlebury who has helped us with all 7 new ponds!



"I've loved practicing the art of Ponding! From installing liners and fencing to planting aquatic plants, it's been a great way to utilise and share my skills whilst supporting nature. It's also given me the chance to gossip with local people and do some ongoing wildlife recording." Rich Scantlebury - Park Work Volunteer

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Nature Nurture: good for us, good for wildlife



The Nature Nurture Group volunteers have brought enthusiasm to nature conservation tasks at wildlife sites across Bristol. Their efforts are already making a difference for nature in woodlands, grasslands, scrub and wetland areas – as well as for other people who visit the sites.



12 habitat management plans produced across SNCIs



Nature Nurture volunteering programme launched in March 2025



1,700 volunteer hours in year 2 supporting habitat management

Rich's Story - Looking after local nature



In this final edition, we share Rich's Story, Rich stumbled across the Nature Nurture group while walking in his local park.

"I was interested in what they were doing with the historic pond at Kings Weston Estate and Nicky suggested I come along and get involved. I thought... this sounds fun and told her to give me 20 minutes (enough time for me to run home and get changed) Now it's October and I'm still here!"

"I've taken part in most of Nicky's' north Bristol work sessions now. It's great having the opportunity to look after different green spaces and not have to travel too far. Looking up from where I'm working right now - I can see out into the distance, green rolling hills beyond my neighbourhood and it's all on my doorstep, you can't beat it!"

Reflection from Nature Nurture Ranger Nicky Hodges

"It's been fantastic to see such a wide range of people getting involved with the Group, from students and career changers to local residents and workplace volunteers. Watching people learn traditional skills like coppicing and scything has been especially rewarding.
The work carried out this year is already showing results. The ponds at Kings Weston Estate and Okebourne Open Space, and the meadows at Callington Road Nature Reserve, Eastwood Farm, Saltmarsh Drive and Saltwell Valley, are full of promise for next year. nature Nurture will continue until at least March and new volunteers are always welcome. Find out more on the Can Do Bristol Nature Nurture Group page."

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Grazing feasibility study and Grassland management pilot

Grazing feasibility study

We commissioned the Rare Breeds Survival Trust to carry out a grazing feasibility study to explore opportunities for conservation grazing across Bristol. The study identified opportunities for future habitat management using grazing animals to support biodiversity and natural processes. This work is ongoing and we will share results soon.

Grassland Managment Pilot



67 ha of grassland now being managed for nature

A major achievement of the Managing for Nature programme has been the transformation of 67 hectares of grassland now being managed for nature, exceeding the project's original target by 7 hectares. Across parks and green spaces, new nature-friendly management regimes have been introduced, including floral lawns, wildflower meadows, tussocky grassland and enhanced hay-cutting regimes.

These changes are helping to create better habitats for wildlife and laying the foundations for richer, more diverse grasslands across the city. Investment in new cut-and-collect machinery has enabled grass cuttings to be removed from many sites, gradually reducing soil fertility and encouraging native wildflowers and important pollinators such as bees and butterflies.



12.4 hectares sown with yellow rattle seed

Building on this success, autumn 2026 saw further meadow enhancement works, with yellow rattle and other wildflower species introduced to selected sites.

While nature recovery takes time, these works represent a significant step forward in creating healthier, more resilient green spaces for wildlife and people. The lessons learned through this programme will help shape future grassland management and support continued action for nature across Bristol.



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River Restoration

Over the past two years, local volunteers have worked alongside our partner, Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) to make a real difference to local rivers. In total, 1,360 metres of river habitats along Manor Woods Valley, Crox Bottom and the River Trym have been improved. These improvements will help create healthier rivers, better habitats for wildlife and rivers that are more resilient during periods of heavy rainfall.
74 brilliant volunteers got involved in practical conservation activities, from building dead hedges to creating berms.

- 33 woody habitat features across three Bristol rivers to create shelter and improve river habitats for wildlife.
- 50 metres of dead hedge habitat created, providing valuable resources for birds, insects and other wildlife.
- Two river restoration management plans to guide future improvements.
- 10 new natural flood management features that help slow the flow of water and reduce flood risk.
- Two new Riverfly monitoring sites, enabling volunteers to help track river health.
- 274 local people engaged through community events, volunteer sessions and outreach activities.

"It's been fantastic to have had the opportunity to work alongside local community groups to deliver river restoration at three sites across Bristol. This work is vital in supporting our valuable urban rivers, which act as such important wildlife corridors throughout the city. None of this would have been possible without the support and enthusiasm of our fantastic volunteers, who got stuck in building dead hedges along the riverbank and berms in the river. Their positive engagement has brought so much to the project, helping to strengthen local connections and custodianship of these special sites."
Caroline Sherrott - River Restoration Project Manager (BART)



Woodland Management

We have worked with the Forest of Avon Trust, volunteers and specialist contractors to improve more than 22 hectares of woodland habitat in 10 woodland sites across the city.
Key achievements included:

- Removing invasive plants such as cherry laurel and Himalayan balsam, creating the conditions for native plants to thrive.
- Restoring woodland ponds by increasing light levels and supporting healthy aquatic vegetation.
- Creating a greater variety of woodland habitats by opening up dense tree cover and improving woodland rides, benefiting a wide range of wildlife.
- Creating deadwood habitats, providing valuable shelter and food sources for insects, fungi and small mammals.

This work has helped create healthier, more resilient woodlands that will continue to benefit both wildlife and people for years to come.



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Continuing the good work



Bristol Plant Monitoring Scheme

Would you like to learn more about the plants growing in Bristol's parks and green spaces while making a valuable contribution to nature conservation?

We're now looking for more volunteers to join the Bristol Plant Monitoring Scheme. By taking part, you'll help collect important information on the variety of plants across the city. This data helps us understand how wildlife is responding to conservation work and supports decisions about how we care for our parks and green spaces in the future.

Volunteers can adopt one or more monitoring plots in habitats such as grassland, woodland, or wetland areas. Surveys are carried out twice a year during spring and summer, and no specialist knowledge is needed to get started. Guides and support are available, allowing you to contribute at a level that suits you. Whether you're an experienced botanist or simply curious about the wildlife on your doorstep, we'd love to hear from you.

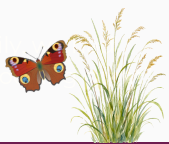
Interested in getting involved? Contact the Nature Conservation Team at nature.parks@bristol.gov.uk to find out more and join the Bristol Plant Monitoring Scheme.

Reflections and “What’s Next”

Richard Ennion - Parks Development Manager

'Over the past two years, Managing for Nature has delivered meaningful change for nature and communities across the city, highlighted by the many positive stories included in this edition. Together, we have moved the dial from 15% to 19% of council land being managed for nature towards the target of 30% by 2030. Whilst our Managing for Nature project is coming to an end, we are working towards our next big project that will accelerate our nature recovery work and support community nature plans being developed through our lottery funded Nature Together project. Watch out for what we hope will be positive news that our Bristol Nature City project has received funding and is ready to go in spring next year'.

We would like to finish by saying a final huge thank you to everyone that has been involved in the Managing for Nature programme over the last 2 years. The operations teams that have taken on the challenge of mastering new machinery and management regimes. Our partners BART and Forest of Avon Trust, for your excellent and inclusive work around river and woodland management and, of course to the brilliant volunteers that have given up their time to care for Bristol’s wild spaces.
You can learn more about the Managing for Nature programme on our webpages.





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