

## Greening Richmond Schools 2024



### Project update

The 2024 project supported schools to draw up an action plan to green their school grounds and then to work towards achieving the goals that they have identified. The aim is to develop new species rich habitats within school grounds that link to the Richmond Biodiversity Action Plans and the school curriculum. The project built on previous work in 2023 and the teaching resources *Imagining a natural world in Richmond* developed by Friendly Parks for All which explored the vision that young people have for the natural world.

A further aim of the project is to promote the green sector as a choice of career to pupils in Richmond Schools through workshops and a leaflet prepared for the project which outlines career options.

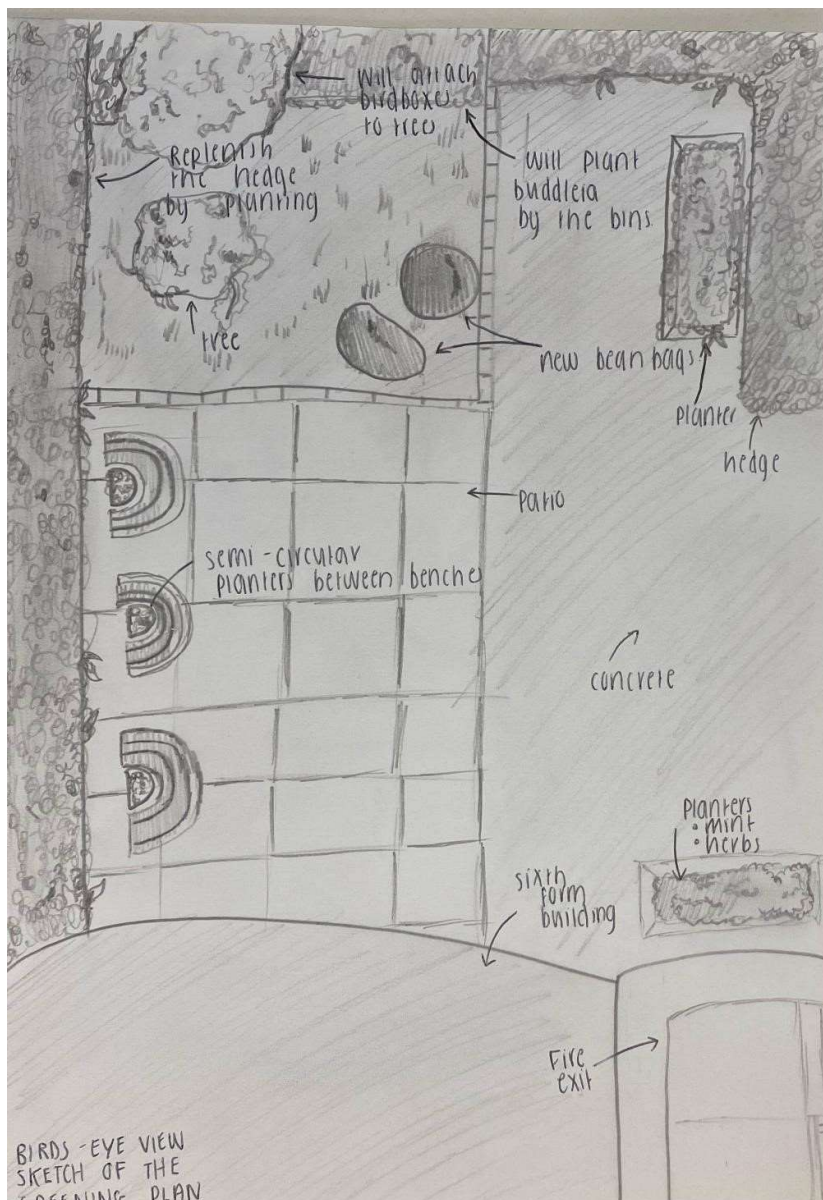
### Method

Let's Go Outside and Learn have worked with 8 secondary schools to define the actions that are priorities and actions that the schools will work towards to develop the improved habitats in the schools. The project requires teams of pupils and staff to deliver the action plans, LGOAL staff give practical support and advice and offered access to council officers where appropriate. Council parks staff have supported the schools to support.

The project team worked with the school to encourage pupils to promote the project within schools e.g. by developing messages and campaigns to promote the project or looking for additional funding to support the project. Each school who completed their action plan has received £500 to support the work of the project, e.g. to buy tools and materials required to deliver the identified actions.

### Outputs from project 2023-2024

Number of schools invited to engage with the project at the delivery stage	11 state secondary schools
Number of schools who have engaged in the project	7 schools
Number of schools who have withdrawn from the project	2 schools (Turing House, Twickenham)
Number of schools who have declined	4 schools (Hampton High, Christ's, Richmond Park and RTS)
Number of schools who have completed the programme	3 schools
Number of schools who have ongoing engagement	4 schools
Number of young people who have engaged in the project	156 young people
Number of plans and recommendations that <b>link to HAP's and SAP's</b> implemented in Richmond Biodiversity Action plans	3 have been implemented 4 Further will be implemented by April 2025
Number of workshops/outdoor activities	48 to date with another 16 planned by end March 2025
Number of green sector career related events that the project delivers	3 to date with another planned by end of March 2025 1 updated booklet for distribution to participating schools career service



### Teddington School Action Plan

The aim of this plan was to green an area of concrete and paving outside the 6<sup>th</sup> form area. The pupils noted that the area was adjacent to the school entrance and carparks, but within the area that pupils had regular access so were able to water and maintain without special permission.

They wanted to encourage engagement so that area as somewhere that pupils would want to spend time.

The project made links with other initiative in school to encourage gardening.



The project has contacted all 11 state schools in the borough to offer engagement with the project and to introduce the concept of biodiversity action plans to the teachers and pupils. To date we have worked with 8 schools with the remainder declining the offer. The reasons for this are either lack of staff to support the project or because the school has a building programme which makes the project difficult to deliver. To date 3 schools have completed the programme, 2 have withdrawn because of schools have insufficient staff to cover the project.

### Outcomes and project learning

- More than 156 young people have been given the responsibility and opportunity to take positive social action and to have a vision for the future of their school grounds by developing an action plan to rewilding their school grounds and to incorporate borough BAP and SAP plans.

All schools have been advised to develop the project model to establishing a working group, which includes senior leadership teams, teaching staff, facilities staff, and pupils to work cohesively to move things forward and achieve a common vision. The schools where the project has been successful has led to the project

progressing. The schools who have withdrawn engagement both had no senior leadership team members or sixth formers to take the process forward. An important learning from the project has been that full engagement from the whole school community is vital for the sustainability of the project.

- The project has seen action plan delivery structures established within each school who have engaged. Pupils elected chairs, secretaries, research members, communications members, and liaison members to ensure that all areas of process were covered. The model can be used in future years to deliver action plans. In some schools the project action plans have been promoted to the whole school community including for example green teams and school gardening groups.
- The model has also allowed the schools to continue working together beyond the end of the engagement period and will ensure that the project will continue beyond the life of the project.
- All 8 schools who finished the workshops have developed plans for new habitats and plans for improved school grounds which reference the Richmond habitat and species action plans as a reference.
- Cultural benefits for engagement have included support of physical health and wellbeing for those involved in the project and potentially to the whole school community in the greening project, developing opportunities for young people to be aware of nature.
- The improved habitats developed through the project supports curriculum learning as well as lifelong learning. The schools that have been most successful have included teaching staff from STEM subjects and geography.
- The project has been an opportunity to engage a new generation of young people in caring for the local ecology and inspire pupils to look for a career in the “green sector”. Several of the 6<sup>th</sup> formers engaged in the project have told us that they welcome the practical experience that the project has given them.
- The project has offered young people an opportunity to make a positive contribution and take part in social action to address the climate crisis, and offered opportunities for practical learning around biodiversity, recycling, composting, and water saving in the world that we live in and its role in the climate crisis.
- Climate Change Anxiety has been considered in the development of the sessions. We have made reference to climate anxiety, shown positive steps students can take as well as online resources for support. The project has offered the opportunity to make a positive contribution through social action and provided the schools a model to develop further to address these concerns. We will explore this further once practical work begins through feedback from students and staff.
- Other benefits include learning to work as a team for common goals, support of physical health and wellbeing for those involved in the project by developing opportunities for young people to be aware of nature. Lifelong learning includes topics such as recycling, composting, and water saving.

### **Examples of School Action Plans**

## Plan for Greycourt Garden project:

### Stage 1: Clearing the area

The area we have been provided for this project is a 77-square-metre space. Currently, it's overrun by weed and plant debris which will need to be cleared before we can make use of the space.

In previous clear-up projects, we have dug up tiles that were used to outline the area for chicken coops (images of these are below). In the rectangular areas of soil outlined by the tiles, we plan for these to become flower beds - which will be a centrepiece of the garden. These need to be de-weeded and the soil needs to be overturned before the new plants go in.

This will be achieved by a team of students and members of the PTA on an organised weekend date before half term (break up Friday 24th May, return to school Monday 3rd June)

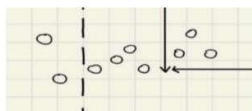
#### EQUIPMENT REQUIRED:

- Shovel
- Wheelbarrow
- Lawnmower
- Garden sacks
- Hedge trimmer ( can only be used by an adult )

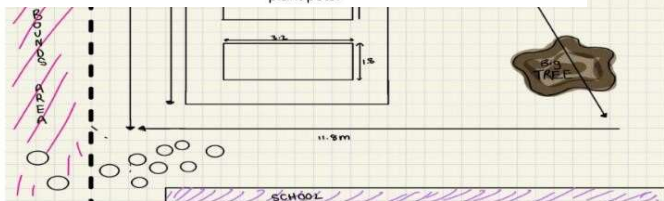


#### Plan for the space:

- We have been donated wood chippings from a local gardening company that will be used to formulate a path at the entrance of the garden represented on the drawing above by these symbols:



- We plan to construct a dead hedge along the left-hand side of the garden that acts as a barrier to the section of land that is next to us, which is used for composting and storing tree branches. This will be carried out by a team of teachers using the plant debris from the store next to the garden. For this to be put in place we need a splint tool to create the holes in the ground to put in place the posts for the fencing.
- For seating, we are going to construct benches made from pallets which can be recycled from around the school site as well as student benches that the caretaker has granted for us to use. The pallet benches will be placed along the dead hedge, looking onto the garden.
- We plan to use tyres that can be placed around the area as potential plant pots.



#### Garden concept images:

Please note:

- The wooden tables are where the pallet benches will be placed
- The wooden fencing in the drawings will be our dead hedging





**Waldegrave School Action Plan**

The action Plan developed by Waldegrave School featured some of the courts in the school as well as greening some of the boundaries to the school in order to create green corridors and link the school more closely with the local area and gardens. The images show new planting to attract pollinators and using previous structures in Digby Court including repurposed rubbish bins that will no longer be required as pupils will be encouraged to re-cycle their rubbish.



### Green skills and careers

The project has highlighted opportunities for a career in the green sector to young people. Recently published reports on the UK skills shortages across the sectors to achieve environmental aims <https://greenalliance.org.uk/publication/closing-the-uks-green-skills-gap/>

The project also aims to highlight the opportunities for a career in the green sector using project staff and parks team staff as a positive role models. The project team has distributed the Green Sector careers booklets to all schools engaged in the project and has made it available to careers tutors in all schools that the project has worked in.

The booklet now includes information about council contractors and their role in maintaining parks and open spaces. The project team worked with Year 10's at Grey Court School to introduce the concept of green careers. Continental Landscapes contract manager gave a presentation to the students as part of the activities.



## Green Careers

An Insight into Some Of The  
Different Green Sector Jobs  
In Richmond Borough



## **Conclusions**

The project has given a voice to young people who are not normally heard in the climate change debate offering them an opportunity to take positive action by supporting schools to 'rewild' areas of their grounds. There are often areas of grey tarmac or paving that the project has been making more biodiverse, attracting pollinators or creating new habitat.

The project has sought to work in all secondary schools in the borough but there have been some gaps where schools have been unable to engage. As a result, the project team would like to suggest that they work with Youth Clubs that have an outdoor area. This way the aims and objective of the project will be fulfilled.

We are proposing to work in partnership with Ham Youth Club, Whitton Youth Centre, Castlenau Youth Centre and Hampton Youth Project. We shall make approaches as soon as possible to deliver the project by April 2025.

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