

IMPACT REPORT 2020/2021



Creating a sustainable city



eco
birmingham
Inspiring Positive Action



A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

The day I started my new role as Director in November 2020, England went into its second lockdown. By the time the financial year had finished in April 2021, we were into our third. What did we achieve in such a deeply difficult and unpredictable year?

We survived, when over 6,000 charities didn't.

We delivered, even during lockdown. We helped those who couldn't pay their energy bills, delivered Bike Bingo and online route-finding sessions for local exercise as well as DIY environmental activities for children and parents to entertain and educate at home.

We grew in new ways of delivery, how we cared for each other, working city-wide to develop a climate plan for Birmingham, and our role in building a more sustainable future.

We didn't do this alone. This was achieved with the ongoing support of the Central England Quakers, through the flexibility of existing and new funders, dedicated staff, volunteers, trustees, associates, and the many friends and champions we work with in our city, all striving to create a better future for us all.

In early 2022 we will be launching our new 3 year strategy to create sustainable change for our community's health, environment, and work which aims to outlast COP26 and the Birmingham Commonwealth Games. Please join us.

Dr Simon Slater, Director

Over the last year we've been developing ways to implement the internationally recognised One Planet Living® framework from Bioregional to help measure our impact across the city.

10 principles (highlighted below) cover all aspects of social, environmental and economic sustainability. In the coming years we will be measuring our work against and across these principles to truly ensure we are enabling Birmingham to become a sustainable city, helping us to live well, within our planet's limits. Throughout this impact report you will see how we are already implementing this frame work across our projects. Next year envisage we will be reporting our impact slightly differently.

-  Health and happiness
-  Travel and Transport
-  Equity and local economy
-  Local and sustainable food
-  Culture and community
-  Materials and products
-  Land and nature
-  Zero waste
-  Sustainable water
-  Zero carbon energy

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Front cover: Upcycling workshops for children focusing on waste and single-use plastics. More information on page 9.



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 from 2019-22 are to:

- Help disadvantaged communities 'build back better' post-pandemic
- Tackle air pollution
- Reduce the city's reliance on fossil fuels
- Minimise the city's impact on the planet

2020/2021 IN NUMBERS

Despite the **ecobirmingham** team being on furlough for 50% of year, we achieved:



448

attendances at our events and courses to improve knowledge of how to live sustainably.



2,953

donated hours of volunteer time.



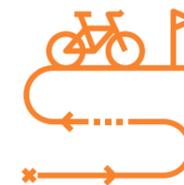
17

adults taught to cycle, starting their sustainable transport journey.



700 fuel vouchers distributed across Birmingham to 1,950 individuals or families to the value of over £32,000.

Transferring much of our activity online:



27

people learnt to find and plan cycle-friendly routes across the city through online route-finding sessions.



40 ▶ 460

40 people registered a total of 460 miles ridden for our Bike Bingo Challenge.



318

Litter picking trails accessed 318 times.



GETTING BIRMINGHAM MOVING

During 2020 and early 2021 activity focused on getting more people to cycle during lockdowns. This encouraged social distancing, keeping active and discovering the local area sustainably by bike.

Through a series of blog posts, we promoted and increased understanding of Birmingham City Council's Emergency Transport Plan and the implementation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) across the city. We also highlighted 16 traffic-free cycle routes across the city and held cycle route-finding sessions online.



BIKE BINGO CHALLENGE

Our Bike Bingo Challenge, in partnership with Heart Research UK and Subway, asked Birmingham residents to choose cycling for daily exercise, find a scenic view, cycle to a supermarket or place of worship, ride 8 miles and share a new cycle route. Participants chose to cycle their children to school for the first time, rode to local shops, used the opportunity to explore their locality or complete personal fitness goals.



40 people registered a total of 460 miles ridden for our Bike Bingo Challenge, that's the equivalent of cycling from Birmingham to Inverness!

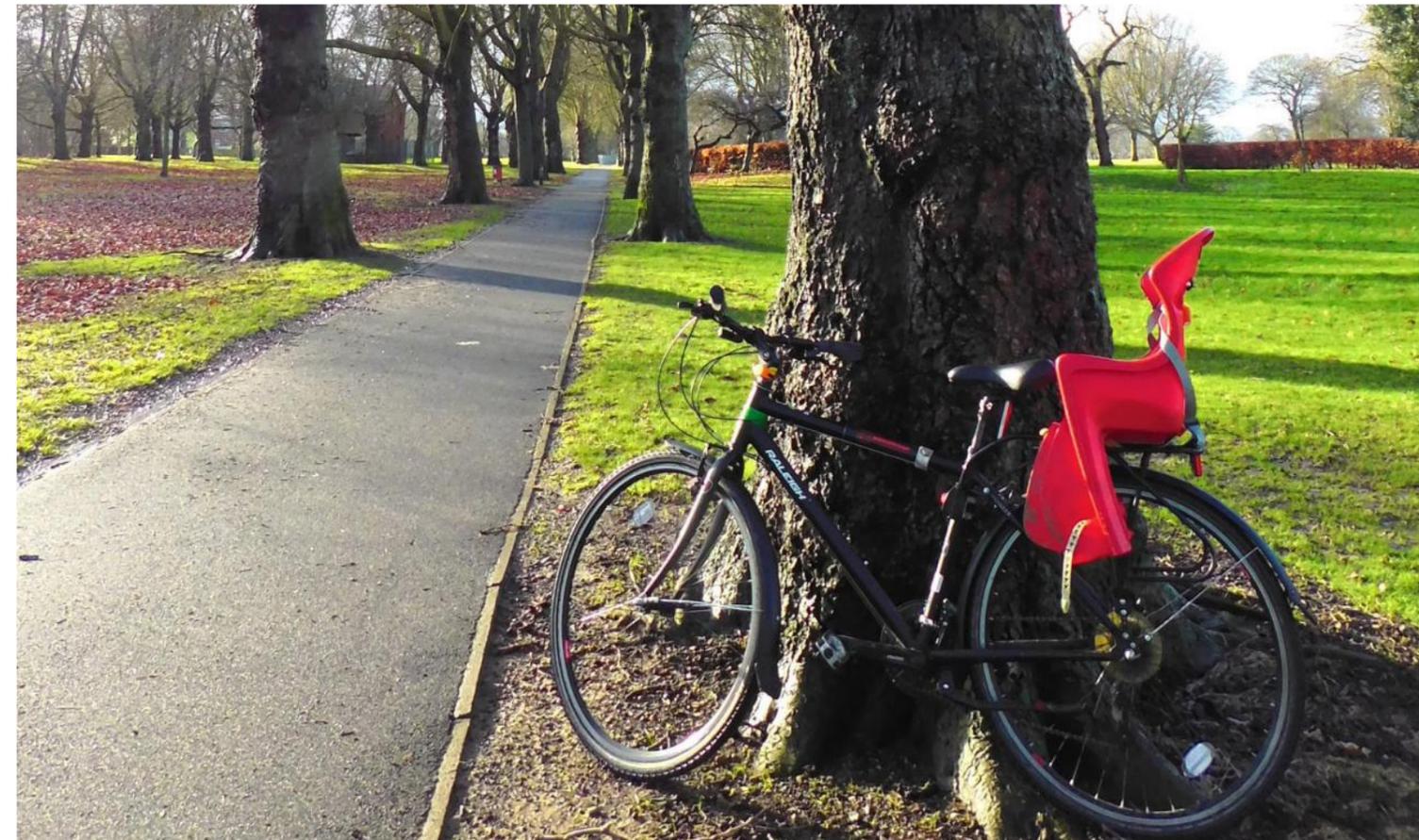
“ This is so helpful! This [route-finding session] has single handedly motivated me to actually go and invest in a flipping bike. 🚲 😊 Can't wait!”

“ Keep up the good work. You are ensuring that the infrastructure we have long campaigned for will be used by people new to cycling and walking as well as us old timers.”

“ Great session from **ecobirmingham**, summarising different route planning apps... Good advice for cyclists of all abilities on finding routes of different types, car-free, climbs etc. Tomorrow's exercise will be off-road and flat!”

“ Great blog post! It's valuable to capture thoughts and experiences of LTNs, especially during this implementation period when we are all learning to adapt to and take advantage of the changes.”

“ As a rather nervous returner to cycling, confusion when bike lanes end or move unexpectedly is a huge barrier for me. Helpful explanations here.”





A GREENER CITY

Responding to a rise in litter in green spaces across the city during lockdown, we worked with Highbury Park Friends and Highbury Orchard Community in Kings Heath and Manor Farm Park in Northfield to produce downloadable litter picking trails. Although emphasising that littering is wrong and bad for the environment, the focus of the trails was to educate about the problems of single-use plastic and offer tips to reduce the amount of plastic people use in their daily lives.



**Highbury Park trail
accessed 186 times.**
**Manor Farm Park trail
accessed 132 times.**



WILD HOLIDAY BUNCH

Partnering with Masefield Community Garden in Northfield, we adapted our Wild Holiday Bunch holiday club to the challenges of COVID restrictions. We offered regular activity boxes to children and families from the local Masefield estate who had previously taken part in our activities or events at the garden. The boxes aimed to keep the connection to their local green space alive and encourage the children to explore, learn and create during lockdown.



ARTIST WORKSHOPS

Over October half term we worked with Sophie Handy and ILdikó Nagy, two local artists to encourage families to reduce their plastic consumption. The upcycling workshops encouraged them to creatively reuse what could be seen as waste and to educate them about the issues with single-use plastic.

“ The workshop was really friendly and enjoyable, and our girls have been motivated to finish their project at home too which is great!”



POWER2GROW

Through our Power2Grow project, we engaged with 8 organisations across the West Midlands Metropolitan county to support them to create and run successful food-growing spaces. These included Birmingham Children's Trust, Solihull College, Aston Community Garden and Moseley Road Baths. Each organisation required different support and advice including running workshops, total planning of their growing spaces, mentoring, funding support and project management.





TACKLING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE

Responding to the social and economic impact of the pandemic, we adjusted our activities to help disadvantaged communities across the city. Working with 26 referral partners across the city (including Birmingham Mind, Age Concern Birmingham, Age UK Birmingham, Barnardos and Bournville Village Trust), we were successful in securing funds to deliver 700 emergency fuel vouchers and fuel poverty factsheets to 1,950 individuals and families over Autumn and Winter.

Furthermore, members of the team trained Northfield Community Partnership in best practice, planning, monitoring and overall management after they received their own funding to run a fuel voucher project. Our team were awarded a 'Keep Calm and Carry On Award' from Northfield Community Partnership for their work supporting the community through the project.



Emergency fuel vouchers & fuel poverty factsheets distributed across Birmingham to 1,950 individuals or families to the value of over £32,000.

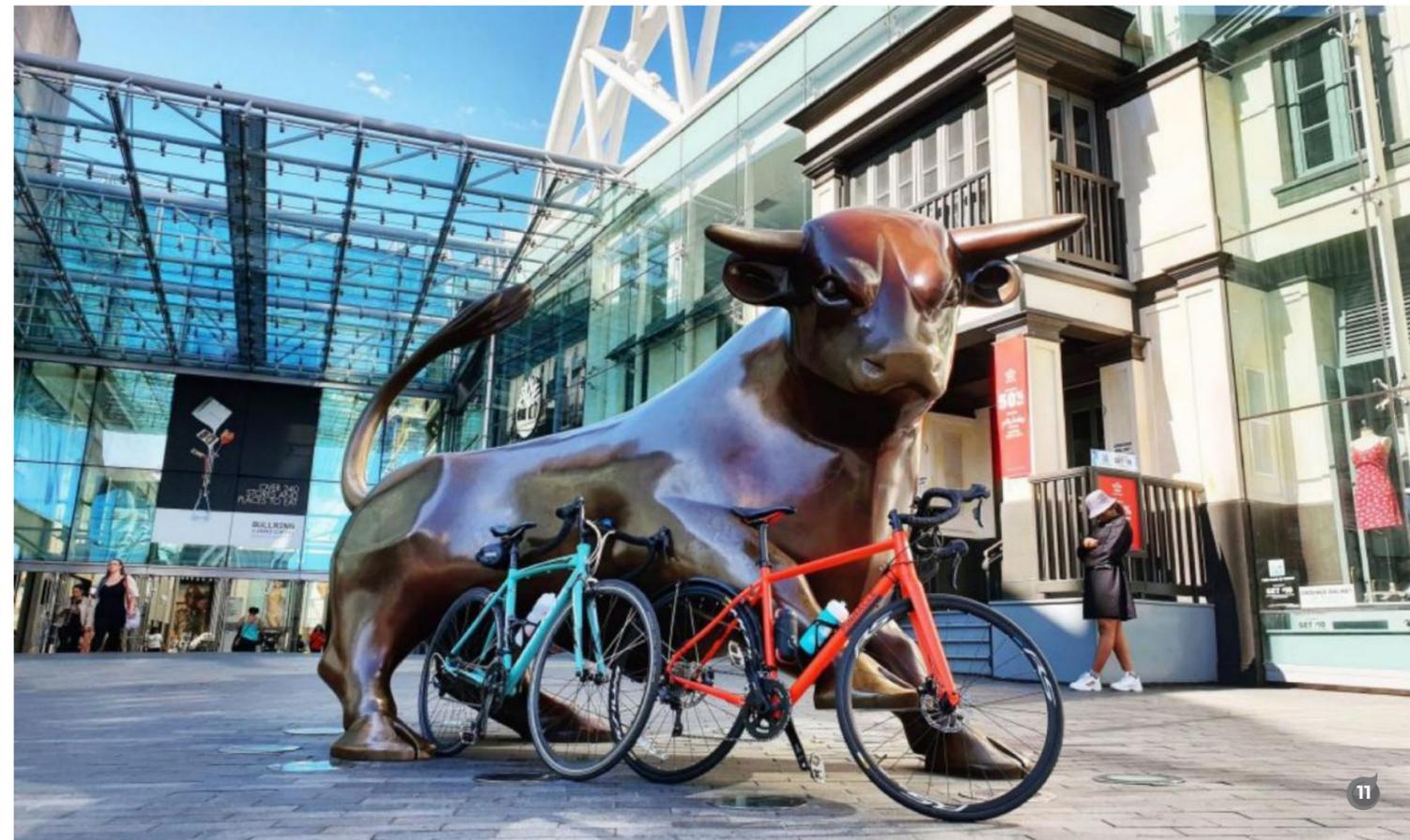


CITY WIDE LEADERSHIP – GREENER BIRMINGHAM

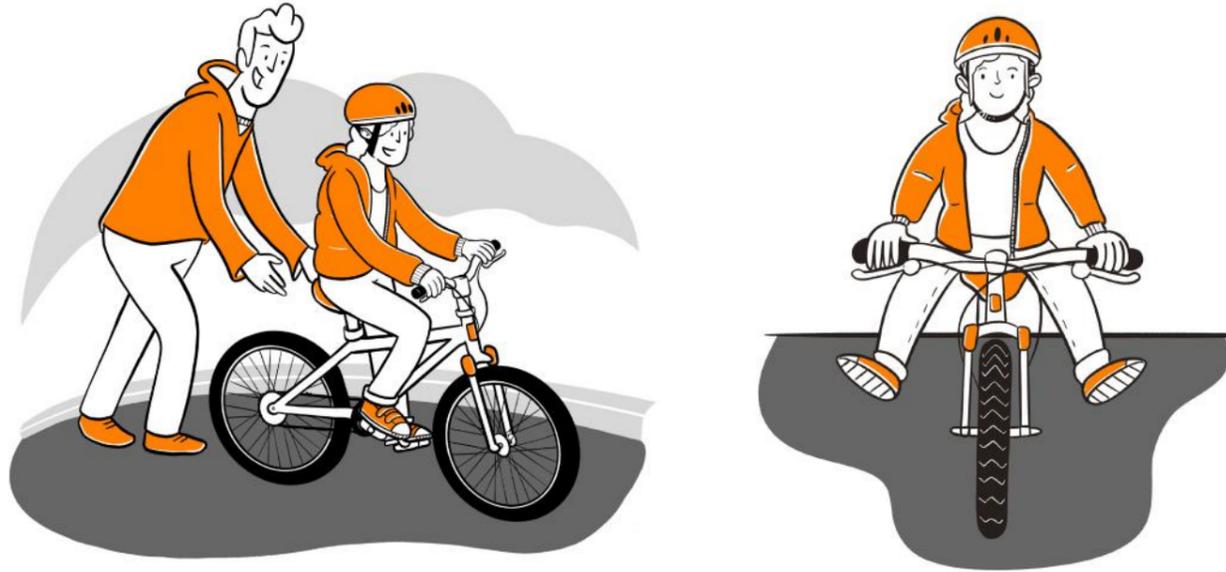
For a third year, we Chaired the Greener Birmingham Coalition, a group of environmental organisations collaborating across the city to create spaces for wildlife and people, advocating for environmental change at a strategic and political level in the city, and acting as a collective voice for environmental concerns of citizens. We are currently refocusing the network to help share good practice and support for the variety of local communities wanting to become more sustainable across the city.

The coalition worked with local councillors to successfully secure a city climate plan, a delivery role for the voluntary sector, and a council climate change team and budget from the city council.

www.greenerbirmingham.com



LOOKING FORWARD



Future plans include:

- Secret Birmingham, a digital resource developed with C&T Theatre allowing users to take a guided bike ride to discover heritage gems whilst discovering cycle routes across the city
- The Birmingham Loop – a new 30 mile cycle route linking all 69 council wards in the city
- Environmental community learning - an education programme bringing communities together by helping them live more sustainability and develop 'One Planet Living' plans for their areas and households
- Resources to help teach those with autism, dyspraxia and hyper-mobility how to cycle at home
- Grow our volunteer, training and education programmes, and refocus our work on energy
- Working with businesses across the city to become more sustainable through our Dust Off Your Bike, Ditch the Desk schemes, or 'One Planet Living' advice
- In response to the pandemic, develop more of an online presence, so we can quickly signpost to help and support across the city, and help people to join a group or activity near them such as cycling, gardening, education, recycling, energy saving, and healthy cooking

GET INVOLVED



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

There are many ways you can help us grow and deliver our projects. By volunteering, becoming a friend, supporting us with a donation, booking us for a training session, or joining us as a member of staff, intern or on a work placement, you will be helping us carry out important work in 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 across the city:

- £5 a month could help us run a cycle route-finding session to get more people in the city out of their cars and on their bikes
- £10 a month could enable us to run outdoor education sessions which encourage children to value the natural environment
- £25 a month could help us work with a community particularly impacted by the pandemic to return stronger and more sustainably

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

Find out more about our work, how you can take part, sign up to our regular newsletter and donate via www.ecobirmingham.com

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