

FREE

# Climate Action News

Climate Action Leads



## Community climate action builds hope

Leeds residents are working together to protect people and the planet and make the city a great place to live. From warmer homes and clean energy to supporting nature to create a happier, greener city, we are thinking big and acting now on climate change. The Roots of Change event at the Leeds Caribbean and African Centre celebrated community climate action projects across our city.

▶ **Exciting projects, big impact: pages 2-12**

Councillor Jane Dowson and residents at the opening of the Leeds Caribbean and African Centre Community Garden. Picture: Paul Chatterton.



**Grassroots food revolution**

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**Woods saved by community**

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**Leeds opens one of UK's first climate action hubs**

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## Climate Action Leeds

### About this special newspaper

Communities across Leeds are working together to protect people and the climate and make the city an even better place to live.

In 2019, Leeds City Council declared a climate emergency. Many groups, organisations and people in Leeds were already doing a huge amount to tackle climate change, protect the environment and make the city a fairer place. More than 40 groups came together to bid for National Lottery Climate Action Funding and plan activities to address the biggest challenges facing the city and the world. Our collaborative programme, Climate Action Leeds, was granted funding in 2020.

This newspaper highlights some key achievements and future plans. **Sector Focus** (pages 2–4) covers projects in housing, food, energy, nature, work and the economy, youth and education, transport and climate justice. **Community Hubs** (pages 9–10) covers community-led climate action across neighbourhoods. **Movement Building** (pages 11–12) looks at how Leeds can be more united in our response to climate, nature and social challenges. Already, Leeds has taken great steps. Together we can create a zero carbon, nature friendly, socially just Leeds by the 2030s.

Climate Action Leeds involves a large network of groups, individuals, sectors and organisations and seven key delivery partners:



With thanks to funding from:



# To hell in a hand cart, the same old stuff or a prosperous fairer greener city?

The world is warming. Extreme weather events are destroying livelihoods, more people are in poverty, public services strained and thousands of species becoming extinct. It's easy to feel we can't make a difference to the challenges we face.

But despair alone is dangerous. Some people with power and authority keep saying that efforts to achieve net zero are a waste of time and will make us poorer. They want to stand in the way of cleaner energy, affordable homes, green jobs, more sustainable food, and happier populations. They want to create scapegoats and they want us to blame each other when living standards are squeezed and people are fleeing areas made unliveable by human-driven catastrophe.

Inertia serves vested interests. But our city won't stand for it. We have seen a different Leeds and the evidence is abundant: hope and action get results. Life can be better, here right now and across the world. Achieving our zero-carbon targets, reconnecting with nature, and increasing social justice and fairness all support a healthy and inclusive economy, and a better quality of life. Everything connects.

This paper is filled with stories about projects making life in our city better as they tackle climate change. Warmer, affordable homes. Clean community energy. Local sustainable food. Active travel and cleaner air.

Supporting and connecting with nature, with a host of health and wellbeing benefits. Yet these articles only scratch the surface of the work done by our city's diverse communities during Climate Action Leeds' five years of collaboration.

So don't believe anyone who tells you there's no point to climate action. We have a city to save, and community action is showing us how to do it. Enjoy these stories and choose one of the three visions for the future we've outlined on page 9. Which do you want to be part of?

### Credits

This newspaper is published by Climate Action Leeds drawing on communities' and partners' work across the city.

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## SECTOR FOCUS

### TRANSPORT

# Alwoodley Walk to School Week saves CO<sub>2</sub> and inspires city

Families in Alwoodley who swapped driving for walking, cycling or scooting to seven primary schools saved more 310 kg of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) emissions in just four days.

Residents praised the better air quality during May 2024's Walk to School Week. Many participants said they would use active travel more often to get to school.

CAG Consultants, specialists in evaluating climate impact, estimated 130 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e could be saved every year if all 227 city primary schools ran a similar campaign.

The week was supported by Alwoodley 2030 Climate Hub, school staff and parents, Leeds Cycling Campaign, Leeds Community Foundation and Living Streets. Grants from Climate Action Leeds and Leeds Tidal provided air pollution sensors, signs, flyers and badges. Free bike MOTs and a travel tracking platform helped people take part.

Climate Action Leeds has developed tools to help schools run similar campaigns. This year, residents in Horsforth and Otley joined Alwoodley in supporting schools and families to take part in an even bigger Walk to School Week.



Picture: Alwoodley 2030 Climate Action Hub.

## FOOD

# Composting and growing: practical climate actions, immediate local benefits

A grassroots food revolution is transforming how we think about food systems and waste. Community composting schemes have taken root citywide, backed by support from Climate Action Leeds' food transition partner, FoodWise Leeds.

Compost Collective Leeds sites at Horsforth's Drury Field and West End School, Feel Good Factor at Chapeltown, Armley's Charlie Cake Park and across Leeds show how food waste can become a valuable community resource, creating free, good-quality soil for community gardens and saving thousands of tonnes of waste from landfill.

Sonja Woodcock of FoodWise Leeds told Climate Action News the benefits include "reducing food waste, improving soil health, building community connections and increasing access to fresh produce". The projects also reduce the impact of our food on the planet: globally, food systems account for up to one-third of greenhouse gas emissions.

Many other FoodWise and climate hub projects are boosting access to healthy, sustainable food, through growing schemes, workshops and in collaboration with other food activists.

The Get Growing Leeds campaign, highlighted in YouTube videos funded by Climate Action

Leeds, supports people to grow food regardless of space limitations. The films showcase success stories from balcony herb gardens to community allotments.

This work on food aligns with the Leeds Food Strategy, co-developed by FoodWise with Leeds City Council, which aims to build a more resilient, sustainable and socially just food system; and with the Leeds Good Food Action Plan, which seeks to help Leeds achieve the Sustainable Food Places Silver Award.

**Want to set up or join a community composting scheme, find your nearest community growing space or help more people benefit from a better food culture in Leeds? Visit [foodwiseleeds.org](http://foodwiseleeds.org)**



Picture: Compost Collective Armley.

## CLIMATE JUSTICE

## Empowering people to be involved in fair climate solutions

Marginalised communities and people living on lower incomes have been hit hardest by the climate crisis. Claude Henrickson leads Climate Action Leeds' widening participation work, and told Climate Action News: "Our work must improve the lives of people in Leeds, the UK and around the world who have fewer resources and less power."

Claude has met with communities and councillors across the city "to bring climate justice more to the front. We're taking meetings to neighbourhoods, mosques, the Leeds Caribbean and African Centre and African markets."

Claude has been involved in community-led projects in Leeds for over 30 years: "In the eighties, we faced a housing crisis. Thirteen of us got together to build homes whilst gaining construction skills, which made us more employable. Everybody said it was a stupid idea. But it worked. Community power means empowering people to be part of the conversation and involved in solutions."

### The 13th Recommendation

The Racial Justice Network (RJN) developed this framework to acknowledge that "Leeds is not an island". RJN's 13th Recommendation and their Race and Climate Justice Report have helped to guide Climate Action Leeds and the wider climate community: [bit.ly/rjn13th](https://bit.ly/rjn13th)

## HOUSING

## Warm homes for all and people-powered retrofit

A raft of low-carbon home initiatives supported by Climate Action Leeds' housing transition partners and hubs are helping people cut energy and carbon emissions and save money while keeping their homes warm.

Free home energy assessments in Alwoodley, Buckstones, Horsforth and Garforth have identified simple but effective steps with immediate benefits.

Assessments in Garforth and Horsforth drew on a thermal imaging camera to help reveal cold spots and identify cost-effective solutions. A Low Carbon Homes Club in Alwoodley hosts 'Ask Me Anything' events. A free Energy Saving Handbook developed by Climate Action Beeston and Otley 2030 is packed with tips for making household savings. Climate Action Leeds has also run workshops to give people trustworthy information and advice, and is supporting a 'showcase home' for community energy retrofit.

## ENERGY

## Community energy takes off in Leeds

Renewable and community-owned energy schemes will transform access to greener and cheaper energy across Leeds. Alwoodley Community Energy, a locally owned community benefit society, will install projects to cut energy costs and carbon emissions. Garforth residents are scoping out local projects, too, and supporting other city groups with energy feasibility studies. Otley's experience shows that the benefits are rapid. Andrew Howarth of Otley 2030 says: "We installed 12 panels on the Social Club and eight on Weston Lane Juniors Football Club last August with funding from Leeds City Council's Community Climate Grant. They have already saved 602 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>, produced 3150 kWh of energy and saved the clubs £860. We've also installed panels on the library and two primary schools."

Our ambition is for community energy to take off across the city. In January, the newly formed Leeds Community Energy brought together energy schemes from across Yorkshire to plan and share learning. Leeds Community Energy aims to be the one-stop-shop for community energy in the city, and has big plans, including supporting the North's biggest community wind turbine.

## NATURE

## Nature recovery networks unite communities for happier, greener Leeds

Communities are creating nature recovery strategies together through networks supported by Climate Action Leeds' Nature Transition Partner.

"We've connected existing activity, linked groups to each other and want to build a movement," explains Pete Tatham of Hyde Park Source.

The work is helping communities access land and additional resources for nature-based projects in the city. For example, Hyde Park Source brokered a license for Seacroft Forest Garden to use council land (page 9).

A free guide developed with Nature Friendly Otley (part of Otley 2030) provides tools to help communities access spaces for nature recovery projects: [hydeparksource.org/networks--research](https://hydeparksource.org/networks--research)

**More about the networks:**  
[linktr.ee/leedsnaturenetworks](https://linktr.ee/leedsnaturenetworks)



## EDUCATION

# Leeds leads with school climate curriculum and Global Learning Awards

Teachers across Leeds are using a groundbreaking Climate Curriculum, which covers important things young people need to know about climate change and how it links to their lives.

The curriculum's age-appropriate learning outcomes framework addresses eight key areas, according to Sarah Fishwick from charity Leeds Development Education Centre (DEC). These include science, action, behaviour change, justice and possible futures, which children are extremely interested in, Fishwick says: "Talking about the future does not need to be filled with doom. On social media children are often fed a binary vision: either we fight climate change, win and there's a green future, or the world burns and we're all doomed. But our possible futures are far more nuanced than that depending on the actions we take. If we have a positive vision of what we want to see, we can live in a way that leads towards it."

Leeds DEC developed the curriculum in conjunction with climate specialists at the University of Leeds, teachers, education experts, learning networks and young people. "We tested the first set of learning outcomes with 120 schools across Europe," says Adam Ranson, Projects Coordinator at Leeds DEC, "then worked with schools through Climate Action Leeds over the past five years. It is designed to be straightforward, simple, and not time-intensive, allowing schools to weave it into existing subjects without needing to rewrite the whole curriculum."



Participants at the Eco Schools Climate conference at the Civic Hall. Picture: Adam Ranson/Leeds DEC.

Feedback from Leeds schools has been positive, adds Adam: "Teachers say using the curriculum gives them hope. We've received interest from schools across England and the Natural History Museum about adopting and using it."

Penny Pinn is a governor of Horsforth Featherbank Primary School and leads on its sustainability work. She told Climate Action News "the climate curriculum is an extremely comprehensive summary of what children need to know throughout primary and secondary school."

Penny adds: "The main challenge for schools is how to fit this into an already packed and pressured curriculum. However, the training Leeds DEC provides gives staff the knowledge and confidence to teach the subject matter."

City teachers and educators can also use online courses developed by Leeds DEC. Many have also joined the Leeds Climate Joy Educators Network to share climate action plans; initiatives to boost biodiversity, plant trees and reduce carbon footprints; and other resources.

"Wonderful education work is taking place across the city," adds Sarah, after 170 young people and teachers came to the Leeds Eco Schools Climate conference in March.

Sarah adds "We are all in it together, taking action and learning from each other. We can see models of what people are doing personally, in their schools and communities and at a national and international level. These stories are amazing and inspiring. It's about what can be done if you dare to do it, because once we all act, hope really is all around."

## Coming soon: Leeds Global Learning Awards

Celebrating the work of young people, teachers and schools across the city and in Yorkshire, Leeds Global Learning Awards takes place at the Civic Hall on 20 June. Pupils can share the work their schools are doing and the event will recognise the achievements of educators and young people around the challenges we face as a global community.

To book your place or learn more about the Leeds Climate Curriculum, email Sarah at [sarah@leedsdec.org.uk](mailto:sarah@leedsdec.org.uk) or visit [leedsdec.org.uk](https://leedsdec.org.uk)

## WORK

## Building wealth, growing resilience – Community Wealth Building for Leeds

Community Wealth Building (CWB) could generate benefits for Leeds while addressing climate and nature challenges. A Climate Action Leeds report and manifesto showed how CWB supports many council priorities and gave recommendations to unleash its potential.

Ronan Murphy-Coghlan led a collaborative CWB programme and said: "The local economy is not doing enough for residents, businesses or the environment. We want to reduce pressure on public services and find new ways to make capital available to the council and communities to increase the quality of life for Leeds' population."

Ronan adds: "We have a better understanding of how to balance the interests of working class and marginalised people with the environment. Wakefield Council has begun considering its economic wellbeing strategy following great work with our partners on the benefits of Community Wealth Building."

Ronan goes on to say: "CWB goes beyond inclusive growth and can, if policies are designed to address long-term inequalities, promote economic development that will bring wealth back into the hands of Leeds citizens, benefitting communities and the environment while reducing its global impact on people and planet."

### Community Wealth Building – in Leeds we need:

**Shared ownership:** local and community businesses, social enterprises, worker-owned enterprises and cooperatives which channel wealth into the economy

**Finance and investment** that works for local people, communities, businesses and social ventures

**Good jobs** in the green and social economy and better labour and environmental standards in work

**Local, fair and sustainable spending** through progressive procurement by anchor institutions

**Land and property** serving communities and nature

More about what CWB can do for Leeds: [climateactionleeds.org.uk/post/a-cwb-manifesto-for-leeds](https://climateactionleeds.org.uk/post/a-cwb-manifesto-for-leeds)

**LEARN** *and*  
**UNLEARN**

**ACT** *and*  
**RESIST**

**BUILD**  
*and* **MAKE**



# OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS A ZERO CARBON, NATURE FRIENDLY, SOCIALLY JUST LEEDS BY THE 2030s

1970s

Global

The first global 'Earth Day' is held, the landmark report 'Limits to Growth' is published, and there is a new United Nations focus on the environment.



1980s

Global

The Brundtland Commission sets out an agenda for global sustainability (1987); the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is established (1988).



1990s

Global

The first Earth Summit is held in Rio (1992); the Kyoto Protocol (1997) sets legally binding carbon emission reduction targets.



2008

UK

The UK is the first country to sign legally binding targets through its Climate Change Act, and sets up a Climate Change Committee to track progress towards net zero by 2050.



2024

Global

Record-breaking temperatures and extreme weather across the world, wreaking damage and creating a tragic death toll.



2020

Leeds

Climate Action Leeds is established. Start of five years of National Lottery funded work in communities across Leeds by a partnership of civic groups aiming to support a zero carbon, nature friendly, socially just Leeds by 2030s.



2019

Leeds

Leeds City Council declares a climate emergency to a wave of ambitious policies in transport, housing and energy; the Leeds Carbon Roadmap is published; the Climate Change Citizens' Jury launches its recommendations; Racial Justice Network (RJN) responds with its 13th Recommendation.



2018

Global

Huge year for global climate action: Extinction Rebellion holds days of action; Greta Thunberg prompts 'School Strikes for Climate' and 'Fridays for Future' around the world; IPCC report highlights the urgency of holding global temperatures rises to 1.5°C.



2017

UK/Leeds

Leeds Climate Commission established - the first in the world

Kate Raworth's groundbreaking book, *Doughnut Economics*, is published, offering a compass for 21st-century economics.



2016

Global

The landmark Paris Agreement comes into effect stating the intention to hold global temperature rises to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.



2024

UK

Based on decades of investment in solar and wind, the dirtiest fossil fuel, coal, officially ends its role in electricity generation in the UK.



2025

Leeds

After five years of work, Climate Action Leeds supports an inspiring and diverse movement of climate action across communities in Leeds. It launches its next phase of activity and 'a call to action' aiming to super charge community-led climate action that can achieve big changes by the 2030s.



## 2030s LEEDS FUTURES WHICH DO YOU WANT TO BE PART OF?



POSSIBLE FUTURE

Building on the huge amount of work over the last decade, ambitious cross-sector working means Leeds hits zero carbon targets, rolls out nature friendly solutions, and increases social justice and fairness for its citizens. Politicians, businesses and citizens come together to tackle problems. Communities are greener, happier and more prosperous, with a sense of hope for the future.



POSSIBLE FUTURE

We fail to take the opportunities available. Leeds largely continues as usual and life doesn't really get any better for people. We don't tackle vehicle pollution, loss of nature, deepening inequalities, increased stress, reduced wellbeing, voter disconnection. There's a sense of wasted opportunities and that life is okay for many but it could have been so much better, if only we had created a new sense of purpose.



POSSIBLE FUTURE

Division and mistrust grow, nationalism and protectionism is on the rise. Economic growth slows down, inequality spirals out of control. There is uncertainty and risk around access to food and energy, housing isn't affordable, there is conflict and fear in communities. Those with money are able to protect themselves from an increasingly dangerous and less pleasant city.

## Climate Action Leeds

# More than mending meetups, Repair Cafés save waste from landfill, transplant knowledge and even fix elves' legs

Repair Cafés are booming in Leeds. Free events where volunteers help people fix their own broken things, from toasters to tools and toys, electronic gadgets to furniture and clothes, they give things a new lease of life so they don't need to be thrown away.

Garforth's monthly Repair Café has been running for nearly two years. Eco-Friendly Garforth trustee and café volunteer Walt Treloar says the café has fixed 81% of items people have brought in and diverted at least 380 kg of stuff from being thrown away.



Picture: Eco-Friendly Garforth.

Walt says: "We have four or five fixers every month and we see printers, toasters, keyboards and all sorts – even an elf with a broken leg. There's always a buzz. We're delighted to fix things but also to talk with people as we do it, so they can get comfortable about trying to fix something. They often learn what to do if something breaks."

Other Repair Cafés are held across Leeds including a new addition to Beeston. Abi Paterson of the Beeston Hub says only two items brought into their first event couldn't be fixed. Abi is "thrilled so many volunteers from Beeston and other repair cafés came along to support us."

Volunteers at the Leeds Repair Café at the heart of Horsforth have repaired a huge range of items: hoovers, hair straighteners, lawn mowers, clothing, ceramics, clocks and tools. In just seven months their repairs saved the carbon equivalent of flying 31,563 miles.

Advice from Leeds Repair Café was invaluable when Garforth set up its café, says Walt: "We also visited Cross Gates Repair Café to see what their processes were. Then some of their fixers came to Garforth and helped us set it up. It's brilliant to transplant knowledge to new cafés, so we've put together a free guide, drop me a line if you want to set up a Repair Café and contact Leeds Repair Café too."

## Get fixed, make friends

**Garforth Repair Café** is usually held at the Miners' Welfare Hall on the first Sunday of the month.

### Contact and other details:

[ecofriendlygarforth.org.uk/repair-cafe](http://ecofriendlygarforth.org.uk/repair-cafe)

**Horsforth Repair Café** is held at St Margaret's Parish Centre on the first Saturday of the month.

**Beeston Repair Café** is held at St Luke's CARES charity shop on the first Saturday of the month. See **Leeds Repair Café Facebook** for Repair Cafés across Leeds.

## Hubs: bedrock of community climate action

Community climate action has flourished across Leeds through local hubs run by people living and working in their neighbourhoods. Each hub chose and planned climate actions which also address everyday issues such as low-quality housing, energy costs, poor air quality, transport links, insufficient green and growing spaces and access to good, affordable food. The hubs have been the bedrock of Climate Action Leeds. Each had funding for their planned activities and to employ a local hub worker for three years. Their fantastic projects are making a huge impact in their neighbourhoods today and building long-lasting legacies. Read our hubs stories for highlights from each area.

## Relax and let the wildlife in

Free wildlife kits are helping Farsley residents attract and protect wildlife. The kits, funded by Climate Action Leeds, include a bird feeder and seed, water butt, compost bin and more. "Gardens are a powerful solution to the climate and biodiversity crisis. It can seem overwhelming, but we can all do our bit by relaxing and letting the wildlife in," says Ros MacIver. "It's brilliant for our mental health, too."

Ros has volunteered with Farsley Community Orchard since 2018, and, along with other volunteers, has set up Farsley Climate Action. They have been given permission by Leeds City Council to take on an additional green space near the orchard. "It's not just about boosting biodiversity but improving the area for people as well. When you have a positive connection with nature, you want to protect it", Ros adds.

## Seacroft oasis is secure for the future

Seacroft residents have transformed a previously overgrown, derelict plot of land owned by Leeds City Council into a "tranquil oasis" where everything is edible or benefits the community, wildlife and the environment. "Grit, determination and hard work" created Seacroft Community Forest Garden, volunteer Linda Otley told Climate Action News. Vegetables including potatoes, cauliflowers, peas, runner beans, beetroot, tomatoes and pumpkins are abundant, feeding residents who also donate some to the food pantry and food bank. Volunteers secured initial funding for tools and planting from Leeds

City Council and Climate Action Seacroft in 2021. They spent months clearing rubble from the site; with the help of corporate volunteering from organisations including Lloyds Bank, EDF Energy, Wates, Virgin and PDF Jones. They planted their first fruit and nut trees and perennial vegetables in 2022, then a variety of fruit bushes and even basket willow for local craft groups. They are now creating a sensory garden and dye plant area, and recently secured new lottery funding and a license to use the land into the future with support from Hyde Park Source.



Picture: Seacroft Community Forest Garden.





# Innovative Community Streets project can address multiple issues in inner-city Leeds

A Marley View yard and street is thriving with edible and ornamental planting thanks to a pilot Community Streets project funded by Climate Action Leeds three years ago.

Climate Action Leeds development worker and permaculture designer Beth Bingley developed initial designs for a yard renovation and street planters with Our Future Beeston, the local hub. After two years of hard work clearing over 80 bags of rubbish, replacing the concrete floor with a permeable surface and co-designing solutions for growing, bin storage, drying washing, and social space for neighbours to meet, the tiny 4.5m square yard is beautiful. Resident Anne said: "It has been wonderful, residents helped residents, and we all know each other now."

Further Climate Action Leeds funding kickstarted the rollout of the Community Streets project in Hyde Park and Woodhouse, led by Hyde Park Source, the Cardigan Centre and Woodhouse Permaculture. The focus in these areas is to integrate permanent and more transient residents like students, in addition to creating spaces that improve wellbeing and quality of life, boost biodiversity and future-proof against climate change.

Community Streets has evolved into a multi-agency partnership and received additional funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the University of Leeds and Leeds City Council's Inner North West Community Committee to work in Woodhouse and Hyde Park, linking the project to the creation and improvement of linked community gardens and mini orchards to create edible green corridors.

"Since the pilot, Community Streets has learned to work faster and smarter," Beth Bingley told Climate Action News. "Leeds Wood Recycling built the modular pallet wood planters and paint comes from Seagulls Reuse, supporting other local community eco-businesses. If you are interested in creating a community street or volunteering, please get in touch. We are developing new design solutions all the time in response to residents' needs."

## Free guides

Contact Community Streets and get open-source designs and resources to build bin stores, street planters and raised beds through [communitystreetsleeds.org](https://communitystreetsleeds.org)



Left to right: Beth Bingley, Angela Gabriel BEM, Councillor Al Garthwaite, Student Consort Winnie, Clare Tate (Beeston in Bloom) and resident Ann Taylor. Pictures: Jeremy Morton and Beth Bingley.



# Saving woods, starting a theatre and installing solar: Otley's carbon-zero revolution

A revolution is underway in Otley. "Our goal is to ensure that our transition to becoming carbon-zero is fair, democratic and involves every part of our community," explains Claire Blindell of Otley 2030. "It's not just about carbon saving. It's just as important to make Otley fairer, greener and sustainable."

Otley 2030's biggest projects have sought to enrich community assets in the Weston Estate. "Solar panels we installed on two community buildings have saved more than £900 in energy costs since last summer, and we've set up a community larder, nature garden and orchard," she adds.

Otley 2030 also created Otley Youth Theatre with the University of Leeds. "There was little youth provision in Otley," says Blindell, "especially for young people in the north side of town who are now coming to Otley Youth Theatre."

One of the town's most remarkable achievements came in December 2023, when it brought 19 acres of ancient woodland into community ownership,

ensuring residents of the Weston Estate have permanent access to green space – crucial in an area surrounded by privately owned countryside.

The woodland had faced potential commercial development when it came up for sale but Otley 2030 rallied local environmental and community groups together, raising £125,000 towards its purchase through a crowdfunding campaign.

"It was a David and Goliath story," says Blindell. "We were competing against commercial interests, but with the crowdfund and a philanthropic loan from We Are The Power, we were able to make the winning bid."

Otley 2030's approach is based on working together and developing relationships with communities, groups, schools, council leaders, faith-based organisations, volunteers and businesses. This collaboration extends to knowledge-sharing: Otley 2030 has created a community nature recovery toolkit, now being used by Horsforth Climate Action, and an energy-saving handbook.

## Future opportunities

Although a thriving market community, Otley lacks social and cultural facilities. Now the community is raising funds to purchase and transform the former Methodist church through the Otley Common community share offer, supported by Otley 2030. The building could house Otley 2030, be a showcase for energy-efficient retrofitting, combat isolation and support the local economy, all while continuing to serve local groups. "We're small," ends Blindell, "but we're greater than the sum of our parts."

Visit [otley2030.com](https://otley2030.com) for a free nature recovery toolkit and energy-saving handbook



Otley Youth Theatre. Picture: Otley 2030.



# Hub is hive where imagination meets reality

Leeds opens one of UK's first climate action hubs

A unique city centre hub has welcomed thousands of visitors to its “joyous” space, unlocking their passion and skills to build a better future.

Available for meetings, events and co-working, people use the hub, Imagine Leeds, to learn, plan and act on issues including transport, housing, energy, social justice, nature, education, food and the economy.

“Imagine Leeds is an amazing space,” says Simon Dixon, who manages and helped to set up the hub, “informed by the latest data, warm relationships, science, culture and voices from across the city. Together, people from all walks of life are changing Leeds’ trajectory from

flying towards environmental and social crises, to leading the way towards a liveable future for all life on Earth.”

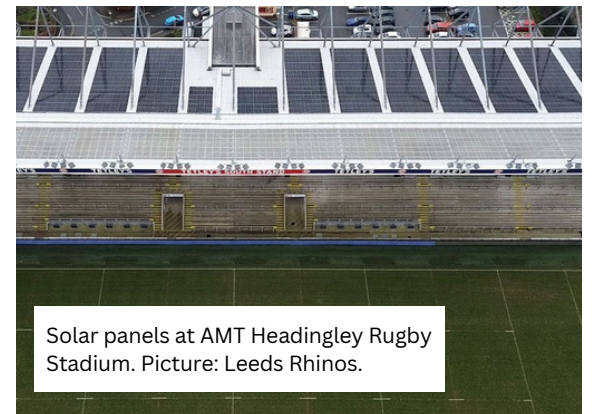
Climate Action Leeds runs Imagine Leeds with the help of many volunteers and organisations. It first operated from City Exchange premises before moving to its 9 Blenheim Terrace venue, provided by the University of Leeds, in November 2024.

“You’re not alone,” adds Simon, “and we want to enable you to think big and act local, to create a city which values people and planet. We have seven meeting and event spaces plus co-working hot desks, and we operate on a pay as you feel basis: all are welcome.

“We have trialled Imagine Leeds in two premises but we are now urgently looking for a new longer-term home for this exciting initiative.”



Picture: Imagine Leeds.



## Leeds Rhinos top of climate league

Leeds’ much-loved Rhinos aren’t just encouraging climate action, they’re living it. Sue Ward, Leeds Rhinos’ Operations Director, told Climate Action News: “Sport plays a critical role in limiting the worst effects of climate change and creating a sustainable future. We are dedicated to our planet and community goals.”

Sue adds: “We are committed to decarbonising our operations and will do this by reducing the amount of energy we consume, continue to generate our own electricity, eliminate gas use, and recycle 65% of all waste produced with zero to landfill.”

“And in partnership with the Leeds Rhinos Foundation,” Sue continues, “we are promoting sustainable travel and food options to our spectators and demonstrating how environmentally friendly choices can make a big difference to their carbon footprint.”

# Local aspirations, global responsibilities: Leeds Doughnut offers vision for city future

How can we enjoy good, healthy lives without overusing resources and overshooting safe carbon emissions boundaries? The Leeds Doughnut is up for the challenge and is based on economist Kate Raworth's Doughnut Economics framework. The doughnut’s inner edge represents the minimum we need to live well and its outer edge stands for the planet’s climate, biodiversity and other limits. The Leeds Doughnut explores how we can live within this safe space so the city can protect people and planet. It is informing Climate Action Leeds’ City Plan.

“The Leeds Doughnut is a group, network, and set of activities bringing local and global perspectives and environmental and social issues together,” explains Jenni Brooks, who leads on Doughnut Economics for Climate Action Leeds.

Dozens of workshops, talks and community events across the city have engaged residents in ideas like “how to think like a 21st-century economist” and constructive discussions on housing, energy, wellbeing and collective action.

Participants found Doughnut Economics insightful, many appreciating how it links us in our communities and globally and helps us to understand economics in relation to climate justice. Many called it hope giving and said they would change their behaviours and do more to challenge destructive narratives.

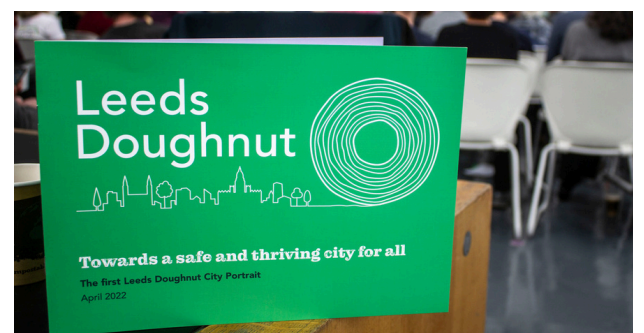
The Leeds Doughnut’s City Portrait (2022) showed us that residents face challenges in housing, health and income while the city exceeds safe planetary boundaries in carbon emissions and resource use. Yet there is much local climate action to celebrate, adds Jenni, “locally rooted growing projects, forest gardens and work on reuse, repurposing, libraries of things, and active travel.”

Leeds Doughnut has created a film exploring clothing's global consequences. “We’re showing what some of the impacts and problems with clothing are,” Jenni adds.

**More information:**  
[climateactionleeds.org.uk/leedsdoughnut](https://climateactionleeds.org.uk/leedsdoughnut)



Leeds Doughnut Launch 2022. Picture: Andrew Metheven.



The Leeds Doughnut City Portrait. Picture: Jenny Bull.



# Reengineering our city, building a movement

Part of Climate Action Leeds' work has been to build a local movement that can start to plan a very different city by the 2030s. "We want nothing less than to reengineer the city to meet the challenges of climate change, nature degradation, and severe inequalities," says Anzir Boodoo, Climate Action Leeds' City Plan Lead.

Climate Action News asked Councillors Katie Dye and Mohammed Rafique to comment on Climate Action Leeds' work.

Katie Dye, co-chair of Leeds Climate Commission, lives in and represents the Killingbeck and Seacroft Ward. She said: "Leeds is ambitious about becoming a low carbon sustainable city and responding to climate change in a way that is fair and just and benefits all our residents."

Katie adds: "Climate Action Leeds is a key partner and has had a significant impact on progress across the city,

mobilising people to get active in their communities, think about the future and create a better way to live."

Mohammed Rafique, Executive Member for Climate, Energy, Environment and Green Space, said: "In 2019, Leeds declared a climate emergency and committed to rapid decarbonisation."

Mohammed adds: "By 2030, we aim to be well on the path to carbon neutrality, reducing our environmental impact in a fair way that improves life for all our communities. Community action is at the heart of this journey. The inspiring projects supported by Climate Action Leeds and featured in this newspaper are already transforming Leeds. These efforts — alongside our bold work to support households and neighbourhoods — are building a greener, fairer city for everyone."



Leeds opens one of UK's first climate action hubs (page 11)

## Over £132,000 awarded to projects engaging thousands of people

Forty-one Climate Action Leeds Community Grants distributed in partnership with Leeds Community Foundation funded carbon reduction and nature friendly activities. The programme, for small community groups and organisations, enabled activities across the city district, including in the city centre, Morley, Wetherby, Yeadon and Farsley. Grant recipients were decided through participatory decision-making

events and by voluntary panellists. Projects including Harehills' first climate action assembly, mindfulness courses at Seacroft Forest Garden and climate action broadcasts on Radio Rangoli. These all used local knowledge to enable groups to realise their ideas to reduce carbon, promote nature friendly activity and increase social justice. As a result of the grants, over 6,000 people took part in climate action in Leeds.

## The next phase of Climate Action Leeds

During Climate Action Leeds' first five years from 2020–2025, we've developed community hubs where residents have created projects that have improved the places they live, and benefitted the climate too (pages 9–10). With our partners, we've shown how transitions can be made in energy, housing, food, nature, justice, work, education and transport (pages 2–4). Thousands of people have participated in activities and events we have organised.

From 2025–2030, we enter our next phase. We want to double down on improving people's everyday lives and protecting climate and nature. And we are committed to prioritising, allying with, and sponsoring systematically marginalised groups to create a new platform for diverse community power in the city.

"Our next phase has a particular focus on youth and racial empowerment and involvement," said Paul Chatterton, who leads City Movement Building at Climate Action Leeds. "We have a strategy to rise to the converging social, climate and nature emergencies. We offer our services to the city as a climate action broker connecting the variety, passion and innovation of bottom-up grassroots activity with the power, regulation and capacities of top-down government."

Andy Goldring, lead for the Imagine Leeds hub said: "We're looking for partners and funders to help build on five years of testing and learning and support our ambitious plans, which will have huge returns for the city and beyond."

Get in touch: [climateactionleeds.org.uk](https://climateactionleeds.org.uk)  
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## Join the movement to create a zero carbon, nature positive, socially just Leeds by the 2030s. Get involved with Climate Action Leeds – become a:

### Partner

Play a leading role in shaping Climate Action Leeds, developing and delivering projects.

### Member

Connect with a powerful network, accessing knowledge, support and inspiration.

### Supporter

Help us spread the word, follow us on social media and read our newsletters.