

Green Shoots Project Summary

Green Shoots is a fourteen-month project funded by the Green Recovery Challenge Fund to connect some of Middlesbrough's most under-represented and disadvantaged groups with nature, increasing understanding, developing practical skills, and creating cohesive communities.

The project will support BAME communities, refugee and asylum seekers and young people from disadvantaged communities to experience nature and take positive action to conserve and enhance it. The project will work through a partnership of local organisations including Actes, The Linx Project and The Other Perspective, that have trusted and established relationships with our communities. The Project Officer will have a key role in maintaining these partnerships as well as working with them to develop and undertake a range of practical tasks across Middlesbrough's nature reserves. There will also be support through a part-time Forest Schools Officer, running family activities at MEC's Nature's World site and a Project Assistant to help with the delivery of activities.

The project will:

- Work with gatekeeper agencies supporting the target groups, building trust, and engaging them in the project, engaging over 530 people.
- Provide Forest School based activities, aimed at 20 family and adolescent groups, engaging them in the natural environment and begin to develop their understanding.
- Provide at least 30 volunteering taster sessions, each one day in length, to introduce participants to the opportunities.
- Provide 10 longer term incentivised traineeships, undertaking practical works to enhance Middlesbrough's suite of local nature reserves.
- Provide 100 other volunteering opportunities.

Although primarily aimed at engaging communities in learning about and enjoying Middlesbrough's natural places, it will also bring about physical improvements to the town's nature reserves, promoting nature recovery. The sites will include the beck valleys running through the town that support a range of habitats including areas of wildflower grassland, new and mature woodland, reedbeds and other freshwater habitats.

Through engagement in the project, we intend that participants will:

- Gain a greater understanding of nature in an urban context.
- Enjoy Middlesbrough's greenspaces more, improving physical and emotional well-being.
- Gain new in nature conservation and improve employability.
- Join existing Friend's groups across Middlesbrough or form new volunteer groups.
- Progress into training, apprenticeships, and employment.