

Impact Report 2024/25



ecobirmingham
Inspiring Positive Action

Charity Registration Number 1177761



Supporting greener, fairer and healthier communities in Birmingham

Introduction

At the end of another remarkable and challenging year, ecobirmingham continues to adapt, grow, and deliver vital support across our city. As Birmingham grapples with ongoing pressures, from the escalating climate emergency to the continued strain on local services, we remain committed to building greener, fairer, and healthier communities. The uncertainty facing our residents is real, but so too is the energy and determination of those working to make change.

This year marked a significant milestone for our organisation as I officially stepped into the role of CEO, bringing renewed leadership and vision. We also made a physical move to a new office at Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), opening up exciting opportunities for deeper collaboration with creative and community organisations, and reaching new audiences from across the city.

We expanded our energy projects, building on the momentum of last year's pilot. With new funding and partnerships, we are now reaching more neighbourhoods and households than ever before; supporting people with energy-saving advice and practical solutions in the face of rising costs.

Our long-term sustainability programme, Building Greener Communities, continues to grow. We've deepened our work in Sparkhill and Allens Cross, helping to embed sustainable living practices and community resilience from the ground up. This complements our citywide work, where we are increasingly recognised as a trusted partner in developing place-based responses to the climate and nature crises.

As we reflect on another year of change and opportunity, we are proud to share the impact of our work—driven by a passionate team, dedicated volunteers, generous donors and the invaluable voices of Birmingham's communities.

Kam Bola
CEO

K Bola





By 2030 Birmingham residents will have the tools we deserve to live healthier and happier lives.

Our Goal

By 2030 Birmingham residents will have the tools we deserve to live healthier and happier lives. We will be cycling and walking more, giving us greater opportunity to enjoy our city's shared nature, culture and community, as well as eating diverse and nutritional diets that keep us feeling well. We will spend the time and money that we can in ways that encourage fair, local and environmentally friendly products, jobs and volunteering. We will live in homes that protect us from extreme weather, powered in new and renewable ways, and we will harness the power of our local democracy to set a clear path for our city and our world.

Aim

To help 25% of Birmingham residents to start or continue a more 'sustainable living' journey guided by their values, priorities, and resources by 2030.

Our mission

Supporting greener, fairer and healthier communities in Birmingham.



Highlights 2024/25

3,799
attendances



There were **3,799 attendances** at our **623 events** and courses to improve people's ability to live sustainably.



We are reaching diverse beneficiaries. **35%** were of Asian heritage, **10%** Afro-Caribbean, **33%** from White British/Irish, **14%** from mixed heritage and the remaining 8% preferred not to say.

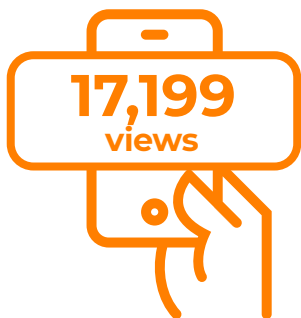


We worked with over **37 organisations**, and in partnership with **15**.



As a team, we contributed **29 hours** to **15 different events** promoting sustainable living to **820 people**.

17,199
views



Our digital resources were downloaded **4,360 times** and our content was viewed **17,199 times** over the year.



20% of participants had a disability, **70%** did not and **10%** preferred not to say. **63%** of participants identified as female, **30%** as male and **7%** preferred not to say.

23,184
beneficiaries



Overall, we directly helped **23,184** direct beneficiaries or **61,206** indirect beneficiaries from across **31 wards** in Birmingham. See pages 10-11 for more.

973
volunteer hours



30 volunteers donated **973 hours** of their time.



Our impact for Birmingham

We use the *One Planet Living@* (OPL) framework to measure the impact of our work across the city. These are simple principles which make it easier to live happily and more sustainably.

We ask our participants the same impact questions across all our activities.



Culture and community

1,080 participants were inspired to take positive environmental action.

77% of participants were inspired to change their own lifestyle.

1,415 participants intended to share this knowledge with friends and family.

95% of children intended to share their learning with others.

Health and happiness

71% of participants felt their health and wellbeing was improved due to taking part in our events and activities.

Participants intended to increase their physical activity by **61 minutes** (33%) on average per week (from 3.05 to 4.07 hrs).

78% of children were inspired to explore their local green spaces more.

97% felt spending time in nature made them feel happier.

100% of parents said it improved their children's mental and physical wellbeing.

Land and nature

90% of children learnt something about nature.

100% of parents felt their child had learnt something and improved their empathy towards the natural world.

100% of parents said that The Wild Holiday Bunch has helped reinforce the importance of valuing the natural environment in their child.



Local and sustainable food

57% of participants improved their knowledge of reducing food waste

746 people planned to reduce their meat and dairy consumption

43% of people planned to eat seasonally

360 people planned to start growing their own food.

Travel and transport

86% of participants were more likely to walk, scoot or cycle.

86% of Active Travel participants improved their ability to cycle.

Participants intended to reduce their car journeys (of less than 1 mile) by **58.3%** on average from an average of 2.9 journeys under 1 mile per week to 1.7 journeys per week.

Zero carbon energy

1,475 participants improved their knowledge of managing and reducing energy use.

Equity and local economy

14% of people found our activities helpful in finding work or a voluntary opportunity.





Wards worked in during 2024/25

We delivered our grassroots activities in 31 wards across the city.

- 10 wards (32%) were in the top 10% most deprived in the UK.
- 9 further wards were in the top 20% most deprived in the UK.
- Other wards worked in.



Let's Get Potting Workshop
North Edgbaston

Wild Holiday Bunch
Soho & Jewellery Quarter



Sustainability workshop with Paragon
Allens Cross



Route Finding Led Ride
Brandwood & Kings Heath





Headline benefits

In total, we calculate our activities have delivered the following headline benefits:



Over the year **1,995 Tonnes** of Co2e saved.



180 extra years of healthy life expectancy.



Over £6.2m of social value benefit produced by our activities.

The main change from last year is that we have reviewed the way we assess and calculate our headline impact. We now calculate years of healthy life expectancy based on the number of people participating in our Active Travel activities. The profile of our activities in 24/25 has moved significantly away from Active Travel to Energy and Sustainability advice.



Our work

Through the following projects on food, education, transport, energy and sustainability we gave people the tools to take positive environmental action and help others do the same.

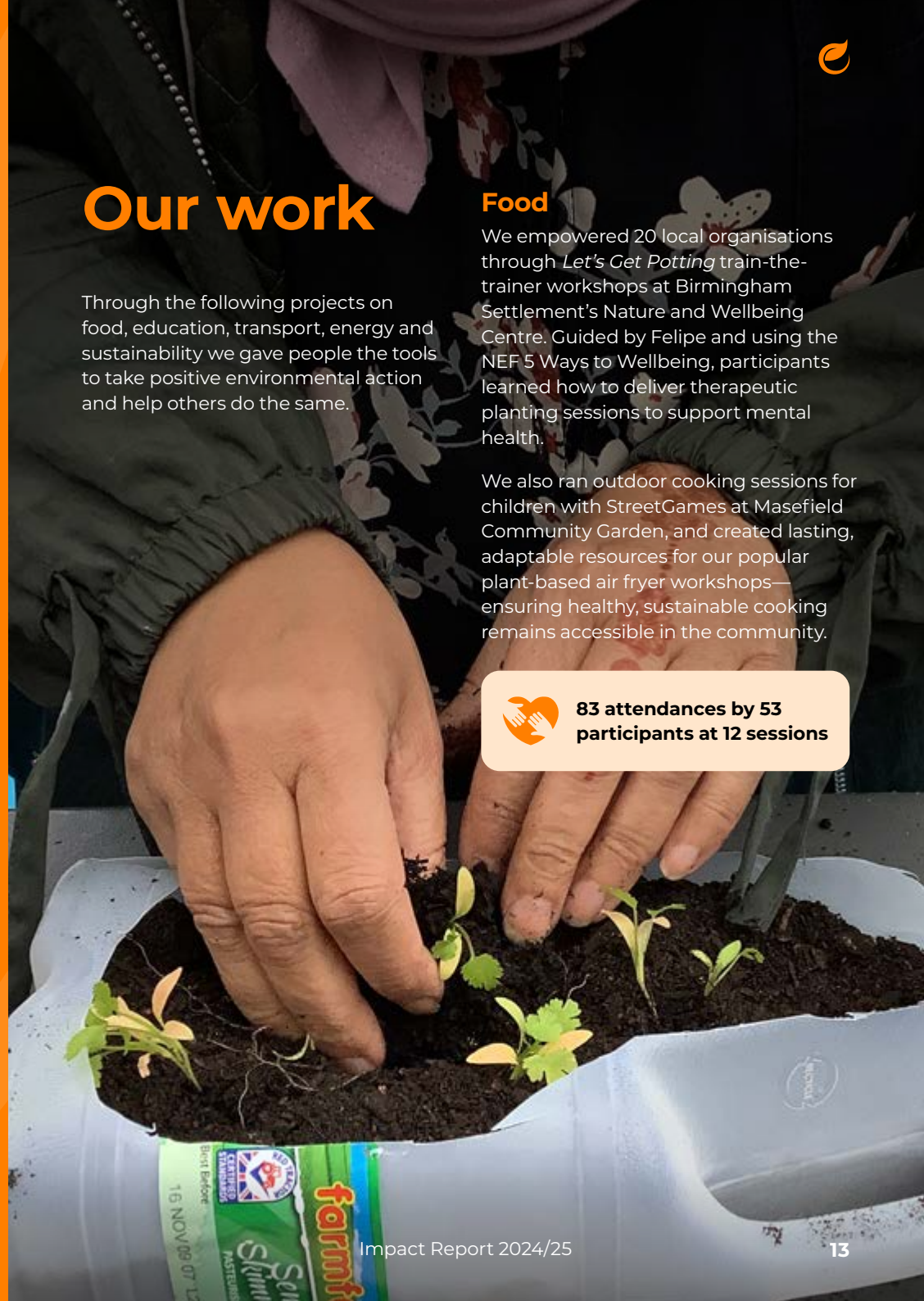
Food

We empowered 20 local organisations through *Let's Get Potting* train-the-trainer workshops at Birmingham Settlement's Nature and Wellbeing Centre. Guided by Felipe and using the NEF 5 Ways to Wellbeing, participants learned how to deliver therapeutic planting sessions to support mental health.

We also ran outdoor cooking sessions for children with StreetGames at Masefield Community Garden, and created lasting, adaptable resources for our popular plant-based air fryer workshops—ensuring healthy, sustainable cooking remains accessible in the community.



83 attendances by 53 participants at 12 sessions





Creative Learning

Our *Wild Holiday Bunch* partnership with the Wildlife Trust continued to thrive. Families loved exploring the *Centre of the Earth*, while one-off sessions at EcoPark and weekly family forest school at Springfield Project's allotment brought nature to life for children and home-educating families. The weekly sessions provide home-ed families regular connections with nature and the families are enthusiastic about making the site their own, creating a great community asset which can be used by other groups.

We expanded forest school sessions across Northfield, Manor Farm Park, and Acocks Green Rec, offering nature-based play to those who needed it most, including families housed at the Westley Hotel.



1,749 attendances by 762 participants at 127 sessions

Through *Stories 4 Nature* with the City of Nature Alliance, children grew in confidence, and staff were left with tools to continue the work. As National Literacy Trust Eco-Champions, we connected 150 pupils from 4 schools to local wildlife-rich green spaces.

Our work with The Springfield Project included nature crafts, eco-city workshops, and forest school sessions for their *Child Friendly Neighbourhood* initiatives. Meanwhile, *Nurture with Nature* with Share Community offered women hands-on gardening, wildlife care, and community building.



We would like to give special thanks to Anne and Odette who facilitated our recent forest school day; they did a wonderful job at engaging the children with nature. The magical day also saw self-confessed fussy eaters cooking together, eating fruit they had never tried before, and enjoying everything they tasted. One of our residents has an autistic child, and we were delighted to see her coming out of her shell in nature. Multiple residents commented they had never seen her look so happy! Staff and residents all thoroughly enjoyed the day, and we look forward to more trips to the ecobirmingham forest school.



This has increased their confidence and provided them the opportunity to make more friends. Learning essential skills, learning about nature and the most important, respecting the nature. We as parents really appreciate the pay as you can model for these sorts of activities.

Parent

Community Organisation




Active Travel

Over 70 sessions saw 210 individuals unlock the benefits of walking and cycling, supported by our team through route planning, guided rides, cycle training, and maintenance workshops. Our *69wards maps* helped people navigate their neighbourhoods sustainably.

Through partnership with *Cycling UK's Big Bike Revival*, 64 people learned to ride or improved their confidence and road cycling skills. At Birmingham City University, we ran 4 days of cycling tuition across campuses, encouraging active commutes. Our *Children's Summer Cycling Activities* with Friends of Bournville Park were so popular they were oversubscribed.

We also launched *Breathe Better*, a new project using creative walks and rides in Sparkbrook, Bournville, Kings Heath and Brandwood to explore air quality and green travel, culminating in a powerful Clean Air Day event at MAC.

Thanks to individual donors, we raised £5,500 to support this work.



302 attendances by 210 participants at 70 sessions





Learning about safely cycling in a busy urban environment gave me the confidence to use my bicycle more and to maintain my bicycle myself.

Participant



My daughter attended one of your cycling workshops in the summer and WOW – after the session there has been no stopping her... She has gone from not wanting to cycle to now being a super cyclist. Thank you so much!

Parent of Participant



We launched our Building Greener Communities project, helping residents build practical skills, improve wellbeing, and raise awareness of sustainable living.



229 attendances by 169 participants at 6 sessions

Sustainability Training and Advice

We are proud to be out delivering workshops and sessions based on the *One Planet Living®* (OPL) framework enabling and supporting organisations and community groups in their sustainability journey. At Share Community Project in Sparkhill we delivered a series of workshops for their women group focusing on wellbeing. The workshops supported them to gain knowledge, practical advice and tips, help with nutrition and ways to maintain sustainable healthy habits, by eating fresh, buying local and walking more. Paragon Bank also took part in one of our sustainability workshops and we supported them to take action in the community by volunteering at Allens Cross.

We have joined the panel of The Birmingham Faith Climate Action Partnership (BiFCAP) - a collaboration between BAHU Trust, Footsteps and Ashden supporting a more diverse and inclusive Birmingham climate movement and engage in, community led climate action in disadvantaged areas of Birmingham.

We launched our Building Greener Communities project working with The Springfield Project and Allens Cross, to bring sustainability-focused activities and improvements to their wards. We delivered a range of community-based sustainability activities, including drop-in energy advice sessions, healthy cooking courses, guided local nature walks, weekly forest school sessions for young people and eco-engagement activities at festival-style community events. In the first year, these activities have engaged over 375 residents, helping to build practical skills, improve wellbeing, and raise awareness of sustainable living.

We have trained staff in Carbon Literacy and *One Planet Living®*, equipping them to become community champions and advance their organisations' sustainability plans.





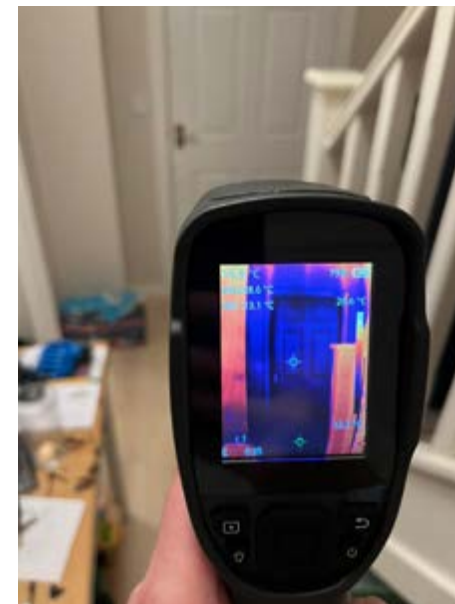
1,436 attendances by 1,379 participants at 408 sessions

Energy

Our energy saving projects have supported **1,379 participants over 408 sessions** throughout Birmingham. Through advice sessions, pop up events, light touch advice and more in-depth sessions, individuals have been given tips as well as practical guidance and the physical measures necessary to save money and save energy by implementing their new knowledge and energy saving tools. We continued our home visit service, with households receiving energy advice in their home to show what will work best for their unique housing situation.

We have also been successfully delivering our Centres for Warmth project in Sutton Coldfield which offers energy advice and guidance as well as priority service registration information, carbon monoxide information and refers people in need to debt and benefit advice.

Having regular presence in several community centres we got our name out to the broader public enabling more people to access our services. We proudly promoted our project on a radio station and a TV documentary highlighting the work we do around energy saving and the support we provide. This had an estimated radio reach of over 4,000 people.



Being a part of this Forest School allowed us to learn even more and encouraged us to increase the time spent in nature. It forced us to just 'pause' and enjoy our surroundings and it was such a great way to relieve stressful times.

BGC – Family Forest School Participant



“Learning the reasons why these actions save energy has made me more likely to follow through. As a result, I’ve already made some changes to my daily routine and shared info with others.

Energy Workshop participant



Looking forward

Our future plans include:

- Concentrating our efforts on fewer wards, enabling us to build the capacity of key community organisations and support them in empowering their communities.
- Launching our online Sustainability Advice Tool Kit.
- Expanding our team of associates and volunteers and continue to strengthen our governance by recruiting additional trustees.
- Building on our involvement with 'Birmingham Community Action Network (BCAN)'. We will grow our energy services and recruit an additional Energy Advisor to meet the increasing demand for energy advice to address fuel poverty in the city.
- Exploring new partnerships with creative and community organisations across the city.





Get involved

Together we can make Birmingham a greener, fairer and healthier place to live.

There are many ways to support our work. By volunteering, becoming a friend, supporting us with a donation, leaving a legacy gift in your will, booking us for a training session, or joining us as a member of staff, you will be helping us to deliver important projects across the city and become part of a passionate and committed team.

Donations from people like you are essential to ensure we can continue our important work for Birmingham and its residents:

£5 a month

could help us run a cycle route-finding session to get more people in the city out of their cars and cycling as part of our Active Travel project

£10 a month

could help us to run outdoor education sessions which encourage children to value and connect to the natural environment

£25 a month

could help us deliver a sustainability or energy advice session with a community group to help them reduce fuel poverty in the city

Donate now



Find out more about our work, how you can take part, [sign up to our newsletter](#) and donate via [our website](#).

If you would like to talk about working together, please [get in touch](#), we'd love to hear from you.

Thank you

Thank you to all of our volunteers and staff, as well as the individuals, organisations and partners who have donated, contributed to, and shared our work.

An additional thank you to Pinsent Masons LLP, Birmingham for their generous support with legal services to assist our office move. We would also like to thank the donors and funders who have kindly and generously partnered with us and supported us in 2024/25.

In particular, the following major donors:

- The Garfield Weston Foundation
- Central England Quakers
- John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust
- The Society of the Holy Child Jesus
- William A Cadbury Charitable Trust
- Cycling UK
- Npower Business Solutions Foundation
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- Players of the People's Postcode Lottery
- The National Lottery Community Fund – Partnerships Midland Region
- LEAD energy project funders
Department of Sustainability and Net Zero and Midlands Net Zero Hub

Contact us:

0121 794 3015

info@ecobirmingham.com

www.ecobirmingham.com

**c/o Midlands Arts Centre,
Cannon Hill Park,
Birmingham B12 9QH**

Follow us on social media:

     **@ecobirmingham**