

WILDER ST ALBANS

- Enhancing Biodiversity and Natural Spaces
- Presented by: St Albans City and District Council
- Date: June 2025

VISION AND OBJECTIVES

- Vision: A greener, wilder St Albans that supports biodiversity, community wellbeing, and climate resilience.
- Objectives:
 - - Restore and protect natural habitats
 - - Increase biodiversity across the district
 - - Engage communities in nature-based solutions
 - Work in partnership with leaders in the field, HMWT, HCC CRoW

WHY WILDER SPACES MATTER

- Benefits of rewilding:
 - - Supports wildlife and pollinators
 - - Improves mental and physical health
 - - Enhances flood resilience
 - - Connects people with nature



WHO WE HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH

- Wilder St Albans initiative – HMWT
- Opportunities Audit and delivery SADC open spaces - HCC Crow
- Alternative Verge Management – Green infrastructure team
- River Ver Improvements - EA, Ver Valley Society
- Wild Spaces surveying and reporting – Volunteers, Friends and Herts and Middlesex Butterfly Conservation , Wilderhood watch group
- The Community Right to Grow scheme - SADC Estates Team

ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

- Council successfully obtaining £40,000 funding for new trees through Local Authority Tree Fund and Urban Tree challenge Fund.
- All new construction projects are assessed for rewilding opportunities and biodiversity enhancements at the pre-planning stage.
- Biodiversity audit looked at where we can increase biodiversity in all open spaces and significant highway verges.
- 10 sites, making up 50,000 m2 were selected for wildflower seeding in the last 3 years.
- Glyphosate-free streets trialled involving 90 people who manually weeded the streets.
- Since 2020 we have planted over 6,000 trees (whips) in our open spaces.
- Since 2022 we have given away 16,000 trees as part of the Herts County Council free tree giveaway initiative. 11,000 tree's were given to residents in 2024/25.
- 110 standard trees have been planted to replace felled trees.

CHALLENGES

- **Balancing Opinions** - of residents between increasing biodiversity and the civic environment
- **Space** – Identifying more publicly accessible/ owned land for rewilding. Recreational uses
- **Cost** - Its not always cheaper
- **Maintenance** - unfortunately, we and our contractors get it wrong sometimes

SPOTLIGHT PROJECT – REVITALISING THE RIVER VER

- Location: Verulamium Park to Cottonmill Allotments
- Partners: Environment Agency, Affinity Water
- Funding: UKSPF, EA, and Affinity Water
- Goals:
 - Restore 2.5 km of rare chalk stream
 - Increase sunlight by selective tree works
 - Create wetland habitats for birds and aquatic life
 - Improve access with new paths and bridges

ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS

- Enhancements:
 - - Wetlands near Abbey View Athletics Track
 - - Tree thinning and pollarding to reduce shading
 - - Removal of non-native and unhealthy trees
 - - Biodiversity boost: wading birds, native plants, aquatic species

COMMUNITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

- Improvements:
 - - Improved footpaths and bridges
 - - Inclusive access for all visitors
 - - Educational signage and engagement activities

REACH 1 AND LAKE RESTORATION

- Aim - Improving lake habitat (silt removal and naturalising lake edges), access and Reach 1 of River
- New councillor working group being created
- Early contractor engagement and detailed designs
- Tender for works circa
- £2m funding approved



FUTURE PLANS

- Plans:
 - - Expand rewilding to other parks, green spaces
 - - Community-led conservation initiatives
 - - Monitoring and adaptive management
 - - Continue work with partners on LNRS
 - - Volunteer opportunities (Friends Groups , HCC CRoW)
 - - Survey and reporting (volunteer surveying, reporting to committee)

CONTACT US

- website:
- www.stalbans.gov.uk/parks-and-open-spaces
- Report it online/ suggest wilding locations
- www.stalbans.gov.uk/parks-greenspaces-contact-us

