



Cheshire
Wildlife Trust

Creating a wilder place to work

cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

Usable outside spaces

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the space**

Many of us spend a large portion of our week in our place of work. We all know how important getting outside and being around nature is. Even a short walk at lunch time can help clear your head, make you feel better and set you up for a more productive afternoon.

Some places of work have great, usable outside green spaces but many don't, especially if you work in a town. This guide is designed to help you assess the spaces outside your work building and identify the ones that can be improved for both wildlife and people. It is also designed to help you think outside the box and make changes even when at first glance it looks impossible.

Whatever action you pick, always be mindful of whether it is right for the space and ensure you get the permission of whoever owns the land or building first.



Where to start

Many companies take their corporate, social and environmental responsibility very seriously. Check to see if yours has a Corporate Social Environmental Responsibility (CSR) team or something similar. A good CSR policy and plan can help facilitate improving a company's green credentials, works like a moral compass for a company's development and can make a business more appealing to potential employees. If your company doesn't have a CRS team or similar then maybe you could set one up. Talk to your HR department. CSR Volunteers work well for lots of companies, helping to make policy reality and implementing great changes for the people who work there. This also means that you will have support and help for any 'wilder changes' you want to make.

For more information on CSR head to [The Giving Machine website](#)

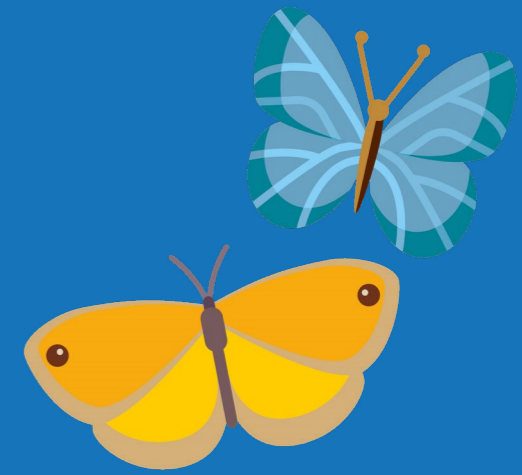


Things to consider

- Do you have a carpark?
- Is there space for planters by the front door?
- Is there any area of space that could be described as wasteland, or somewhere that is really overgrown?
- Is there a flagged or concrete area that could be transformed, even a small one?
- Do you share any space with a neighbour?
- Is there an area where you keep the bins?
- Is there a wall suitable for vertical planters or hanging baskets?
- Is there an accessible rooftop?
- Is there a small grass verge outside the building?
- How about an unused space across the road or in close proximity to your work building?

Check out the [useful resources page](#) on our website for inspiration on how to transform your space!

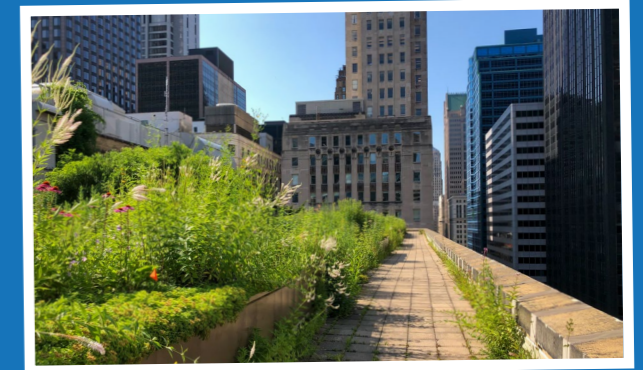
Ideas for your space



Every space will be different. Don't be limited by these, be as creative as you can with the space.

If the space is small or paved,

an easy option would be to make use of lots of pots and planters, filling them with plants that bees and butterflies love. If the business owner agrees, there are plants and wildflowers that will grow in the spaces between paving flags. You can also build a pond in a pot in a small space, Seating can be created from cable reels or pallets or even logs. More information about all these things can be found on our [website](#).



If walls are your only option,

don't despair. You can make use of wall mounted planters, trellises and hanging baskets. Lots of plants and fruits will happily grow up a sunny wall or in a basket and this offers the chance for employees to pick the fruit. Planting scented flowers like lavender in wall mounted baskets can also have a positive impact on people who walk past them, and the bees love them.

Perhaps your space is a car park.

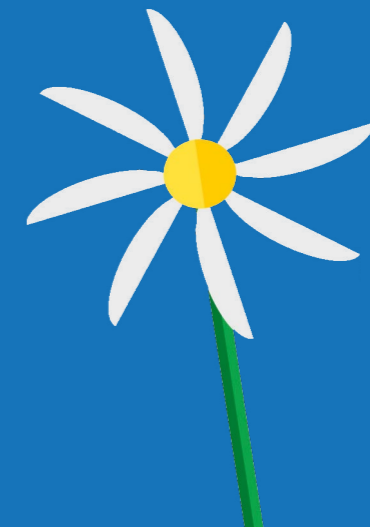
you can put large planters between spaces and fill them with pollinator friendly plants. Since Covid, many people work from home more often. Check if there is the possibility of taking over one or two spaces in the car park to create a seating area and to add some pots or even a pond.

Short mown grass areas are a brilliant space to work

you can start by leaving sections of the grass to grow long. You will need to speak to whoever usually mows the grass to ensure it doesn't all get cut, pathways mowed through provide lovely spaces for employees to walk. There are resources to help you on the [Grow Don't Mow](#) page of our website.

If you have lots of space...

If you have lots of space, you could plant some trees. An orchard will provide a shady space, fruit can be picked by employees and it provides a great space for staff activities or team building days. There is lots of information on planting an orchard on [The Orchard Project](#) website.



Funding your space transformation

There is often a way to make changes with impact while spending very little money, or even for free.

Your team

The staff who work with you are a great place to start. Make a list of things you need to improve your space then put an ask on the notice board, or send around an all-staff email. People often have plants, plant pots, seeds, old tools, or even furniture that they are willing to donate for free.



Selling sites

Facebook marketplace and freecycle.org are great places to find things that are in need of a new home and might be just what you're looking for. It is a good idea to know what you're looking for but to be a little bit flexible, be prepared to sand or paint something that is almost perfect but not quite there. You can also find tools and even storage solutions on these sites.

Company support

Speak to your manager or the business owner. If you can present your plan, along with the benefits it will bring to the employees and to local wildlife then your company might be willing to give you a donation to help facilitate your work.



Fundraising

With the permission of your business owner, look at some fundraising ideas at work:

- A bake sale
- A sponsored event
- A wear green to work day
- A car wash.

Think outside the box, there are lots of ways to raise money. Ask your employer if they will match fund what you raise.



Ensuring everyone benefits from the space

Outdoor space is so important, especially in urban environments where so many of us don't have gardens. There are many health benefits to spending times outdoors and connecting to nature. Creating even the smallest area where you and your colleagues can take a break, have lunch or maybe even have a meeting could have a huge impact on both the mental health of the team and on their productivity.

Make sure you talk about the space, share your plans and ask what other people think and want to see.

Invite staff to get involved in the transformation. Office staff especially might be grateful for a chance to do something practical and you never know, you might have a keen gardener in your team you don't know about.

Have a grand opening, bring cake, show everyone what you've done and make sure they all know they can use it. If you have plants that need watering, ask for volunteers and set up a rota.

Getting people involved in the space will give them a sense of ownership and pride, some people might not have a garden at home so this maybe their only opportunity to get stuck in.





Transforming a wasted space where you work can make a huge difference to wildlife but it will also make an even bigger difference to all the people who work there. It is a win win!

We have more information about wellbeing with nature and Pathways to Nature Connection in our 'Creating a space for wellbeing' guide. There is also a wellbeing journal that you can download and share with your team.

If your organisation is looking for other ways to connect to nature and support wildlife, then Cheshire Wildlife Trust offers a variety of unique nature-based propositions for business and organisation away days, team building, supporting employee wellbeing and for fulfilling CSR commitments. If you would like more information, then please visit our [website](#).

For more free guides, videos and activity packs please visit our [website](#).



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