

Biodiversity for All – 2024

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority awarded Huntingdonshire District Council a three-year £1.35 million bid to accelerate the delivery of measurable biodiversity net gain in Huntingdonshire. This will be delivered through five key themes – CPCA Overview, Jobs and Skills, Strategic Open Spaces, Community Driven Delivery and Mapping. Four of these themes have developed into their own work programmes - please see project updates below.

Project Updates: 23rd August 2024

Jobs and Skills

The Vision:

To increase local green skills to help tackle the biodiversity crisis and facilitate further green jobs, bringing local stakeholders and residents together to support nature, educate and contribute towards a Net Zero Huntingdonshire. Find out more [here](#).

What has been achieved this week?

- Groundwork East and project participants only have one week left to go until they finish the project at [Stukeley Meadows](#). They are making good progress and are setting the liner for the pond in this week. The celebration of the project will be happening next Thursday!
- The seventh Green Skills course has been confirmed for October 2024 at our newest park, [Berman Park](#)!

Strategic Open Spaces

The Vision:

To prioritise key HDC strategic sites across Huntingdonshire for biodiversity development. The aim is to gather evidence, engage with the community to co-design and deliver on projects to boost biodiversity on these sites.

What has been achieved this week?

- Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to enhancing the biodiversity of our key green spaces and we are excited to announce that a **Green Hay Transfer from Hinchingsbrooke Country Park to Huntingdon Riverside** is currently underway!



- The rangers are preparing to do a first trial transfer from Hinchingsbrooke Country Park to Huntingdon Riverside. Data is currently being collected on the donor and recipient site so that we can compare over the coming years whether this has been effective and we can refine the methods.
- What is green hay?

? What is Green Hay?

Green hay transfer involves spreading **freshly cut hay**, rich in seeds from diverse plant species, **onto** another **poor species-diverse grassland**. This helps to introduce a wider variety of native plants in the donor site, **increasing** the overall species **diversity** and ecological **resilience** of our park.

Ecological Benefits 

- **Increased Biodiversity:** Introducing new seeds will help create a more resilient and vibrant ecosystem
- **Support Wildlife:** A richer variety of plants provide better habitat and food sources for wildlife.
- **Improved Soil Health:** Diverse plant species contribute to healthier soils, supporting plant growth and sequestering more carbon.

We understand that the area might look a bit untidy during the process. Please bear with us—this is a natural part of the enhancement and will lead to a **more beautiful and biodiverse park** in the near future. We thank you for your patience as we work to improve our open spaces.

- Separate to the Biodiversity for All funding, the Biodiversity team have been working with St. Neots Market Town Development team about **bat habitats at another key site in Huntingdonshire – St. Neots Riverside Park**. As part of the [Market Town Investment programme](#), the **Old Falcon** building is being explored and feasibility studies are being carried out about the space and it's value and heritage. MKA Ecology have been carrying out ecology work on site and have found bat roosts. To ensure that mitigation is at the forefront, the Biodiversity team have met with MKA Ecology this week to determine a mitigation plan for the bats, looking at potential trees at St. Neots Riverside Park to install bat boxes should works proceed. Things the team were looking for include location of the tree in relation to the Old Falcon (the closer the better), age of the tree, surrounding habitat, existing bat features (holes and crevices already make good habitats). The team have selected 6 trees in total for day roosts bat boxes and 2 areas secluded for the hibernating boxes. The team will be working collaboratively with the Arboriculture team to make this happen.



Community Driven Delivery

The Vision:

To encourage and enable others within Huntingdonshire to increase biodiversity through community engagement and delivery.

What has been achieved this week?

- This week, our Graduate Ecologist, Lola, continues to write the Community Biodiversity Grant Scheme reports and recommendations, which are typically over 10,000+ words each. In the meantime, check out Lola's video about completing the biodiversity site audits across Huntingdonshire [here](#).

Mapping

The Vision:

To collate data, collecting observations of species on sites. To inspire and educate future generations to raise awareness of biodiversity and the part they play in the ecosystem.

What has been achieved this week:

- iNaturalist statistics – In the past two weeks, observations have increased by **250** to an overall total of **14,016** and identified species have increased by **27**, totalling **2,180**. There are currently **1,072** Huntingdonshire residents signed up to log observations through the iNaturalist app.
- This week, observers found (amongst many!):

Meadow Grasshopper



Great Crested Newt



Marmalade Hover Fly



Knopper Gall Wasp



- Don't forget to download the iNaturalist app to log your species findings across the district!

What is iNaturalist?

Citizen Science

Every observation can contribute to biodiversity science, from the rarest butterfly to the most common backyard weed.

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