



*A Year in Review*  
*Cleaner, Green, Well, Together*



*(July 2020)*



“CLEANER,  
GREENER, WELL,  
TOGETHER”

*“The achievements of YOE2019LCR show just what can be done by the people of our City Region when they unite around a common cause. The Year of Green Action delivered some spectacular events and was inspirational. I welcome this Review of the Year.*

*The communities and business of Liverpool City Region now need to rise to even greater challenges to recover from Coronavirus. By working together our Recovery Strategy will also help us Grow Back Greener and become more resilient to the challenges of a changing world and to fulfilling our commitment to be carbon neutral by 2040 and to respond to the challenges of climate change.”*

**Steve Rotheram, Liverpool City Region Metro Mayor**



Steve Rotheram visiting Grow Speke

## THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who took part in the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Year of Environment 2019 (YOE2019LCR).

This included 1000s of people young and old, our sponsors and over 120 partners from a range of different public and private sectors.

From litter picking to wildlife recording, every contribution no matter how small has made a positive impact on the City Region’s environment. These actions and pledges have contributed to a successful YOE2019LCR culminating in the year-ending and inaugural Environmental Summit.

This evaluation report is a review of the Year, highlighting what was planned, how it was executed, including challenges and successes; and next steps towards delivering a lasting YOE legacy.

Here are some of the highlights of what was a special Year for all of us:

- 580 events and activities;
- 1000s of people engaging across 8 environmental themes;
- Over 1500 environmental pledges from people and organisations;
- An emerging Natural Capital Baseline to deliver environmental net gain;
- A lasting legacy secured at the Environmental Summit including:
  - Formation of a Climate Partnership;
  - £0.5m annual community environment project fund;
  - Launch of the first City Forest School.

**Gideon Ben-Tovim, OBE, Chair of Nature Connected and Chair of LCR Climate Partnership**

# YOE2019LCR, A YEAR IN REVIEW

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# Foreword



**Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor of Liverpool City Region**

*"...while Year of the Environment is a golden opportunity to showcase our stunning natural assets – it must also be used to start a conversation on how we protect and preserve them for future generations."*



**Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency**

*"This year, I'm looking forward to increased environmental action and events that promote Liverpool. I hope the Year of the Environment inspires people from all backgrounds to get involved in projects that build on the ambition in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan to make us the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it."*



**Gideon Ben-Tovim OBE, Chair of Nature Connected & Chair Liverpool City Region Climate Partnership**

*"We hope 2019 will enable us to demonstrate the quality and value of our outstanding blue green assets - rivers, parks, canals, community gardens, coast, reserves - and to showcase the range and commitment of our environmental organisations and our volunteers."*

# Background and Introduction

1. Nature Connected, as the official local nature partnership (LNP) for the Liverpool City Region, responded proactively and together, to the Government call for 2019 to be a year of green action. Following publication of the Defra 25-Year environment Plan the board of Nature Connected decided to set up a Steering Group to manage and oversee preparations for YOE2019LCR.
2. Nature Connected recognised the need to broaden the partnership beyond that of the LNP to include representatives from a wide range of sectors including waste, energy, academia and the private sector. The Steering Group and Management team met regularly to oversee and steer the year and encouraged activity in all corners and spaces of the LCR.
3. **Early priorities included:**
  - Preparing a diverse, exciting and engaging programme of events;
  - Securing sponsorship for the year because Defra's challenge did not include resources to support action;
  - Growing political support from across the City Region's leadership as an official programme of activity;
  - Putting in place steering and governance arrangements to oversee a successful year;
  - Recruiting capacity including a project officer to drive the year forward.
4. Planning for YOE2019LCR started in autumn 2018 when a workshop was held to determine the desired aims and objectives, explore a thematic approach, identify desired outputs and outcomes and build an approach to communication and engagement. To have a meaningful impact, lasting legacy and engage people from across the City Region, YOE2019LCR needed to approach "environmental action" in its broadest sense. A thematic approach was adopted to cover the following; climate change, air quality, water, green spaces, habitats and biodiversity, waste, health and well-being, connecting communities with nature and sustainable energy.
5. The strategy for a successful year started to shape up quickly once the vision and objectives were agreed by the Steering Group. There was unanimous support to make YOE2019LCR accessible to everyone and focussed on practical action. The live calendar of official YOE activities and events was central to our strategy and sought to engage new audiences in green action. Many of these activities and events were already planned but by including them within the calendar of YOE



activities and promoting them as such, it gave people the sense of being involved in a much larger partnership of activity.

6. An early task was to build the website ([www.yoe2019lcr.org.uk](http://www.yoe2019lcr.org.uk)) which was to provide a communications hub throughout the year. As the Year gathered momentum the website became the go to place for information and downloadable resources for partners to use.
7. Under the leadership of our chair Gideon Ben-Tovim OBE, the Mayoral Combined Authority was quickly supportive. YOE2019LCR got off to a rapid start with a well-attended and well-publicised Launch event on 11 January 2019. The launch was supported by a brochure showcasing some of the city region's assets, launch of the branding for the year and importantly a very public endorsement of the initiative by the Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram and the Chair of the Environment Agency Emma Howard-Boyd. The goodwill generated by the partners during the launch was very effective at securing organisational commitment to the Year.
8. As well as encouraging green action, the Steering Group wanted to prepare the ground so that the Year would raise the profile of environmental issues and put in place a better way to integrate green into the lives of people in our City Region. Little did we know at the outset that global events would be on our side with environment rarely being out the news. Issues such as plastic pollution of the seas, flooding of homes, wild fires, climate strikes and extinction rebellion making environment a focus of conversation and action.

### **Funding and Adding Value**

9. YOE2019LCR needed a significant level of coordination. The Steering Group agreed a Coordinator post be created to ensure processes and communications were coherent and streamlined. As Nature Connected itself had no operational funding, funding had to be secured from both partners within the YOE partnership and those with an interest outside.
10. Early on it was recognised that a celebratory event would be helpful to review the impact and outcomes of the Year. This idea quickly developed into the first Green Summit for the LCR and for it to have the impact and act as a platform for commitments, sponsorship would be needed.
11. Generous contributions were made both in kind and financially by Combined Authority, Environment Agency, Knowsley Council, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool One, Metro Mayor of Liverpool City Region, MEAS on behalf of the participating local authorities, Mersey Forest, Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority, Peel Group, TEP Ltd and United Utilities. A vast amount of resource was invested through peoples' time and this was perhaps one of the most significant achievements of the Year – people being prepared to make extra effort for environment action.

# Mission Statement and Aims

12. The Steering Group developed the following mission statement and aims for the Year ahead:

## Mission Statement

*“2019 will be a Year of Green Action across Liverpool City region where people from all backgrounds will have the opportunity to be involved in projects that improve the natural world. Our aim is to leave a better environment for the next generation to inherit and make our area one of the best places in the country to live, work and flourish.”*

## Aims

- Support the National Year of Action;
- Help deliver the Greenest UK city region;
- Highlight the economic contribution the environment provides;
- Increase children and young people’s connection to nature;
- Showcase outstanding blue green assets of the Liverpool City Region;
- Celebrate and promote the range of environmental organisations;
- Encourage a range of practical actions that inspire;
- Use 2019 as a catalyst for ongoing positive environmental behaviour.



Open Day on Sefton coast, John Dempsey.



Encouraging Wildlife Observations, Wildlife Trusts.

# Themes

13. Over the Year eight themes were explored through a variety of events and activities. These themes were chosen to be deliberately broader than the national year of 'green' action; aiming to embrace every aspect of the environment.

- Air quality;
- Climate change and resilience;
- Green spaces, habitats and biodiversity;
- Connecting and engaging communities with nature;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Sustainable energy;
- Reduce waste;
- Water.

14. Events and activities held throughout the Year were delivered by YOE2019LCR partners and build on existing activities, which were badged

and showcased as 'YOE2019LCR' events. Where possible, 'thematic champions' were appointed who helped co-ordinate a significant programme of green action which can be broadly grouped into the following types:

- Spotlight events – typically larger events with higher levels of participation;
- Listening events – thematic 'talking events' held to inform discussion in the run up to and at the Environment Summit;
- Grass roots – smaller events such as litters picks and health walks.

15. Many events cut across several themes so were recorded as linking to more than one theme. This is beneficial as the impact is so much greater for the environment, for example, a health walk can also be a litter pick and wildlife recording event, meeting at least 3 different themes.

16. The chart over the page shows events and activities by theme over the year. This shows a peak of activities over summer months with the following themes being represented most:

1. Connecting and Engaging Communities with Nature (57%);
2. Green Spaces, Habitats and Biodiversity (35%); and
3. Health and Wellbeing (29%).

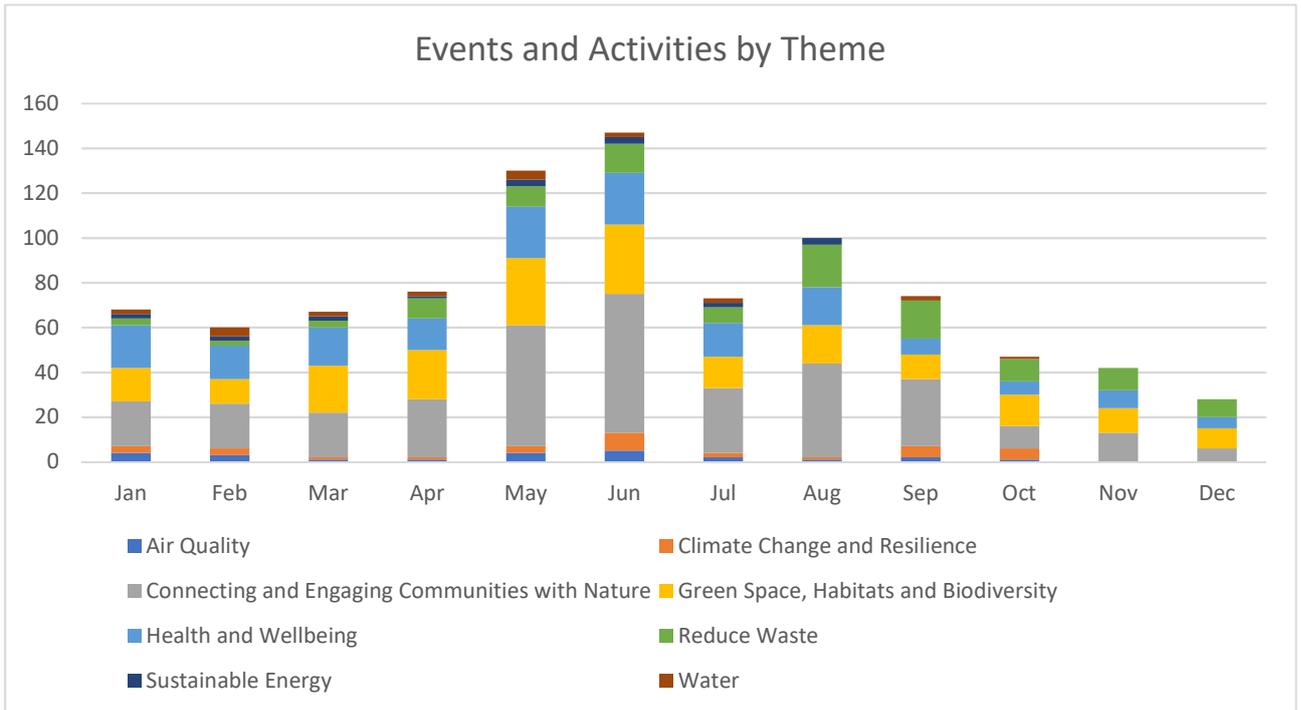


Figure 1: Events and Activities by Theme

17. Some themes benefited from existing networks of green action and as such show a higher level of action (Figure 1). However, this is not to say other themes were not explored at all or lacking in success or action. To better understand and celebrate this, we explore each thematic area below in detail.

### Air Quality

18. When compared with themes, such as ‘Connecting and engaging communities with nature’ and ‘Green spaces, habitats and biodiversity’ the level of grass roots activities was much lower. This is mainly due to relatively fewer existing activities and voluntary groups as well as the lack of a thematic champion for the air quality theme. Nonetheless, events such as ‘Wavertree car free day’ in



summer 2019 were well attended and attracted interest from Liverpool's Mayor and the local press.

19. St.Helens Council ranger service also organised a 'World Environment Day' event at Taylor Park in June which included an exhibition of environmental actions linking in with the air quality theme. The event was attended by 400 people.
20. Further, health walks and cycle rides were held throughout the Year encouraging communities to leave their car at home and choose cleaner / healthier travel options. These smaller events linked to air quality but also the health and wellbeing theme.

21. Merseyside Environmental Trust championed cycle rides, including 'Cycle Safari's' across the City Region taking in some of our environmental assets e.g. the Leeds to Liverpool Canal, Pier Head and Liverpool Loop Line.



22. An air quality listening event was held in Huyton, Knowsley in July as it has a major impact on health. The main question introducing the event was *"Poor air quality is clearly bad for health. Is there a way of promoting greater productivity and cleaning up the air? What will the Liverpool City region (LCR) Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) do about this?"*.
23. The listening event found that poor air quality in the City Region was largely attributed to nitrous oxides from petrol and diesel engines. It was suggested that this could be tackled by improving transport links, free travel passes for the elderly was used as an example of incentives to use alternative modes of transport. Manchester's integrated transport network of buses, trains and trams was highlighted, despite the City's serious air quality problem.
24. A discussion regarding the strengths and assets of the Liverpool City Region identified the planted areas and trees in historic avenues such as: Princess Avenue and Brodie Avenue, as well as networks of parks and open spaces which can support increased walking, cycling and overall better health. Creation of green infrastructure from housing developments was also noted as a way of improving air quality locally.
25. Attendees discussed the emerging Local Industry Strategy (LIS). There seemed to be a plea for the LIS to recognise the links between health and productivity. There was a push for the development of infrastructure which would support alternative travel; cycling, walking and public transport. It was suggested that a fixed

percentage of funding should be invested into green infrastructure and promoting alternative travel. The idea of an inclusive travel model to cater to all members of society was discussed. It is important that the model does not isolate people with disability or those in disadvantaged areas.

26. Overall, the listening event showed that a behavioural change is key to improving air quality. It would be beneficial to work with schools and children to promote use and understanding of greener public transport.

## **Climate Change and Resilience**

27. A standout event during 2019, was the climate change and resilience listening event held at the Quaker meeting house, Liverpool in October. The listening event was delivered in a specific World Café style, encouraging collaboration and collective discussion.
28. Transport was widely discussed including the EU's part in subsidisation of LCR public transport and what effect the UK's exit from the EU would have on this? Public Transport was identified as a great asset for tackling climate change. Public transport needs to be affordable, accessible and integrated across the City Region.
29. The listening event considered that everything environmental is essentially a social justice issue. A social justice test was recommended for lower level charging, to assist those in the most need to access public transport. The introduction of Arriva Click was dismissed as a solution for those with less means; after all it requires a smart phone and exclusively deals with card payments. Frustration was felt when the issue of getting people out of cars was met with questions about the cutting of bus services. A wonderful idea was the introduction of a card like the Oyster card in London. Capping daily spending at the price of a day ticket, whilst being approved on Mersey rail services and all bus routes. This would prevent confusion for which tickets can be used of which buses; for example, Arriva and Stagecoach.
30. Aside from buses and trains, canal and water infrastructure development were suggested to transport goods. Although this would reduce the number of HGV's on the road, logistically it would be difficult and may have a negative impact of marine life and biodiversity.
31. To combat the negative impacts of car use, congestion charges in the city and town centres were raised. It was suggested that cars should be banned from the city centre; however, this could prove to be difficult due to the high volume of businesses in the city centre. Furthermore; from an accessible point of view it is quite discriminatory. Although public transport is generally accessible; trains and buses have limited space for wheelchair access. Many people rely on personal car use and/or taxi services to participate on daily life. Perhaps the focus should be on reducing the impact that cars have, rather than reducing the number of cars.

32. School transport was discussed, with solutions being raised for the school run deadlock. Currently school league tables are based on academic results, however it was suggested that a 'green bottom line' should be introduced. This would allow the school to be judged on air quality and alternative transport options for students. Housing was discussed at the event, future proofing homes in line with the spatial development strategy. This would improve the buildings resilience to climate change factors, such as flooding.
33. Similar to air quality, this theme had a lower level of events and lacked a thematic champion and existing network of activities. Like air quality, climate change and resilience cut across many other thematic areas such as habitat management and creation e.g. Gems in the Dunes volunteer days on the Sefton Coast and Marine Awareness Day which delivered action (dune management) and awareness raising, respectively.

### Green spaces, habitats and biodiversity

34. Lancashire Wildlife Trust was appointed 'thematic champion' to co-ordinate the Green Space, Habitats and Biodiversity theme along with support from other nature-based groups such as the LERC – Merseyside BioBank and a wide network of volunteer groups. This meant that YOE2019LCR could build on and support an established programme of activities and events. Therefore, across the Year 35% of all events linked with this theme.



35. The LCR City Nature Challenge was a highlight engaging young and old across the City Region. Over 4 days in late April 2019, a total of 12,424 wildlife observations were gathered by 127 recorders using the iNaturalist app identifying 1,064 species. In our first year, the LCR finished 2nd in the UK and Europe, and 24th Worldwide. The City Nature Challenge has become part of the YOE2019LCR legacy, and we took part again in 2020 – this time with 173 participants.



36. A Greenspace Challenge also ran throughout the Year. This event was very competitive, inspiring 462 recorders to make a staggering 61,843 wildlife observations at over 200 green space sites. Following YOE2019LCR the records held by Merseyside



BioBank increased by 42% helping to inform better biodiversity outcomes.

37. The LCR Natural Capital Baseline has been developed to address biodiversity and environmental net gain. This is planned for launch later in 2020 and will provide a natural capital solution for the Local Planning Authorities.

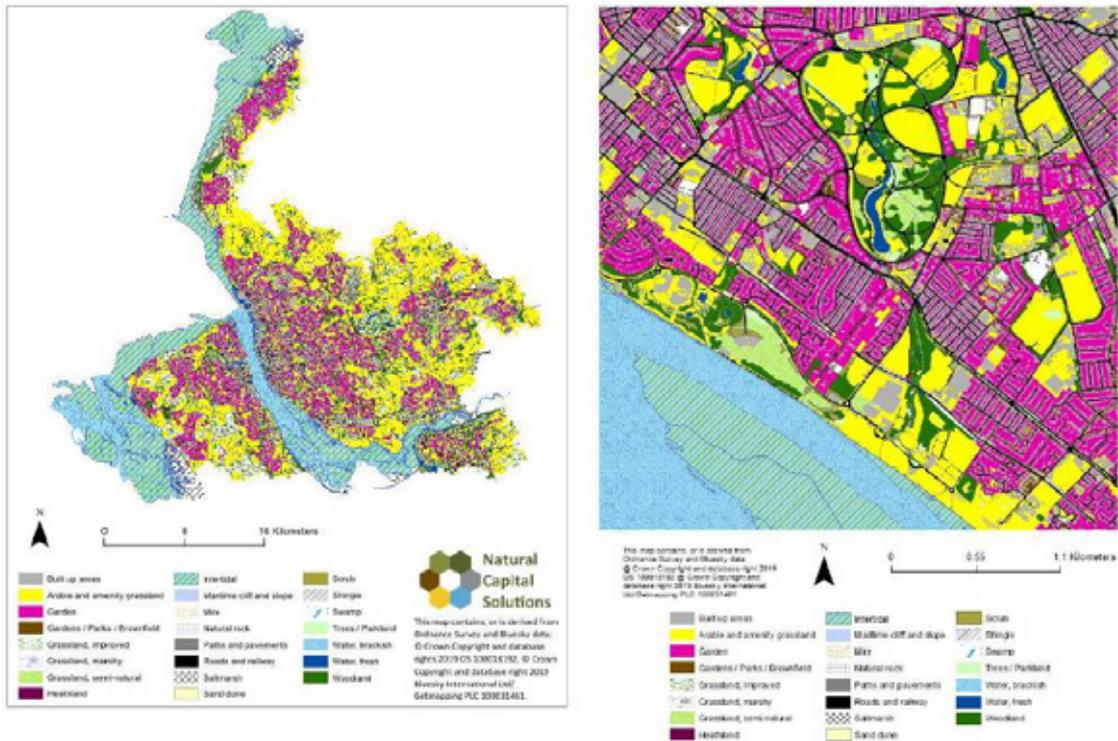


Figure 2: Natural Capital Baseline – Asset Map

38. Mersey Forest hosted several community tree planting events. Between April 2019 to March 2020 a massive 33,468 native trees were planted increasing landscape connectivity across the LCR with the majority planted by young people during 40 school events. The LCR's first City 'Forest School' was also launched at Liverpool John Moores University.



39. The listening event for the Green spaces, habitats and biodiversity theme took place in September 2019, at Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre. Key messages included:

- We have some magnificent habitats and green open spaces that need more protection throughout LCR;
- Explore having LCR designated as a Regional park;
- Green community groups need to be listened to;



- Take a longer-term view of protecting green space in LCR;
- Develop a robust green spatial strategy;
- Press the government to implement the stalled Environment Bill;
- The management of visitors is essential to protect but also to celebrate green spaces;
- Plant more trees in appropriate locations;
- Look to other good national and international examples of sustainable regional communities;
- Show a greater balance between economic growth, environmental protection and social needs;
- Support local groups to protect their open green spaces see them as friends not enemies;
- More powers to the Metro Mayor and Combined Authority;
- Combined Authority persuading the six local authorities to agree to radical green space protection;
- Become more involved in open space community groups;
- Use the iNaturalist app.

## Connecting and engaging communities with nature

40. Overall 57% of all events and activities linked in with this theme – higher than any other theme. This perhaps unsurprisingly and can likely be explained by the level of support by Council parks and ranger services, voluntary and grass roots groups as well the broadness of theme i.e. the majority of activities had an element of community focus.

41. Events in this theme also had the highest level of participation, for example, Knowsley Flower Show and Feel Good Festival, Victoria Park Fun and Craft Day, World Environment Day at Taylor Park and Willow Park Craft & Nature Day attracted 1000s of people; linking in with YOE2019LCR as part of their wider community-based programme.



## Health and wellbeing

42. The health and wellbeing theme was a powerful theme which cut across events and activities throughout the Year. This theme was the inspiration for 29% of all events including a significant programme of health walks across the City Region. Larger spotlight events such as the 'Health, Wellbeing and the Environment Event' held in January 2019 set out ambitions for the Year and explored work by the Innovation Agency and Mersey Forest focusing on the importance of the environment for mental health. Health and wellbeing perhaps more than any other theme, cut across a range of activities and events and struck a cord with young and old people.



43. One of the final events of the Year 'Mental Elf Fun Run' at Runcorn Hill, Halton held on 15 December 2019 epitomised this. The event attracted a field of 100s of runners getting outside, exercising and connecting with nature; which has a massive beneficial effect on health and wellbeing.



44. The Air Quality listening event (see above) was also linked to health as the two themes are often connected. Therefore, the discussions relating to the need to improve air quality will also have a positive impact on health and wellbeing in the City Region.



## Sustainable energy

45. The sustainable energy theme did not have a thematic champion or existing network of events and partners, however, this theme linked strongly with air quality and health and well-being themes.
46. A sustainable energy listening event was held at Mountford Hall, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019. The event focused on all eight YOE themes but directed the discussion towards students and sustainability. When asked what the LCR needed to do to improve environmental sustainability the need to invest more in sustainable urban infrastructure in the region was recommended.
47. Barriers to achieving improvement in environmental sustainability included lack of infrastructure and low budget allocations.

48. As a City the students felt we could implement the following plans to improve our environmental sustainability:

- We should invest more in sustainable urban infrastructures in order to help harness more renewable energy (solar and hydroelectric power), electric transport buses, more bins, green spaces and recreation areas for public.
- Stringent regulations on littering laws, waste segregation and disposal of recyclable waste correctly.
- Special attention to conserve the local biodiversity by making provisions for their safe and secure shelters to avoid hindrance from humans.
- Since Liverpool gets a lot of rain throughout the year, student suggest to harvest rainwater at city level by having rain water harvestings system at various spots in the city.
- To avoid people buying plastic water bottles, safe drinking water fountains should be made available at train stations, city centre, shopping centres, educational institutes and offices.

49. When asked how individuals can affect change, the students commented:

- By making sustainable choices in everyday life like using trains and bus to commute, avoiding paper receipts while shopping, using reusable water bottles, avoiding plastic cutleries.
- Conserving water by reusing water for various household chores such as watering plants and having small cisterns for the toilet flush.
- In the day time, try to use only day light in the room and save electricity.
- Not littering the beaches and keeping our oceans clean and protecting the marine life.
- Reusing and recycling the plastic waste correctly and avoiding the single use plastic items.

## **Reduce waste**

50. Overall 19% of events linked to the 'Reduce Waste' theme. The majority of these events consisted of litter pick events which were hugely popular and well supported by grass roots groups such as the New Brighteners, Friends of Crosby Beach as well as Surfers Against Sewage and Council parks and ranger services. LJMU interns, working with MEAS, also organised several litter pick events in the Bootle area.

51. Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority (MRWA) were the thematic champion and held a series of roadshow style listening events in Autumn of 2019 ahead of the Environmental Summit.

52. Data from the waste listening event highlighted that 91.6% of respondents currently recycle. However, people felt that recycling could be improved by making

the regulations/information around recycling clearer. Accessibility was also highlighted as an issue with more bins and more frequent collections suggested. It was also felt that manufactures should do more to minimising packaging and using recyclable products where possible. The 8.4% of people who did not recycle blamed lack of knowledge, lack of space and specifically apartment building restrictions. The latter; was a common theme particularly amongst students living in university owned/privately rented halls. The appetite to recycle was clearly expressed by those who did not already take part.

53. Over 90% of participants would consider reusing items such as used or second hand the most common being clothing and furniture with electrical items and toys following closely behind. Repairing items would also be considered if it was economical to do so.

54. Education, knowledge and information was deemed to be the key to increasing recycling. Education about the impact of plastic and where it ends up have become a key focus over the past 18 months within the UK but there is still further to go.



55. The MWRA will use the results of our Listening Events to design and implement a new Communications and Awareness Strategy which will link to the wider Zero Waste 2040 Strategy. It will also continue to actively engage with communities and residents across the Liverpool City Region using its Recycle Right campaign to improve recycling and reuse, and to reduce confusion and contamination.

## Water

56. MEAS working closely with Arup, United Utilities and River Mersey Trust led on this theme. Listening events were held in October 2019 and included a focussed listening group hosted by LJMU and led by MEAS. United Utilities also held a drop in style event at the Liverpool Museum.

57. During the listening event there was an overwhelming consensus that the work of Mersey Basin Campaign (MBC) and Capital works through United Utilities have resulted in tremendous improvements to the River Mersey. Furthermore, they have changed the face of LCR in terms of regeneration. The public and businesses are engaging with the river; this is welcomed and encouraged to continue in the future.





# Events

62. Event and activities over the Year were co-ordinated and organised by a range of different partners with a strong focus on community / volunteer groups. Events can be can broadly grouped into the following types:

- Spotlight events – typically larger events with higher levels of participation;
- Listening events – thematic ‘talking events’ held to inform discussion in the run up to and during the Environment Summit;
- Grass roots – smaller events such as litters picks and health walks.

63. Over 580 events were held promoting environmental awareness across the 8 themes across all Local Authority areas engaged with 1000's of individuals. Activities comprised beach cleans, street cleans and community projects which embodied the spirit of YOE2019LCR capturing the imagination of young and old; and contributing to a lasting legacy of green action in the LCR. Figure 3 below shows the number of events by district over the Year. The ‘Other’ category represents activities held outside of the City Region which expressed a desire to link in with YOE2019LCR.

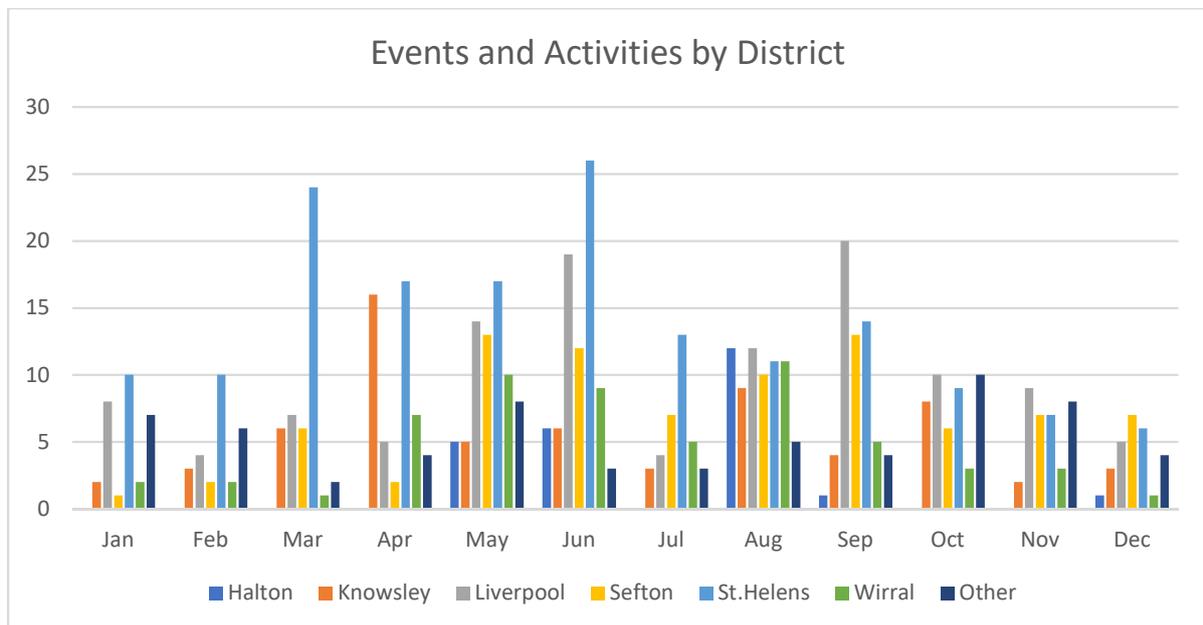
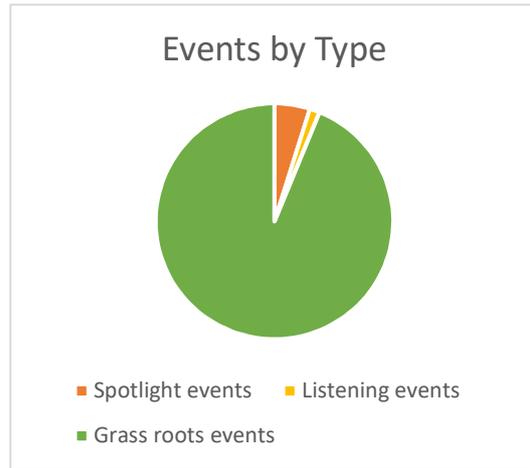


Figure 3: Events and Activity by District in 2019

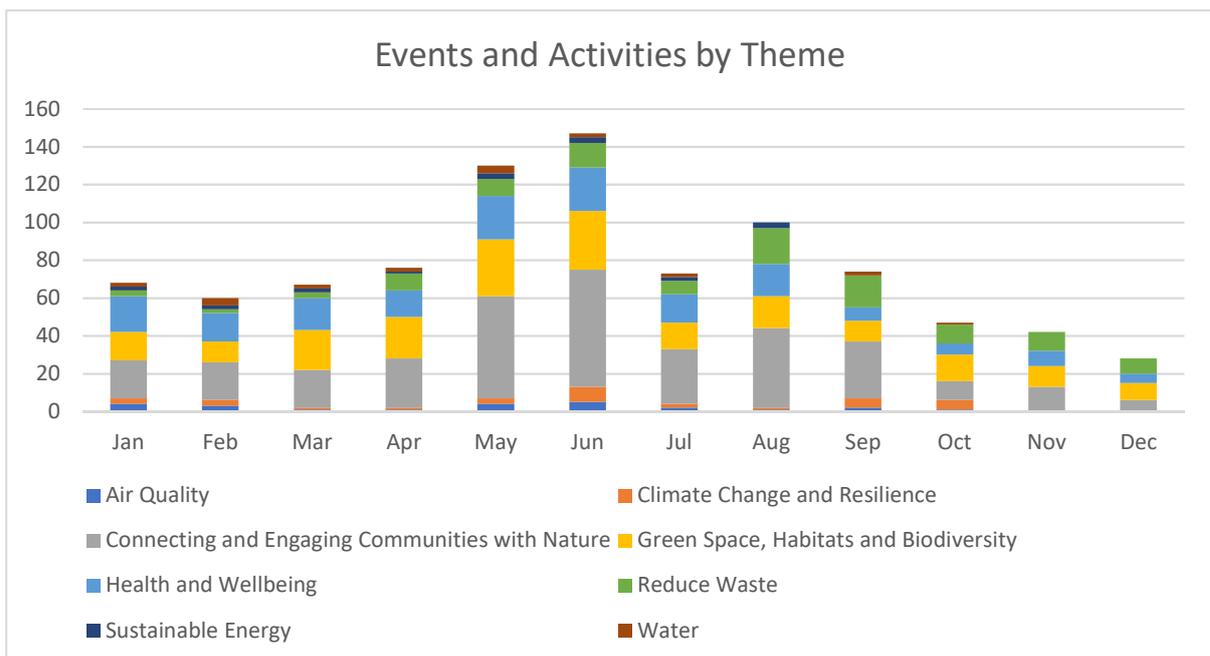
64. Many events took place between April and September when the weather was more suitable for outdoor activities. Several listening events took place in September and October to feed into the Environmental Summit.

65. **Figure 4 (inset right) shows that grass roots events such as litter picks and community park events made up the largest proportion of events. People really connected with their local spaces!**



66. Over the Year, 3 themes stood out in terms of number and breadth of events and activities – see Figure 5. These themes comprise:

- Connecting and Engaging Communities with Nature;
- Green Spaces, Habitats and Biodiversity; and
- Health and Wellbeing.



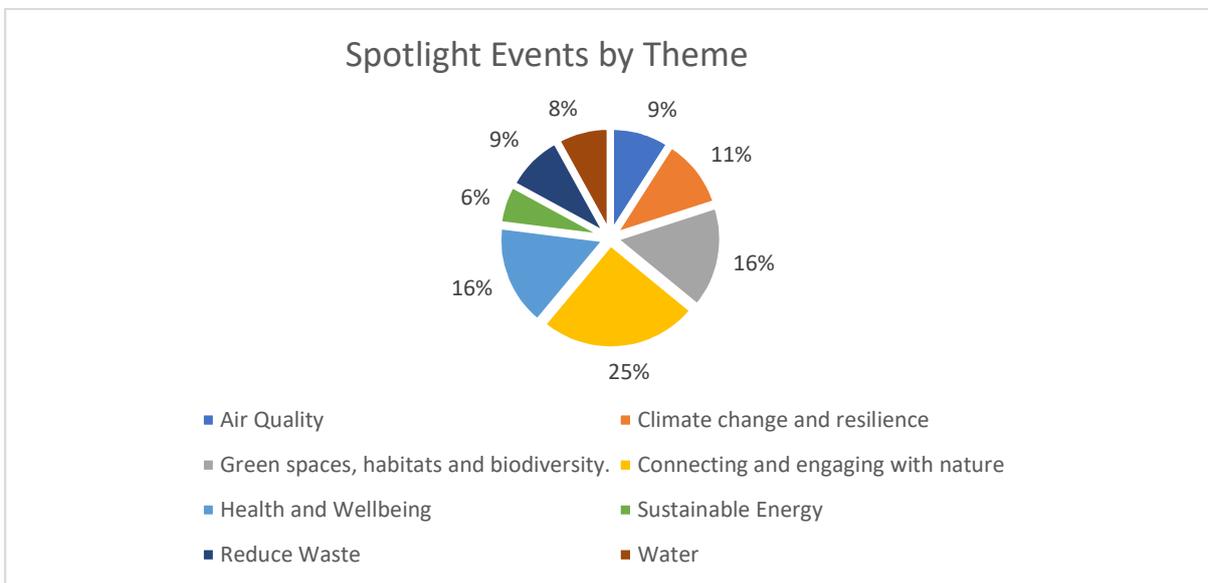
**Figure 5: Events and Activities by Theme**

67. Reduce waste themed events were also prevalent throughout the Year comprising predominantly litter picks.

68. Within the spotlight events (larger events such as Knowsley Flower Show) the most common theme covered was connecting and engaging with nature, accounting for 25% as shown in Figure 6. Followed by health and wellbeing and green spaces, habitats and biodiversity with 16%.



69. Nature Connected, MEAS, Mersey Forest, BioBank and the Local Wildlife Trust were lead partners in the YOE2019LCR project; therefore, a lot of spotlight events involved engagement with the local environment as shown on Figure 6. Most of the events that covered the connecting and engaging with nature and the green space, habitats and biodiversity theme had overlap with the health and wellbeing theme as a lot of the events focused on walking/exploring and mental wellbeing. A fantastic, example of this overlap was the Winter bird walk at siding lane nature reserve; incorporating walking; biodiversity and engaging with nature.



**Figure 6: Spotlight Events by Theme**

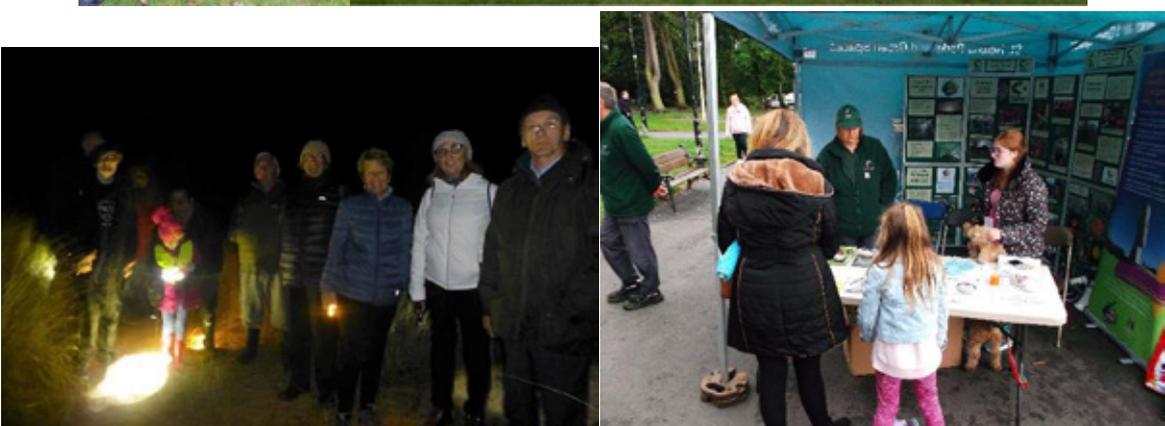
70. The least common theme in the spotlight event calendar was sustainable energy. Events based on sustainable energy would be more difficult to execute in an interactive and accessible manner.

71. There are many examples of events and local projects delivered across all districts to support Year of the Environment 2019. Examples, from each district covering a variety of themes are listed below.

Event	Theme	Area	Description
Nature Walk	Green spaces, habitats and biodiversity  Health and wellbeing	Halton	Evening bat walks organised by Norton Priory Museum and Gardens.
Stadt Moers Spring Clean	Connecting and engaging communities with nature	Knowsley	Community litter pick in Stadt Moers Park.
Community Tree Planting	Climate change	Liverpool	Tree planting in Norris Green Park organised by Mersey Forest.
Dune Slack Improvement	Connecting and engaging communities with nature	Sefton	Carrying out various habitat management tasks within the sand dune systems organised by Gems in the Dunes.
Love Your Street	Reduce waste	St Helens	Community clean ups delivered by Groundwork to create cleaner and safer streets for everyone.  In just 2 months, 400 local young people joined businesses and existing community groups to remove over 500 bags of rubbish.
Green Air Schools Project	Air Quality	Wirral	Action to tackle air quality around schools by Wirral Eco Schools Team.



**Event photographs**



# Your Pledges

FROM LITTER PICKING, TO EATING LESS RED MEAT, CYCLING MORE AND RECORDING WILDLIFE; YOUR PLEDGES HAVE BEEN AT THE HEART OF YOE2019LCR

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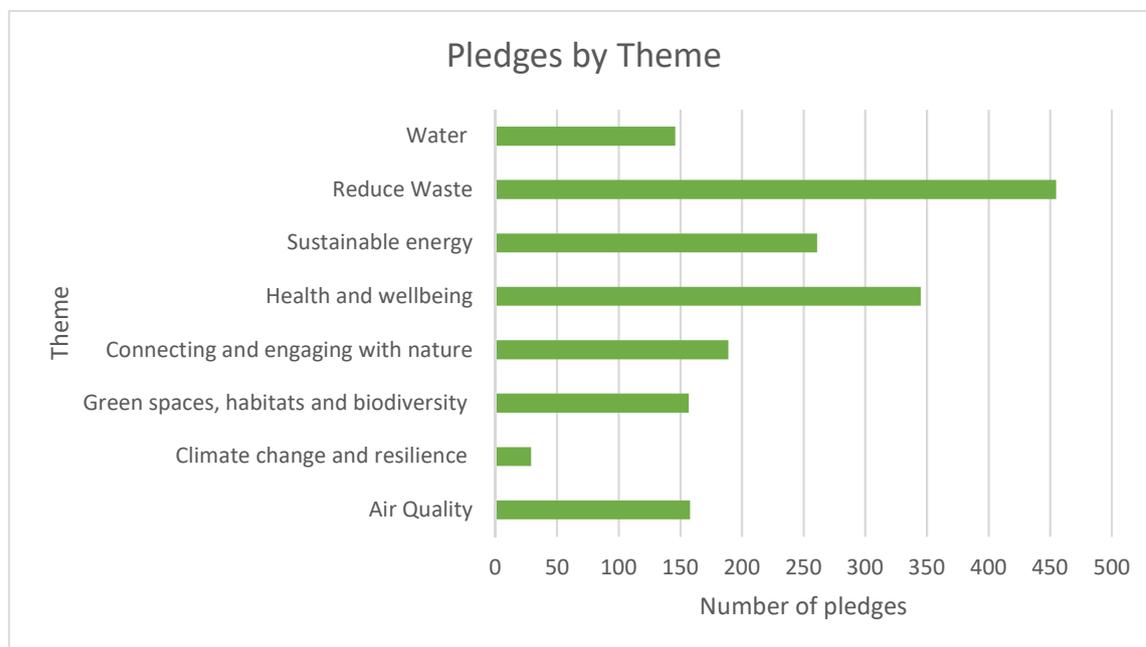
*What is your pledge for YOE2019LCR?*

*We have received 1740 so far...!*





72. Throughout the Year, pledges were made by partners, members of the public and organisations either through the website or at an event. The concept of ‘pledging’ is derived from the national Year of Green Action (YOGA) and seeks to encourage people to make small changes in their everyday life, to support the idea that ***collectively we can make a difference!***



**Figure 7: Number of Pledges by Theme**

73. Of the 8 environmental themes pledges relating to Reducing Waste were most common accounting for 26% (455 pledges!). With campaigns aimed at reduction of single use plastic in 2019 and Blue Planet II focussing on marine plastics, waste reduction has become increasingly prevalent and important in society and this was reflected within YOE pledges.
74. Health and Wellbeing (20%), Sustainable Energy (15%) and Connecting and Engaging with Nature (11%) also featured strongly which pledges around diet and eating less red meat, growing your own vegetables and planting wildflowers common place.
75. Some themes were more difficult to make a specific pledge about such as Climate Change and Resilience as it is such a broad topic. Often related actions e.g. ‘use the car less’ fell into other themes such as Air Quality. Therefore, this is why the climate change theme is somewhat underrepresented.

### How did you do?

76. Feedback was received from a survey of pledgers at the end of the Year to assess how successful people’s pledges were. Although the response was limited, the data collected revealed a positive impact from making pledges. 85.7% of participants actively followed their pledge. The remaining 14.3% selected ‘other’ indicating, that they did not follow the pledge completely or all the time, however they had not completely abandoned it.

77. Many pledgers had not attended any of the events in the YO2019LCR calendar demonstrating that the **impact of the Year extended beyond the organised events and into the wider community**. Making a pledge had a positive impact of the individuals, with 71.4% of participants agreeing that it had made them more aware of their actions.
78. The pledges obtained during organised events were met with great enthusiasm engaging all generations who were keen to have a positive impact on the environment and ensure a better environmental future not only for themselves but for generations to come. Below are some notable successes.

**Wirral Environmental Network (WEN)** were by far the greatest collector of pledges throughout a range of events including Wirral Food and Drink Festival and Wirral Earth Festival. WEN also set up a tour of the libraries giving people an opportunity to pledge in different settings. **A total of 196 pledges** were collected by WEN, 28% of which related to reduce, reuse, recycle. 20% eat less meat, grown own vegetables and shop local and 17% of pledges related to transport and aims to walk, cycle and use the bus more.



The Year of Environment Team attended the popular **Marine Awareness Day 2019** at Crosby organised by the Friends of Crosby Beach in conjunction with GreenSefton. It provided an opportunity for community groups and environmental organisations to interact with the public and to raise awareness of issues affecting the local beaches and sea including plastics and litter. People were encouraged to take part in the 2-minute beach clean or a guided nature walk. Year of Environment had a stall and asked people to 'Peg a Pledge' which was very successful in engaging with families who were keen to help the environment. Individuals and families made a pledge and it was 'pegged to the windbreak'.



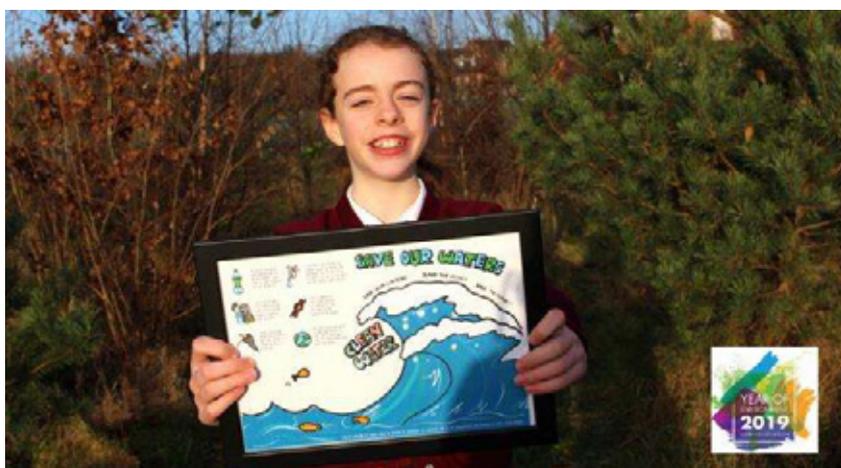
# Young People

79. The national Year of Green Action 2019 had a strong focus on young people, and this shone through to the Liverpool City Region's Year of Environment. All themes engaged with young people through a range of events and activities. Below are some of the highlight's of 2019:



## Water theme school poster competition

80. The YOE2019LCR Schools Poster competition sponsored by environmental consultants TEP Ltd explored the Water theme.
81. We had 7 fantastic Primary Schools from throughout the City Region take part in this competition, with over 300 poster entries! Thank you to:
- St. Bartholomew's Catholic Primary School
  - Haydock English Martyr's Catholic Primary School
  - St. Julie Catholic Primary School
  - Ladymount Catholic Primary School
  - St. Oswald's Church of England Primary School
  - St. Teresa Lisieux Primary School
  - Waterloo Primary School
82. With so many amazing entries it was difficult to pick a winner. After careful consideration our judges selected two winning posters from:
- Haydock English Martyr's Catholic Primary School



- St. Teresa Of Lisieux Catholic Primary School



83. In choosing the winners, the judge's made the following comments:

*'We liked the strong image of the wave and the clean water that we want to preserve, and the range of environmental issues that were illustrated with interesting icons. This student packed a lot of information and themes into their poster, in a clear, easy to understand summary. They also emphasised saving water, animals and the whole planet, with a green and blue colour scheme referencing the earth.'* - **Haydock English Martyr's Catholic Primary School**

*'This was a very bold, colourful and creative design, using collage to catch the eye and show the themes of water and fish. We liked how it summarised a couple of the main themes, of reducing water usage, stopping plastic pollution and protecting marine life. The repeated hashtag slogan at the top also shows a simple but powerful message, and reminds us that we can all help to spread the word.'* - **St. Teresa Of Lisieux Catholic Primary School**

84. In addition to our winners, we also shortlisted 21 posters which were showcased alongside the winning posters at the first LCR Environmental Summit held on Friday 8th November 2019.



85. Overall, the judges were highly impressed by all the entries and made the following comments:

*'It was a very tough choice, and we really appreciated every single entry! There were some really creative, colourful and comprehensive designs, and we loved how the students really engaged with the range of topics relating to water. Global imagery of the earth appeared quite a few times, showing that students are thinking about how their actions can impact or protect the environment, animals and people around the world, as well as in their local area. There are clearly a lot of passionate young environmental ambassadors out there. We hope that they all continue to care for the earth, spread the word about environmentally friendly lifestyles, and carry on being creative!'*



## Echo Environment Awards 2019: Young Environmental Champion sponsored by Liverpool City Region - The Year of the Environment 2019

86. Elizabeth Gadsdon - The Little Collector Wirral won 'Young Environmental Champion' for her inspirational litter picking efforts across Wirral. Elizabeth started caring about the environment when she was just 6 years old. She taught her family to care and hopes to continue to inspire others to make little changes to the way they live to help make their environment better.



## University of Liverpool - student listening event on environmental sustainability

87. On 3 October 2019, a world café style event was held and with 169 students attending.
88. Several questions were asked of the students on the theme of environmental sustainability. The discussion was lively and positive – demonstrating how much young people care about their environment:



*“To achieve our goals for sustainability we will need to overcome challenges such as lack of infrastructure, low budget allocations in sustainability programmes, lack of motivation and interest among the public, problems with peoples’ mind set and mistrust in the government’s recycling system...”*

89. Key points from the discussion included:
- We should invest more in sustainable urban infrastructures;
  - Stringent regulations on littering laws, waste segregation and disposal of recyclable;
  - Special attention to conserve the local biodiversity;
  - harvest rainwater at city level by having rain water harvestings system at various spots in the city; and
  - Safe drinking water fountains should be made available at train stations, city centre, shopping centres, educational institutes and offices.

## University internship and volunteer programme

90. Over the Year and into the early part of 2020, we were absolutely delighted that internships and volunteers were provided by the following Universities (in order of contribution):

- Liverpool John Moores University;
- University of Liverpool; and
- Bangor University.

91. No central government funding was provided to support implementation of the national Year of Green Action. This presented a challenge but one which was successfully overcome through partnership working and innovation. For instance, **MEAS and LWT hosted 10 student internships and volunteers in 2019**. These internships were invaluable providing resource for communications, administration, training and events throughout the Year and into 2020 - the evaluation and legacy phase. We extend our thanks to the universities.

92. The students have been inspired by YOE2019LCR including one intern who designed artwork for the website and promotional materials such as posters around the 8 environmental themes and presented passionately at the Environmental Summit in November 2019.



## Mersey Forest

93. At the Summit, the Metro Mayor successfully launched the first ever City Forest School in Liverpool delivered in partnership by Mersey Forest and Liverpool John Moores University and forming part of the YOE legacy.

94. Mersey Forest also held 40 tree planting events at schools across the City Region. These school events contributed to a massive total of 33,468 native broadleaved trees planted over the Year.



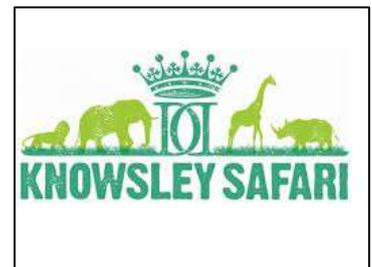
## Knowsley schools photo competition

95. Leading up to the Knowsley Flower Show held in August 2019, a school photographic competition on theme of the environment was held across the borough. The winning photographs were exhibited at the Flower Show.



## Young person survey competition

96. We held an online young person survey towards the end of 2019. Over 200 people entered and 161 were under 24 and classed as 'young people'.
97. A winner was selected at random and won a family pass to Knowsley Safari Park who kindly sponsored the survey.



## Results of survey

98. We asked 9 questions which were linked to the themes of the Year, the results below represent the answers of those who identified as being 24 years old and under:
1. Can you name this bird? (A photo was shown with the following options; Whooper swan, Canada goose, mallard or grey heron)

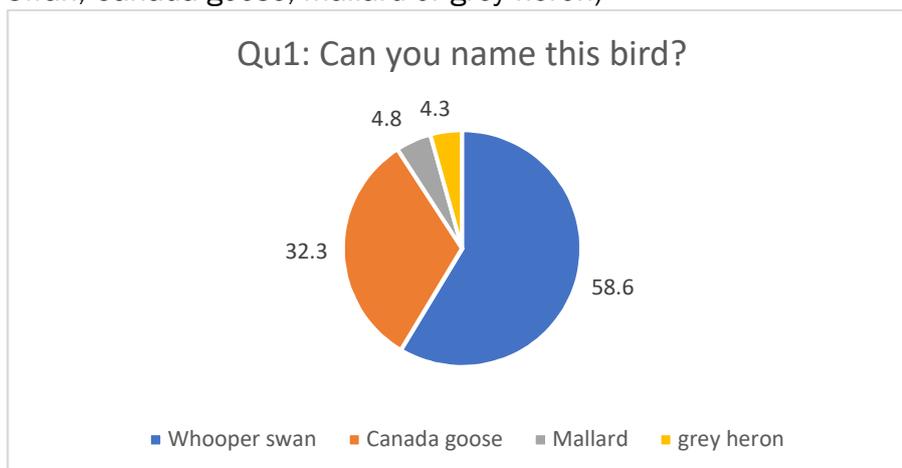


Figure 8: Question 1 Results

99. *Answer: whooper swan.* This question was included to test young people's wildlife ID skills. It also tests their local knowledge – whooper swan is an internationally

important winter visitor to the City Region. 59% were correct but a third thought the bird in the photograph was a Canada goose. Apps such as iNaturalist can help young people develop their ID skills and partners such as Merseyside BioBank and Lancashire Wildlife Trust will continue to promote this as part of the YO2019LCR legacy.

2. Can you recycle this in your household waste bin? (photo of greasy pizza box)

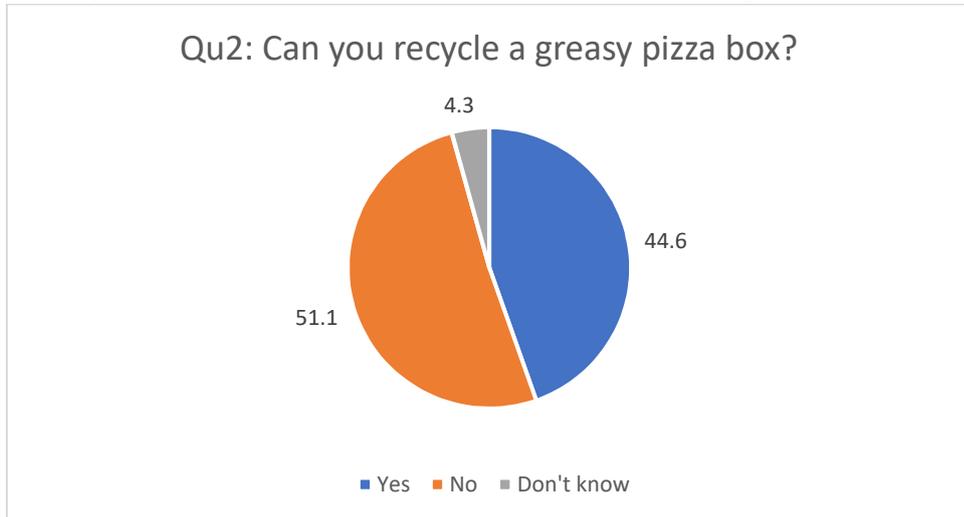


Figure 9: Question 2 Results

100. Answer: no. This question really split opinion, with just over half answering correctly. In Merseyside you cannot recycle soiled cardboard material as this contaminates the waste stream – if the box was clean i.e. grease free then it could be recycled.

3. When travelling by public transport which is most important to you:

- Usb points
- Low emissions train/bus
- Free Wifi
- Contactless payments

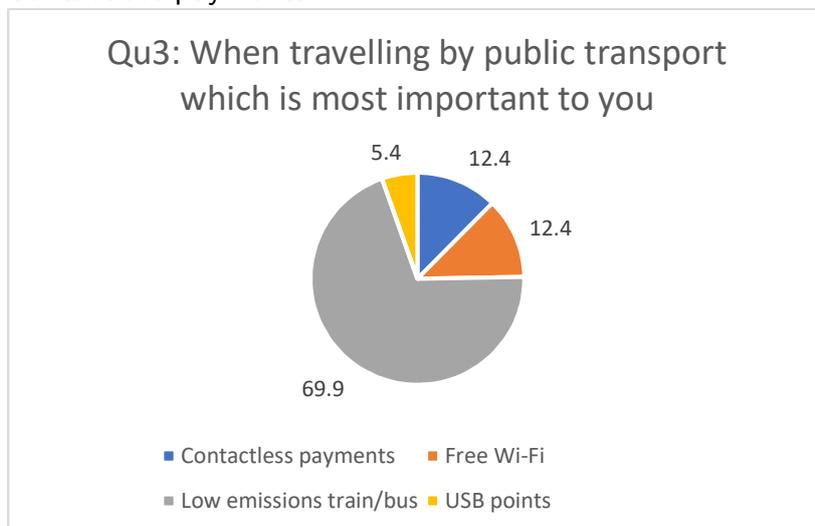


Figure 10: Question 3 Results

101. This was an open question. 70% of young people said that when using public transport, low emissions vehicles were the most important consideration for them. This is really encouraging to see and demonstrates young people are aware of environmental / carbon impacts.

4. Who is best at saving energy at home? e.g. switching off chargers when not in use, not leaving things on standby, turning off lights.

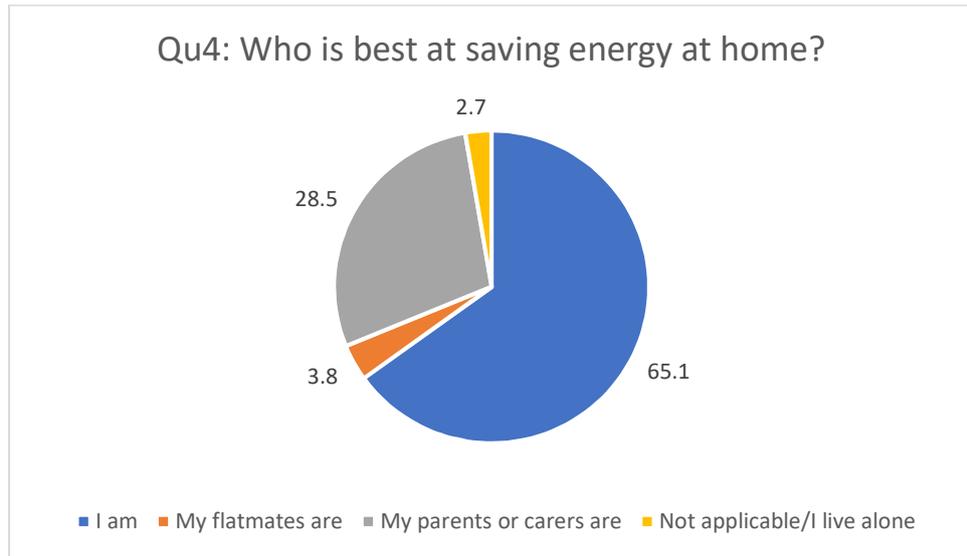


Figure 11: Question 4 Results

102. Again, this was an open question. Almost two thirds of young people stated that they were best at saving energy at home. This is encouraging as it shows an awareness of energy efficiency issues amongst younger people.

5. Which of these green spaces is in the Liverpool City Region?

- Lunt Meadows
- Regents Park
- Roundhay Park

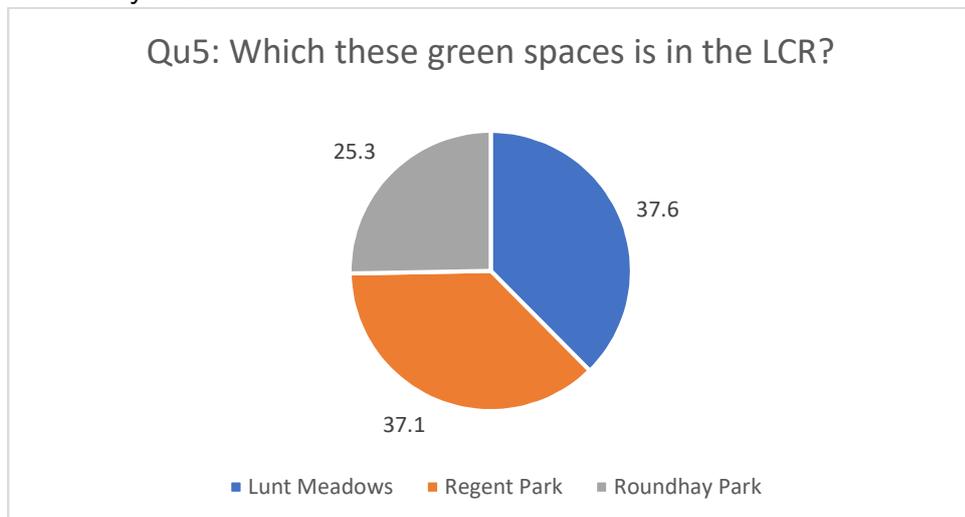


Figure 12: Question 5 Results

103. *Answer: Lunt Meadows (near Maghull, Sefton).* This question split opinion. 38% correctly identified that Lunt Meadows is in the LCR. However, 37% and 25% thought Regents Park (London) and Roundhay Park (Leeds) respectively were in the City Region. This may highlight that whilst young people in the LCR are engaged with the environment they may not be aware of all the fantastic greenspaces available to them or may be unfamiliar with the wider Region if they are studying here from elsewhere.

6. How many cups of water can a dripping tap waste?

- 4, 8 or 12 cups per day

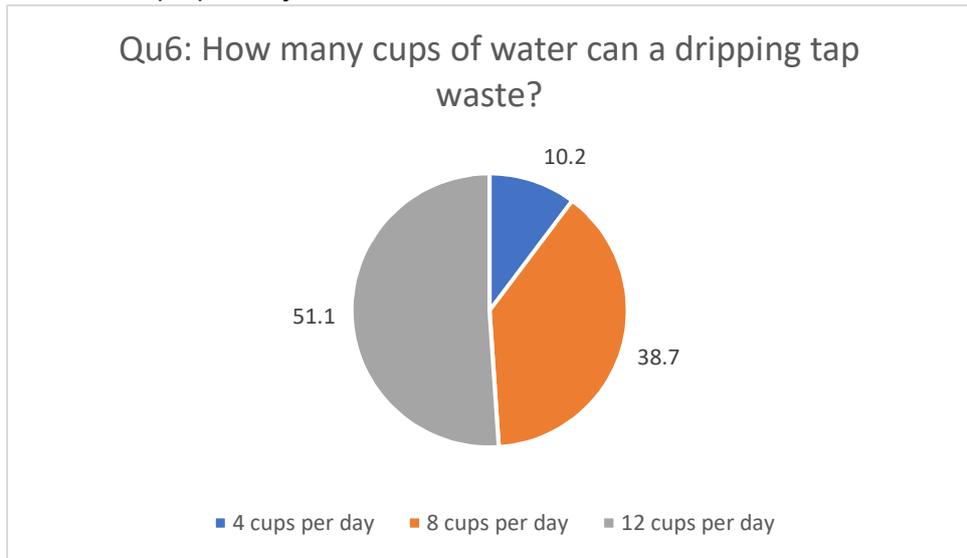


Figure 13: Question 6 Results

104. *Answer: 12 cups.* 51% of young people selected correctly. This question was designed to raise awareness and get people to think about water use and wastage. 12 cups per day is a lot tea!

7. Where would you go to chill out if you felt stressed?

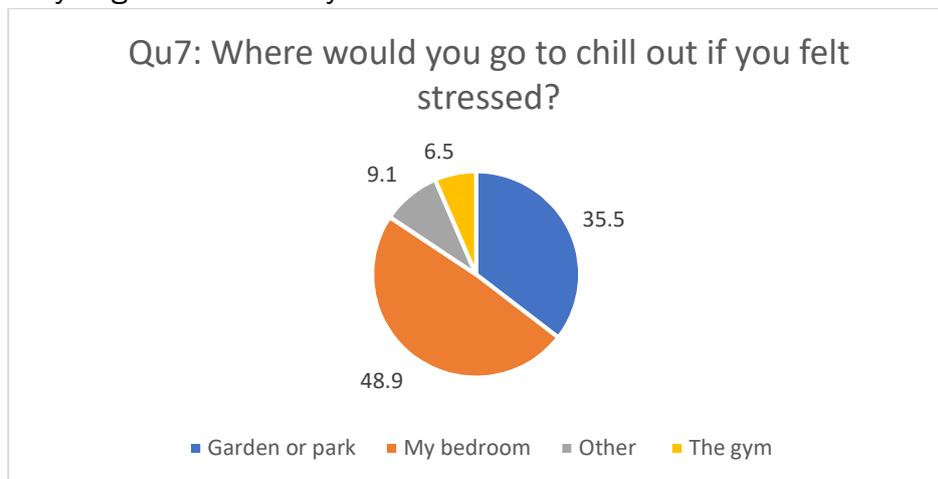


Figure 14: Question 7 Results

105. This question was designed to examine young people’s connection with the natural environment. 49% of young people stated that when stressed or needing to ‘chill out’ they go to their bedroom. Just 36% said their garden or a park. This perhaps reflects the popularity and rise of ‘screen time’ TV, smart phone, tablets, video games etc.

8. Would you consider changing what you eat to help the environment?

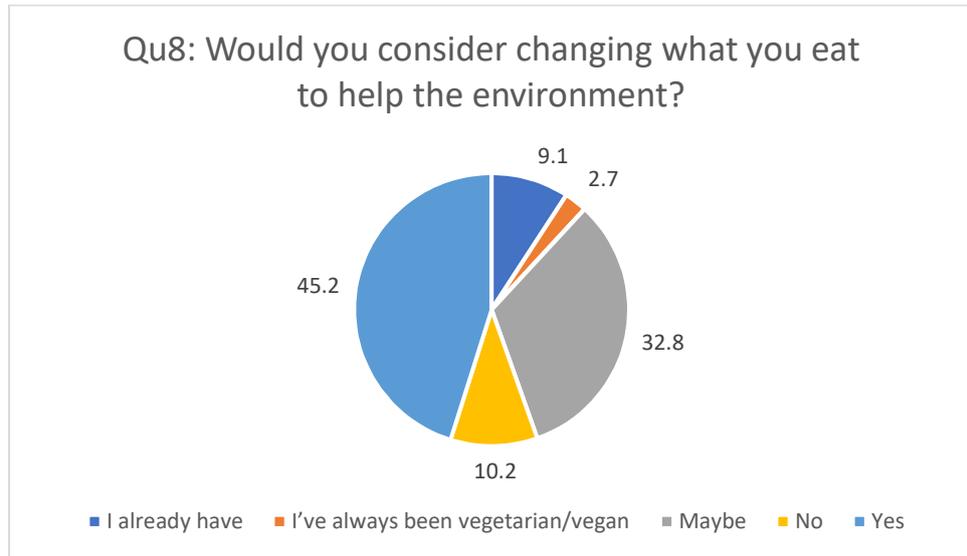


Figure 15: Question 8 Results

106. Almost half of young people said that ‘yes ‘they would consider changing what they eat to help the environment whilst 10% said that they wouldn’t. This is really encouraging and again highlights an environmental awareness and responsibility amongst young people.

9. When I see a spider inside, I

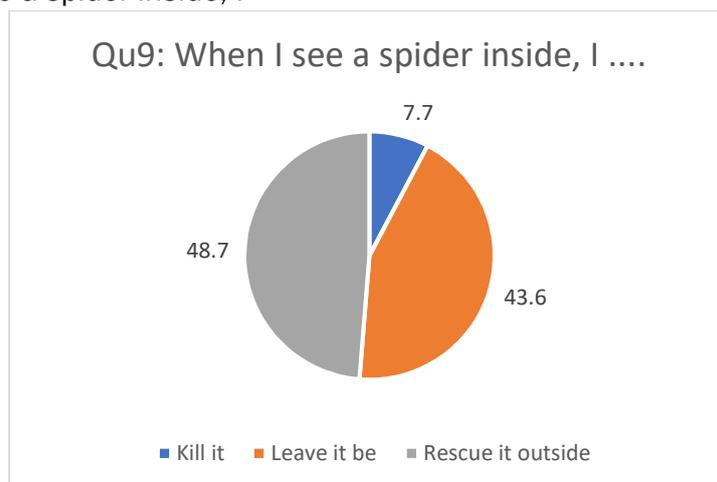


Figure 16: Question 9 Results

107. Answer: leave it be.

From a wildlife / ecology perspective, the best thing you can do if you see a spider in the house is leave it be. This is because your house / flat etc is suitable habitat for many spiders. Indeed, many common species of spider live close to us in our homes, gardens and outbuildings. 49% of young people said they would 'rescue it outside' and 44% said they would 'leave it be'.

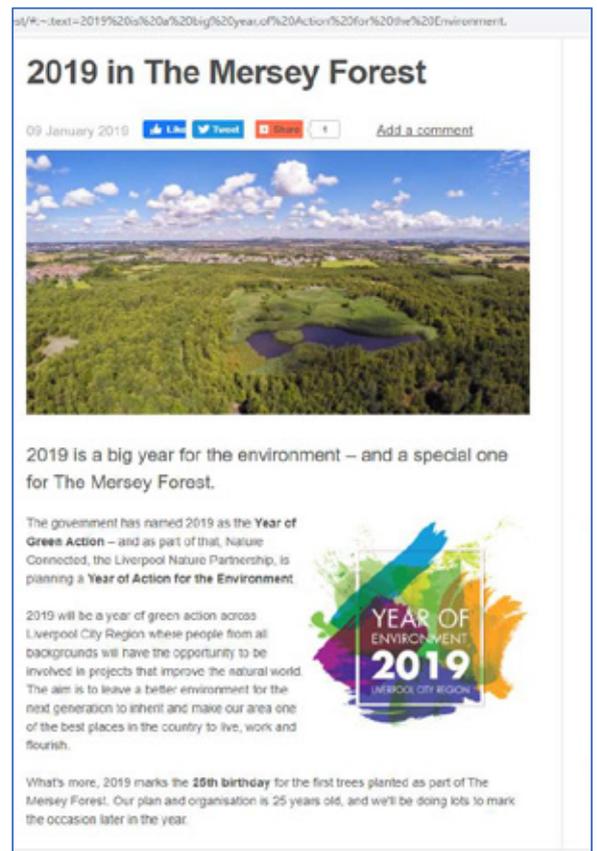


# Communication Strategy

An aim of the Year was to engage with as many people, groups, organisations and businesses to make the Year of Action a success. A range of social media channels were used not only to raise awareness but to facilitate sharing of information and events.

## Approach

108. An early priority was to develop a communications plan for the year. The YOE team ensured that there were easily accessible and simple communications guidelines for the full range of activities and events during the year. This really helped to co-ordinate communications during the year including co-promotion as official YOE events.
109. A key part of the strategy was to encourage partners to re-use and promote the resources, key messages and events during the year through their own communications channels. Social media was identified as a key part of the strategy and was especially targeted at the younger age groups. Websites were most commonly used with LinkedIn especially important for professional networks.
110. For the Launch, spotlight events and the Green Summit engagement with the press was managed by the host organisations and the core messages picked up, re-released and promoted by partners. For example, local launches were promoted by the local authority communications team and the Launch and Green Summit were promoted by the Metro Mayors office. This greatly increased the penetration and profile of the year through press articles, on-line news and trade press.





111. The YOE1019LCR twitter page had an impressive **471,400** views of the tweets during 2019.



112. Two hashtags were used throughout and were successfully adopted by our partners to promote events, and followers: **#YOE2019LCR** and **#iwill4yoe**.

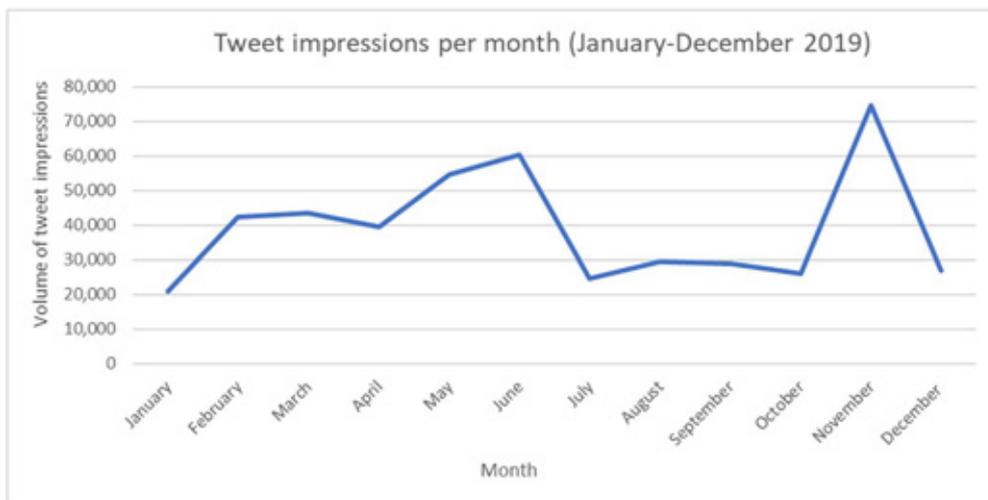


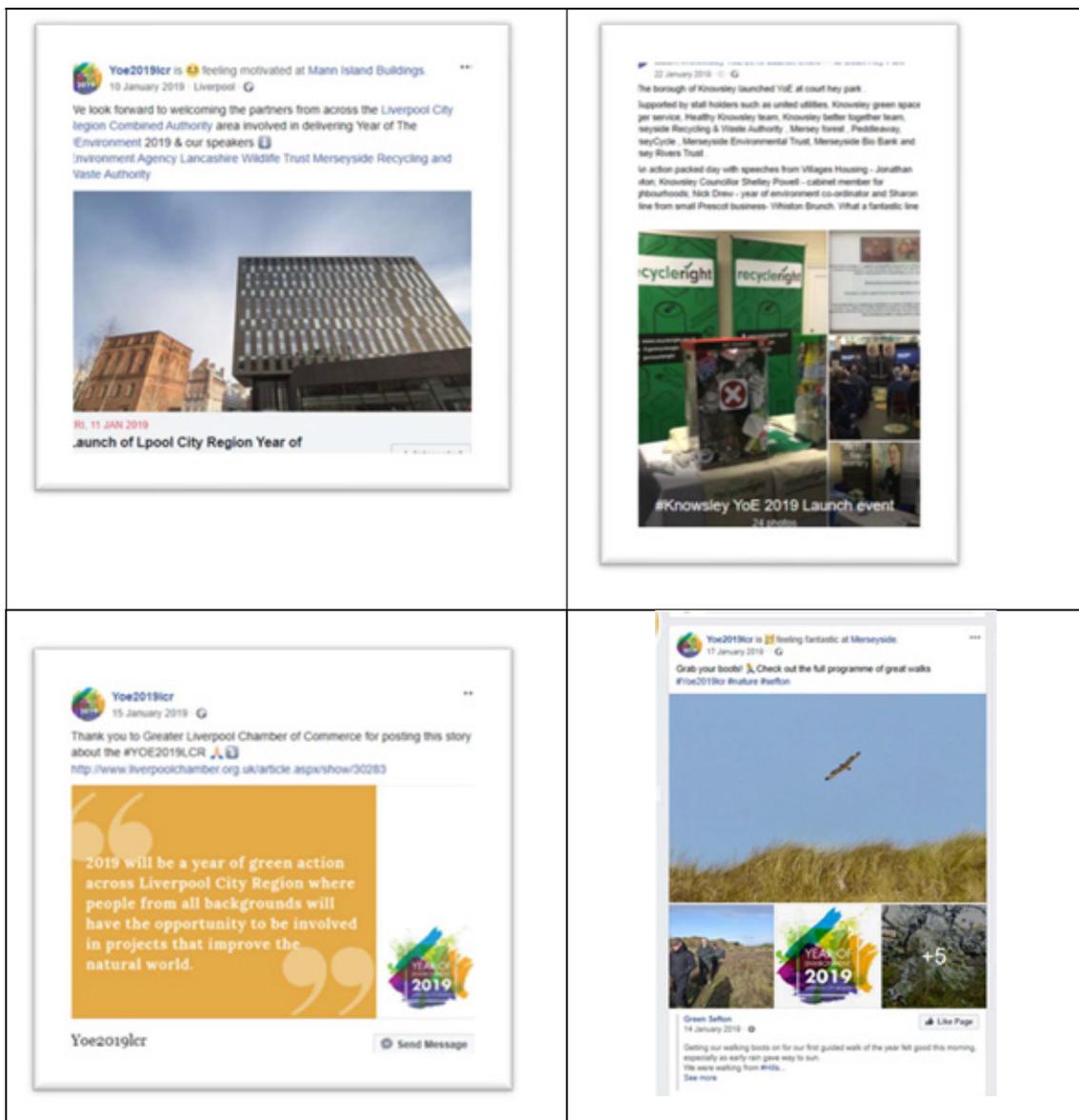
Figure 17: Tweet Impressions during 2019

113. Views in Twitter steadily increased during the first month of establishing presence on twitter. After the first significant peak in June, impressions decreased. As we would hope with the Green Summit in November this resulted in increased media attention and an increase in public awareness which was reflected with the largest volume of impressions and profile visits. The partners and sponsors of YOE2019LCR actively tweeted more, whilst mentioning and tagging @yoe2019lcr in posts and pictures. This naturally resulted in more profile visits attracting a wider audience and participation.

114. [@yoe2019lcr](#) proved to successfully engage with the public and other organisations. The twitter page gave a suitable platform to update partners/sponsors and the public on events and promote the work of close connections. **By the end of 2019 we had 1,000 followers.**



115. The YOE2019LCR Facebook page had a wider purpose and was so much more than awareness raising as it documented the Year through a variety of real-time posts and photographic library as well as highlighting topical issues that arose during 2019. One of the key target audiences for Facebook was business. It was managed by a communications consultant and provided a chronological journey through the Year of Action and a legacy of what was achieved. Examples of posts are shown below including the LCR Launch in January 2019.



116. The Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/YOE2019LCR/> remains live as an archive of the Year.



117. The YOE2019LCR Instagram account was set up to offer practical tips and suggestions to support any pledges made throughout the year with the aim of engaging with a different demographic. Posts ranged from reduction in single use plastic, to links for recycling crisp packets and encouraging cycling with promotion of Merseyside Cycle Maps. To celebrate **plastic free July**, every day during the month, an alternative to single use plastic was posted. This was very popular with others sharing their swaps and successes – all designed to raise awareness and nudge behaviour change. Partners and community groups also used the #YOE2019LCR to link to the account and promote the projects they were undertaking.



118. LinkedIn was used predominantly to link with the business and professional community as a further way of sharing ideas and information including academic research. LinkedIn was used by several of the YOE partners, including those on the Steering Group to post articles, promote the year and add personal perspectives and insights. This was powerful at increasing the reach of YOU2019LCR through professional networks.

## Website

119. During 2019 the YOE2019LCR webpage [www.yoe2019lcr.org.uk](http://www.yoe2019lcr.org.uk) received over 10,000 visits and 33,000 page views. There was a total of 8267 users with 12.1% returning to the website on more than one occasion. Page views were consistent throughout the year, but higher views were noted during the summer and October, possibly as a result of the promotion of the **Environmental Summit** and the increase in events throughout the warmer months. **The website is now offline** and content has been archived by MEAS who managed the site. YOE legacy activity in 2020 and reference materials from the year are available via the Nature Connected website [www.natureconnected.org.uk](http://www.natureconnected.org.uk).
120. The website was used to promote the Year and to provide a range of information encouraging local groups and businesses to become partners or sponsors. The events calendar proved popular, providing details of events being held

throughout the Liverpool City Region. These were promoted by a range of groups which were linked to the fundamental themes of the year. The website also allowed people to submit their pledges for environmental support. Photographs of people holding up their pledges at various events formed an inspiring display on the website – see Pledge section.

121. Using Google Analytics we have been able to analyse the nature of website use.

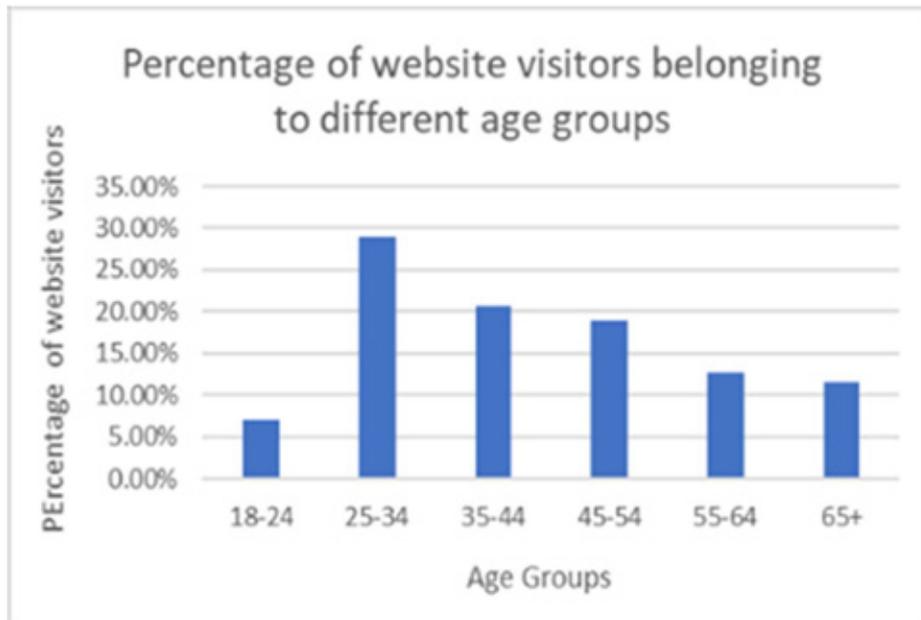


Figure 18: Website visits by age group

122. The largest percentage of visitors to the website were from the 25-34 age group. Figure 18 demonstrates that the YOE2019LCR interacted with a variety of ages, however those aged 18-24 were less likely to visit the website. This may reflect either their engagement with the Year of their preference for other social media platforms.

123. The data shows (Figure 19) that almost two thirds of visitors were identified as females. It was interesting that female users seemed to engage more with the website than males. Whilst the browsing habits vary between the genders it is unclear why there was this noted difference in our website use, especially as participants at events etc were, anecdotally, evenly split.



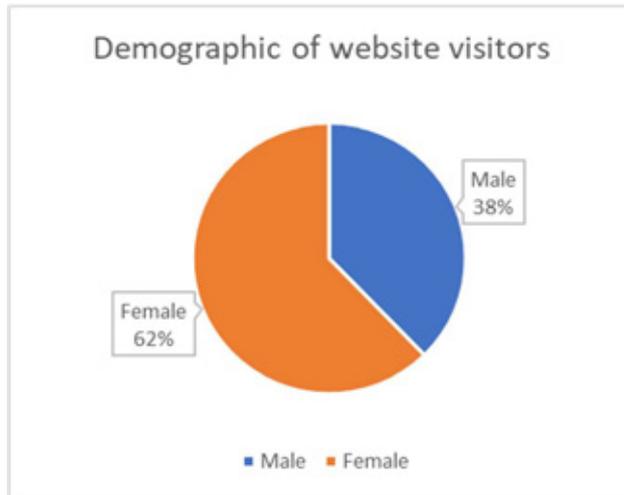


Figure 19: Demographic of visitors

124. Mobile access was the largest single device use as shown in Figure 20. Given that smart phone ownership is very high and a large focus for the year was on activities / events and accessing those events, this is as expected. The data highlights the importance of creating a mobile friendly interface.

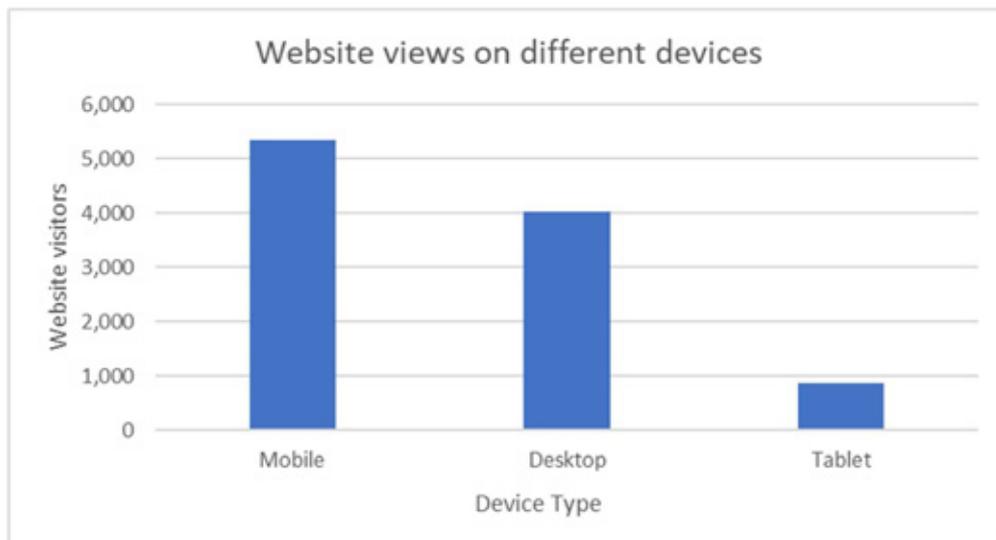


Figure 20: Website visitors by device type

125. With 30% of website access direct (see Figure 21), this shows that the website was accessible and easy to locate. It also was assisted our communications approach of co-promoting activities and events with YO2019LCR website address and logo.

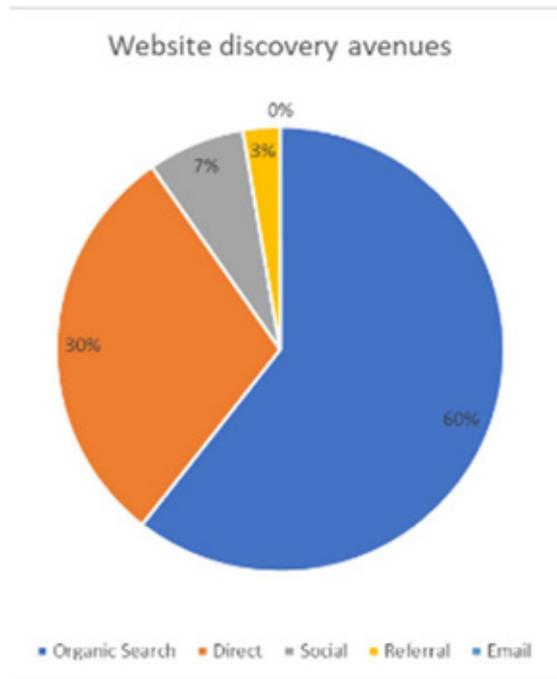


Figure 21: Website views by origin

### Partners and Sponsors

126. YO2019LCR was a collaboration and as such many partners used their own channels of communication to support the year. This provided an essential and necessary method of promoting events and pledges as well as ensuring the messages associated with the Year of Green Action reached as far and as many as possible. This partnership working was one of the many successes of the year bringing community groups, businesses, government and academia together for a common goal.



# Environmental Summit – *Toward a Green Future*

In November, the first Liverpool City Region Environment Summit was held celebrating the Year of the Environment and look forward to securing a lasting legacy...

127. The all-day ‘Toward a Green Future’ event was hosted within the impressive John Lennon Art and Design Building at Liverpool John Moores University. The ticketed event was very popular with over 250 delegates attending the inaugural event from over 100 different organisations and community groups.



128. The aims of the day were to:

- to build on and celebrate the success of our YOE collaboration;
- to offer a platform for strategic announcements for the Liverpool City Region Mayor;
- to deliver a range of engaging presentations and panel discussions;
- to offer Consultation and Listening opportunities to influence for example the Spatial Development and Industrial Strategies;
- to offer a number of interactive workshops under the range of YOE themes; and
- to provide networking opportunities for our significant number of partners and stakeholders.

129. The day began with a tree-planting ceremony which marked the launch of LJMU’s Forest School. This was led by the Liverpool City Region Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram and Dr Avril Rowley who were also joined by pupils from Pleasant Street Primary School and St Nicholas Primary School.



130. A series of short presentations were given by an array of well-respected speakers ranging from academics, Councillors, environmental professionals, students, businesses, community groups as well as Keynote slots for Pamela Warhurst CBE and Steve Rotheram. This provided an ideal opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the Year of Action by a wide range of partners, including community groups to deliver environmental betterment.



131. The day also acknowledged the challenges faced in delivering some of the environmental aspirations particularly in terms of Climate Change which has come to the forefront of policy making and has seen a significant rise in public awareness over the course of the year. The event also saw two campaign groups protesting on local as well as global issues to raise awareness and demand action to be taken. This right to express views was welcomed as it demonstrated the range of people who feel passionately about the environment.



132. At the event, the Liverpool City Region Climate Partnership was announced to coordinate the city regions response to the climate emergency. In addition to this, £500,000 annual grant was awarded to support community climate and environment projects. The response was greatly welcomed by communities which had previously highlighted lack of funding at the listening events.

133. Central to the day was the infozone which provided an opportunity for our partners to promote their organisations and a meeting space for people to come together network and share ideas and experiences. This area was a hustle and bustle of activity throughout.



134. The YOE team worked hard to ensure that the Environmental Summit was as sustainable as possible. We are proud that the event was paperless; Single use plastic (SUP) free, delegates were encouraged to travel by public transport,



# Reflections on the Year

137. The impact and benefits of YOE2019LCR have been assessed quantitatively and qualitatively. The Coordinator, Nature Connected and the YOE Steering Group, feel that both the YOE 2019LCR and the Environmental Summit were very successful in achieving the aims and objectives set out at the start of the year. This is evidenced throughout this Year in Review Report. The momentum gained, as a result of 2019 being a dedicated year of action on the environment, focused the minds of individuals and organisations as to “why now”. There was a genuine interest from stakeholders across the region to work collaboratively recognising that environmental action should be aligned across themes, across sectors and across places to ensure that the greatest impact is achieved.



*A fitting legacy...*



138. The LCR YOE provided a very important opportunity to support and celebrate local community and voluntary action. It was effective at engaging new audiences from across the social spectrum. This was especially the case for local people and activists who reported that they often feel disengaged from decision making and wanted to use the year to have their voice heard. There was little better example of that than at the Environmental Summit when environmental activists were able to make their contributions to

the day. All views and opinions expressed during the year were gratefully received.

139. It was notable how many people during the year worked above and beyond their remit to ensure its success often in a voluntary capacity. This shows many hold the environment as a core value, and work in the sector because they really do care. YOE2019LCR engaged LJMU which went above and beyond to assist in the success of the Green Summit including hosting, provision of staff, resources and event organisation expertise. The expertise of the Local Environment Records Centre (Merseyside BioBank) and the Local Wildlife Trust (Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, North Merseyside and Greater Manchester) was instrumental in the Citizen



science engagement in YOE and success of the biodiversity and green spaces theme.

140. Extremely generous leadership was provided by the core organisations without which the year would not have been possible. These included Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS, environmental specialist advisor) the Mersey Forest (England's largest Community Forest) – both organisations work in all of the Local Authority areas across the region so provide that tangible link between the local authorities and wider partners. In addition, Knowsley Council worked tirelessly to ensure that the year was a success.
141. As a very well-respected Community Leader - The Chair of Nature Connected and the YOE – Gideon Ben-Tovim OBE, provided extremely inspirational, creative and generous leadership, ensuring that the partnership remained and remain ambitious to achieve what many thought was unachievable and we were very fortunate to have the services of an outstanding co-ordinator Michelle Whalley seconded from Mersey Forest on a part-time basis.
142. In looking forward, it is important that the generosity shown from these key players, is not taken for granted or assumed. The Building Blocks in creating the new Climate Partnership, wider Climate Panel and Community Environment Fund, alongside the ongoing operational costs of Nature Connected need properly resourcing if they are to be sustainable and drive forward this agenda.



Q&A panel at Environmental Summit, November 2019.

# What's Next?

## Moving Forward – Next Steps?

143. Nature Connected are keen for the collaboration under the 8 themes to continue and for local people to continue to take positive environmental action as part of their daily routine. We also press for the environment sector to be well-resourced and connected so it is well placed to influence the plans and strategies of the City Region.

144. Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham suggested at the first Green Summit that we should have a **decade of environment action** and this was warmly received by those present. Nature Connected are working alongside the Combined Authority to determine the next steps for the Climate Partnership and the Community Environment and Climate Action Fund. In maintaining momentum, the partnership plan to amplify and celebrate the success of the Year through a range of events.



The team will be presenting a specially designated “**YOE 2019 Outstanding Achievement Award**” at the upcoming Echo Environment Awards in September 2020.

145. This evaluation report has been produced at a time of unprecedented global stress as the Covid-19 pandemic wreaks havoc across all parts of the globe. The drop in economic activity and the social distancing measures put in place are providing many with an unexpected opportunity to observe the world around us and ask some challenging questions about what sort of world do we want to sustain. Countless others are in the front line fighting this terrible virus and it will touch every person and every community during 2020.

146. Some are suggesting that a “new normal” will emerge following the pandemic where we feel more deeply connected with people and nature and fundamentally re-evaluate our relationship with the blue planet. The evaluation is written at a time when the UK Government is take the Environment Bill through parliament and there is now optimism that green issues will feature more prominently in our lives moving forward.



147. It is within this context that the YOE2019LCR partners, led by Nature Connected have been planning the next steps and activities. The YOE2019L CR website has been archived and **new initiatives will now be placed on Nature Connected's site [www.natureconnected.org.uk](http://www.natureconnected.org.uk) as the hub for environmental action.** Great progress has already been made with important new initiatives and commitments which are set out below.

148. Government has called for submissions from the City Region as its Covid-19 recovery strategy. Nature Connected is working closely with the Mayoral Combined Authority, as part of the long-term recovery plan, to embed green into the recovery and grow back greener. Much of the engagement, learning and progress made during 2019 will strengthen our case.



149. The creation of the **Climate Partnership** to help oversee the LCR response to climate emergency is greatly welcomed as is the new annual Community Environment and Climate Action Fund. The **£0.5m annual grant available will provide untold benefits to the sustainability, health and well-being of many of our communities and special places.** The Partnership is supported by a wider Climate Panel partly drawn from YOE partners.

150. Due to the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic, all legacy events in 2020 have been cancelled in the interests of public health and social distancing. However, there are many alternative ways to make a difference whilst in isolation, such as adapting energy saving habits and following an environmentally sustainable diet.

151. Liverpool City Region entered the City Nature Challenge for a second year. Whilst 2020 was not a global competition because of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was an opportunity to reflect on the nature in our own spaces and local communities. The focus has been to observe nature in back yard, homes and gardens. We have again performed well with some amazing wildlife observations and one of the lasting changes coming out of this global shock is a deeper connection by people with the wonders of nature.



152. Regardless of the current situation, planning continues to help maintain the momentum of YO2019LCR once public life reverts to usual. Many projects continue including the ambitious hybridisation of buses and roll out of the new Merseyrail electric stock and hydrogen and tidal energy project feasibility work, so the signs are encouraging.
153. Nature Connected continue to work with the Mayoral Combined Authority. We continue to advise and provide evidence to the planning team and other colleagues on the emerging Spatial Development Strategy and Local Industrial Strategy. The ground-breaking work of the Natural Capital Steering Group should serve the City Region well in providing a mechanism to help us target and monitor the effectiveness of investment in environmental assets.
154. Work is also progressing well with preparations for mandatory biodiversity net gain from development in preparation for enactment of the Environment Bill in future years. This will bring with it many financial and spatial challenges for our development sector, local authorities and local delivery partners but will undoubtedly be a game changer for quality of place and connection with nature.
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155. Finally, we are already planning the next Green Summit. Due to Covid-19, the plan is for the second Green Summit to take place in 2021 and to shadow plans for COP26 in Glasgow. The second Green Summit will be an opportunity to hold our feet to the coals and find out whether the momentum generated during 2019, the progress made during 2020 and review what tangible progress has been made towards the Greenest City Region and zero carbon targets.
156. Information about future plans and activities will be posted on the website [www.natureconnected.org.uk](http://www.natureconnected.org.uk).





# Here are just some of our amazing partners

