12 WAYS TO MAKE LIFE IN LONDON BETTER

NATIONAL PARK CITY MAKER*
LONDON #NATIONALPARKCITY

IS A CELEBRATION OF EVERYTHING THAT HAS BEEN DONE TO MAKE LONDON GREENER, HEALTHIER, WILDER, ENJOYABLE AND DIVERSE.

IT’S ALSO A LARGE-SCALE AND LONG-TERM CHALLENGE TO MAKE LIFE BETTER THROUGH ACHIEVABLE ACTIONS. EVERYONE CAN BENEFIT AND CONTRIBUTE EVERYDAY.
1. **BE ACTIVE.** Exercising makes you feel good. Discover a physical activity you enjoy and one that suits your level of mobility and fitness — page 6.

2. **CONNECT.** Think of this as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in making good Connections that will support and enrich you every day — page 12.

3. **TAKE NOTICE.** Be curious and aware of the world around you and how it makes you feel. Reflecting on it helps you appreciate what matters to you — page 14.

4. **KEEP LEARNING.** Ask questions. Learning new things is enjoyable and makes you more confident — page 16.

5. **PLAY.** Take time to play. It is fun and can grow your imagination, give you strength, help you develop new skills and make new friends — page 18.

6. **CREATE.** Being creative and making things encourages self-expression and can reduce stress. It can also be a great way to give to others — page 20.

7. **GIVE.** Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with people and places — page 22.

8. **LOVE.** Feeling and giving love improves your mental wellbeing and strengthens relationships with people and nature — page 24.

9. **GROW.** Planting, nurturing and growing plants is emotionally rewarding while providing beauty, food, cleaner air and shade — page 28.

10. **MAKE SPACE FOR NATURE.** Creating space for nature wherever you can will help nature flourish and will reward you with joy — page 34.

11. **ORGANISE.** Why not create an informal National Park City Group? Co-ordinated and informed action builds strength, capacity and resilience to achieve more — page 38.

12. **TAKE ACTION.** You don’t need to hug every tree you see. Just try to live your life polluting and damaging as little as you can to make our world a better place — page 40.

Our 12 Ways to Make Life Better is inspired by, and builds on, the New Economics Foundation’s 5 Ways to Wellbeing. What if we all did more of these things? Share your actions using #NationalParkCity Be a National Park City Maker by doing these things for yourself and others nationalparkcity.london

Try one of our interactive quests online to make life better, visit makelifebetter.nationalparkcity.london
London has a wealth of public spaces where you can enjoy being active. It’s a great city for exploring on foot and it’s often quicker (or not much longer) to walk than travel by car or public transport. Getting around by walking, cycling or paddling is good for our health. And it can reduce air pollution and carbon emissions.

There’s a surprising number of medium to long distance paths across and around the city. From the 7 mile Colne Valley Trail to the 150 mile London Loop there’s something for everyone. Follow river courses, conquer hills with incredible panoramic views or enjoy London’s woodlands and parklands.

Meet new people or avoid concerns about getting lost by joining a group. The Ramblers is one of a number of organisations offering free walks in and around London. Go Jauntly is a great navigation app using clever photo guides, and points out interesting places as well as loo stops.

From the Olympics at Queen Elizabeth Park to Wembley and Twickenham, London is famous for hosting world-class sporting events. Sport England offers a list of official sports (use the link below) from Aikido to Yoga or Korfball to Zorbing, all of which and more can be accessed in the city. You can join and help thousands of local grassroots clubs, groups and teams supporting people to enjoy being active outdoors.

sportengland.org/our-work/national-governing-bodies/sports-that-we-recognise
London is a great city for being active outside, but it could be even better. What if residential streets gave priority not to cars but for children to run, skip, seek mini-beasts or scan for virtual hidden treasure? What if our roads were safer for cyclists? What if our canals were clean enough to swim in? What if there was better signage to help people navigate around traffic-free paths? What if more neighbourhoods organised community games or activities?

Cities are shaped by people, wildlife, natural processes and ideas that don't recognise administrative boundaries. People can decide for themselves where the London National Park City begins and ends.

Ordnance Survey GetOutside Champion, Adventurer, Explorer and Naturalist Dwayne Fields says: ‘As a passionate walker, London and the South East is my stomping ground. We’re so fortunate to have areas like the Chilterns, Surrey Hills and Kent Downs close to central London. You can get to each of these in under an hour. Make the most of our long-distance pathways and neighbouring National Parks. If you’re a little more adventurous, there are plenty of great safe routes to choose from too. Here are five short walks between tube and train stations for you to try, designed with OS Maps. Use the OS Maps website or app to find and follow these routes, to discover many more, and to help make your own. Share your walks with Ordnance Survey using #GetOutside.’

London National Park City does not have an official boundary.
**ESCAPE ROUTES**
This map of London and the South East shows average journey times to train stations from central London that are great launch pads for walks. You might also be tempted to go on an adventure along one of the long-distance footpaths criss-crossing the region.

- **Chilterns**
  - London to Amersham: 32 minutes
- **Kent Downs**
  - London to Sevenoaks: 32 minutes
- **High Weald**
  - London to Tunbridge Wells: 47 minutes
- **Surrey Hills**
  - London to Dorking: 49 minutes
- **North Downs**
  - London to Guildford: 51 minutes
- **South Downs National Park**
  - London to Haslemere: 56 minutes
- **Dedham Vale**
  - London to Manningtree: 56 minutes

**EXPLORE WITH OS**
For over 228 years, Ordnance Survey has helped people explore Great Britain. And today, more than ever, we are committed to helping more people to get outside more often, so that they live longer, stay younger and enjoy life more.

OS Maps is our multi award winning guide in the great outdoors, combining Ordnance Survey's iconic mapping (1:25k, 1:50k), with over 2 million routes, stunning 3D mapping, and Augmented Reality.

It can be accessed via a single login for the mobile app, or a web browser for planning at home. The app tracks exactly where you are, and helps you discover more about your surroundings using Augmented Reality, highlighting hills, woodland, towns and more. It even links through to an individual web page giving more details of the area, including local walks, images and places to stay.

For further information visit osmaps.uk.

**HELPING MORE PEOPLE TO GET OUTSIDE MORE OFTEN**
GetOutside sits at the heart of everything Ordnance Survey does. Just as the outdoors is for everyone, GetOutside is for everyone.

We want to showcase the best that Britain has to offer, by providing inspirational stories, experiences and adventures for people of all ages and abilities. As part of rekindling the nation’s love of outdoor activity, we want to activate the whole nation with a day focussed on free outdoor events and activities. National GetOutside Day takes place on Sunday 29 September 2019.

If you’d like to get involved, we’d love to hear from you. Visit getoutside.uk to find out more or simply email getoutside@os.uk.

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Connections are about relationships, how we fit ourselves into society. They are building blocks of communities. Connecting can build resilience, create friendships, grow support networks and lead to shared resources.

Connections are made at work, through schools, libraries, faith centres, clubs, hospitals, hobbies, neighbourhoods and pre-natal groups.

Getting outside can help. Places are things we have in common. Initiatives, some highlighted in this paper, like the Big Lunch, Car Free Day or Play Streets, can be great starting points.

What if we said hello to each other more?

What if you organised a community picnic?

What if you asked a favour from a neighbour?

What if you went along to more events?

What if you struck up a conversation with a fellow walker?

What if you helped to organise a project that brings people together?

Why not?

Spend more time outside with family, friends, colleagues & neighbours

Join a local group or take part in community meeting

Share your knowledge with someone from another culture, place or generation

Share tools or other things

Go stargazing with a friend

Photograph: Luke Massey
Geographer Duncan Fuller suggests taking your time when out and about. He poses questions to slow us down and take notice of our surroundings.


What makes us ask ‘how’ or ‘why’? What makes us smile? What makes us slow down? What makes us think? What makes us look? What makes us feel? What makes us forget where we’re going, or where we came from?

A great way to tune into the city is by recording it, through words, images and sounds. Pick something that interests you. It could be pigeons flying in formation, blue plaques, portraits of people with pink hair, places in need of love or anything that captures your imagination. Revel in your mini discoveries and share them online: #NationalParkCity.

What if we all put things in our windows for passers by to notice? What if your daily commute turned into a daily safari? What if the view from your workspace allowed you to witness nesting birds? What if you pointed out nature to others? What if you looked up more often?
Learning new things throughout our lives can build confidence, increase awareness and understanding, and can be fun and sociable too. Sharing skills, expertise and knowledge is an important way to help make London a greener, healthier and wilder place. It’s what the National Park City is all about.

London has many world-class museums, parks, galleries, libraries and destinations to help us to keep learning.

The Horniman Museum and Gardens (horniman.ac.uk) in Forest Hill, is an internationally important museum of human culture. Its collections include musical instruments and natural history from around the world. It also has an Aquarium, Butterfly House and Animal Walk, all set in 16½ acres of gardens with a spectacular view over central London.

Capel Manor College (capel.ac.uk) are keen supporters of London National Park City and a wonderful resource for Makers. Capel has six venues across the capital offering courses in agriculture, animal management, arboriculture, countryside management, dog grooming, floristry, garden design, outdoor adventure, horticulture and landscaping, and more.

London is full of people and groups sharing ideas and knowledge like how to take a really good photo, where to find wild food to eat, how to paint a massive mural or how to create a community orchard.

HOW MANY OF THESE NATURE-RELATED DESTINATIONS HAVE YOU VISITED?

- Barnes Wetland Centre
- Centre for Wildlife Gardening
- Chelsea Physic Garden
- Horniman Museum and Gardens
- Kew Gardens
- Lee Valley Regional Park
- London Zoo
- Natural History Museum
- Thames Barrier
- Walthamstow Wetlands

WHY NOT?

- Learn the names of different species of plants & animals
- Join a guided walk, go to a museum, gallery, city farm, botanic garden
- Make a recorded history of somewhere you care about
- Visit a neighbour and learn something from them
- Explore place names or discover lost rivers

What if all of London’s schools delivered some lessons outdoors?

What if you asked more questions about the world around you?

What if you reignite a passion for a subject you haven’t considered since leaving school?

What if you consider what’s happened in the lifetime of veteran trees in your local park?

What if you explore how local streets got their names?
WHY PLAY?

“Play is an essential part of every child’s life. It’s vital for the enjoyment of childhood as well as social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. When children are asked what is important in their lives, playing and friends are usually top of the list.”

— Play England

Play is doing something just for the fun of it. Play is for everyone, not just children. It can build confidence, strength, imagination, friendships and happiness.

London is stuffed with places to play, many of which could be better.

PLAY STREETs

It’s when a street is closed to traffic and transformed into a temporary playground. London Play (londonplay.org.uk) and Playing Out (playingout.net) have lots of tips and advice for setting these up.

THREE SIDED FOOTBALL

London’s Philosophy Football FC decided to subvert the Beautiful Game and created 3-sided football. Teams play on a hexagonal pitch with three goals. As a result, players end up collaborating as well as competing. For the full rules visit goob.net/3-sided.php.

WHICH OF THESE HAVE YOU PLAYED? HOW LONG AGO? WHO WITH?

• Hide and seek
• Sardines
• Capture the flag
• Stuck-in-the-mud
• Pong sticks
• Hop-scotch
• Double-dutch
• Hill rolling
• Treasure hunt
• House number bingo

Tweet us your favourite playground, street or game @LondonNPC #NationalParkCity

GO AND...

PLAY IN STREETS, WOODS, RAIN, MUD, SUNSHINE AND SNOW - PLAY BALL GAMES, “NO BALL GAMES” AND BOARD GAMES OUTDOORS - PLAY WITH A KITE - PLAY MAKE BELIEVE - PLAY SOMETHING YOU’VE NOT PLAYED IN AGES
Residents and visitors to London love creativity. It’s why there are so many galleries, exhibitions, shows, street art sites and sculptures in our parks and public spaces. You don’t have to be talented to be creative. You just need to be willing to give something a go. It can also be a great way to give to others.

Being creative can bring people together, explore difficult subjects, answer problems, improve environments and even create new jobs, services or technology. In fact, with the right creative project you could do all of the 12 Ways to Make Life Better at once!

Across London there are thousands of creative community projects taking place. Here are just a few to be inspired by.

** Bounds Green Window Show is a community exhibition, displayed in the windows of houses and businesses each winter. The Window Show lights up the streets of Bounds Green with colour and creativity at a dark time of year. Founder Katherine Harding explains: “I set up the show with the help of a few neighbours, a simple website and some photocopied flyers. This project aimed to assert and celebrate the strong identity of our community. In our first year, over 50 households made displays. This year more than 80 took part, with over 1000 accessing our online map to enjoy the displays over the weekend.”

** Chiswick Without Borders celebrated the neighbourhood’s proud international character through embroidered maps. Residents were invited to stitch their connections to the world with a symbolic migratory bird, a swallow, with its flight linking the map of Chiswick to places around the world. The project was led by textile artist Ekta Kaul, in association with Abundance London: “In the current times of insular voices and inward-looking gazes this project invites everyone to celebrate our openness and our connections through the convivial act of stitch.”

** 1,000 Swifts Over Walthamstow was organised to celebrate the opening of Walthamstow Wetlands and to connect local residents to the site. 1,000 Swifts over Walthamstow called on artists, makers, creators and residents to make swifts from sustainable or recycled material and attach them to their own building or display it in a window. Windowsill Art shows that anyone can help bring some colour to their street and a smile to the faces of passers-by, simply by displaying flowering or impressive plants on window ledges, doorsteps and from pots or boxes fixed to walls. So-Shan Au, a National Park City Maker, says “My balcony garden makes people look up, smile, stop, enjoy, and say hello too.”

** Why not get creative with the idea of the National Park City by making something featuring our “aster”? In the middle of this paper you will find a pull-out aster* for creating your own design.
CAN YOU?

GIVE A SMILE
GIVE MORE SPACE FOR NATURE
GIVE HOMEMADE JAM TO YOUR NEIGHBOURS
GIVE TIME TO A PERSON, GROUP OR CHARITY

What if more companies like Timberland recognised the value of making London greener, healthier and wilder?

What if managers gave space for their staff, students or teams to spend more time working, meeting, creating and bonding outdoors?

What if more businesses scaled-up efforts to avoid single-use plastics?

What if everyone gave themselves more time to relax outdoors?

What if we all gave a little bit more…?

MORE THAN VOLUNTEERING

Giving is one of the most powerful ways to make life better in London. It might be ideas, money, space, skills, love, energy, respect, goodwill, food, tools, support or time. Research shows that ‘giving’ can boost happiness and health for both the receiver and the giver. It creates opportunities to connect with others and unifies communities.

London is full of people, groups and organisations that rely on the generosity of others. There’s no shortage of volunteering opportunities. Visit nationalparkcity.london/makers for lots of ideas.

MAKER STORY

National Park City Champion Alison Archer, alongside a team of London National Park City Makers, gave her time and organised free walks along the Hidden Fleet, Walbrook and Effra rivers. Around 125 Walkers tred the course of the buried or canalised rivers and learned about their histories. Most common feedback: “When are you doing this again?” “I can’t believe it’s FREE!”

Giving is more than volunteering. It can be as simple as offering a greeting, thanking your bus driver, or complimenting someone on their garden or window box. Giving can be personal. Be generous to yourself. Spend time quietly in a calm place, find opportunities to listen to nature, find space to go for a walk.

London National Park City will become a success by lots of people and organisations making contributions. Creative projects are a great way to give to others.

#GIVEAPLANT

Our #GiveAPlant campaign involves giving plants, swapping seeds or cuttings. Surprise friends, make new ones and get to know your neighbours. You could even start a #GiveAPlant swap at work, school or in your neighbourhood.

MYPLAYGREEN

Timberland, concerned by studies linking poor greenspace access with a drop in wellbeing, set up MyPlaygreen, encouraging children and young people to discover and explore urban green spaces. The project focuses on making city parks, community gardens, farms, vegetable gardens and green spaces more accessible. £80,000 for 14 innovative projects around London (including the two below) has seen more than 5,000 children getting closer to nature.

Volunteers set up Spitalfields City Farm 40 years ago in Tower Hamlets, one of East London’s more densely populated areas. Through their efforts with Timberland, inner-city children get to have direct contact with animals and crops.

At the Clitterhouse Farm Project, local residents converted a dilapidated Victorian farm into a green community resource for Cricklewood in 2013. The transformation has created a hub to support small businesses in the local community and a meeting place for residents.
Love can make life better. Love can make us happy. It helps connect on deeper levels and makes us more protective of people, nature, places and things. Love for people, nature and places is a reason why many people support the London National Park City.

Artist and DJ Penny Metal has had a 6-year love affair with insects. The outcome is her book *Insectinside: life in the bushes of a small Peckham park*. In it she shows off every insect species she came across, like the weevil pictured on the left, and charts the gentrification of Peckham through the compound eyes of her tiny neighbours.

“I was interested in what I’d find in a small urban park. I chose Warwick Gardens as it was close to my home and I could pop there for a couple of hours each day. The mission was to photograph everything that moved.

Over the years I gained an intimate knowledge of life in the park. I knew where to find the shield bugs, where the fruit flies like to hang out, and the time that a tiny blue chalcid wasp appears on a particular rose bush in summer every day (midday!). I’ve become absorbed in their personalities. All 555 different species! All my sightings are sent to Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) to add to the map of wildlife in London.”

Carrying on the idea of small space living, Penny created a Pollinator Pot Garden in her front garden and is currently recording the insects visiting it. Find out more and follow Penny at insectinside.me.

WILL YOU?
LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE
LOVE NATURE, INCLUDING WASPS AND SPIDERS
LOVE CLEANER AIR, HEALTHIER RIVERS AND LITTER-FREE LAND
LOVE BEING GREENER, BEING OUTDOORS
LOVE OUR PLANET
Inside this pull-out you’ll find a map and seasonal things for you to enjoy. You’ll find even more things at nationalparkcity.london

2019 is the UK Year of Green Action. Waltham Forest is the Capital’s Borough of Culture 2019. Brent will be the next London Borough of Culture in 2020. 2020 is also the year of the next United Nations climate change and biodiversity summits. 2020 a huge year as governments set new aims to restore nature, curb climate change and address poverty.
JUNE

June is Stag Beetle monitoring month. An annual survey is run by Greenspace information for Greater London (GIGL) in partnership with London Wildlife Trust. Other events include London Parks and Gardens Trust’s Open Garden Squares weekend, UK Bike Week and the East End canal festival.

JULY

Throughout July it’s ice cream month, World watercolour month, Picnic month and Plastic Free July. It includes Love Parks week with lots of festivals in London offering cinema screenings, plays, sports events and performances taking place outdoors. It’s also the month for Waterloo Carnival, the CircaFest in Gunnersbury Park, Lambeth Country Show in Brockwell Park, the Big Butterfly Count and the National Park City Festival. Enjoy a circus sampler at Somerset House, Kaleidoscope Festival at Alexandra Palace and International Busking Day in Wembley Park. Then cheer runners taking part in the Virgin British 10k or the London triathlon.

AUGUST

August brings Fishing month, Happiness Happens month and Romance Awareness month. Cyclists will be geared up for the Prudential RideLondon event and the Brompton World Championships in the Mall. Head east for the London Wildlife Festival at Walthamstow Wetlands. You can also head south for the Wild in the City Festival which celebrates people of colour in nature. Mid month, there’s the Wildchild Festival in Dulwich, followed by the world famous Notting Hill Carnival.
HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO GET INVOLVED.

You can badge events, projects, talks, walks, celebrations or yourself with our London National Park City in Opening* wordmark,ater or other resources to proudly show your participation. nationalparkcity.london/identity

DO SOMETHING

The London National Park City is all about enjoying being outdoors and making life in London greener, healthier and wilder. You can help launch the National Park City by simply going on a walk somewhere new, growing some plants, taking a friend wild swimming or doing anything that contributes to these goals. If you are on social media, please share any photos using our hashtag. #NationalParkCity

JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN TO MAKE LIFE BETTER

Do you ever feel life could be better? We do. That’s why we’ve curated lots of ideas of things you can do to make life better in London. Joining this campaign is a great way to start being the National Park City to life in your life. makelifebetter. nationalparkcity.london

ORGANISE AN EVENT AS PART OF OUR LAUNCH YEAR

Are you organising a London National Park City inspired or supporting event between 21 July 2019 and 31 July 2020? Visit our webpages to find out how to add details to our free listings page. nationalparkcity.london

ORGANISE A MINI OPENING CEREMONY

We’re inviting anyone to celebrate London being a National Park City by organising a mini opening ceremony which can happen anytime in the run up to the launch or anytime during our launch year. You could declare a new pond is open for news, or celebrate opening a wild street, a nature reserve, piece of land, an art walk or anything inspired by the National Park City. makelifebetter.nationalparkcity.london

SIGN-UP TO OUR NEWSLETTER

We’ll keep you updated with news and opportunities. You can sign up to our newsletter here: nationalparkcity.london/newsletter

SIGN THE LONDON NATIONAL PARK CITY CHARTER

Do you support the London National Park City? Are you going to do things to help make it a success? Show your support by signing the London National Park City Charter at nationalparkcity.london. See page 47.

Be a National Park City Maker - Turn to page 44 to find out more.

Photo: Luke Massey
NATIONAL PARK CITY

LONDON OFFICIALLY OPEN
October

Celebrate the London in bloom awards, Wildlife day, the ‘On Blackheath’ Festival, Roald Dahl day, Urban Food day and the Great British Beach Clean on a beach near you! Look out for Open House weekend in London and walk, pedal, scoot or swim for Car free day, which includes the second London car free day! Be inspired by National Park City Talks at Conway Hall on the 19th October.

Mental Health month gets underway in October, as does Black History Month, Fire Prevention month, Fair Trade month, Breast Cancer Awareness month and Family History month. Days to look out for include Badger day, World Habitat day, the Royal Parks Foundation half marathon, Howl at the moon day and World Cities day.

November

Remember, remember the fifth of November. It’s also World Vegan month, “November”, Adoption month and Manatee Awareness month. Days include: International Toucan Twister day, Cider Apple day, Fibonacci day, celebrating Fibonacci’s famous mathematical sequence in nature and make sure not to miss Cake day.

September

London’s trees turn various shades of gold, bronze, yellow, red and copper before providing endless opportunities to catch falling leaves and make a wish.

The Oxford Street lights, Trafalgar Square tree and open air ice rinks, it must be December. Month Xmas Human rights, ears and Music in our Schools’ month.

Kicking off with World AIDS Day, December includes: World Soil day, International Human Solidarity day and Christmas Jumper day.

We dip into January, month of Oatmeal, Soup and Hobnobs. It’s also Celebration of Life month, International brain teaser month and Get a Balanced Life month. For the strong-willed, you can celebrate2022 Polar Bear Swim day with a freezing dip in one of London’s outdoor swimming pools or lakes. To recover you can indulge in the Festival of Sleep day, take part in the RSPB annual Big Garden Birdwatch, save money with Cut-Your-Energy-Costs day, wax lyrical for Poetry day and take part in Seed Swap day to 4GreenPlant.

The short days and long nights remain in February, making it ideal for Library Lover’s month, Bird-Feeding month, Vegan Cuisine month, Bake for Family Fun month and Hot Breakfast month. World Wetlands day is at the beginning of the month. Followed by International day of women and girls in science and of course, Valentine’s Day. We then have Random Acts of Kindness day.

World Thinking day and Tell-a-Fairytale day to bring some magic and sparkle.
SPRING

Average temperature: 3.5°C – 16.8°C
451 Sunshine hours
Average rainfall: 158mm
4.8 average days of rainfall (more than 1 mm)
5.6 average days of frost
6.8 average days of frosts

MARCH

Optimistic splashes of yellow are delivered by daffodils as March brings us a sobering Caffeine Awareness month, Peanut month, Endometriosis month, Hemophilia month, Kidney month, Multiple Sclerosis month, Nutrition month, Women's history month, Craft month, and Umbrella month.

There’s plenty to celebrate too, with World Wildlife Day, World Book day, Plant a Flower day, St Patrick’s day with its parade and festival in Trafalgar Square, Take-a-Walk-in-the-Park day and World Sparrow day. Then feel smug by making a savoury or sweet pie to mark Pi day (3.141592…. 14th day of the third month = 3.14). Let’s not forget London Coffee Festival and the London Book and Screen week with seven days of storytelling, readings and talks.

APRIL

April, so the saying goes, brings showers. It also heralds Autism Awareness month, Poetry month, Jazz appreciation month, Decorating month, Garden month, Straw Hat month and Active Dog month. There’s Walk-to-Work day, Rat day, World Health day, Look-up-at-the-Sky day, Garlic and Bike days. Enjoy the annual Oxford V Cambridge boat race on the Thames (Or the Goat Race at Spitalfields City Farm). As the days get longer and warmer, the lure of being outside becomes almost irresistible, so welcome the fact May is National Walking month, Barbecue month and Bike month. It’s also Get-Caught-Reading month, Photo month, Lyme Disease month, Lupus Awareness month and Cystic Fibrosis month. The May Bank Holiday weekend brings London’s Inland Waterways Canalway Cavalcade at Little Venice - a celebration of canals. The unmissable RHS Chelsea Flower Show and Chelsea Fringe are always highlights. Other days to enjoy are World Laughter day, Mother Ocean day, World Bellydance day, Hackney half-marathon, London Craft Week, Frog Jumping day, “Vesak”, the day of the Full Moon, World bee day and the International day for biological diversity.

MAY

2042
London’s 200th anniversary
35,000
hectares of greenbelt (about 22% of London’s total land mass)
3.5m
trees giving us oxygen, cooling the city, removing some air pollution, keeping soils intact and helping to reduce flood risks

4.8 average days of rain (more than 1 mm)
Growing plants connects us to nature. It can make where you live more beautiful, create habitats for wildlife, reduce air pollution, provide food, and bring joy. Studies show people are calmer and feel better surrounded by greenery. Hospital patients recover health faster when trees and plants are visible from their beds.

We’ve shaped our landscapes for millennia. With more than 47% of London already green, it wouldn’t take much to tip the balance in favour of nature. If every Londoner greened one square metre of grey space by growing grasses, wildflowers and creating ponds, we would increase the abundance of life in the city, make neighbourhoods more resilient to weather hazards and climate change, and make where we live more beautiful too.

You can get started on a wall, balcony, in a garden, at work or at school. You could adopt a tree pit or a dead space and turn it into a flower bed, wildlife haven or mini orchard.

Wandsworth residents formed a Twitter group @GreentheGridSW18 and adopted the tree pits in their road. With the support of the local council, traders and the wider community, regular planting events are held to green their street and front gardens.

Ivy can help to block some air pollution. Chiswick Oasis ivy screen forms part of a new green wall between children in the playground and the 6 lane A4.

Some Councils offer financial support, like this Linear Park in Waltham Forest’s Grove Road. It was unused, unloved and a magnet for anti-social behaviour. A competition to remodel it was won by a partnership of Matter architects and artist Lucy Harrison, who says that community involvement is essential for the success of such projects. The park remodelling included raised beds for local school pupils to adopt, like these students pictured overleaf, from the nearby Connaught School for Girls.

No space of your own?
• Find out about allotments
• Ask a neighbour if you can help look after their garden
• Contact your local council or landlord and ask if you can adopt some land
• Volunteer to look after empty ground in a school, hospital or business park
• Join or start a local park work group. Visit farmgarden.org.uk/your-area/london
• For ideas on growing food, try cfgn.org.uk

CAN YOU?
GROW HERBS IN YOUR KITCHEN
GROW FOOD FOR NEIGHBOURS
GROW WILDFLOWERS, HEDGES OR IVY UP WALLS
GROW SEEDS AND CUTTINGS TO EXCHANGE WITH OTHERS
GROW HOPE
The window sill is one of the easiest ways to start growing:
- Start with a herb in a pot from your local supermarket. Basil, Rosemary, Mint will all thrive.
- Common houseplants like Lady’s-rose, both grow well on bright windowills.
- American Aloes are large, dramatic and loves sun.
- The jade plant or money tree is low maintenance.
- Spider plants (spider ivy) help to clean pollutants from the air of a home or office.

**WINDOW BOX OR BALCONY**

Start simply and experiment. Try and create some shelter and a microclimate.

Use plants which are resilient to wind and sun, so consider which grow naturally in those conditions.

Consider grasses and sedges, “waste” rock plants like pinks, thrift, erigeron daisies and houseleeks, or small shrubs like juniper, and thyme. Love the trailing look? Try ivy or trailing ivy geraniums.

In summer, sow nasturtiums which will tumble down covered in flowers, which you can add to summer salads.

“I love to sit and notice how the plants change daily, even catching a passionflower opening from bud to full flower in ten minutes. The tiniest balcony garden can be great for your wellbeing as well as wildlife. I highly recommend embracing nature and giving it a try!”— Angela Dunne, National Park City Maker

If you can only do one thing for wildlife, then plant ivy. Much misunderstood, it’s one of nature’s super plants.

**FIVE IVY FACTS:**

Ivy is not parasitic and doesn’t suck the life out of trees. It’s simply climbing to reach the light. Left unmanaged ivy can smother the trees’ leaves.

In autumn, ivy has small yellow nectar rich flowers, supporting wasps, hornets, hoverflies, solitary bees, small tortoiseshell, peacock and red admiral butterflies.

Ivy such as Hedera helix provides a refuge for birds and other small animals to roost, nest and hibernate.

The dark berries of ivy provide essential winter food like a 24/7 grocery for blackbirds, thrushes, wood pigeons and others.

Ivy keeps walls 15% warmer than other parts of a building in winter, and 36% cosier in summer. Keep an eye on growth around vulnerable areas such as rooflines and windows.

What if you transformed your street into an Ivy Street — with 50% or more of walls covered in ivy?

Gardening in small spaces is incredibly good value, easy on the watering, and quickly brings you into a thriving community of Londoners who are eating as locally as can be. And you’ll get lots of stuff for free... especially if you join a community garden. An errant seedling today could be the Summer’s best tomatos. Someone’s invasive horseradish could be the making of an Autumn Sunday roast.

“It’s all about having a go. You can get started right away with just the following:
- A pot with a hole at the bottom for drainage, don’t forget a saucer or tray.
- A packet of seeds.
- A bag of peat-free multipurpose compost that says it’s suitable for seed-sowing.
- A clear plastic bag to create a mini greenhouse while seeds germinate.
- Light, water, love.
- And maybe some sharp sand to deter slugs & snails.

**GARDENING IS A STATE OF MIND**

Lucy Clark, Food & Wellbeing Grower at MindFood in Ealing

“Where to start if you’ve never tried gardening before? If, like many of us, your only experience of growing food is watching shop-bought herbs die on your windowsill, then don’t panic. To get the best out of gardening, all that’s required is a simple change of mindset, and the trick is not to try so hard. After all, you can’t really make anything grow, you can only give it the conditions it needs to thrive. So if you’re an absolute beginner, with no time or space, just choose seeds or plants that will grow as spite of you, dedicate the smallest corner of your world to growing something good to eat and let nature do the rest.

If you have a balcony or windowsill start with a few summer extras like cress, radishes and pea shoots. Then sow some cut-and-come-again leaves like peppery rocket or mustard mizuna. Try buy edible flowers like nasturtiums or cornflowers. Young hosta leaves are edible too, just like spinach.

More information:
- mindfood.org.uk for info about free food-growing courses to help with stress
- capitalgrowth.org.uk to find out about local community gardens
- gardenguru.org.uk to learn about growing in a clean, sustainable way
- wildhomes.co.uk to see more on square foot gardening
- ediblehighstreet.com to learn about growing in small spaces.
THE GREENHOUSE PROJECT

The Greenhouse Project offers Single Homeless Project service users the opportunity to check-in with nature, on whatever level best fits their needs and mood. They deliver regular gardening sessions across eight London boroughs, with the intention of creating beautiful, healing and lush outdoor spaces to spark curiosity and deliver peacefulness.

SHOBA

Shoba is a service user who lives in Ilford. “I am homebound and live with no garden, just concrete. Growing up in Tanzania, east Africa, we had our own farm and grew our own vegetables. I now attend a local allotment once a week for Single Homeless Project’s Green Garden sessions and it’s a life saver. I’ve been given a raised bed and I’ll be able to use my wheelchair to access it. The plots are specially designed for disabled people. If I had a tent in these gardens I would sleep in it.”

WHAT COULD YOU PLANT?

Benjamin Bruce is a horticulturist, Chartered Landscape Architect and National Park City Maker. Here are some of his top London plant tips for colour and year-round interest in semi-shady areas:

Trees create height in your outdoor space, with room below for shrubs and flowers.

- Amelanchier lamarkii – Juneberry – A deciduous flowering shrub.
- Acer saccharum – Field maple has yellow flowers.
- Acer davidi – Meador maple.
- Understory shrub with amazing bark.
- Celastrus asperulus – European wattle tree or hackberry. Good for shade.
- Magnolia kobus – Ornamental deciduous trees with fragrant flowers.

Shrubs can grow quite large and are best at the back of beds, like hedges.

- Hypericum ‘Hidcote’ – A compact version of St John’s wort with yellow flowers.
- Deutzia – Cornus ‘Midwinter Fire’ – Dogwood with fiery coloured stems in winter.
- Hydrangea serrulata (Sume Queen) – Oak leaf hydrangea with doughy white flowers.
- Choisya ternata and cultivars – Mexican orange blossom, with aromatic leaves.
- Herbaceous - Flowering year after year, these hardy plants are the perfect addition in any garden.

- Agya reptans cultivars – Bugleweed, dense and spreading ground cover.
- Tulipa sp. – Choose from a range of colour and sizes.
- Thunbergia delavayi – Chinese morning glory. Upright perennial with late green foliage and clusters of blue flower heads.

For Ben’s full list of plants for semi-shady, sunny or full shade gardens, visit our website, nationalparkcity.london

For fans of wildlife gardening, London Wildlife Trust recommends leaving nature to do its own thing. If you can’t wait and feel a need to sow seeds, here are their top 5 wild garden plants for London:

1. Greater yellow-rattle (Rhinanthus major) – More common in London than other parts of the UK.
2. London rocket (Sisymbrium iria): this Mediterranean species of rocket flourished after the Great Fire of London, was confined to a few sites.
3. Fuchsia (Digitalis purpurea): majestic woodland plant of semi-shaded areas, but while they are beautiful and loved by pollinators, they are poisonous.
4. Marsh marigold (Caltha palustris): big, flourished lover of ponds, streams and wet ditch and nectar sources.
5. Traveller’s-joy (old-man’s beard, Clematis vitalba): a clambering climber with creamy white flowers and feathery fruits in autumn.

Recent studies have identified plants and trees capable of capturing pollutants such as nitrogen, sulphur, ozone, particulates or heavy metals. The Phyto-Sensor report was based on studies in London and is available from citizen science.net.

What if every Londoner transformed a square metre of grey concrete into a mini meadow of flowers? What if we all planted a tree? What if solid fences were replaced by hedges allowing hedgehogs to move freely through London’s gardens? What if hardstanding for car parking was made porous with low-lying plants drawn down the centre? What if every new building had a green roof and living wall? What if our street trees were when orchards of apples, pears and cherries?

10X GREENER

Friends of the Earth helped to crowdfund this paper. Their 10X Greener campaign encourages people within shared postcode areas to bring nature back into their lives. It’s helped crowdfund a community garden covering Hackney’s E5 postcode area and resources for the Daubeney Fields Forever community group to transform their part of Hackney.

Of the Earth says: “Imagine stepping out your front door and experiencing nature everywhere you look. From high rise balconies and front gardens to alleyways and bus stops. We’re talking hedgerows, fruit trees; bee-friendly flowers; bird-friendly habitats; and more. It’s Greener is about bringing nature into your daily life, no matter where you call home.

10X Greener supports you and your neighbours to raise funds and hire a gardener to work in your postcode. Crowd funding a postcode gardener is one way to get 10xGreener up and running.

We raised money from residents and businesses for our test run in Daubeney Road – and hired our first postcode gardener, Kate Poland. She is already making a difference in the E5 area, planting up empty spaces, helping residents, starting a bulb swap scheme and encouraging the creation of pocket parks.”

Kate says: “I can’t wait to bring grey spaces to life and try out ideas like seed banks, a signature wildlife plant and even weed champions.”

friendsoftheearth.org.uk/nature/10x-greener- towns-and-cities

What if every Londoner transformed a square metre of grey concrete into a mini meadow of flowers? What if we all planted a tree? What if solid fences were replaced by hedges allowing hedgehogs to move freely through London’s gardens? What if hardstanding for car parking was made porous with low-lying plants drawn down the centre? What if every new building had a green roof and living wall? What if our street trees were when orchards of apples, pears and cherries?
Creating habitats and encouraging wildlife around buildings, estates and rivers will help nature flourish and connect with other locations.

Making more of London greener and wilder will help to address the mass extinction of species happening around the world. The United Nations estimates a million species are at risk of extinction due to human activities. London is home to nearly 15,000 species.

Action is needed on many fronts. We all have a responsibility to make more space for nature whether through development, community action or individual acts.

Developers must aim to use less concrete and incorporate more soil, more trees, more planters, more fields, more water features and naturalised waterways.

Berkeley Homes are behind a new collaboration to deliver a green housing project in south east London. Staff are helping to distribute the London National Park City Maker paper to many of their residents. Here is some of the thinking behind Kidbrooke Village:

“Outdoor spaces within cities are a key element of community life. It is vital we safeguard them, despite the pressure to accommodate more people and homes in the city. Kidbrooke Village, in Greenwich, is a great example of this with the regeneration project delivering 3,000 more homes than were previously on the site while retaining 20 acres of green space as the central feature of the site.

The project was developed with the community in mind, so a natural park and a temporary village centre were created early on to help residents connect with their neighbours. The park is now a key part of community life, thanks to ongoing engagement activities promoted by Berkeley and London Wildlife Trust. Together we’re enhancing the biodiversity benefits, from the planting in the park to nature walks, volunteering days and other events. The vision is that Kidbrooke will become home to black poplars, newts, slow worms and other species.”

Berkeley’s recommendations include:

- Make public open space a key element of your design, not an afterthought
- Think about how people will live and interact with the space. Ask their views!
- Make the space multi-functional. Well-designed open space can provide amenity and play areas, biodiversity benefits, as well as adaptation to climate change through flood risk management and the cooling and shading effect of plants
- Design the space to be safe and accessible, adding reasons for people to stop and enjoy it rather than just look at it from a window

WHY NOT?
TRANSFORM A DEAD SPACE INTO A LIVING PLACE
AVOID USING CHEMICALS IN OUTDOOR SPACES
PLANT POTS, TUBS OR WINDOW BOXES
CONTACT FRIENDS OF THE EARTH AND ASK ABOUT THEIR PROJECT TO MAKE STREETS 10XGREENER
PUT OUT FOOD, WATER AND NEST BOXES FOR WILDLIFE

Kidbrooke Village nature walk. Photo: Berkeley Homes

Kidbrooke Village biodiversity. Photo: Berkeley Homes
RewildMyStreet.org provides guidance on making space for nature around our homes, gardens and streets. They've created graphics of a balcony and a typical London street to show what can be done.

Teenage activist Kabir Kaul is from Hillington. He's concerned about the future of the world he's inheriting, particularly its dwindling number of birds, insects and plants. He's taking action and has some pointers:

"I believe we should make changes individually in small steps, of which we have absolute control. I have a few easy ideas to attract wildlife. Start by hanging bird feeders and nest boxes from trees. I use suet balls, seed mix and coconuts. Don't feed them bread, salty food or cooked rice. They either can't digest it or extract nutrition from it. If you don't have a tree, hang feeders from balconies, on walls or along fences.

Create a water feature. This gives birds a place to eat, drink and bathe. It could be just an old washing-up bowl set in the ground. Adding aquatic plants attracts damselflies and frogs. You can also make a difference by visiting and looking after nearby green spaces. Pick up litter or make a little garden on your street for wildlife.

If we all did this, we could vastly expand London’s green spaces and boost its wildlife. The increase in plants will also help lower levels of carbon dioxide. Yes, there is a lot to be upset about, but I am hopeful change is coming very soon.

Starting with ourselves."

Making new spaces for nature such as green roofs and living walls all help tremendously, but it can take a long time before they can replace the loss of an existing green space and its nature benefits.

What if we rewilded every barren space in London? What if there were more Londoners loving, caring and greening grey corners? What if you formed a London National Park City Makers Group? What if new developments all included homes for nature alongside homes for people? What if employers offered either funding, time or encouragement for staff to green areas of their daily commute or neighbourhood?
Celebrating places, organising events or running campaigns can increase awareness and understanding, galvanise concern and action, celebrate and promote good work.

Working in a group to organise and inform can amplify impact and help make change for good.

London’s 3,000 or so public parks and open spaces are vital for communities for wildlife and for nature. Planning and development in London should advance the positive vision of London as a National Park City. London’s green, public and open spaces should be protected, respected and improved, and should not be subject to pressures from development.

When pressure arrives the best form of defence is mobilising people and constructing a sound rebuttal. When old trees, pocket parks, verges or public spaces are lost, we all end up poorer. Your local council planning and/or environment team will be able to help answer these questions:  
- If it’s about a tree, is there a Tree Preservation Order?  
- If it’s a landmark, is it a listed monument or building?  
- Does the location have an official “designation” to protect it from damage?  

There may be some special wildlife or habitat present. Check on GiGL’s website: gign.org.uk/discover-london

Sometimes you may need professional support or expertise to protect greenspace. Charities like the following often have limited resources, but offer guidance on their websites:  
- CPRE London  
- London Wildlife Trust  
- London Parks and Gardens Trust  
- The National Trust  
- Thames21

There are more than 700 Parks Friends Groups across London, breathing life in to, improving and protecting our much loved local public green spaces.

WHAT DO PARK FRIENDS GROUPS DO?  
Organise community events and activities such as fun days, film nights, tree trails, walks and deliver talks  
- Promote historical and ecological knowledge  
- Run occasional volunteering days such as weekly gardening sessions  
- Boost the park through planting bulbs or restoring old features  
- Champion funding and investment  
- Report and address issues such as vandalism, litter or areas in need of attention  
- Campaign on behalf of parks for new facilities, to stop inappropriate development, or halt events which cause damage or compromise enjoyment of the park. To find your local Park Friends see goparks.london or the London Friends of Green Spaces Network fpn.org.uk. There’s also information on starting a new group at parkcommunity.org.uk.

QUAGGY WATERWAYS ACTION GROUP
In 1990 communities in Bromley, Greenwich and Lewisham living near the River Quaggy challenged flood relief plans and won support to restore the river.

Previously diverted through concrete channels or pipes, it was transformed back in to a lush, wild river, boosting wildlife, reducing flood risk and creating valued community space. QWAG’s success features in an AS-Level Geography textbook for the AQA Exam Board. qwag.org.uk

FRIENDS OF KNELLER GARDENS, RICHMOND ON THAMES
Set up as a link between Council and community, Friends of Kneller Gardens speaks up on behalf of the park and its users. Over the years a drinking fountain and gym equipment have been installed and its cafe upgraded. Kneller Gardens is maintained as an inviting and accessible community asset, and is on Facebook @FriendsofKnellerGarden and Twitter @KnellerGarden.

FRIENDS OF WINSFORD GARDENS, PENGE, BROMLEY
“We are now in our 7th year of maintaining and improving Winsford Gardens. Over the years, we’ve transformed this previously neglected park into a safe and welcoming environment for locals. Our volunteers meet every Wednesday to look after this very important local space.” … Brenda Little, Chair, Friends of Winsford Garden/Finge Green Gym Community Group

FRIENDS OF CANONS PARK, HARROW
Established 15 years ago, the Friends group has boosted visitor numbers, informing people about the history and wonderful variety of nature and wildlife in the park. “We all derive great pleasure from giving back to the park that has hosted us, our friends and our families for more than 80 years”. canonsparkfriends.org

WHY NOT ORGANISE PICNICS AND GAMES IN THE PARK LOCAL SUPPORT STREET CLOSURES FOR PLAY AND COMMUNITY MEALS FOR WHERE YOU LIVE TO BE BETTER FOR PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE A NATIONAL PARK CITY GROUP

What if every London park had a National Park City Makers group? What if struggling High Streets adopted a similar community led response? What if every school had a National Park City group? What if every London park had a National Park City Makers group?  

Photo: Luke Massey
“It may sound frightening, but the scientific evidence is that if we’ve not taken dramatic action within the next decade, we could face irreversible damage to the natural world and the collapse of our societies.” — Sir David Attenborough

Climate and environmental crises are now widely acknowledged, from school pupils to politicians. Environmental concerns are being expressed more loudly than ever before. We need behavioural change, societal change, and systems change. Our own lifestyles, behaviours and values are at the heart of this. Acting in our own lives helps create demand for better products, activities, policies. Personal action helps convince and support community and political leaders and decision makers to take the bolder actions necessary to avoid the increasing likelihood of species extinction and climate catastrophe.

It is possible to reduce our harmful impact on the planet, but we must think globally as well as locally. London’s population has swollen by two million since 1990, and whilst the emissions produced in London in that time have decreased, London is still a center of consumption of goods and services. Through our national and international supply chains Londoner’s have a significant emissions impact.

HERE ARE SIX IMMEDIATE WAYS TO TAKE ACTION:

1. If you haven’t already, consider switching to a more plant-based diet. Londoners’ diets are steadily veering towards flexitarianism; dominated more by plants than meat or fish. Studies show that without meat or dairy products, global farmland use could be reduced by 75%. That’s an area larger than China, Europe, Australia and the US added together. Reducing meat and fish intake by about half, would mean a corresponding drop of about two thirds in greenhouse gases, nitrogen levels in soils and oceans, land use and water use.

2. Get around under your own steam or use public transport. Walking and cycling not only reduce emissions, they are better for personal and collective health. Active travel is also a brilliant way to stay connected to the city.

3. Switch to a green energy supplier, sourcing electricity powered by wind, light or water. TIP: Using a smart meter you can gauge energy use to identify other potential savings.

4. Try to reduce the amount of new clothing and textiles you purchase. Since 2002, global clothing production has more than doubled. The average consumer buys 60% more, and each garment is kept for half as long.

TIP: The Depop app makes buying and selling unwanted items through a smartphone quick and convenient.

5. Consider where you take your holidays and how you travel for work and pleasure. Flying is a significant generator of emissions and almost all of the UK and Europe is now accessible by ferry and train. Amsterdam is 3.5 hours direct from Kings Cross by train, competing with air travel in time, price and comfort, or you could support the UK’s 15 traditional National Parks.

6. Waste less food. Londoners generate a whopping 3.7 million tonnes of waste a year. Nearly half of that is food; most of which is fit to eat.

TIP: Karma is a Swedish app now operating in London with 700 cafes, restaurants and grocery stores selling excess produce at half price towards the end of their trading day. Followers can see what’s available nearby, purchase online and collect from the relevant outlet.

There is some inspiring content on the climate crisis and planetary health as part of the Olafur Eliasson (In Real Life) exhibition running at the Tate Modern until January 2020.

START NOW: WATCH SIR DAVID AT TENBOROUGH’S “CLIMATE CHANGE – THE FACTS” • SUPPORT POLITICIANS, CHARITIES AND BUSINESSES IN WORKING TO REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS • SWITCH TO A GREEN ENERGY PROVIDER •

ADOPT A MORE PLANT-BASED DIET AND WASTE LESS FOOD • WALK AND CYCLE MORE, USE CARBON-FUELLED TRANSPORT LESS
GET MORE INVOLVED WITH LONDON NATIONAL PARK CITY

SIGN UP TO OUR NEWSLETTER
Our regular email newsletter opportunities, provides updates, ideas, inspiration and events. Subscribe online: nationalparkcity.london/newsletter

LONDON NATIONAL PARK CITY NETWORK
We want as many organisations and groups as possible to be involved in making the London National Park City a success. If you are a group, organisation, school, agency, business or company, consider joining the London National Park City Network. You don’t have to be based in London. National and international organisations are encouraged to join. There are no fees, though we will ask you to use our identity to promote London as a National Park City. Visit nationalparkcity.london/network

NATIONAL PARK CITY SCHOOLS NETWORK
Are you a teacher? Sign up to our National Park City Schools Network: nationalparkcity.london/schools-network

WRITE FOR US
The beauty of London is its size, complexity and diversity. Did we miss something you think more people in London should know about? We are looking for inspiring articles encouraging people to make London better. Help us share best practice and innovation: nationalparkcity.london/submit-for-us

BE A NATIONAL PARK CITY MAKER
Help to get more people outside making London greener, healthier and wilder. Find out more about being a National Park City Maker by turning the page. Then visit nationalparkcity.london/maker

National Park City Makers can create groups to make somewhere greener, healthier and wilder or to get together to enjoy and explore London’s outdoors.

NATIONAL PARK CITY CHAMPIONS
Do you: • love the idea of making London greener, healthier, wilder? • want to share your enthusiasm and our vision with groups, organisations and companies to engage them? • want to meet fantastic people and hear about their amazing work? • want to help others make a difference? • have time to commit to delivering a number of events per year? If you answered yes to these questions, you can become a Champion. Find out more at: nationalparkcity.london/champion

LONDON NATIONAL PARK CITY IDENTITY TOOLKIT
Our Identity Toolkit sets out how people will see, feel and understand London is a National Park City. It’s a badge, a statement and symbol to proudly indicate you are making London better.

Our logo is free to use for non-commercial events or activities supporting the movement and our aims. Download our Identity Toolkit here: nationalparkcity.london/identity

Our wordmark and logos can not be used for anything unrelated to our movement, nor to endorse commercial activities, campaigns or funding bids without our approval.

PLANET FRIENDLY MERCHANDISE
T-shirts, sweatshirts and bags are available to show support nationalparkcity.london/t-shirts

LONDON NATIONAL PARK CITY MAP
Request a free copy of the UrbanGood London National Park City Map. Designed by Charlie Peel, this beautiful map celebrates London’s entire landscape and includes the city’s strategic footpaths. Get yours from nationalparkcity.london/map

DONATE
We need funds to enable us to deliver the vision of a greener, healthier, wilder London. Donations can be made online at nationalparkcity.london/donate

If you’re a philanthropist or corporate funder, contact us at hello@nationalparkcity.org

LONDON NATIONAL PARK CITY RANGERS
A volunteer National Park City Rangers programme is currently being developed. National Park City Rangers will have expertise in specific skills or places. Our Rangers will be a mixture of volunteers and employees in partner organisations. If you’d like to know more, please visit nationalparkcity.london/rangers
HOW TO BE A NATIONAL PARK CITY MAKER?

We can all make a difference and as you’ll see by reading this paper, sometimes you don’t even need to do anything.

A National Park City Maker is someone:

Who cares:
What if we all cared a little more for where we live, work and play? We care for the things we love and love the things we care for.

Who is informed:
“Why?” is the question Makers ask themselves. Knowledge is not power, it is only if there are specific issues within the bigger picture and identifying the best way forward is what makes a Maker.

We see our “What If?” section on pages 48 and 49 for some powerful examples posted by some of our Twitter followers.

Here is our simple three-step process to bring a National Park City Maker.

**STEP 1**
Simply start by enjoying more of London’s great outdoors. Go for a walk, play football or climb a tree. Invite someone who may not have considered getting outdoors to join you, and you might already be helping to make life better in London.

**STEP 2**
Look around your building, street, neighbourhood, work or school. Notice good things, problems and opportunities. Ask “What If?” and imagine what it would look like or feel like if it was better.

“What If?” is a simple but powerful question. “What if London was a National Park City?” was the question that led to the successful campaign to make London the world’s first National Park City. At first just a few people were asking it, then many asked “Why not?” we reached a tipping point and it’s become a reality. “What If?” can spark imaginations.

Who does stuff:
If not me, then who? Makers don’t wait to be asked, they do it. We are an informed, fast and community spirited way with content and support.

**STEP 3**
Share what you do.
We need to deliver an answer to teenager Greta Thunberg who, when speaking about the climate emergency, challenged us all in her statement: “I want you to act as if our house is on fire. Because it is.”

The first National Park City Fair 2018, in partnership with Conway Hall.

The public lanes where HAG started litter picking have now become the start of a new green corridor, encouraging and signposting residents of Heston to Osterley and public rights of way to Osterley and Heston. Our National Park City vision is by telling stories. Doing so can help to grow support and investment. Storytelling has become a buzzword, promising to engage, offer authenticity, influence and motivate, give clarity and more. Yet face to face discussion remains the most trusted and effective way to bring about change.

1. the Storytelling Triangle.
You speak to your audience in the story itself. Strengthening the relationship between any two of these helps the third to get on board. When your enthusiasm, passion and knowledge for the story are high, your audience is in turn compelled to help much more strongly. Keeping this triangle fluid allows you to keep building, but crucially doesn’t allow you to read from a script. Storytelling is not an academic lecture but a dynamic experience.

2. Descriptive Language.
Illustrate the core ingredients in a story; characters, actions, time and settings. Descriptive language is the ideal jargon and technical language busters. By helping people see (or feel, smell, touch) what we are saying, stop them from hearing what they think we are going to say and to remember the point we are making. Be warned, too much detail and your points will be lost.

Start with a strong hook, such as a provocative statement, a killer fact or a question (‘What If?’). Don’t waste your story rehashing what everyone already knows, just set the scene for what is to come.

The middle is the bulk to take you through the changes from the status quo before arriving to your end, which sadly is where many stories let themselves down. With our National Park City stories, either end with a call to action around a specific area related to your theme, or hand the story over to your audience by asking how they will take authorship of the next chapter. What could they do?

Stories are also important to gain coverage in your local media. Journalists want to know what, who, where and when. If you fulfil these questions, have a good story and a photo opportunity, you’ll find it easy to get in the news. Josh Gaillemin and Lily Pender. atwebsitethewholestory.org.uk

HESTON ACTION GROUP

What if we cleaned up the street outside our front door? What might that lead to? Heston Action Group (HAG) started as a small band of individuals picking up litter outside their homes and cleaning public lanes to make it more pleasant to walk children to school. They organised street parties to encourage more people to help out and even started a junior wing, called the HAGlets.

The public lanes where HAG started litter picking have now become the start of a new green corridor, encouraging and signposting residents of Heston to explore and enjoy the understood public rights of way to Cheyne and beyond. There are plans for fruit trees, wildflowers, and more. What if this pathway gets people out of their cars and into nature? All from the simple steps of a few people picking up some litter.
London's geological, social and political landscape has witnessed many changes. This July opens a new chapter in its building on the brilliant milestones of its past and the history of the National Parks movement.

Our vision is to make London a city where people, places and nature are better connected.

A city that is rich with nature and where everyone benefits from exploring, playing and learning outdoors. A city where we all enjoy high quality public and green spaces, where the air is clean to breathe and it’s a pleasure to swim in its waters. Together we can make London a greener, healthier, wilder, fairer and more harmonious place to live. Why not?

The London National Park City is a shared vision and journey for a better life. Everyone can play an active role in making the London National Park City a success.

Visit our webpage to sign our charter, pledged to play an active role in making the London National Park City a success.

nationalparkcity.london/charter

What if everybody could lose themselves in nature for five generations from now?

We are working together for better:

- green housing and urban design
- clean air
- urban parks
- well-being
- nature
- people
- conservation
- countryside
- biodiversity
- health
- quality of life
- food
- water
- energy
- nature
- education
- resilience
- engagement
- partnerships

We collectively share the ambition, responsibility and power to deliver on these things and more.

What is a National Park City? It’s a place, a vision and a city-wide community that is working together to make life better for people, wildlife and nature. A defining feature is the widespread commitment to its cities, people, culture and nature work together to provide a better foundation for life.

The London National Park City is a shared vision and journey for a better life. Everyone can play an active role in making the London National Park City a success.

Visit our webpage to sign our charter, pledged to play an active role in making the London National Park City a success.

nationalparkcity.london/charter

What if everybody could lose themselves in nature for five generations from now?
We asked @LondonNPC followers on Twitter for their #NationalParkCity inspired “What if?” questions.

**WHAT IF?**

**WHAT IF THE NATIONAL PARK CITY WAS A UNIVERSITY DEDICATED TO NATURE?**

**What if London National Park City was a university dedicated to nature education and research? What if we could kayak to work?**

**Joel O’Donnell**

**WHAT IF ALL MAJOR ROADS WERE LINED WITH POLLUTION ABSORBING HEDGES?**

**What if all major roads were lined with pollution absorbing hedges?**

**Jo Cartmell**

**WHAT IF WE BUILT PUBLIC RUBBISH RECYCLING Points IN SCHOOLS?**

**What if we built public rubbish recycling points in schools?**

**Ben Smith**

**WHAT IF WE COULD HAVE BIRD AND BIKE PARKING IN Trafalgar Square?**

**What if we could have bird and bike parking in Trafalgar Square?**

**Joe O’Donnell**

**WHAT IF EVERY STREET HAD A STREET CHAMPION WHO COULD HELP ENSURE IT WAS KEPT CLEAN?**

**What if every street had a street champion who could help ensure it was kept clean?**

**Joe Beale**

**WHAT IF WE HARVESTED ENERGY FROM WIND PRODUCED BY TRAINS?**

**What if we harvested energy from wind produced by trains?**

**Rory Harding**

**WHAT IF THE FOUNTAINS IN ©IDADAIRY INITIATIVES LIKE LOW-POLLUTION LIGHTING?**

**What if the fountains in ©IDADAIRY initiatives like low-pollution lighting?**

**Megan Eaves**

**WHAT IF WE DIDN’T HAVE TO MAKE ROOM FOR PARKED CARS IN THE CENTRE OF OUR CITIES?**

**What if we didn’t have to make room for parked cars in the centre of our cities?**

**Sarah J Berry**

**WHAT IF SETTLEMENTS NEEDED TO INSTALL A GREEN WALL AND SOME KIND OF WATER FEATURE?**

**What if settlements needed to install a green wall and some kind of water feature?**

**Helen Bus**

**WHAT IF WE CLOSER OFF RAT RUNS TO COMMUNITY AND SAFE BIKE PARKING?**

**What if we closed off rat runs to communal and safe bike parking?**

**Jack Cornish**

**WHAT IF 100KM OF LONDON’S THAMES WAS A BLUE AND GREEN CORRIDOR?**

**What if 100km of London’s Thames was a blue and green corridor?**

**Louise Minter-Kemp**

**WHAT IF WE WROTE A LIST OF THE SPECIEST THAT ONCE LIVED IN LONDON (LIONS AND ELEPHANTS, NOT ALL THAT LONG AGO, APPARENTLY) & DECIDE TO BE AMBITIOUS ABOUT WHICH ONES WE MIGHT INTRODUCE - PERHAPS BEFORE THEY GO EXTINCT?**

**What if we wrote a list of the species that once lived in London (lions and elephants, not all that long ago, apparently) & decide to be ambitious about which ones we might reintroduce - perhaps before they go extinct?**

**Rory Harding**

**WHAT IF THE FOUNTAINS IN Trafalgar Square WERE CLASSIFIED AS NATURE RESERVE - AND MAJESTIC RED KITES FILLED LONDON’S SKIES AGAIN?**

**What if the fountains in Trafalgar Square were classified as nature reserve - and majestic red kites filled London’s skies again?**

**Malcolm Bacchus**

**WHAT IF EVERY STREET HAD ITS OWN VISION AND ENThusiasm FOR NPC?**

**What if every street had its own vision and enthusiasm for NPC?**

**Daniel Whitlegg**

**WHAT IF WE COULDN’T BUILD ON THEM?**

**What if we couldn’t build on them?**

**Luke”””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””””’
NATIONAL PARK CITY FOUNDATION*

This paper has been created by the National Park City Foundation, the charity that has been created to help make the London National Park City a success. Thanks to the very generous and energetic support of 471 supporters of our crowdfunding campaign to make this newspaper.

SPECIAL THANKS

We’d like to say a big “Thank You” to the thousands of supporters and hundreds of volunteers. Too many to name individually.

To everyone who has tirelessly pushed us on and energised the movement to declare London the world’s first National Park City. Thank you

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our 12 Ways to Make Life better is inspired by, and builds on, the New Economics Foundation’s 5 Ways to Wellbeing.
Our Network of organisations, groups, streets, businesses and more have been vital in helping to make London a National Park City. We are ever grateful for all their support. Thank you to (in alphabetical order) …