

# IMPACT REPORT 2018/2019



*Creating a Sustainable City*



**eco**  
birmingham  
Inspiring Positive Action



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR AND CHAIR

2018/19 has been a huge and exciting year of transition to becoming ecobirmingham, grown out of the Northfield Ecocentre project set up by Central England Quakers in 2009. We live in an era of climate crisis and in a city that has recently declared a state of climate emergency, so we find our work is, ever more relevant and urgent.

We have continued to broaden the communities who engage with us and partners we work with - particular highlights being the Refill Birmingham campaign, supporting those with additional needs to ride a bike and our Green Lens photography exhibition.

As we are all affected by the climate crisis, environmental education and action needs to include everyone, so we will endeavour to be as representative and as inclusive as we can in how we operate. We will ensure everyone's ideas, opinions and actions can make a positive difference to the city; both environmentally and socially. Our activities have and will help people, organisations and communities live and operate in a zero-waste and low-impact way.

We are excited about rising to the environmental challenges that face the city and the wider world, and are committed to helping Birmingham become a sustainable city in readiness for the 2022 Commonwealth Games and beyond.

A huge THANK YOU to all of our passionate volunteers, funders, partners, work placements, and Friends for their support over our first year as ecobirmingham. We would particularly like to thank our trustees for helping us with such a smooth transition. We also give thanks to Central England Quakers for their help with our transition and their ongoing support as we grow and continue to retain and celebrate our Quaker heritage.

**This report charts the activities and impact of our first nine months as ecobirmingham, from July 2018 to the end of March 2019.**

Michael Addison, Director

Amanda Talwar, Chair

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ecobirmingham officially launched in October 2018 at Midlands Arts Centre with over 150 guests. The team with Natalie Fee, founder of Bristol-based City to Sea, creators of the national Refill campaign, who spoke at our event.



## 2018/2019 IN NUMBERS



2587

People attended our events and courses to improve their knowledge of how to live sustainably



215

Refill stations in the city by end of March 2019 (up from 123 in Sept 2018)

## OUR MISSION AND VALUES

To enable Birmingham to become a **sustainable city**.

We exist to affect **social change** and transition towards **low-carbon** and **sustainable lifestyles**.

By **inspiring** and supporting communities and organisations across Birmingham to take **positive action**, we will demonstrate that building low carbon communities brings **benefits, opportunities** and **wellbeing** to everyone, whilst **protecting the environment**.

We retain the ethos and values of our Quaker heritage, continuing to fundraise **ethically**, operate **fairly, inclusively** and **transparently** whilst taking a leadership role in environmental sustainability.

Our key focuses 2019-22 will be to:

- Tackle air pollution
- Reduce the city's reliance on fossil fuels
- Minimise the city's impact on the planet



387

Children involved in outdoor learning to increase their knowledge, understanding & connection to the natural world



451

Attendances at our two community gardens where people developed food growing skills



1077

Donated hours of volunteer time



476

People increased their cycling levels by attending our led cycle rides



162

Adults and children taught to cycle, starting their sustainable transport journey



4

People given training to enable more children with additional needs to cycle

19

Children with Autism, Aspergers, Dyspraxia and/or Hypermobility were taught, or are in the process of learning to ride a bicycle

12

People learnt and became more confident in maintaining their bike

### GETTING BIRMINGHAM MOVING

**We promote and advocate for sustainable transport methods and infrastructure across the city. We teach all ages and abilities to cycle and offer:**

- **Cycle tuition for children and adults**
- **Route finder sessions**
- **Bike maintenance classes for children and adults**
- **Social, group led rides**
- **Cycling for children with Autism, Aspergers, Dyspraxia and Hypermobility**
- **Cycle to work schemes**
- **Social prescribing**

“*The lessons with Cycle South Brum were brilliant. They really broke everything down in a way I didn't realise would help. He was taught how to start, stay still, how to feel comfortable on the bike and how to set off... Omar loves cycling now. He is just so happy on his bike and can't wait to go on it... that's a real joy to see as a parent.*”

Omar's mother, whose son was taught through our Cycling with Autism project

“*The thought of teaching my three children to ride a bike was not only a complete non-starter, but a logistical nightmare... Esther was patient, a great mentor... so encouraging and positive. It wasn't just riding a bike we were taught, but bike maintenance and bike safety too... As a family, we live as sustainably as we can, and riding our bikes has given us the chance to get active, improve our fitness and reduce our environmental impact by choosing a greener mode of transport.*”

Corinne, mother of three new cyclists

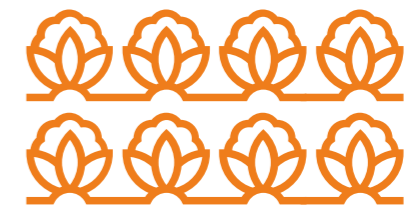
“*I gained a Cycle UK ride leader qualification. Volunteering for Cycle South Brum helped grow my confidence.*”

Zac, volunteer





Allen's Cross Community Garden produced 117kg of food worth £706, the equivalent of 1456 meals



Our scheme Power2Grow has helped 8 community gardens across the city, giving advice on setting up and managing gardens

## A GREENER CITY

**Through our community gardens, we enable people to grow their own food, avoid food waste and teach how to make small changes that have a positive impact on our environment.**

Our partnership project Allen's Cross Community Garden was invited by RHS Gold Medal winner Hannah Genders to represent urban community gardens at the prestigious RHS Malvern Spring Festival. The garden showcased how communities can grow together and included compact container gardens and upcycled garden features.

*"Whenever I see the polytunnel or the raised flower beds I made at Allen's Cross, I feel proud to know I'm part of that legacy."*

Tom, former volunteer



Masefield Community Garden: RHS Britain In Bloom Level 4 Thriving prize



Special Merit for Head Volunteer Sally Gopsill



Allen's Cross Community Garden: RHS Britain In Bloom Level 5 Outstanding

*"We have a young boy around the age of 11... He's one of those children that likes to get involved with the activities and gets engaged. His mom will come along as well and support him. He took some seeds. After some guidance from Jackie, he started to grow them in his back garden. He built a business over the Summer selling his veg to people in the Close."*

Lavinia, Fox Hollows Community Garden, given guidance through Power2Grow

# BUILDING OUR WORK ACROSS THE CITY

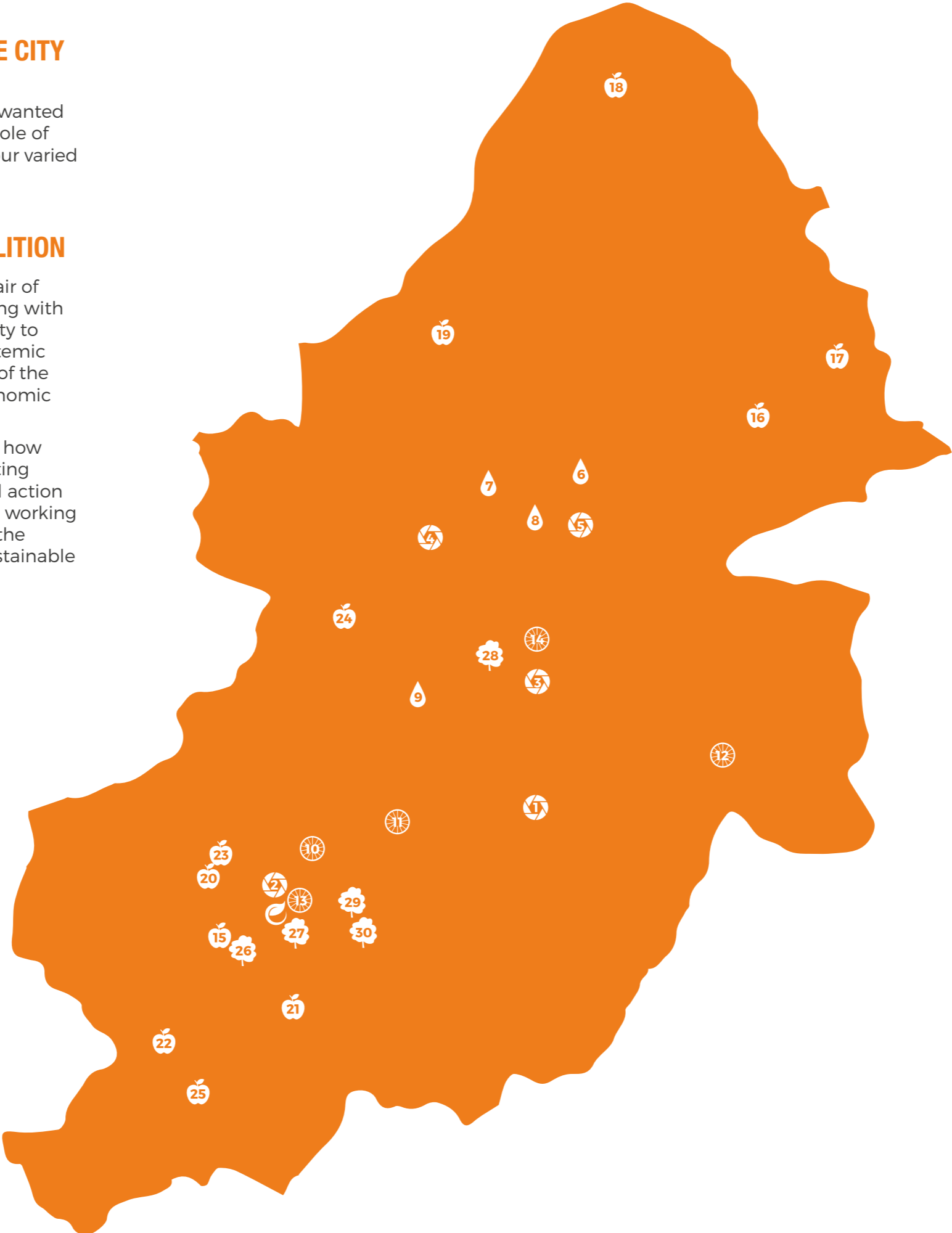
Having been known for our work in South Birmingham as Northfield Ecocentre, we wanted to ensure our new work embraces the whole of the city. The map shows the locations of our varied projects in the city across the year.

# THE GREENER BIRMINGHAM COALITION

We are excited to take over the role of Chair of the Greener Birmingham Coalition, working with environmental organisations across the city to encourage change at a structural and systemic level, placing the environment at the top of the agenda across business, political and economic sectors.

We remain committed to taking a lead in how the city can act more sustainably, supporting Birmingham City Council to take practical action after declaring a Climate Emergency, and working with city and regional partners to ensure the Commonwealth Games in 2022 are as sustainable as possible.

[www.greenerbirmingham.com](http://www.greenerbirmingham.com)



## ecobirmingham

### GREEN LENS

- 1 Kings Heath Park
- 2 Northfield Arts Forum
- 3 Midlands Arts Centre
- 4 Deaf Cultural Centre
- 5 Impact Hub Birmingham

### REFILL BIRMINGHAM

- 6 Aston University
- 7 Jewellery Quarter
- 8 Victoria Square
- 9 University of Birmingham

### CYCLING ACTIVITIES

- 10 Manor Farm Park
- 11 Bournville Junior School
- 12 Hall Green Health
- 13 Victoria Common
- 14 Calthorpe Park

### FOOD GROWING ACTIVITIES

- 15 Allen's Cross Community Garden
- 16 Dolphin Women's Centre
- 17 Firs & Bromford
- 18 St Lukes Church Community Garden
- 19 Vegan Vybes Earth Garden
- 20 Ley Hill Community Garden
- 21 West Heath Community Centre
- 22 Fox Hollow Close
- 23 St Bartholomew's Church
- 24 Nettlefold Community Garden
- 25 Cofton Park

### FOREST SCHOOL & CRAFTIVISM ACTIVITIES

- 26 St Brigid's Catholic Primary School
- 27 Quaker Meeting House
- 28 Martineau Gardens
- 29 Masefield Community Centre
- 30 Masefield Community Garden



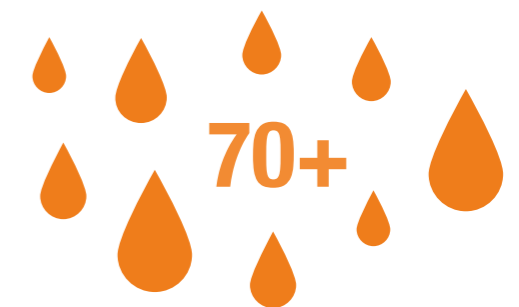
## REFILL BIRMINGHAM

“ If every Brummie refilled a water bottle once a week instead of buying a new single-use plastic one, the city would reduce its waste plastic bottle consumption by 22.3 million a year.”

**ecobirmingham** became the local champion for Refill in October 2018, an initiative to reduce the amount of single-use plastic by making it easier to refill your water bottle while out and about. Working with Severn Trent and Refill founders City to Sea, we held a Refill Action Day in March to sign up businesses across the city. The initiative has led to a strong working relationship with Birmingham City Council around reducing single use plastic in the city, particularly in relation to preparing for the Commonwealth Games in 2022.



At the end of March 2019 there were 215 Refill Stations across Birmingham, an increase of 92 in 6 months, helping to reduce the city's impact on the planet



volunteers took part in Refill Action Day

# green lens

Over the Summer of 2018 we worked with local arts and community organisation Ampersand Projects to engage young people across the city to discuss and explore the green issues that matter to them locally or globally through the medium of photography and film. This was a new audience for us to engage with, and very timely, with the growth of young voices within climate activism.

A series of 10 free workshops took place across the city with three of the city's leading photographers, Kate Green, Andrew Jackson and Steven Burke, in order to build skills, give creative opportunities and spark discussion around green issues with a diverse audience.

The Green Lens exhibition took place from 1 September - 28 October 2018. It highlighted the issues that concern them most, the environmental changes they are witnessing on their own doorsteps and those that affect people and wildlife internationally. The photographs were accompanied by the young people's own words and the stories behind the work.

[www.greenlens.org.uk](http://www.greenlens.org.uk)

## WHAT DOES A GREENER FUTURE LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

A consultation with members of the public during the exhibition (with respondents from age 3-70) included comments such as:

- “Business thinking about their long term impact on planets and society, wanting to help not harm.”
- “Safe cycle routes, tax on excess rubbish as an incentive to recycle.”
- “More cooperation from councillors and local MPs to show an interest and take action. The plastic bag tax has worked.”



respondents focussed on local issues and solutions, 22% on transport, 38% on waste, 15% on food.



191 active participants in the project (aged 16-25)

10 workshops across Birmingham

141 entries to the project

120+ participants in exhibition activity

185,000 visitors to the final exhibition at MAC

- “The Green Lens exhibition was very rewarding: a great opportunity to exhibit my own work and also meet others who share the same passionate views and see the importance of creating a more eco friendly world. The launch event was thoroughly exciting to converse with a wide range of individuals who made the exhibition happen. It gave me a lot of hope that actually a sustainable green future can be achieved and there are other people who want to make this reality.”

Alice Evans, Green Lens exhibited artist

- “The Green Lens workshop enabled young people to learn on many different levels; some mentioned they learnt how technical photography is, and others found it enhanced their connection to the environment in a way they hadn't experienced before - it really focused our discussion on how we can connect more people to their local environment and how we communicate the issues we care about to different audiences.”

Stephanie Lynch, Young Green Leaders Programme Officer Groundwork UK

- “All the participants really enjoyed themselves and it was lovely to see that they were so happy. The workshop matched the needs of the group and adjusted to the different skills levels, and backgrounds of the participants. It was completely accessible. The subject of green issues was also really interesting and I think this was really thought provoking for the participants.”

Adam Breeze, Team Leader and Employer Liaison Officer Deaf Cultural Centre



## INSPIRING POSITIVE ACTION

We use the arts, education and the latest technologies to engage people creatively in projects that share knowledge, provoke debate and inspire action. We are also committed to improving access to and understanding of the natural world for people across the city using Forest School and Craftivism principles. Our activities include:

- Forest school sessions
- Food growing sessions
- Bee and pollinators education sessions
- Environmental and mini-craftivists workshops for schools and community groups
- Internships and work placements

Our educational sessions in the community included a 12 week, after school, Mini Craftivists club for 5-11 year olds at Masefield Wellbeing Hub, Northfield. Working with artist Madeline Norris, the children chose the ocean as a global issue to focus their work on, creating their own artworks to raise awareness about sea pollution and our impact on the planet. The project finished with an exhibition, showcasing their work.

“The children were so engaged. We have limited budgets here and limited expertise here so when ecobirmingham started the Mini Craftivists club it was something very interesting and curious for the children to be part of. It was a real success.”

Martin Griffin, Community Worker at Masefield Wellbeing Hub



We also held a creative outdoor holiday club for 7-11 year old nature explorers and an Ecotots sessions ran at Masefield Community Garden, introducing toddlers and pre-schoolers to gardening.

“It showed me we must stop polluting the world as soon as we can.”

“I’ve learnt so much interesting stuff. I want to help save the environment for a job.”

“What we need to understand is that children and adults need to work together to ensure we grow and evolve on a healthy planet.”



## MOVE MORE, EAT WELL

For a second year, ecobirmingham, in partnership with Sport Birmingham, Garden Organic, Sustrans West Midlands and The Health Education Service, has delivered *Move More Eat Well*, a programme to promote behaviour change and help the residents of Northfield, Longbridge, Cofton and Rubery to become healthier via sustainable travel, food growing and healthy eating.

ecobirmingham's activity included:

- Ride Active led rides in partnership with British Cycling
- Cycle tuition for children and adults
- Bike maintenance classes for children and adults
- Community cooking and healthy eating sessions
- Community food growing sessions

“The healthy eating sessions helped me understand what I should and shouldn't eat to manage my diabetes.”  
Participant

“Thank you all for making me so welcome and for the encouragement you gave me. I am so thankful to you all - and probably will be speeding past you some time in the future!”

A local resident in her 70s who learnt to cycle through the Ride Active programme.



attended healthy eating sessions, increasing their knowledge of eating more healthily and sustainably



235

increased their cycling confidence by attending MMEW cycling sessions

## GET INVOLVED

**You can get involved with our work and help Birmingham become a more sustainable city by:**

- Signing up to our regular newsletter
- Participating in one of our projects
- Volunteering in one or more varied roles across the organisation
- Supporting us with a one off or regular donation

Your support will help deliver our future plans including:

- Expanding cycling tuition for those with additional needs
- Working with businesses across the city to become more sustainable through our Dust off Your Bike and Ditch the Desk schemes
- Developing digital resources to help visitors and residents discover ways to access the city in more environmentally friendly ways
- Working with partners towards a greener Commonwealth Games in 2022
- Social prescription projects in the city
- Ensuring Birmingham City Council's Scrutiny Committee on single-use plastics implement recommendations presented to them

If you would like to talk about working together, please contact us. Our door is always open.



Practicing what we preach... The team cycled to Ecofest at Midland Arts Centre in September. Our collective journey of 142km saved 30.85 kg/CO<sub>2</sub>e, 21.06 kg/NO<sub>x</sub>. The benefit to society equated to £233.78. Every little counts.



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