

West Midlands Greener Together Forum

Keeping the Faith in Climate Action



West Midlands
Combined Authority



Greener
Together

Agenda

5:30pm – 5.45pm – Kamran Shezad – BAHU Trust

5.45pm – 5:55pm – Jackie Homan – West Midlands

5:55pm – 6.05pm - Tas Bashir - Community Retrofit by MECC Trust

6.05pm – 6.15pm - Dan Gregory - Birmingham City Council

6.15pm – 6.25pm – Shaheen Ahmed & Jo Ind – Balsall Heath Nature Map

6.25pm – 6.35pm – Prubhjyot Singh - EcoSikh

6.35pm – 6.45pm - Chris Martin – Birmingham Faith Climate Action Partnership

6:45pm – 6:50pm – 5 - minute break

6:55pm– 7.20pm - Panel event with young people of faith How do you feel faith supports young people with climate action?

7:20pm – 7.25pm – Community announcements – for anyone to raise any upcoming events or areas of interest to the Forum

7.25pm – 7.30pm – Closing remarks

7:30pm – 8:00pm – Refreshments & Networking



Regional Climate Action

Jackie Homan

Head of Environment

West Midlands Combined Authority

Regional climate targets

2041 is the regional date set to achieve net zero

This is a hugely ambitious plan but is an essential investment in the region's future.

We set out a five year plan explaining how we can deliver a 33% reduction in carbon use across local transport, energy, homes and businesses by 2026.

How we support the Environment

The WMCA's Environment Programme has four themes;

Natural environment | circular economy | climate adaptation | air quality

Behaviour change is a cross-cutting theme

Projects we've secured funding for and started delivering;

- £1m from Defra for the Local Investment in Natural Capital project
- £1.4m from Defra and DLUHC for air quality sensors and a behaviour change programme
- £1.2m from Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund for a new Community Environment Fund
- £300k secured from Woodland Trust's Emergency Tree Fund
- Our Community Green Grant programme has provided over £1m for 30 projects across the region
- Over 596k trees are registered on our Virtual Forest platform that encourages tree planting

Community Grants

Since 2022, the WMCA has awarded grants of over £1.7 million to community groups to improve greenspaces, connect people with nature, reduce waste, make communities more resilient to climate impacts and improve knowledge of environmental issues.

Recently our Community Environment Fund has funded;

All Saints' Action Network, Wolverhampton - to open a Repair Café at its community hub and wood recycling centre.

Holyhead Road Allotments, Coventry - to transform an area of the site that has become water-logged due to climate change

Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust - for Dudley's Path to Nature Recovery project to help connect more people in Dudley and Sandwell to nature

Saathi House, Aston – to train 90 local women as environment champions to promote sustainable living practices



Our work with faith groups

The Faith Strategic Partnership Group brings together key members of West Midlands faith and community groups to help improve the lives of all residents.

- The group identifies priority areas and strategies to tackle these from a faith perspective. These include homelessness, education, employment, poverty, community relations and leadership.

In 2023, the WMCA signed The Faith Covenant – a joint commitment by faith communities, local authorities and others to a set of principles that promote open, practice working on all levels.





Get in touch

www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/environment-energy/

environment@wmca.org.uk

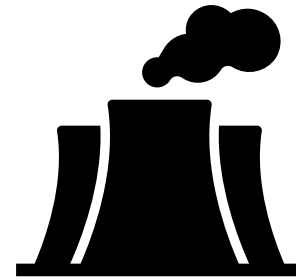
Collaborative approach to retrofit



The Housing Challenge

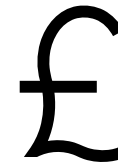
23%

Of Birmingham families live in **fuel poverty**



Housing responsible for **36% of Birmingham's emissions** (largely for heating)

66% of Birmingham homes estimated to be **EPC D or Below**



£1.4bn per year cost to NHS due to **cold, damp homes** (national)



My Vision

Birmingham is leading the way in Retrofit

- Supporting 10,000 households per year
- An exemplar approach based on collaboration and trust



Current Obstacles to this Vision

- Low awareness
- Lack of trust
- Poor quality communications
- Bad quality work
- Disorganised, confusing approach

= Low uptake



Wider Value of Delivering this Vision

- Cost of Living
- Health
- Community cohesion
- Jobs and training
- Local economy/ small businesses



Emerging Retrofit Programmes

- SHDF
- Energy Company Obligations
- Devolution programme
- Supporting people who are not eligible for funding



Birmingham Leading the Way

- Must scale up delivery of retrofit across the city
- Need to raise awareness and build trust
- Council cannot achieve this alone

How can I work with you to support more people in your communities?





@BhamCityCouncil



@birminghamcitycouncil



@birminghamcitycouncil



birmingham.gov.uk



Balsall Heath Nature Map

Balsall Heath

Bees hover above the frothy, white heads of cow parsley, with its waist-high flowers and mellow, musky scent promising long, lazy summer days ahead. Mice scuffle through the grass, rustling amongst the sapphire-blue flowers of the alkanet. The hawthorn, with its slender, gnarled trunk, festoons an exuberance of blossom, like a drag queen in an over-sized headdress.

Come here at night and you might hear bats flying in this triangular space of green. But why not go down to the river by day? Go past the farm and follow the lime tree way. Walk down by the eucalyptus tree, past the silver birch, the row of cherry trees, the yew and the horse chestnuts. Keep walking to where the chuff chaff kisses and the willow warblers sing. There, the river's clear water gurgles over smooth, cool stones.

This is Balsall Heath.



Artist Shaheen Ahmed

Balsall Heath Nature Map

Faith inspired nature mapping of Balsall Heath

Celebrating urban biodiversity

Collaboration with artists

Rachel Pilkington and Dave Gray

**Primordial Earth, is a Sanctuary:
a place for prayer and reflection for
all living beings.**

**'He has spread out the Earth for all living
creatures'**

Quran: Chapter The Lord of Mercy verse 10

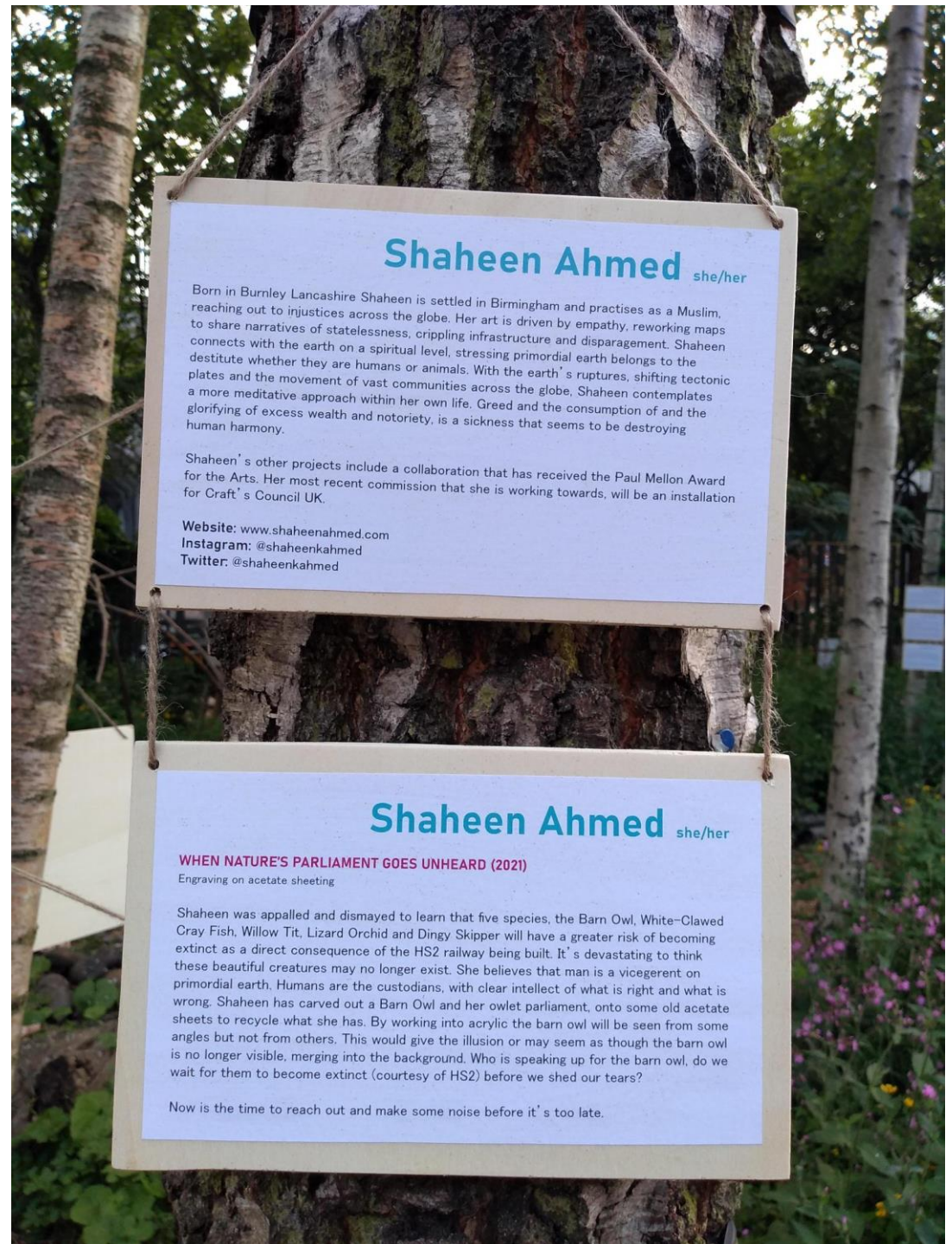


Ruptures & Resilience

A GROUP ART EXHIBITION
ABOUT HS2.

✿ EVERY WEEKEND OF JUNE
✿ 12-5pm

COME & ENJOY
THE GARDEN



Shaheen Ahmed she/her

Born in Burnley Lancashire Shaheen is settled in Birmingham and practises as a Muslim, reaching out to injustices across the globe. Her art is driven by empathy, reworking maps to share narratives of statelessness, crippling infrastructure and disparagement. Shaheen connects with the earth on a spiritual level, stressing primordial earth belongs to the destitute whether they are humans or animals. With the earth's ruptures, shifting tectonic plates and the movement of vast communities across the globe, Shaheen contemplates a more meditative approach within her own life. Greed and the consumption of and the glorifying of excess wealth and notoriety, is a sickness that seems to be destroying human harmony.

Shaheen's other projects include a collaboration that has received the Paul Mellon Award for the Arts. Her most recent commission that she is working towards, will be an installation for Craft's Council UK.

Website: www.shaheenahmed.com
Instagram: [@shaheenkahmed](https://www.instagram.com/shaheenkahmed)
Twitter: [@shaheenkahmed](https://twitter.com/shaheenkahmed)

Shaheen Ahmed she/her

WHEN NATURE'S PARLIAMENT GOES UNHEARD (2021)
Engraving on acetate sheeting

Shaheen was appalled and dismayed to learn that five species, the Barn Owl, White-Clawed Cray Fish, Willow Tit, Lizard Orchid and Dingy Skipper will have a greater risk of becoming extinct as a direct consequence of the HS2 railway being built. It's devastating to think these beautiful creatures may no longer exist. She believes that man is a vicegerent on primordial earth. Humans are the custodians, with clear intellect of what is right and what is wrong. Shaheen has carved out a Barn Owl and her owl parliament, onto some old acetate sheets to recycle what she has. By working into acrylic the barn owl will be seen from some angles but not from others. This would give the illusion or may seem as though the barn owl is no longer visible, merging into the background. Who is speaking up for the barn owl, do we wait for them to become extinct (courtesy of HS2) before we shed our tears?

Now is the time to reach out and make some noise before it's too late.



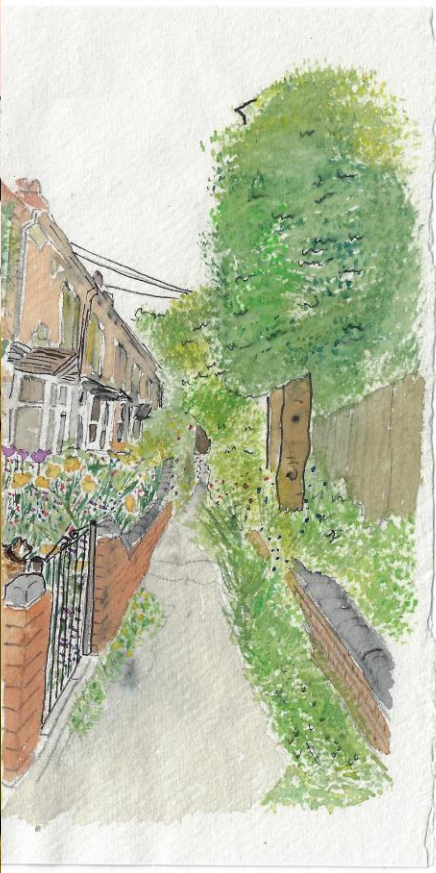
Our Garden Sacred Spaces of Balsall Heath

Mapping our experience of Nature as a community

Sharing and making connections with each other and with nature

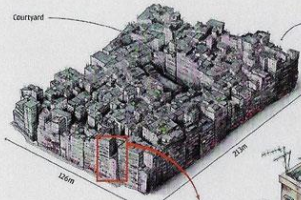
Making art together that celebrates nature and raises awareness of how we all depend upon nature to thrive and survive

Working towards an appreciation of nature in the wider city, raising awareness of what we can do to help nature thrive and survive



City of anarchy

Kowloon Walled City, located not far from the former Kai Tak Airport, was a remarkable high-rise squatter camp that by the 1980s had 50,000 residents. A historical accident of colonial Hong Kong, it existed in a lawless vacuum until it became an embarrassment for Britain. This month marks the 20th anniversary of its demolition.



500
Buildings built
into 2.7 hectares

Without municipal services, there was no rubbish collection. Old television sets, broken furniture, discarded mattresses and other bulky items were hauled to the roof and abandoned.

Other rooftops were used for exercise, playgrounds, relaxing and even pigeon raking.



Planes needed to turn 45 degrees to land at Kai Tak.

Buildings were no more than 14 floors high to avoid collisions.

There were 77 wells inside the city, some 90 metres deep. Electric pumps delivered water to big tanks on rooftops. From there, water was funnelled through narrow pipes to the homes.

HK\$35
monthly fourth rent.

Despite its daunting, squalid appearance and reputation for lawlessness, many of Kowloon Walled City's former residents remember a family. It may have been the City of Darkness to outsiders, but to thousands who called it home, it was a friendly, tight-knit community that was poor but generally happy.

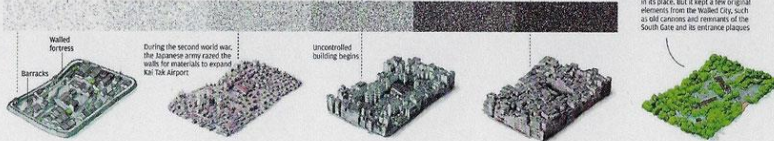
Electric wires were placed outdoors to prevent fires.

KOWLOON WALLED CITY
Hong Kong

The street-level shops were a mix of unlicensed delicatessens and doctors, market stalls and cafes that often included dog on the menu. Fish balls, barbecued fish roasts and other foodstuffs were manufactured in premises with little or no sanitation.

From fortress to park
The Walled City underwent a dramatic transformation in the final decades of the 20th century.

| 1898 | 1940 | 1950 | 1973 | 1980 | 1990 | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 700 inhabitants | Each point is an inhabitant | 2,000 inhabitants | 5,000 inhabitants | 10,000 inhabitants | 30,000 inhabitants | 50,000 inhabitants |



Walled fortress

Barracks

During the second world war, the Japanese army razed the walls for materials to expand Kai Tak Airport.

Uncontrolled building begins

Brothels and gambling dens, operated with impunity.

Residents carried umbrellas to shield themselves from constantly dripping water pipes above the narrow alleys.

Authorities isolated eight freshwater ponds – one inside the city, and the others outside its perimeter.

Population density
per square kilometre

HK 1,800,000

Mong Kok 130,000

Hong Kong 6,700

40sq ft
per person

The area's interconnected high-rise towers were built without architects and engineers, and ungoverned by Hong Kong's building and sanitation regulations.

There were several schools and kinder gardens. Some of them run by organisations such as the Salvation Army.

Tiny metal fabrications shops made up a good number of the 700 or so industrial premises. Most were found between the ground and fifth floors.

There were many tenon squares but they were unoccupiable. Police could only arrest non-residents.

Fresh start

In March 1993, the settlement was demolished and a park that looked like a typical Chinese garden was built in its place. But it kept a few original elements from the Walled City, such as old canons and remains of the South Gate and its entrance plaza.



ECO-SIKH UK

CARE FOR NATURE CARE
FOR ALL



ABOUT ECO-SIKH UK

Eco-Sikh UK is a unified inter-faith response to help combat climate change, global warming and bio-diversity loss.

With a firm belief that the sum of our diverse communities is so much greater than its parts, we believe that all humans have an intrinsic sensitivity to the natural world, and that a sustainable, more just society is possible.



ABOUT ECO-SIKH UK

Eco-Sikh UK is a non-profit organisation which is part of a wider global climate action programme by Eco-Sikh.

With a firm belief that the sum of our diverse communities is so much greater than its parts, we believe that all humans have an intrinsic sensitivity to the natural world, and that a sustainable, more just society is possible.

‘Air is our Guru, water is our father, the earth is our mother. They give us life, we sleep in their laps night and day, in which the entire world plays.’—Guru Nanak Dev Ji(SGGS p.8)



OBJECTIVES

Eco-Sikh UK aims to interact and engage with communities focusing around five key activity areas (social objectives) of the Seed Plan: *(see appendices I, II, III, IV & V)*

- Assets
- Education & Young People
- Media & Advocacy
- Partnerships & Eco-twinning
- Celebration



ACTIVITIES

Collaborating with others – Canal and River Trust



Canal & River Trust
Making life better by water



Festival of Light

Canal & River Trust will be celebrating Diwali and Bhandi Chor and lighting up the historic Galton bridge this year so come along and enjoy the majestic scenery of the bridge and the canal.

Date: Saturday 6th November 2021 - 5:30pm to 8pm.
Venue: Roebuck Lane, Smethwick, B66 1BS.

Free Entry! Light up a diva on the water.

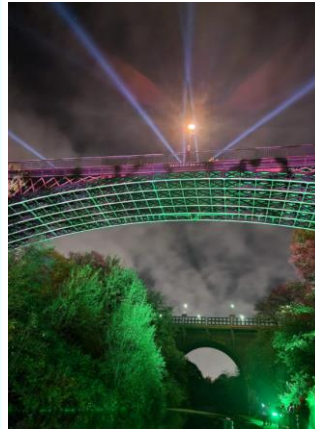
For more information:
Contact Lutfur 07818 539 310 or Prubhijot 07970 104390



Enjoy. Volunteer. Donate
canalrivertrust.org.uk

Making life better by water
Canal & River Trust is the charity that works with communities to transform their local canals and rivers, creating places and spaces that can be enjoyed by everyone, every day.

Charity No. 1146792



Canal & River Trust
Making life better by water



Let's Paddle - Kayaking Sessions

Ever wanted to learn to kayak but didn't know where to start? Join us at one of our free, "Let's Paddle" kayaking sessions in Galton Valley Canal

Date: Wednesdays 25th August - 11am to 3pm. Meeting Point: Galton Valley Pumping Station, Entry point: Brasshouse Lane, B66 1BA

To book your free place please call Prubhijot Singh on 07970 104390

For more information:
Contact Lutfur or Joity on 07818 539 310 / 07970 104390



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ACTIVITIES

Collaborating with others



Canal & River Trust
Making life better by water



Community Canal Clean

Let's take pride of our local heritage and make it enjoyable for all. Come and join us for a day out with the community to clean up your local canal.

Date: Saturday 29th February - 10:30am to 1:30pm
Meeting Point: Galton Valley Pumping Station, Entry point: Brasshouse Lane

Please bring suitable clothes and footwear, all other equipment will be provided

For more information:
Contact Lutfur Rahman on 07818 539 310



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Canal & River Trust
Making life better by water

Eco Community Fun Day!

The Life & Legacy of Guru Nanak Dev Ji 550 Years Celebrations

Saturday 28th September 2019 - 10:00am onwards
Galton Valley Pump House, Smethwick,

Please join us for an EcoFriendly community fun day. Come and help us plant some trees, litter pick on our waterways and even enjoy a ride in a canoe or a visit on our heritage boat!

For more information:
07970104390 - Prabhjot Singh



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ACTIVITIES

Every year March 14, Guru Har Rai Ji
Coronation day is celebrated as Sikh
Environment Day

Gurudwara in Derby goes Plastic Free
for Sikh New Year



Min Kaur, BBC Journalist interviews children at Ramgharia Sabha Gurudwara

Ramgarhia Sabha Gurdwara in Derby is starting the Sikh New Year by being one of the first in the UK to go plastic-free.

The children who attend the Gurudwara have been instrumental in lobbying the Gurudwara's management committee to use alternatives to single-use plastic instead.



ACTIVITIES

Boota Prashad



EcoSikhUK @EcoSikhUK · Mar 15
Eco-Sikh UK team distributing Boota Parshad at Ramgharia Gurdwara, Derby today

This whole bio-degradable pot can be planted in the soil in your garden - simple!

Checkout how to do with our infographic available to download at ecosikhuk.org/resources

#EcoSikhUK #SED



EcoSikhUK @EcoSikhUK · Mar 15

There are many creative ways to celebrate the Sikh New Year & Sikh Environment Day. A wonderfully simple way is to distribute 'Boota Parshaad'. New blog post tinyurl.com/r33yto7

Checkout this infographic - download it at [#SikhNewYear](https://ecosikhuk.org/resources#SikhNewYear) #SED #EcoSikhUK

Celebrate the Sikh New Year & Sikh Environment Day with Boota Parshad

Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Bani Maha or 'twelve months' composition in Raag Tukhari says:
'In the month of Chet, the splendour of spring has sprung and the humble bee hums with joy'.

A wonderfully simple way to celebrate the Sikh New Year and Sikh Environment Day, is to distribute 'Boota Parshaad' to the Sadh Sangat.

You will need:

1. A space in the Gurdwara Sahib - preferably near an exit.
2. A table
3. A bag of all-purpose compost.
4. 2 small hand shovels
5. 100 flower bulbs and planting pots (vary numbers accordingly, depending on Sadh Sangat)

This is how to do it:

Set up the table with the compost, bulbs, planting pots and hand shovels so that they're readily available.

As the Sadh Sangat exits the Gurdwara Sahib, encourage them to plant a bulb in a pot and provide instructions how to care for the bulb and when to plant outdoors.

The bulbs will flower yearly and will attract bees that are critical for fertilising plants and flowers.



ACTIVITIES – Green flag status

Community Canal Clean Up – Smethwick, Birmingham

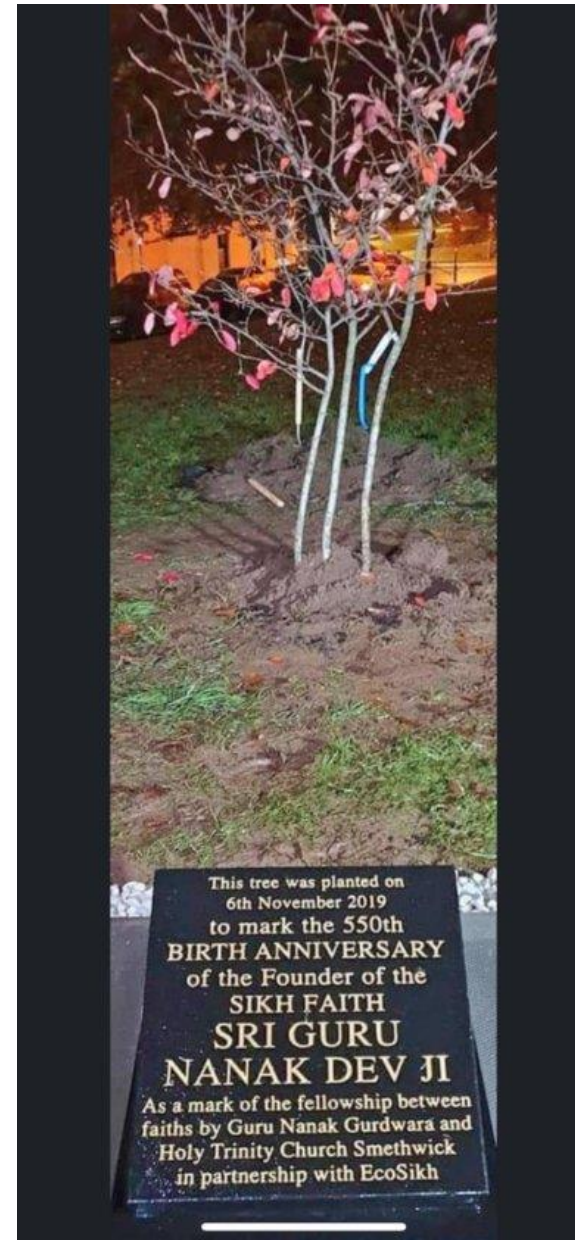


Eco-Sikh UK teams up with the Canal and River Trust

Eco-Sikh UK teamed up with the Canal and River Trust for a community canal clean up on Saturday 29th February in Smetwick, on the outskirts of Birmingham.



ACTIVITIES – Guru Nanak Dev Ji's 550th





ACTIVITIES – Many others



Bahu Trust - Birmingham

Guru Nanak Gurudwara Smethwick

Faith for the climate

Foot Steps - Birmingham

Holy Trinity Smethwick

Woodland Trust



GET INVOLVED



<https://ecosikhuk.org/>



<https://www.facebook.com/ecosikhuk>



<https://twitter.com/EcoSikhUK>



<https://www.instagram.com/ecosikhuk/>



THANK YOU





Footsteps
Faiths for a Low Carbon Future



FOOTSTEPS

BCF
BIRMINGHAM
COUNCIL OF FAITHS



Photo: Owen de Visser

Walk of Witness through centre of Birmingham November 2015

FORMED November 2015

CORE ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- Faith-based climate activities
- Summer Interfaith walks
- Annual Tread Lightly conferences
- Young People engagement
- Political and Local Engagement

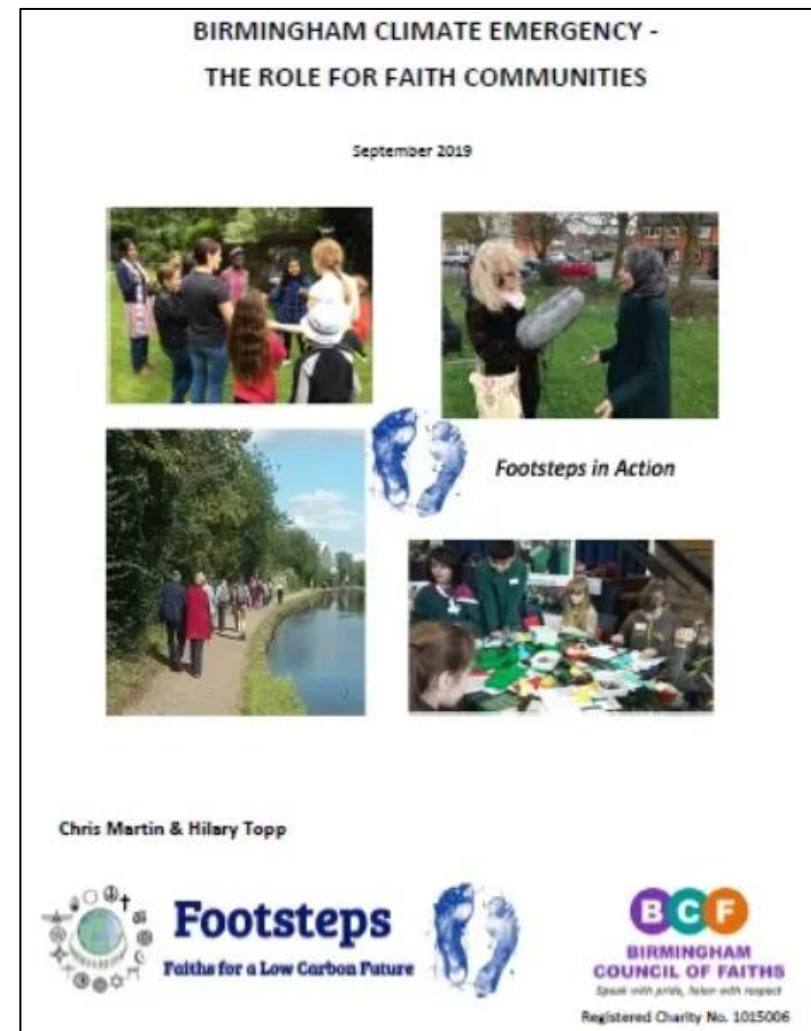


BCC CLIMATE EMERGENCY and ROUTE to ZERO TASKFORCE



Birmingham Faith Community leaders calling on Birmingham City Council to Declare a Climate Emergency.

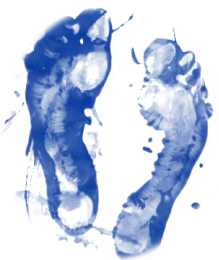
Cllr Waseem Zaffar said 'the involvement of the faith communities is crucial'



Birmingham Faith Climate Action Partnership



Footsteps
Faiths for a Low Carbon Future



with
Birmingham's faith communities

Birmingham Faith Climate Action Partnership

OBJECTIVES

- Build the capacity of Birmingham faith groups to lead, and engage in, community lead climate action in disadvantaged areas of Birmingham

FUNDING

- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation - £200,000 funding over 3 years

VEHICLE

- 10 - 15 local faith community climate action projects



Footsteps
Faiths for a Low Carbon Future



Ashden
Climate Solutions in Action

Birmingham Faith Climate Action Partnership

Local faith community climate action projects

- based on community needs and perspectives
- co-designed and delivered with local communities
- based on
 - energy efficiency and awareness
 - food, diet, health
 - connections with nature
 - sustainable mobility and active travel
- initiatives that can be replicated elsewhere



Footsteps
Faiths for a Low Carbon Future



Ashden
Climate Solutions in Action

Birmingham Faith Climate Action Partnership

An exciting opportunity

- To build on the different experience of the delivery partners
- Create a link with the Birmingham Faith Covenant
- Develop new ways of community led environmental work
- Showcase how Birmingham leads in interfaith climate work

Next steps

- Establish governance arrangements
- Start identifying potential local climate action projects



Footsteps
Faiths for a Low Carbon Future



Ashden
Climate Solutions in Action

Birmingham Faith Climate Action Partnership

THANK YOU!

WELCOME QUESTIONS

SEE FOOTSTEPS WEBSITE for more details

<https://footstepsbcf.org.uk/bifcap/>



Footsteps
Faiths for a Low Carbon Future



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Keeping the Faith in Climate Action



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**Greener
Together**