



Community Green Grants Year 1 Summary



West Midlands
Combined Authority



WEST MIDLANDS
Greener Together

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) launched the Community Green Grant in January 2022 to support projects that:

- 🌿 Increase or improve green spaces close to where people live.
- 🌿 Connect people to nature, especially communities experiencing green deprivation.
- 🌿 Enhance the local environment (e.g., tree planting, increasing biodiversity)





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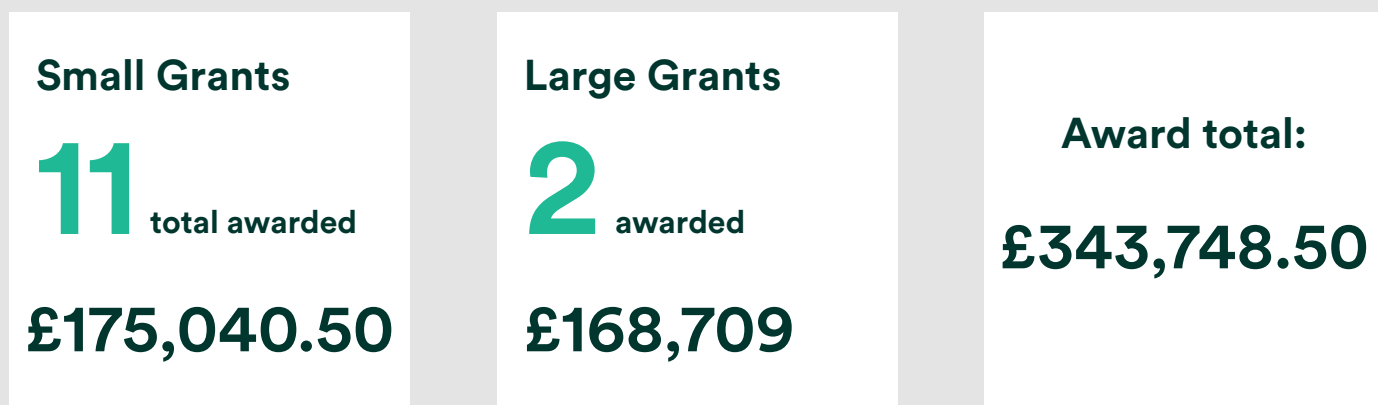


Year 1 Summary

Year 1 Community Green Grants has funded 13 projects, most projects run for one year.



(There is one joint project covering Sandwell and Dudley).



The collective participant aim of funded projects is over 40,000.

Following a spatial analysis, it has been calculated that there are more than 200,000 people living in the communities that lie within a 15 minute walking distance from those sites that received funding to provide new or improved accessible greenspace



Achievements

Added Biodiversity:





The planned restoration of
2 KILOMETRES OF RIVER



Commitment to
plant over
**2000
TREES**



Improved
access
to over
20
acres of
green
space

-  Habitats added such as bird and bat boxes, bug hotels, a boggy area, hedgehog friendly homes and hibernacula for amphibians and reptiles.
-  Additional planting including planting of wildflower areas for pollinators, grassland improvement, raised beds to enhance “grey spaces”.

Food Poverty:

Over half the funded projects include a community food growing element in their plans. Food poverty is a growing concern with organisations wanting to support communities to have better access to fresh fruit and vegetables.





The Application Process

There are two grants available:

 **Small Grants - £3,000 to £25,000**

 **Large Grants - £25,000 to £100,000**

The fund is administered by The Heart of England Community Foundation, the application and support documents are available on the HoECF website: [WMCA Community Green Grants | Heart of England Community Foundation \(heartofenglandcf.co.uk\)](https://www.heartofenglandcf.co.uk/wmca-community-green-grants)

The Community Green Grant is a rolling grant with applications being accepted throughout the life of the fund. Grants are awarded each quarter.

The eligibility of applications is assessed by HoECF then passed to WMCA for appraisal by the Grants Assessment Panel. Applications are scored on how closely they meet the priority criteria which is set out in the [Application Guidance](#).

Support is available to all applicants from the Community Green Grants officer. Applicants are encouraged to contact the CGG Officer to arrange a meeting or site visit before making a formal application.

A commitment to increasing biodiversity is an essential part of successful applications. To support organisations achieve this aim a useful guide was compiled by the Grant Assessment Panel: [Top-Tips-for-increasing-biodiversity-V1.3.pdf \(heartofenglandcf.co.uk\)](#)

There is also a series of webinars on Increasing Biodiversity freely available on the WMCA YouTube channel. Delivered by experts they cover topics ranging from wildflower meadows to how to install ponds for wildlife: [Increasing Biodiversity webinars - YouTube](#)



Funded Projects

Q1 March 2022:

Kings Rise Academy: Opening KRAKEN (Kings Rise Academy Knowledge and Education in Nature) to Kingstanding

£8,494.50 Birmingham

Development of a school garden to make it available to the wider community. This will include 2 weekly clubs (Little Bugs Club and The KRAKEN Gardeners Club) for new users.

The project has opened a new green space to the residents of Kingstanding giving them the opportunity to connect with nature and reap the benefits of the being in the outdoors.



Old Hall People's Partnership: The Bentley 'Growing Great' Pocket Park

£18,650 Walsall

Creation of a pocket park in Bentley, Walsall. The project provides residents with a green space to enjoy and the opportunity to garden and grow fruit & vegetables.

The pocket park includes wildflower areas and raised beds to grow herbs and vegetables. Biodiversity will be encouraged through the inclusion of log piles, hedgehog homes, bird & bat boxes, and solitary bee houses. A project coordinator will work with local people of all ages to do the work to establish the pocket park and the maintain it.

Sustainable Life: Access to Ten Acres

£16.050 Birmingham

An exciting project to clear 1.6 acres of brambles on the Ten Acre site and make it accessible to the public and restore a hidden orchard.

The work is supported by a group of committed volunteers. Activities have included a Plum Festival to celebrate the opening of the orchard area. Other work will be the delivery of workshops and work with residents to encourage care and maintenance of the site. The project is maintaining important habitats and helping the area become a place where a diverse range of plants and wildlife can thrive.

Q2 June 2022:



Caldmore Community Garden: Let's Meet at the Garden

£17,692, Walsall

Caldmore Community Garden is an established community garden in Caldmore, Walsall.

The project focuses on increasing the biodiversity of the garden through the cultivation of a new “boggy area”. Additional activities include the building and installing of bat boxes; working with the Bat Conservation Trust to identify the bat species on site.

The funding has also allowed the garden to continue their weekly garden Saturdays for local families which provides essential hands-on experience with nature for children in the area.

Feeding Coventry: Herbert, Kairos, and Foleshill Green Project

£25,000, Coventry

Feeding Coventry is a small charity working to support food resilience across Coventry. They are based in Foleshill Community Centre. They have had success with setting up 2 community gardens and are building on this success with 3 new green spaces.

The funded project is to create accessible green space in 3 areas of Coventry: Foleshill, Herbert Art Gallery, and Kairos Women's Centre. The work will increase the biodiversity through the planting of community gardens where people can grow food/ wildflowers and learn about the importance of natural habitats in urban areas.





Kingstanding Regeneration Trust: Brookvale's Birds & Bees Project

£19,344, Birmingham

Kingstanding Regeneration Trust is a charity based in Erdington supporting NEET (not in education, employment, or training) young people in North Birmingham into training and work.

The organisation is situated at the old park keeper's cottage within Brookvale Park they have been funded to clear the 70 square metre cottage garden that is overgrown and littered. The area can then be used to engage young people aged 16-25 in green skills. The participants will be given the opportunity to complete entry level qualifications to help them get jobs and apprenticeships in the green industry.

“KRT's transformative project will turn a wasteland into a fragrant, bio-diverse garden with safe spaces for local wildlife and growing food. On this journey, they will train 40 NEET young people to gain the skills, qualifications and work experience they need to succeed at finding sustainable employment in the green industries. Once established this garden will continue to provide work experience opportunities for young people for many years to come.” Anya Sanchez, KRT Director



Q3 September 2022:

All Saints Action Network: Greening All Saints

£20,206, Wolverhampton

All Saints Action Network is an established community development trust working to achieve long term change in the All-Saints area of Wolverhampton.

The proposed project is to turn an unused carpark at the back of their community and business hub into a family playground. Funding has been secured through a landfill trust for resurfacing and playground equipment. WMCA Community Green Grants has awarded £20,206 for the biodiversity elements of the project. This will include installing a wildlife pond, raised beds, habitat boxes and bird boxes. Part of the grant will also be used to improve the existing community garden and support the gardening club.



Marsh Hill Allotments: Nature Area- Accessible Green Space Stockland Green

£7,200, Birmingham

Part of a larger project which will change an unused area of the allotments into a community area with wildlife pond and wildflower meadow. With additional funding the area and pathways will be made fully accessible so that people with limited mobility can access the site. The Community Green Grant fund will be used to clear the site and install a wildlife pond and wildflower meadow. Once established the area will be used by schools and community groups. A programme of activities will be delivered aimed at local SEN groups and the elderly with limited opportunities to accessible natural spaces.

Northfield Stroke Club: Relaxation, Refresh and Rejuvenate

£11,175, Birmingham

Northfield Stroke Club is a voluntary group that provides support for people recovering from strokes. The project is based at the Reaside Community Centre in Northfield. The project will transform the unused green space around the community centre into a community garden for the Northfield Stroke Club and other groups who use the Community Centre.

The club is attended by several keen amateur gardeners who are enthusiastic about getting involved in the transformation of the site. This will include planting wildflowers, installing container ponds, growing fruit/ vegetables, and installing bird boxes and other habitats.





Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust: Love Your River Stour- Cradley and Lye

£99,990, Sandwell and Dudley

This project is a large-scale community focused river restoration. Working alongside local communities and with significant staff time BBCWT will transform 3.5 hectares of ancient woodland and 2 kilometres of river. There will also be the creation of 1 hectare of species rich grassland and the planting of 2,000 trees and shrubs.

The project aims are to improve the habitats and water quality and to increase the number of local people accessing the 2 sites. Pathways and access points will be improved for better, safer access.

BBCWT have had great success with the “Love Your River Stour” project in Wolverhampton, seeing an improvement in river quality and an increase in people accessing the site.

As part of the expansion in Lye and Dudley BBCWT will run community engagement activities and volunteer days so local people can get hands on with the river restoration. There will also be the opportunity for 24 young people to train in environmental restoration.



Q4 December 2022:

EKHO Collective CIC: EKHO Therapeutic and Sensory Community Garden

£21,130, Dudley

Ekho collective are a new CIC focused on improving wellbeing through green projects. The staff are specialists in mental health support and Therapeutic Horticulture. The organisation is based at Hawbush Community Gardens in Brierley Hill, it is an urban industrial area with a need for welcoming accessible green space.

Ekho will be transforming 2 unused allotment plots at Hawbush into a therapeutic sensory garden, additional work will include improvement to the woodland on site and the installation of a wildlife pond. Ekho strive to use green gardening techniques such as a no dig approach to gardening, making their own compost, mulches and conserving water sources. They work with isolated people helping them to gain confidence in gardening and learning about environmentally friendly techniques. They also plan to offer families affordable activities in a safe green space.

The garden will become a therapeutic space for participants and a resource to continue their successful social prescribing work and food bank provision through the allotments.

St Catherine's Church: St Catherine's Community Garden

£10,099, Coventry

The project is based on unused land at the rear of the church, the Community Green Grant is one grant within a larger project to remove a derelict building from church land and redevelop the land into an outdoor space for the community.

The Community Green Grant is covering the garden elements including the pruning of existing trees and hedgerows and the installation of a wildflower area, composting area and raised beds. The grant will also cover additional items such as seating, gardening tools and a shed.

There is a volunteer element with training of garden volunteers by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. The aim is that the garden will become a community space available not just to the many groups that use the church but also to community groups including schools, children's groups, a dementia café, and users of the food bank.



The Froglife Trust: Coalface to Wildspace

£68,718, Walsall

Froglife Trust is a national organisation that works to conserve the UK's amphibian and reptile species. Funding has been secured from Heritage Lottery to embed community workers in a deprived area of Walsall and lead on increasing engagement with amphibian conservation.

The funds awarded from Community Green Grant is an essential addition to the wider work providing funding to pay for the restoration of two non-functioning ponds in Reedswood Park and the addition of two new ponds with the aim of increasing the amphibian population in the area.

There will be a programme of community work engaging with local schools and community groups. The aim is that the project will create two wildlife corridors running from central to west Walsall and create an inviting accessible space for the public to engage with a neglected area of Reedswood Park.



Next Steps....

The WMCA Community Green Grant will continue in 2023.

- Just over £300,000 remaining to award in 2023.
- Funding options are being explored to extend and continue the programme.
- For further information on WMCA Community Green Grants email CommunityGreenGrants@wmca.org.uk



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