



A magical day at Clissold Park
by Leyla Ozkan

The power of five – access to green space is a right, not a privilege

All Londoners deserve to revel in the beauty, tranquillity and freedom of green space. That is why we're calling for action now to level-up access to green space across the capital.

It will come as no surprise to hear that London has just half the green space it needs for a population its size. The space that exists is threatened by harmful developments and inequalities in access meaning that not all Londoners have the opportunity to reap the benefits of the natural environment. BAME and poorer communities statistically share less space and lack access to private gardens and public parks. We have outlined a five-step, realistic and achievable plan to deliver [#GreenSpace4All](#), a vital priority that is now more important than ever for delivering a post-pandemic green recovery.

Despite the looming climate emergency and our heightened dependence on nature during lockdown, our green spaces are not safe from destruction. As we speak many areas of London are threatened by development. [Five areas](#) in particular have been brought to our attention that are under imminent threat including: Victoria Tower Gardens, Hounslow Green Belt, Green Dale Park Southwark, Duncombe Hill Lewisham and Limehouse Triangle Tower Hamlets.

An increase in the frequency and quality of green spaces are integral to London's resilience to the impacts of a changing climate. We need to enhance existing green spaces, with more trees, through planting, nurturing and natural regeneration, more hedges to help reduce noise and air pollution, and wildlife-friendly management. These nature-based solutions and many others are outlined in our manifesto, [A More Natural Capital](#), calling on the next Mayor of London to improve our natural environment.

With the help of local communities, we want to help create [Ten New Parks for London](#) from promising protected sites which have been forgotten by the authorities. We want to collaborate with local campaigners and the relevant boroughs to transform these spaces into useful new parks, with assets including nature reserves, water features and sports facilities.

Despite many wonderful parks, London does not have enough green spaces and they are too far away from too many communities. [Please make a donation](#) towards our work and help us ensure we can pass on a greener city to future generations. We are hugely grateful to our members and supporters for any help they have been able to give.

Helping London live through lockdown

CPRE London Chair Tony Burton reflects on making the best of an unusual year.



It has been a year like no other. Our lives have been turned upside down and the way millions of us use London's local countryside and streets has been transformed. CPRE London's work has never been more important.

The capital's parks and green spaces have provided sanctuary, exercise and a place to meet and been used in record numbers. Our [Big Green London Map](#) has given local community groups the means to raise the profile and celebrate their local green spaces and add them to the bigger picture. Through this GoParksLondon initiative we are making sure the vital green spaces so many have discovered during Lockdown get the funding, attention and protection they deserve. We're now campaigning to make things even better and create ten new London parks for everyone to enjoy.

We've also been helping make space on our streets for people to walk and cycle free from traffic. [The Healthy Streets Scorecard](#) has put the spotlight on boroughs taking action and called out those parts of London where more needs to be done.

London's countryside should benefit all parts of our city. To help this we've been working ever more closely with local groups. This has helped plant hedgerows in Lewisham and Haringey and supported mums and under-fives in temporary accommodation with a growing project in Newham. We're keen to do more.

CPRE London plays a unique role as a champion of London's countryside and an advocate for high quality new development.

"Our lives have been turned upside down and the way millions of us use London's local countryside and streets has been transformed."

We bring together a wide range of voices - for wildlife, clean air, beauty, active travel, tranquillity, public access, design, trees, parks, safe streets - and support better community engagement and effective planning and other decisions by public bodies. As a consequence we find ourselves convening London's many voices and bringing together campaigning and community groups across the capital.

Our joint work on [GoParksLondon](#), [Healthy Streets](#) and a [shared manifesto](#) for the upcoming Mayoral elections are just three ways in which CPRE London is giving people a stronger voice. Now our eyes are looking to a different life beyond lockdown. We now know the true value of London's countryside and with your ideas and support we stand ready to play an even bigger role in celebrating and securing its future.

A view from our new trustees

This year we're delighted to welcome three new members onto the CPRE London board.



Alena Kalashnikova has joined us as Treasurer:

"Joining CPRE is the most effective way to help to protect the city which I like so much. Apart from sharing the goals and values of the charity, I wanted to play a part in the decision-making process and make contributions. I believe that discussions and debates with other inspiring members of the CPRE team will enrich my life experience and help to overcome challenges."

Poonam Douglas has recently joined as Honorary Secretary:

"I joined as a trustee coming out of the first COVID-19 lockdown and saw how green spaces in London have never been so important for children and adults alike; particularly in a metropolitan city where many do not have access to private outside space. I'm excited about campaigns like Space to Build which incorporates the requirement for much needed housing while protecting the open spaces for everyone and growing the network of advocates for our city."

Tara-Jane Sutcliffe is one of our new Trustees:

"I am delighted to join the board of CPRE London to support vital work championing our capital's green spaces and urban countryside. With unparalleled opportunity to drive through a post-pandemic green recovery this is a critical time to make a strategic contribution to the vision of a greener London."

We look forward to working with Alena, Poonam and Tara-Jane in 2021.

Healthy streets: a vision for 2021

A second scorecard and the School Streets report shine a spotlight on London's streets much in need of reform.

July saw the launch of the second [Healthy Streets Scorecard](#) published by the London Boroughs Healthy Streets Scorecard Coalition, proudly coordinated by CPRE London. The results of the second scorecard, for the first-time show year-on-year progress but display marginal shifts in even the most progressive boroughs. The proposed scorecard measures will dramatically improve air quality and road safety, boost active lifestyles and reduce carbon emissions – often overnight.

A [School Streets report](#) was released in November by the Healthy Streets Scorecard and Mums for Lungs, and received significant attention in national media, including The Times and The Evening Standard. The report has revealed that the number of traffic-free School Streets have surged in London, from 302 in just 6 months under the Mayor's "Streetspace" plan. Despite rapid progress, out of the 3,085 schools in London, only 12.4% have Schools Streets in operation. The new year is a perfect time for boroughs and schools to implement the necessary measures that will transform the school run and protect children from air pollution and vehicle danger.

Turning wasted grey parking space into greener, quieter, less-polluted areas, will significantly aid the transformation of London's streets. Also released in November, [CPRE London's Parking Transformed report](#) outlines eight simple ways parking space can be modified to make London a greener city.

The quieter roads of lockdown are a distant memory and it's time that we acted on London's dangerous, polluted and congested roads. Action on our streets will improve your environment and make roads safer. Ask your local council to take action on these [five measures today!](#)

Planning reform: implications for London

Planning reforms proposed by the Government have come under attack from a wide range of organisations.

The proposals have been criticised as misguided and flawed for failing to understand the vital role played by the planning system in delivering environmentally sustainable development that meets the needs of local communities. They risk seriously reducing the longstanding and critical democratic nature of planning by undermining effective public involvement in policy and decision-making processes.

As it stands, local communities will have a say about whether their area becomes a 'Growth', 'Renewal' or 'Protected' zone. But, unlike under the current system, they would then have no say on the individual developments that take place in those zones or on their doorsteps, resulting in an unacceptable loss of local democracy in the planning process. We believe that a strong, democratic planning system is an essential component of sustainable development, community cohesion and a healthy environment. Concerns have focused on the so-called 'housing algorithm' that would dictate how many homes are built across England and where. As well as being unfit for purpose, these centralised targets have been determined without input from the local authorities and communities who know their areas best.

The resulting housing figures for London are overinflated and take no account of realistic capacity or the emerging new London Plan. They would fail to deliver genuinely affordable housing for those in need and would place our precious green spaces at serious risk of development.

A fundamental rethink is required if we are to meet the need for more affordable housing by making better use of existing developed land and protect and increase quality green space – both vital for the future of London. We have written to MPs in the capital urging them to persuade the Government to think again.



Students from Winton school, Islington. Islington has reported the highest number of School Streets in London.

Your winter walks sorted: the launch of the Central London Footways

David Harrison of London Living Streets fills us in on an extensive new walking map that will stretch our legs and broaden our horizons.

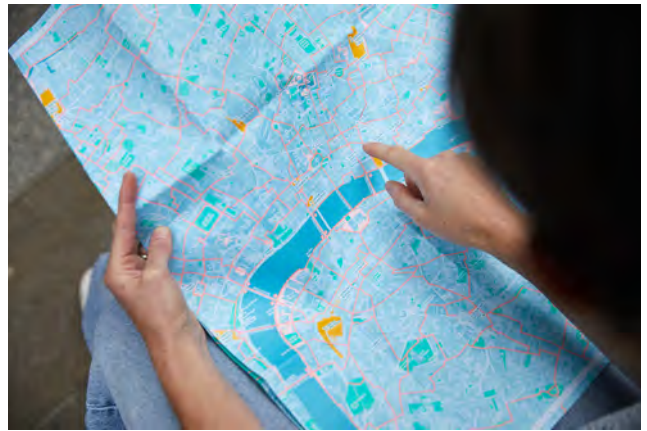
2020 has been a tough year, but it has changed our habits; friends tell me that they have discovered, or rediscovered, walking longer distances for both leisure and practical purposes.

Are we returning to an earlier age? In 1854, 400,000 people walked into and out of the City of London every day. These walks weren't the final leg of a journey from a station: they were the entire commute. Walking more and further is critical to tackle our health, pollution and climate crises, and to avoid contagion and relieve pressure on roads and public transport.

To get people walking more on everyday journeys, Central London Footways, a network of quiet and interesting streets, has been launched. There is an on-line and printed map which was published in September. The network and campaign were devised by David Harrison and Emma Griffin at London Living Streets. The printed map and design are by Urban Good funded by Transport for London.

The map connects London's important destinations, mainline stations, and green spaces. This is about getting people from A to B, but in an enjoyable and healthy way. It includes routes through Central London's many squares (more than 40 on some definitions), superb parks and historic streets. A unique combination.

The map also creates new ways of looking at walking, showing how quickly journeys can be walked: Euston to the British Museum through leafy Bloomsbury in 19 minutes, compared to 17 minutes by taxi and 16 minutes by public transport.



It joins up the many new public realm improvements, for example from Trafalgar Square to the Museum via low traffic Seven Dials and traffic-free Princes' Circus. The project also aims to get people campaigning for further improvements: reduced traffic and parking, better crossings and wider pavements.

300,000 people have viewed the map online and our first print is disappearing fast. Our London bookshop stockists have been surprised by how many people have turned up at bookshops asking for free copies. The next step is to reprint, taking into account users' suggestions for improvements. We also intend to extend the network to other parts of London and are looking for volunteers to uncover London's best streets for walking and its hidden features.

For a digital version of the map, to find out where to obtain a free copy, and to contact Central London Footways, visit www.footways.london.



Oasis in the heart of the city by Sarah Ahern

Star of wonder...

We all know the words to the Christmas carol but how many of us in London can look up to see the beauty of a starlit sky? Isabelle Ficker comments on the dangers of 'blue' light.

A star-spangled night sky is one of nature's most magical wonders. Yet in our artificially lit world, three quarters of the population's eyes never switch to night vision and most of us no longer experience true darkness. Streetlamps, neon signs, headlights, sports fields, traffic lights, 'security' lights contribute to an ever-present glow that is devastating the natural world as well as our own health.

The problem of light pollution in London is exacerbated by 'blue-rich', high CCT (4000K) LED street lighting. Hailed as an energy and money saving revolution in lighting, it now seems that the short-wave blue contained in these LEDs is contributing to a catastrophic, world-wide decline in biodiversity and is associated with conditions such as cancer, obesity, diabetes and depression. The old sodium lights had their faults but they contained very little 'blue' and so were better for health and the environment.

It is not a question of being anti-LED but about recognising that all forms of life are connected. We are part of and depend on a healthy ecosystem for our well-being and survival. We must make intelligent use of the available spectrum of LED, redirecting our choice to 2700K and better still 2200K.

We all need to get behind CPRE's **Dark Sky** London campaign being launched in February by lobbying the new Mayor of London and local councils, to minimise light pollution in their boroughs and commit to a low CCT future. By so doing we will begin to reclaim the night sky with all the benefits that it brings.



And the award goes to...

The Urban Tree Festival walks away with top lockdown award at the #TreeOscars.

The 2020 Urban Tree Festival took place online in May. CPRE London chaired a selection of 'Tree Rings' seminars celebrating London's urban trees and beyond. Thanks to the support of thousands of voters in the London Tree and Woodland Awards, the Urban Tree Festival has been crowned Lockdown London Tree Champions! This special award acknowledges the outstanding people and projects who have helped London's urban forestry during lockdown.

Volunteer profile

We chat to our intern Louis about his time at CPRE London and new year projects.

How have you been contributing to CPRE London's campaigning work?

As a Green Space Research intern I have analysed Local Plan policies to propose sustainable, low carbon alternatives for future policy. Working with Alice Roberts, I have researched local threats to the Green Belt and linked them to national policies on climate change, transport and housing, culminating in the report: **London's Green Belt: Our climate safety belt**. The internship has improved my research, analytical and casework skills, and my ability to recognise the ever-increasing need for advocacy for peri-urban land.

You also work with Black Geographers, a community interest group providing a space for #blackgeographers to connect. Can you tell us a bit more about what opportunities they offer?

The Young Geographers project is a range of services that cater to those studying geography. The project aims to engage black and minority ethnic students with geography, to better understand the world around them and pique an interest in environmental issues and further study. With ESRI UK, we are proud to announce the creation of the Geospatial Fund, a scholarship for students studying an undergraduate or postgraduate geography degree. Applications open January 15th 2021.

What's new for Black Geographers in 2021 and how should people get involved?

I will be leading a project focusing on planning and youth engagement which will introduce students wanting to study geography/built environment degrees into urban planning and the many career paths associated with the sector. People can get involved with Black Geographers by following us on our **social accounts** and visiting our **website here**.



Paul Wood, author and cofounder of the Urban Tree Festival said,

"The Urban Tree Festival team was thrilled to be crowned 'Lockdown London Tree Champions'. It was particularly exciting because the award was voted on by the public and we had stiff competition in the shape of Rachel Summers who became known for chalking of tree names and their stories on Walthamstow Streets, and TreeTalk, a website enabling users to create daily tree walks that hit the headlines earlier in the year."

You can access live event videos and blogs online at **urbantreefestival.org**. We're already beginning to organise the Urban Tree Festival in May 2021 - watch this space.

London after lockdown Get behind the hedge

What steps should we prioritise for building a fairer and more resilient city in the wake of the pandemic?

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus the health and economic inequalities within our city. These challenges, alongside the threat posed by the climate emergency, means that as we navigate the 'new normal' it is clear that a return to 'business as usual' is not an option.

As part of our 2020 AGM, CPRE London organised a panel discussion on **London After Lockdown: priorities for a green recovery**. The topic was debated by a high-profile cast from London's environmental and urban planning community: Dr Clare Melhuish, Director of the UCL Urban Laboratory at University College London, Ben Rogers, Director of the Centre for London and Shirley Rodrigues, Deputy Mayor for the Environment and Energy.

The panel presentation and subsequent discussion homed in on key priorities for focused action, including: carbon-neutral regeneration for prosperous economic development, improved access to green space in areas of deficiency and inequality, stronger planning tools for greener social and housing developments across the city, the upscaling of community initiatives and healthy, green, liveable streets.

We are grateful to our panellists who provided enlightening and constructive thoughts on a post-pandemic recovery. We will continue to press for a strong green vision for London that encourages the systematic change required to create a more socially integrated and environmentally sustainable city.

Read a more detailed summary of the discussion and watch the video highlights on our [website](#).

Hedgerows are often thought of as a quintessential feature of the rural landscape, yet they are also a vital element in the urban environment. Alongside roads and paths they provide a natural barrier between people and vehicles, reduce noise and air pollution, support wildlife and enhance landscapes.

That's why, in September, CPRE London launched an initiative to support local community groups who want to plant new hedgerows in parks, green spaces or other suitable locations. Following a call for proposals, aided by Parks for London and the London Friends of Green Spaces network, we received lots of interest from local groups. We were pleased to be able to offer support to four schemes in Haringey, Merton, Islington and Lewisham, with small grants towards the cost of materials, tools, and planting stock.

In Islington, fruiting hedging is being introduced to enhance an existing green space. Yvonne Connolly, Britain's first female black headteacher, after which the community garden is named, said "I am grateful to CPRE London for their kind grant to the Wray Crescent Open Space for new hedgerows. This will greatly support the work of our volunteer groups, and enable our community of people and wild inhabitants to enjoy the variety of hedging and a bountiful supply of fruit for many years to come".

There are many existing schemes to support tree planting but nothing focused on establishing new hedgerows. Subject to future funding, we want our urban hedgerow initiative to become an annual programme.



Busy planting in Crouch End

Hidden gem protected

The Finchley Way Open Space is set to be rejuvenated thanks to new plans.

We are pleased to learn that Barnet council is supporting a Friends group (FoFWOS) in working to restore an area of deciduous woodland. The area has been neglected for about 15 years and is attached to an open grassland recreational space. The whole site has an area of 0.6ha., is a 10-minute walk from West Finchley station and is described as a hidden gem. The site is in the grounds of the former Brent Lodge, which was left to the people of Finchley in the will of its then owner, Augustus Cooper. The group hopes to involve local schools and children's nurseries as well as residents to restore and improve the site and thereby enhance the area's biodiversity. For more information visit their [GoParks listing here](#).



The Finchley Way Open Space on a bright morning

Our message to the next Mayor of London

Tackling the climate and nature emergency requires action from all levels of government. That's why all eyes are now on the London elections which will now take place alongside local elections across England on 6th May.

Since the postponement of the elections due to the pandemic, we have been busy reviewing and refining our joint manifesto **A More Natural Capital** which outlines ways the Mayoral candidates should improve London for people, nature and climate. We are delighted that more than 20 leading groups with an interest in the environment and quality of life in the capital have come together to agree a set of priorities for the next Mayor. In our manifesto, we grouped 24 key actions under four broad themes – action to reduce pollution and waste, to secure nature's recovery, to increase resilience to climate change and to improve health and wellbeing.

Action to address the climate and nature emergencies take centre stage in the manifesto. While also advocating the benefits to people's health and wellbeing of contact with nature and green spaces, we were not to know that a public health emergency would emerge so rapidly as a third, existential threat. We all know how much green space has become a lifeline for urban communities over the past year. If London is to secure a truly green recovery then we need an approach that works for all its inhabitants.

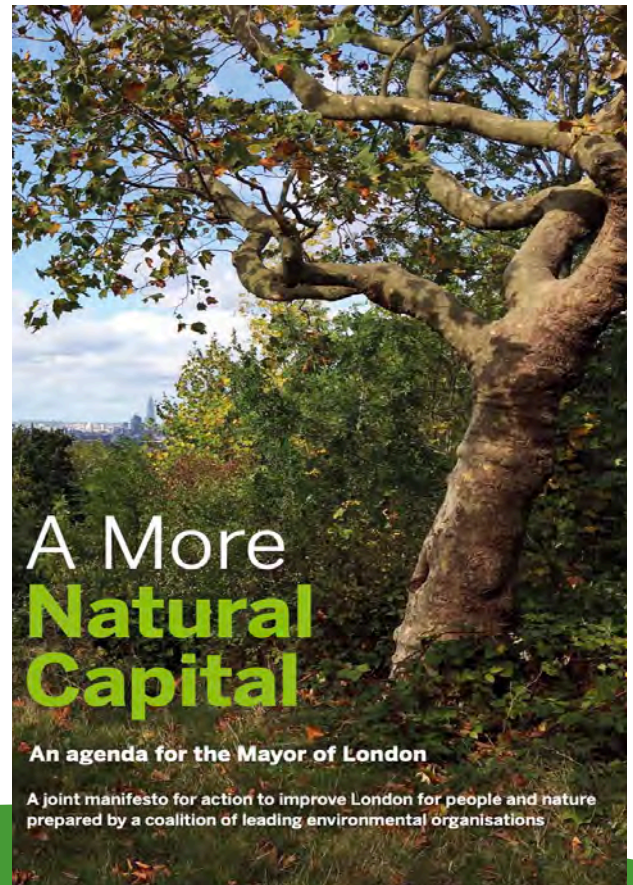
More than three quarters of Londoners believe that nature should contribute to the recovery and nearly two thirds say that protection and enhancement of green space should be a higher priority following the pandemic.

London's disadvantaged communities tend to live in the poorest environments – an issue highlighted by the pandemic. It is essential that economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic goes hand in hand with environmental improvement and social justice.

It is striking how any of the Manifesto proposals – such as connecting more people with local green space through the creation of new green walking routes and parks, improving air quality by promoting more active travel, and increasing tree canopy cover – could support the achievement of multiple climate, nature and health objectives.

Having discussed our proposals with the election candidates and their teams at the start of the year, we are now poised to re-engage with them to secure support from across the political spectrum for our agenda. We want to work closely with the successful candidates to deliver our aspirations for a healthier, greener and more liveable London.

Keep an eye on our website and social media to find out how you can help us drive home the case for a more natural capital. [Download the manifesto here](#) and watch this space to see how you can help promote the agenda.



#PictureGreenLondon

Congratulations to our winners!

In July, we asked Londoners to get behind the lens and capture the interaction of London's green spaces. The response was incredible, and we received a fantastic array of entries that showcase London's natural cityscape. Congratulations to Marieke, Marcos and Candy and a huge thank you to all entrants! We encourage all our supporters to keep sharing your images with #PictureGreenLondon. We'll keep you posted on our 2021 competition!

The photo to the right is the winning entry 'Heading to the basketball courts, Brockwell Park' by Marieke Wrigley.



Stuck for New Year's resolutions?

We've come up with five resolutions which will enable you to explore and enjoy London's distinctive urban beauty and contribute to the securing a healthier, greener environment in the new year.

The events of 2020 have highlighted how precious London's green spaces are for everyone. As we have adapted to varying forms of social distancing, tiered restrictions and working from home, we've all become aware of the value of spending time outdoors.

We would like to offer some suggestions to add to your New Year's resolutions for 2021. The five we have chosen represent a combination of enjoying the projects our members and supporters have helped us to achieve this year, together with one or two where your engagement will continue to help secure better use of London's natural resources.

Try a new walk and explore more of London's unique character

Enjoy the history and richness of what London offers with its amazing combination of characterful streets, green spaces, waterways, and natural habitat. Visit www.footways.london for some inspiration.

See how many different trees you can spot within a mile of where you live

Did you know London has over 8 million trees and over 80 different species? Here is a map to help find the species in your area with some great tips on how to enjoy your walk by Paul Wood at www.thestreettree.com

Discover a new park to explore in your borough

Check out London's 4000 parks and green spaces at [GoParks London](http://GoParks.London).

Forgo a car journey

You could make a difference in 2021 by switching a journey you would normally make by car, for walking, cycling or public transport. If we all gave up one car journey every week, we could make such a difference to tackling air quality and reducing congestion on our roads.

Help us create 10 new green spaces for Londoners

One of the best ways to protect open spaces is for them to be formally recognised as public parks. We have drawn up a shortlist of areas that would benefit from such status including Warren Farm in Ealing, Bowring in Greenwich, and the East London Waterworks in Waltham Forest. We also want to support new regional parks, such as the Brent River Park. Early in the new year we will be launching our campaign for 10 new parks for London. Please help us achieve this by making a donation to our appeal [here](#).



'Early morning in Greenwich Park by Candy Blackman

We would like to thank our members, supporters and partners for helping us create a greener city for London.

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The countryside charity
London

Working for a greener city