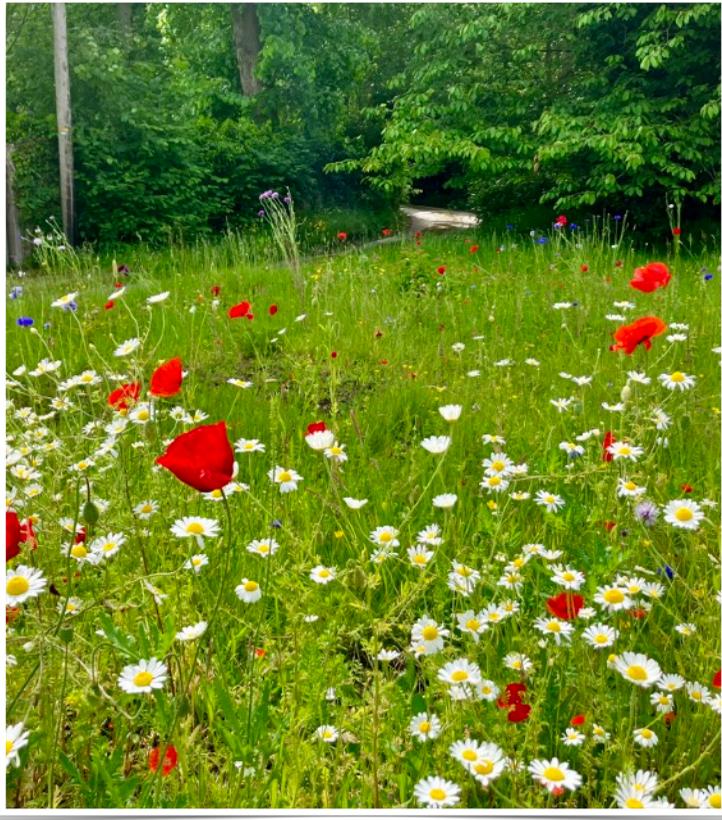


# Community Nature Recovery Plan Toolkit



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# Introduction

## Welcome to our Nature Recovery Toolkit!

We hope you and your community enjoy reading it and find it useful.

This toolkit has been designed to help communities take action for nature in their own local areas. You can follow all or just some of the steps - these are suggestions to make it easier for you based on our experiences creating Otley's trailblazing Local Nature Recovery Plan in 2022.

Working in partnership with several local nature groups, and with Otley Town Council and Leeds City Council for several years our Plan is in place with several areas of land around town now being managed for nature.

We've had our ups and downs along the way and hope that this toolkit helps others find a clearer route towards community action which helps nature recover close to where we live.



River and Claire



River Six BA BSc, Ecologist, Geospatial Technician, Chair and Founder of Wildlife Friendly Otley

Claire Blindell, Communications & Engagement lead, Otley 2030, Trustee of Wildlife Friendly Otley, Community Rewilder

*Special thanks to Jane Smith and Dr Catherine Burton who are an essential part of our nature recovery team in Otley.*



# 10 STEPS TO LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY

## 1. Convene a community

Create a space where individuals gather, not (necessarily) physically, but emotionally and intellectually to exchange ideas, share experiences and forge connections around a shared passion for nature recovery.



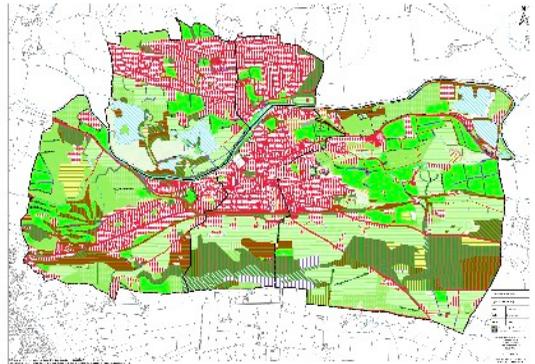
WFO team in 2021

Who in your area is interested in habitats and wildlife?

What are the skills in the room?

## 2. Commission a baseline survey

Once you have a core group, take this next proactive step towards understanding and improving your local habitats for nature.



Baseline map of Otley, commissioned by Otley Town Council, field work by Gordon Haycock and digitised by River Six

What habitats does your area contain? How connected or disconnected are they?

By documenting existing habitats and species distributions, baseline surveys provide invaluable data for informed decision-making in your efforts going forward. There are pots of money that you could apply for so that you can commission a local ecologist. Alternatively, why not engage with your local university for undergraduate or postgraduate help?

### 3. Identify the obstacles

The obstacles to nature recovery will be different in your area to another. As a core group of local people, nobody is better placed to identify the obstacles, except perhaps the local wildlife! The baseline survey should inform this step...

Why are habitats not connected?  
Is light pollution or road crossing a major problem? Are your local political representatives empathetic to nature recovery? Are they actively making a difference?  
Once you have identified the potential hurdles, it is time for the next step.



### 4. Prioritise interventions

Once your obstacles are laid out, it will be important to review the skills you have in your core group and prioritise what can be done first. This is a strategic exercise. What commitment can your group give to the project? To build up momentum and help with the next two steps, it might be a good idea to go for something visible to your wider community, intervening in a public space to improve it for wildlife and people.

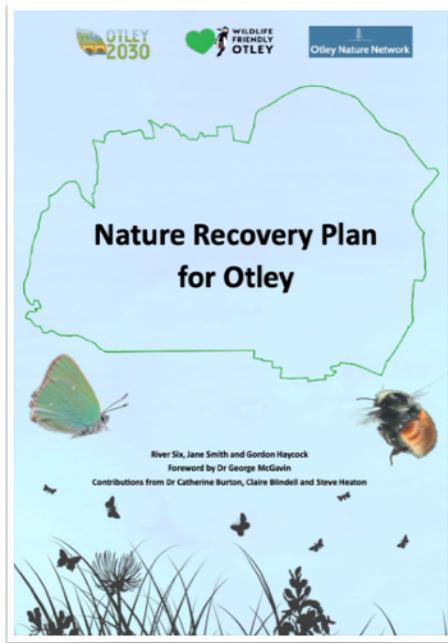


Visible wildflower planting in Otley Town Centre business

## 5. Begin drafting your Nature Recovery Plan

A good start is by reading The Lawton Review, published in 2010 and other similar groups' nature recovery plans (see resources page for our Nature Recovery for Otley).

Your plan should be a dynamic document that will be reviewed by your group frequently to update the actions needed, based on your progress.



## 6. Engage stakeholders

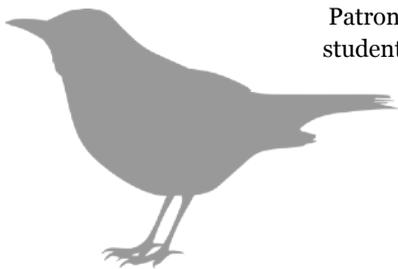
Once your core group has a set of actions for your first draft, it's time to engage stakeholders in the plan. Including conservation

experts, local policymakers and your community.

By engaging at this stage, your plan can incorporate diverse perspectives and ensure broad support.



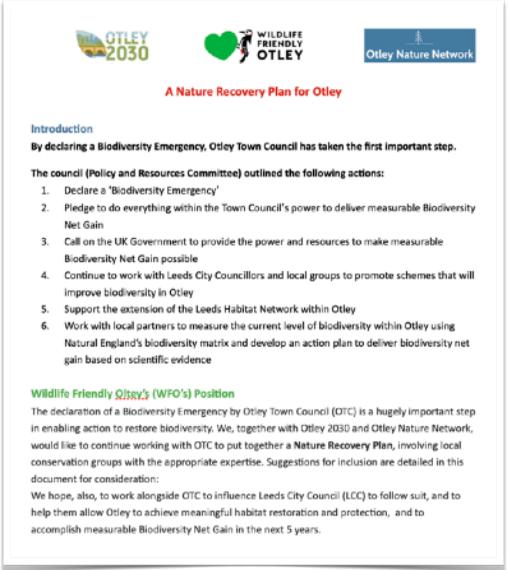
Launch of Nature Recovery Plan for Otley, 2022  
Patron of WFO, Dr George McGavin with local students from Prince Henry's Grammar School



## 7. Publish your nature recovery plan

After welcoming input from your community and stakeholders, finalise your nature recovery plan and publicise it across local media outlets and social media.

Try to keep your actions to a maximum of 10 projects - planting a community orchard is one example. Remember that actions will be reviewed frequently.



## 8. Implementation

Execute the action plan by allocating resources, coordinating efforts among stakeholders, and implementing on-the-ground projects with the help of volunteers.



River leading the team planting WFO's first community orchard



## 9. Adaptation and Review

Continuously keep records of your interventions and progress. When it comes to the agreed review date, adapt your Nature Recovery Plan based on your monitoring results, changing environmental conditions, and stakeholder feedback. Bioblitz are a great way to collect records whilst also engaging your community (for information see the resources page).

**Bringing your community along with you is key!**



Identifying species at a bioblitz with Otley residents

## 10. Education and Outreach

Throughout steps 2-9 conducting outreach and educational activities will raise awareness about nature recovery, continue to build community support, and encourage sustainable practices among residents and stakeholders.



Having stalls at a variety of local events is a great way to reach new audiences

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## GLOSSARY

### **baseline survey**

A survey conducted to assess the situation prior to the start of a project.

### **bioblitz**

A communal citizen-science effort to record as many species within a designated location and time period as possible.

### **biodiversity**

The variety of plant and animal life.

### **ecologist**

A person who studies the relationship between plants/animals and their environment.

### **habitat**

The natural home or environment of an animal, plant.

### **interventions**

Actions taken to increase potential for positive outcome.

### **nature recovery**

Looking at where healthy wildlife habitats exist and how they can be improved, expanded, and connected.

### **species distribution**

Where (and how many) of certain animals/plants live.

### **stakeholders**

People/organisations with interest in the success of your project (i.e. local council, businesses etc).

## USEFUL LINKS

Nature Recovery Plan for Otley

<https://www.wildlifefriendlyotley.org.uk/restoringhabitat>

Plantlife – managing grasslands

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/advice-learning/managing-grassland/>

How to run your own bioblitz

<https://www.bnhc.org.uk/bioblitz/national-bioblitz-network>

iNaturalist – identify what you see

<https://www.inaturalist.org/blog/6475-identify>