



Cheshire
Wildlife Trust

Help people
connect with a
space for nature



cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

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People and spaces for nature

Cheshire Wildlife Trust understand the importance of spaces that are protected and managed for wildlife. They provide food and homes for hundreds of species of animals and insects, many of which are declining. It is also important for everyone to have access to green spaces and places where they can connect to nature, especially in urban areas where many people don't have a garden.

In this guide we aim to give you lots of ideas of ways in which people can use an outdoor space, to have fun, to connect to nature, to learn and to make friends. Remember before you do anything you need to find out who owns the space and speak to them to get permission, you will also need to check that there are the correct insurances and risk assessments in place for any activities you do. Each space is different so use what works for you and don't be limited, get creative!

In the beginning



The first thing to get people involved in is transforming the space into something useable for people and a haven for wildlife. If people help with this step, they will feel a real sense of connection to and pride in the space. When people feel connected to a space they are more likely to look after it in the long term and then more people can benefit.

Place of work

If your space is at your place of work, use the notice boards, internal newsletters, or staff emails to invite people to get involved. Form a committee to get a team of dedicated people on board and use surveys to get everyone else's opinion. Survey-Monkey have a free survey tool that you can use to ask lots of people what they think in a manageable way. Talk to your HR department if you have paid volunteer days and ask if these can be used by staff to get involved.



Community space

If your space is a community space then find and talk to local community groups, youth groups and any other organisations who could benefit from improving the space. Reach out to the people who live closest too as they might already have ideas. Social media is a good place to start, see if there is a page for the town or area where the space is situated and post on there.

- Create a group on Facebook with a relevant name where you can share ideas and invite people to join.
- Do a flier drop in the surrounding streets with information about how people can have their say.
- Consider holding an open meeting to discuss the space, this can help to involve people who may not be on social media.

Wherever your space is, communication with people who might use it, or who might be impacted by it changing, is very important from the early stages. It can help to prevent any issues further down the line.



Transforming your space

The old saying 'many hands make light work' is very true and depending on what you need to do to your space, you may be very glad of a community helping. The key is everyone understanding what they are required to do.

- Make a plan
- Draw up a list of tasks
- Consider the tools that will be needed
- Work out some realistic timescales
- Gather an idea of costs
- Generate some fundraising ideas
- Organise group workdays
- Make sure everyone understands the objectives and the plan
- Split out the work



Tasks that can be shared

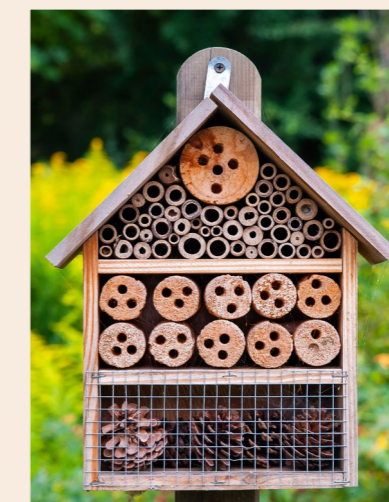
Lots of your transformation will require enthusiasm and hard work rather than specific skills. This means there should be something that lots of people can get involved in. Hosting a workday and inviting people along to take part is a great way to make real progress. You can improve the space for wildlife while getting lots of people involved and connecting with the space.



Tree planting If you have room planting native trees or creating an orchard is a great task for a group of people and depending on the size of the trees quite easy. You can get more information and can even buy trees from the Woodland Trust.

Creating habitats You can build bug hotels, hedgehog houses and mini ponds. Find out how by visiting our website.

Sow wildflowers If you have a lot of space then creating a wildflower meadow is a good way to improve your space and to create a lovely place for people to visit. If you are short of space then planting wildflowers in pots will still provide food for pollinating insects and is something lovely for people to see. Have a look on our website for more information.



Clearing invasive species Depending on your site you might have to deal with invasive species like Rhododendron bushes or Himalayan balsam. There is more information about invasive species and what to do with them on Gov.uk.

As time goes on

Once you have transformed your space and it is a haven for wildlife, it is important to keep people connected and using the space. People might think that once the initial hard work is done that their involvement can end. This doesn't need to be the case so below are some ideas of how people can use the space long term.



Citizen science

This might sound very serious but, it can be lots of fun and perfect for families. If you are hosting an open day in a community space or a staff family day for your workplace there are lots of activities you can plan.

> **A bug hunt or wildlife search** – We have lots of [spotter sheets](#) on our website to help you identify what you see. There is also a free app called [iNaturalist](#) that can identify plants and insects from a photograph taken on your phone. Remember to report what you find to [RECORD](#).

> **Pond dipping** – If you have water in your space then pond dipping to find out what lives there is a good way to monitor how well the pond is doing. The [Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust](#) have great tips on how to pond dip safely and all the equipment that you'll need.



General maintenance

There will always be jobs to do in any space, litter picking, watering flowers if they're in pots, mowing pathways through wildflower meadows, tidying, etc.

Hold a Wassail

If you've planted an orchard on your site then why not hold a wassail? Wassailing is the ancient British custom of visiting your apple orchard, reciting incantations and singing to the trees. The idea is to promote a good harvest in the autumn. It is lots of fun and a great opportunity to get the community together to enjoy food, drink and music, often there is also a bonfire, but this will obviously depend on your space. Learn more about this tradition from the [National Trust](#).

Craft activities

There are so many activities that can take place outside: collecting items for a collage, pressing flowers and leaves to make bookmarks, weaving with natural objects, painting or drawing what you see. The options are endless just make sure that anything that is used is already on the ground. If everyone picked flowers or took leaves, very quickly all the plants would be gone.

Wellbeing with nature

Evidence shows that connecting with nature can have a positive impact on mental and physical health. There are lots of ways in which any space, no matter how small or urban, can be used to improve wellbeing for those who use it. We have a separate guide called creating a space for wellbeing that is full of ideas, there is also more information on our [website](#).



Whatever you decided to do in the space always be mindful of nature, ensure that your activities are not going to cause damage or scare away wildlife who have made the space their home. Have you been inspired to do something for nature? Inspire others by sharing your story on social media and add it to our [interactive map](#) of local people like you taking action to bring wildlife back.

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



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