



KEEPING IT WILD

FINAL IMPACT REPORT 2021

September 2018 – October 2021



Executive Summary

Keeping it Wild was a three-year project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and delivered by a consortium of partners (London Youth, Headliners and John Muir Trust) led by London Wildlife Trust. It aimed to engage young people from traditionally under-represented groups, to take part in nature conservation projects in their local communities, paid traineeships and a youth forum, with the overall aim of making nature accessible and relevant to young people living in London.

Achievements

Overall, the majority of Keeping it Wild project targets were achieved or exceeded:

- * 1,397 young people engaged
- * 93% of young people were from at least one of the target groups: Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic groups (BAME), disabled young people or young people from lower socio-economic communities
- * 59 Wild Action Days, 16 Wild Action Programmes, 31 Traineeships and 46 Social Action projects delivered
- * 397 John Muir Awards achieved
- * 152 Level 1 and 31 Level 2 Media Accreditations achieved
- * 6 nature reserves improved, 39 wild spaces recorded and 20 projects resulted in improvements to natural heritage

Impact

London Wildlife Trust through Keeping it Wild has achieved the following outcomes;

- * Large increase in the amount of London Wildlife Trust **communications content** about natural heritage produced by young people, including blogs, films, photographs, surveys, social media campaigns and exhibitions
- * Improvements to **natural heritage**, at London Wildlife Trust nature reserves and local community greenspaces
- * Young people felt positively engaged and empowered through their experiences
- * 85% of young people have a **better understanding** of natural heritage and 82% feel that heritage is now more engaging to young people
- * Young people feel that nature and wildlife is **accessible and inclusive**; 74% agreed that heritage represents people like them
- * As well as practical **skills**, young people

have developed softer skills such as communication, team working and leadership and 93% feel that the skills they have developed will be useful for them in the future

- * 67% of trainees agreed that they have gained more knowledge about **jobs in the conservation sector**, 89% agreed that their CV has improved and 100% agreed that the traineeship was relevant to their career goals
- * Young people are more likely to **take ownership and action** as a result: 82% are more likely to visit their local greenspaces, 80% have a greater sense of ownership over their local greenspace and 87% feel inspired to take action
- * 77% of young people feel their overall health and **wellbeing** has improved.

In addition, there has been considerable **organisational change** with partners embedding new ways of engaging young people in nature and wildlife.

Learning

The critical success factors for London Wildlife Trust in Keeping it Wild were:

- * London Wildlife Trust's ability and success at reaching a **diverse audience**, through the partnership with London Youth
- * The skills, dedication, and passion of the **people** and the strength of the **partnership**
- * **Keeping it local**; the focus on nature and wildlife in London
- * Emphasis on all elements being **youth-led**
- * **Flexibility and adaptability** throughout, but particularly through the Covid-19 pandemic

‘Without this project there is a chance that these young people would not have met at all (online or in real life) during the past 5 months due to the pandemic. The project seemed to achieve its aims in helping the community learn more about wildlife, but I think a more direct effect has been the healing effect of the young people sharing their mental health struggles during lockdown and having the chance to really consider how watching wildlife has helped them, and how it will continue to help them during their lives’. (youth worker)



‘The project enhanced a connection between the young people and their natural environment, their observational skills were enhanced as they really noticed what was going on for wildlife and nature in an area they visit often. They improved in confidence as they debated and discussed how they would use the budget and what their priorities were.’ (youth worker)



“Igniting a passion amongst some of the young people for wanting to help develop wildspaces has been a major success and something we are keen to facilitate in the near future” (youth worker)



Introduction

London Wildlife Trust was awarded a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant for the Keeping it Wild project, which is part of the national Kick the Dust programme. The project aimed to engage young people from traditionally under-represented groups, to take part in nature conservation projects in their local communities, paid traineeships and a youth forum with the overall aim of making nature accessible and relevant to young people living in London.

The project ran from August 2018 to October 2021 and aimed to engage 600 young people aged 11-25 to become actively involved in the protection and promotion of London's natural heritage. The programme focused on young people who are typically under-represented in the environmental sector by engaging young people from areas of socio-economic deprivation, Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic groups (BAME) and disabled young people.

In addition to the benefits to participants the project also aimed to change the way the heritage sector connects and engages with young people. A key theme of the project was communications, media and film, in order to ensure that wildlife is more relevant and accessible to a wider audience of young people and to ensure that project partners used best practice when engaging a young audience into their core activities.

There were originally five distinct strands of activity;

- * **Wild Action Days (WAD)**; one-off, informal taster nature conservation days delivered at London Wildlife Trust nature reserves
- * **Wild Action Programme (WAP)**; an 8-week skills development through conservation programme at a London Wildlife Trust reserve
- * **Social Action Programme (SAP)**; groups of young people design and deliver their own environmentally themed social action projects and receive a small grant

- * **Traineeships**; a 12 week full time traineeship programme with a bursary at London Wildlife Trust
- * **Young Person's Forum (YPF)**; a sub-committee of London Wildlife Trust's Board of trustees, with the remit of improving the Trust's communications and engagement strategy for young people

From year 2 onwards, the Wild Action Days were incorporated into the Social Action Programme as an initial taster session for groups.

In the final year of the project, London Wildlife Trust also received additional funding from the Youth Accelerator Fund (YAF), which was used to deliver more intensive skills development activities for young people, including digital media and youth leadership training and a paid work placement with a digital media company.

The project was delivered by a partnership, led by **London Wildlife Trust** and included **London Youth, Headliners UK and John Muir Trust**. London Wildlife Trust led on the management of the project, as well as delivery of the WAD, WAP, traineeship and YPF strands. London Youth led on the SAP strand delivery. Headliners provided media training to young people taking part in WAP, SAP and traineeships, and the John Muir Trust also supported these young people to obtain the John Muir Award. The YAF activities were supported by Open Creates Ltd, a digital and creative marketing agency.

Shephard & Moyes Ltd was appointed to support a formative evaluation throughout the life of the project. This is our third and final annual evaluation report and summarises what has been delivered, achieved and learnt over the three years of the project.

About Keeping it Wild

The Need

Consultation with young people and partners in the development of the Heritage Fund Activity Plan found that many young people were not aware of or not accessing natural heritage sites or opportunities in London. Current engagement in natural heritage sites was almost exclusively for leisure purposes, with very few young people in London participating in conservation or outdoor learning activities. There were low levels of awareness of the benefits of engaging with London's natural heritage and the historical context of sites and links between biodiversity and history were not well understood.

Discussions with youth workers and young people taking part in Keeping it Wild highlighted the lack of opportunities young people have to engage in nature and wildlife. Although many young people who took part in Keeping it Wild did have an interest in wildlife or the environment, most did not have the opportunity to visit nature reserves or learn about nature.

There are also a lack of available paid opportunities in the natural heritage sector, with volunteering being the traditional route into the sector. Unpaid roles are common and therefore create a significant barrier to entry for young people, particularly those from low-income backgrounds.

The sector struggles to engage young people, with low levels of participation in organised activities by young people and there are low levels of engagement with BAME audiences, despite London Wildlife Trust sites being located in ethnically diverse boroughs.

The need for Keeping it Wild can be summarised as:

- * Heritage is an ageing sector and not diverse/representative of the population which is unsustainable
- * Young people don't know there is wildlife in London
- * Young people are not spending enough time outdoors, resulting in poor health/wellbeing outcomes
- * Lack of awareness of how to engage with wildlife
- * Lack of general activities for young people due to cuts in services, and even less provision in the heritage/wildlife sector
- * Skills gap in youth sector in environment/conservation
- * Perceptions that 'it's not for us' amongst young people and youth workers/organisations
- * Lack of knowledge of career paths/opportunities in the heritage sector

"This is something that they've just never done before. Even though we could explore wildlife as a topic, to actually have a look in their area about what kind of nature there is and open their minds and learn about what is on your doorstep. Where they're like in this kind of concrete jungle, they just think, oh, there is no wildlife. I think they've definitely learned about what local wildlife is in their area."
(Youth worker)

Case Study: SAP group

London Borough of Redbridge Youth services delivered two SAP projects; one group worked with the local Conservation Rangers and an artist from SPACE studios to produce a Nature Map of Redbridge, which was launched at an Exhibition at SPACE studios and will be available online in pdf form. The following conversation was with three members of the group.

“I was in youth council and I didn’t really have much going on. I was like, might as well go along and see what it’s all about. And then I got involved. And then it was so much better than we’d actually expected. I didn’t know that we’d all go on a trip, which was really fun, because the park that we went to is really close to my house. And we got a tour guide and the part that we actually went and visited I didn’t even know existed. I got to learn new things about my own community, that was quite interesting. And we got to meet loads of artists when we were designing our logo, and some of my work was put in the book that we’ve made. It was a good experience.”

“I’m not really that involved with nature, so thought I might as well just go along, see what it’s like. It was definitely more different than I expected. I thought we’d be doing work. So like task work and essays and that kind of stuff. But it’s definitely more fun than I expected. Lots of doing artwork, trips, so definitely more fun. And I love photography, so I think that really interested me. We made a nature guide, a map and pamphlets, that’s all going in an exhibition.”

“I think it was a really good opportunity that I got to learn so much more about nature in general. Because I have hay fever. So I sort of run away from plants and I don’t go into wildlife. But the fact it was on Zoom, it was sort of working with nature, but like, not actively with plants, it was mainly like doing things with nature, which was like a new way to look at everything. I learned a lot about editing photos, because we had an artist come in, who helped us with putting the book together. So I got to meet new people. And I got to learn more about my community. And I just sort of got to find out what type of person I am as well in terms of creativity and stuff like that, which is quite cool.”

Case Study: YAF and WAP participant

“I first took part in the digital marketing workshop, which was advertised through my university as I’m doing a digital media and communication course. When I heard about the 6 week course [Wild Action Programme] I was keen to sign up. I am interested in animals, but not so much about nature.

I really enjoyed how every week I learned a lot of new information which normally I wouldn’t have discovered on my own. There was something new every week to take away and it really made me see nature differently. I learned that if I see a patch of grass it’s not just grass it can be a meadow or grassland or a wetland which previously I had no knowledge of.

I had no idea the Great North Wood existed and no idea that there are so many projects involved and there are so many outdoor activities you can take part in and it just highlighted all the locations I could travel to in the future.

[The group] was a community so we were

hearing everyone’s stories and sharing the same interests with everyone so it wasn’t just you learning on your own about it, everyone was adding to it.

I also never knew how campaigns were made, [particularly] nature, which I also experienced in the two day workshop. But I found it very interesting to find out more about how they create wildlife campaigns and how they use media to draw attention, and also how they create headlines. That was a very interesting session. It really added to my degree.

After having experienced the two-day workshop, and the six week course, I realised that the direction I want to go into in my line of work. I’m really interested in being an art director. I just saw designing is just designing but now I want to design with a purpose. Right now I’m part of an internship where we are promoting eco friendly, pet parenting ways. Getting more involved into the environment side, it really like made me want to go for that internship.”

The Approach

The table below provides an overview of the six strands of activity in Keeping it Wild.

Wild Action Days	Wild Action Days were one-off, informal taster days delivered at London Wildlife Trust nature reserves. From year 2 the Wild Action Days (or online Wild Meets) were incorporated into the Social Action Projects strand as an introduction to the programme.
Wild Action Programme	The Wild Action Programme was a more intensive skills development programme, through which young people undertook a combination of practical outdoor nature conservation and online learning, worked towards a John Muir Award, and completed accredited media training from Headliners.
Social Action Projects	The Social Action Projects strand was led by London Youth. Member organisations engaged groups of young people to design and deliver their own social action projects either on London Wildlife Trust nature reserves, their own local green spaces or online through awareness campaigns, films or other communications content. As part of the programme the young people also worked towards a John Muir Award and worked with Headliners to produce films to showcase their achievements and receive an accredited media award.



Traineeships	Three month full time paid traineeships were available for up to 30 young people over the life of the project, with each trainee based at a London Wildlife Trust site. Trainees worked alongside the project delivery team and on-site staff to support the delivery of project activities to young people and assist in general reserve management, marketing and communications and visitor engagement duties. Trainees also worked towards a higher level John Muir Award as part of their placement and completed a media qualification with Headliners.
Young People's Forum	The Young People's Forum was established as a sub-committee of London Wildlife Trust's Board of trustees, with the remit of improving its communications and engagement strategy for young people. The forum met 4 times a year and was used as a consultation and ideas development panel, focusing on communications and marketing and engaging young people in nature conservation.
Youth Accelerator Fund	The YAF programme provided more intensive skills development opportunities for young people; including media and youth leadership workshops, paid work experience at a digital marketing company, delivery of a showcase event and participation in focus groups which led to the creation of the Wild Youth Hub.

Who took part

This section considers who London Wildlife Trust and the consortium partners reached through Keeping it Wild.

Overall, the project engaged 1,397 young people over the three years; 1,239 from the original Heritage Fund project and a further 158 from the Youth Accelerator Fund. It is important to note that these are not unique individuals, as some people have taken part in multiple strands of activity.

Target groups

As stated in the introduction, Keeping it Wild was targeted at under-represented groups of young people; namely young people from BAME or lower socio-economic communities or young people with disabilities or health conditions. Overall the partnership has been extremely successful at reaching these groups, with 93% of all participants (where demographic data is available) being from at least one of these three target groups.

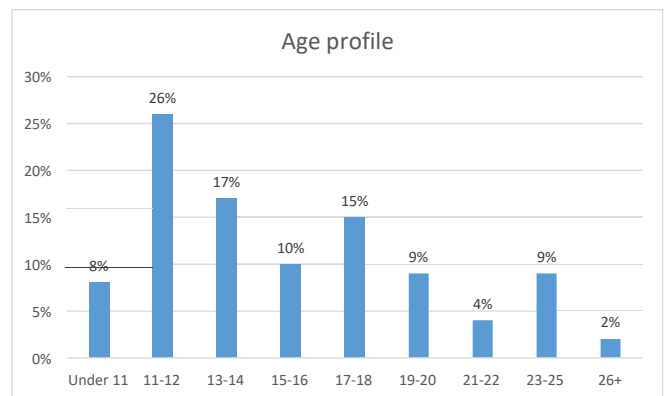
Gender

Overall, the project achieved a fairly equal gender split, with 51% of participants identifying as female, 48% identifying as male and 1% identifying as either transgender, non-binary or other. The table below shows that there were no substantial variations between the different project strands, with the exception of the Young People’s Forum, which engaged more females than males.

	% Female	% Male	% Other
WAP	53%	47%	<1%
SAP	51%	48%	1%
Trainees	47%	50%	3%
YPF	59%	41%	0%

Age

The chart below shows the overall age profile of Keeping it Wild participants. It shows that overall, the project engaged a good range of ages, with 90% of young people from the target age range of 11-25. Overall, the project tended to engage younger ages, with just over half (52%) aged 10-14. However it has also been relatively successful at reaching young people aged from 15 to 18 (25% of all participants), who are generally difficult to engage as they are often busy with GCSEs and A Levels/equivalent.



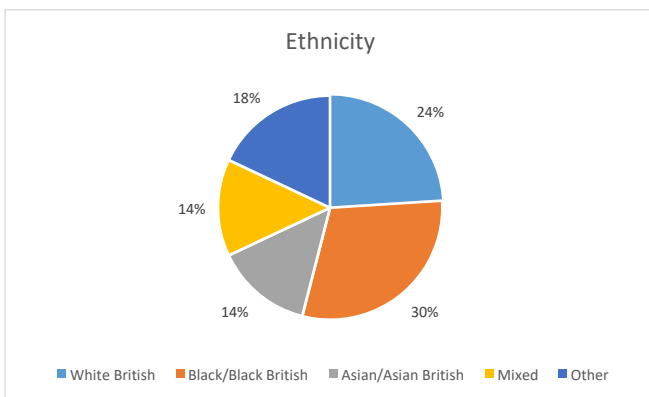
However, it is important to note that the age profile was different across the different strands of the project:

- * The WAPs engaged the most even spread of ages, with 27% aged 14 or under, 35% aged 15-18 and 38% aged 19 or over
- * The SAPs tended to engage more younger age groups, with 65% aged 14 or under, 24% aged 15-18 and 12% aged 19 or over
- * The traineeships and Young People’s Forum tended to engage more older age groups; 6% of trainees were aged 15-18 and 94% were 19+, and 13% of YPF members were aged 15-18 and 87% aged 19+

This suggests that in order to engage a range of age groups, projects need a variety of different activities or opportunities.

Ethnicity

Overall, 76% of young people who took part in Keeping it Wild were from BAME communities. This is a particular strength of the project given the lack of ethnic diversity within the nature conservation sector; data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency in 2014/15 showed that only 3% of people who enrolled on environmental conservation courses were from BAME communities, and research by Natural England identified that only 1.8% of their staff identified as having non-white heritage.



The SAP strand of the project engaged the largest proportion of BAME young people (82%), benefiting from London Youth’s existing reach into diverse communities. The traineeship programme engaged 69% and the WAPs 68% of BAME young people.

The YPF strand engaged the smallest proportion of BAME young people, with less than half (48%) from non white backgrounds. Going forward, London Wildlife Trust should be mindful of this and consider how the diversity of the YPF can be increased further.

Disability

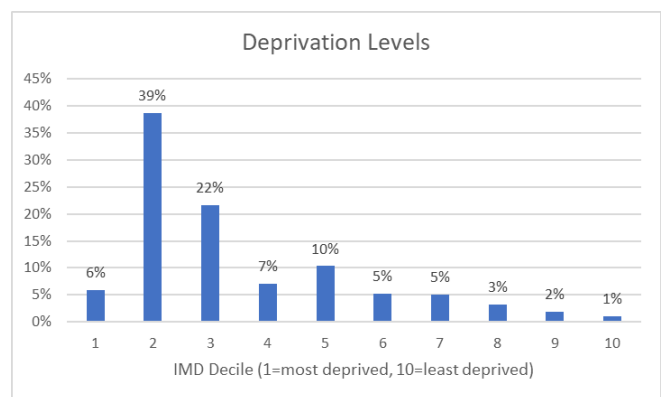
Overall, 30% of young people who took part in Keeping it Wild had a disability or health condition (including mental health conditions).

The WAP and SAP strands were particularly successful at engaging groups of disabled young people, notably autism and learning disabilities. In particular, the shift in delivery

from face to face to online as a result of Covid-19 enabled the project to be more accessible for some groups. For example, one of the SAP groups, Autus, an organisation that supports young people with autism only deliver online, and would therefore have been unable to take part in the project prior to the pandemic when all activities were delivered in-person. And Elatt, an organisation that supports young people (including SEND) with employment support and training, took part in the WAPs in both year 2 and year 3 of the project and found they were able to engage young people who would normally not take part in outdoor activities.

Lower socio-economic groups

Postcode data was collected from participants (or youth clubs for the SAP programme) and mapped to the Index of Multiple Deprivation to give an indication of the proportion of young people who live in lower socio-economic communities. Overall, 41% of Keeping It Wild participants live in the top 20% most deprived communities in England.

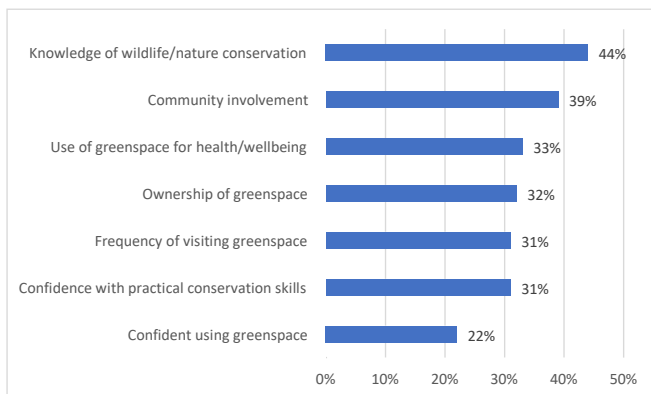


Nearly half (48%) of young people who took part in the SAPs live in the top 20% most deprived communities in England, again benefiting from London Youth’s reach into diverse communities. This compares to 31% of WAP participants, 26% of trainees and 20% of YPF members.

Previous engagement levels

The registration forms for the WAD/SAP and WAPs asked participants to rate themselves against a series of statements designed to ascertain levels of knowledge, confidence and experience of engaging in nature and wildlife, before taking part in Keeping it Wild. These baseline scores were used to determine the extent to which the project reached young people without prior knowledge or experience.

The results are shown in the chart below, indicating that just under half of participants had low levels of knowledge of wildlife/nature conservation and around a third had little experience of visiting greenspace, or using it for health/wellbeing.



In addition, 70% of young people who signed up to take part in Keeping it Wild had no experience of taking action to conserve or protect greenspace.

“Although London has lots of parks, I think nature is much more than parks but it’s really hidden. If you don’t know you don’t look unless you search for it. So if you live in a city, and if you’ve always lived in a city, and if you’ve never lived in the countryside, or if you’re not exposed to it.” (young person)

Overall, there were two distinct groups of young people who took part in Keeping it Wild;

- * young people who were passionate about nature, wildlife or the environment and wanted opportunities to learn more, engage

with likeminded people or access the sector for a career

- * young people with little experience or knowledge of nature or wildlife, or young people where nature or wildlife had little relevance in their lives

Although both groups had different starting points, all lacked the opportunity to develop their knowledge, improve their skills or take action to support wildlife in London.

Young people chose to get involved in Keeping it Wild to learn more about nature and wildlife and to help improve their local greenspaces. Many were passionate about the environment and keen to learn more about how they can do more to help.

“This is a great opportunity to get to know nature better and increase our knowledge and understanding as well.” (young person)

“I wanted to learn more about wildlife conservation.” (young person)

“It seemed like it would be fun and I want to help the environment.” (young person)

“My reasons for getting involved in the project are furthering the community’s knowledge and improving the community’s green space to look nicer and allow animals/nature to inhabit it.” (young person)

“Not a lot of people my age, especially in my school seem to believe how conservation is so important and it annoys me that what they see is different to the way nature/the world feels so I want to do something about it.” (young person)

Other common reasons were to socialise and develop their teamworking skills.

“To know about nature and what I can do to preserve the environment and make friends and keep active.” (young person)

“I want to improve my teamwork skills and meet new people.” (young person)

Young people also wanted something positive to do during the Covid-19 lockdowns.

“I want to try something new and also use this time in quarantine to find new hobbies and appreciate nature more.” (young person)

Case Study: Elatt

In year 2 of Keeping it Wild, the WAP programme started working with Elatt, a training provider that works with adults and young people with special educational needs. 60-70% of learners have needs which means they are unable to participate in mainstream education. Elatt provides a safe learning environment which is focused on personal and social development as well as 1-1 support. They deliver a number of programmes with external partners and most delivery is online.

Elatt chose to take part in the WAP during the first lockdown in 2020.

“Our hope was that the course would increase their environmental awareness and give them an opportunity to work together – the young people are isolated, so keeping them engaged was the focus, but also to learn about environmental issues. We also wanted them to focus on their local area – lots of students think about environmental issues in relation to global issues, but we wanted the focus to be on their local area.” (group leader)

As a result of taking part in the online WAP, Elatt young people were able to appreciate nature and wildlife more.

“They are now a lot more aware of wildlife and nature. Before the environment was just pollution and plastics and recycling, now they are thinking more widely and noticing the wildlife around them. Not all of them are 100% interested in wildlife, but being isolated has made them appreciate nature a bit more – they realised how important seeing parks and greenspace is and what is around them. They appreciate nature more.” (group leader)

They continued in year 3 and as Covid-19 restrictions eased, were able to take part in outdoor activities. For one participant, the impact of Keeping it Wild has been significant;

“When we were delivering online, there was one participant, and he never had his camera

on. And throughout the whole course he talked about how scared he was of Covid and how he hadn't left his bedroom the whole time. He was just like, “why would anyone go outside as you're gonna die of Covid”, he was really scared of it.

And then [when restrictions eased] the group were able to visit Woodbury Wetlands, and he actually came out, which was amazing. But he was wearing a mask and didn't want to do much, so we just went for a walk and had a chat.

But then fast forward to this year. He isn't doing the project, because he's already done it. But he's come out with the group today as a mentor, because he wanted to join in the trip. That was a really big step for him. In the first session I remember him saying that nature had caused Covid and Covid is so bad. And now, he's not necessarily out flying the flag for nature, but he's out supporting other young people getting out into nature. And that's really lovely to see.” (London Wildlife Trust project officer)

What was delivered

Overview

The table below summarises the key outputs delivered over the three years, and compares these to the original targets. It shows that the vast majority of targets have been achieved or exceeded.

	Target	Achieved
WAD Sessions delivered	47	59
WAP Session blocks delivered (up to 8 sessions)	15	16
SAP projects delivered	42	46
YPF meetings	12	12
Young people engaged (original project)	1030	1239
Young people engaged (Youth Accelerator Fund)	160	158
John Muir Award achieved	302	397
Young people benefit from media training	120	266
Level 1 media accreditation achieved	150	152
Level 2 media accreditation achieved	32	31
Employment support training delivered	32	31
Nature reserves improved	6 per year	6 per year
Wild/local spaces recorded (film/digital media)	39	39
Projects result in improvements to natural heritage	20	20

Wild Action Programme

The key achievements from the WAPs were:

- * 16 WAP programmes delivered
- * 168 young people engaged
- * 162 young people achieved a John Muir Discovery Award
- * 112 young people achieved a Level 1 media award
- * 6 nature reserves improved peryear

In year 1 of the project, the WAP focused on practical conservation works in London Wildlife Trust reserves, working with existing groups of young people through colleges, alternative education providers or young people not in mainstream education; often young people with disabilities, additional needs or those being homeschooled. The programme provided a practical experience, where young people were given responsibility for helping to manage habitats as well as learn more about

nature conservation. In year 2 the programme shifted to online delivery from March 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There was a mix of programmes with existing groups (again, with a focus on young people not in mainstream education) alongside open-recruitment programmes where individual young people would apply to take part. Year 3 saw a combination of online and in-person delivery as Covid-19 restrictions allowed.

The learning from the WAP strand of Keeping it Wild can be summarised as:

- * The importance of giving young people **responsibility and ownership**; either through practical volunteering when delivered in person, or through the Wild Challenges assigned in between weekly online sessions; young people were not simply passive learners and this differentiated the programme from more traditional school visits

- * Being **flexible** to the needs of the individual groups; in terms of length of the programme but also content
- * Ensuring the programme is **youth-led**; designing the content to meet the interests of the groups and encouraging young people to carry out their own research
- * Having a focus on nature and wildlife in young people's **communities**; during lockdowns the programme was successful at encouraging young people to notice the nature in their gardens, local streets or even what they could see from their windows
- * Recognising that open-recruitment programmes would be filled by young people with an existing interest or passion for nature/wildlife, who were looking for opportunities to share their interests with **likeminded people** and learn more about other ways they could take action (either as a hobby or career).
- * **Integrating the media** element alongside the conservation activity or learning rather than a separate strand; co-design and delivery of sessions between London Wildlife Trust and Headliners was successful at fully embedding the two elements from year 2 onwards

Social Action Programme

The key achievements from the SAPs were:

- * 46 social action projects delivered
- * 435 young people engaged from 34 separate youth organisations
- * 204 young people achieved a John Muir Explorer Award
- * 266 young people received media training
- * 34 young people achieved a Level 1 media award
- * 20 projects resulted in improvements to natural heritage

The SAPs were led by London Youth and initially followed their existing 4-stage delivery model which was mapped to the four John Muir Award challenges of Discover, Explore, Conserve and Share. In year 2 the model was simplified to reduce the number of stages and combine the four challenges into two distinct elements; either an in-person Wild Action Day or virtual Wild Meet followed by the design and delivery of a Social Action project in the group's

local community which had a focus on nature/wildlife.

The learning from the SAP strand of Keeping it Wild can be summarised as:

- * Working through London Youth's diverse membership engaged a large proportion of small, grassroots community-based youth organisations with **little experience** of delivering nature/wildlife-focused programmes.
- * In particular the programme benefited from the **pre-existing relationships** between London Youth staff and youth workers/youth organisations, which were essential to encouraging these groups to participate
- * The need for significant **training and support** for youth workers who lacked experience and confidence of delivering nature/wildlife focused programme; building the capacity of the youth organisations has led to many choosing to continue to deliver similar programmes of activity
- * The importance of giving young people ownership by providing a **budget** for their social action project, and requiring them to '**pitch**' their ideas to a panel of experts (either online or in person)
- * Building in opportunities to **inspire** or spark the curiosity of young people for which nature/wildlife may not be relevant to them (through the Wild Action Day or Wild Meet), whilst also having a focus on what action they can take in their own communities
- * Recognising that during the Covid-19 lockdowns, young people welcomed any opportunities to connect to their peers; building in connections between **nature and wellbeing** ensured the programme stayed relevant as well as valuable during this period
- * Allowing groups to deliver either **practical conservation or campaigning projects** in their communities, in particular online campaigns, worked well during lockdowns
- * The need to keep the **administration of the John Muir Award** as simple as possible; recognising that most youth organisations would not be familiar with the award

Traineeships

The key achievements from the Traineeships were:

- * 32 young people recruited
- * 31 young people achieved a John Muir Explorer Award, received employment support training and a Level 2 media award
- * Overall, 22 young people (70% of all trainees) have successfully gained employment in the conservation (or associated) sectors as a result of the traineeships, including four trainees employed by London Wildlife Trust and one trainee employed by Headliners

The majority of trainees applied with the specific goal of building their skills and experience in the conservation sector and the majority provided positive feedback of their experience. Demand for the traineeship was extremely high and increased over the three years as awareness of it increased.

The traineeship involved a 12-week full time paid placement at London Wildlife Trust, working on one of their reserves, whilst also receiving media training and support to achieve the John Muir Award. The traineeship also incorporated a focus on communications and campaigning, with 'take-over days' on social media and/or the production of film/ photographic media.

The learning from the traineeship element of Keeping it Wild can be summarised as:

- * The importance of strict **eligibility criteria** for the placement; although many young people were graduates, the focus on engaging young people from BAME or lower-socio-economic communities or young people with disabilities ensured that the project maintained a focus on reaching young people who are under-represented in the sector
- * The importance of it being a **paid placement**; 100% of trainees rated this element as excellent or good and many said they would not have been able to take part without it
- * Although many would have liked the placement to be longer, the importance of including a **variety of experiences**, and supporting young people to curate their own traineeships as much as possible

- * Ensuring that trainees are fully **supported** by all staff at the Trust (not just the Keeping it Wild team), and the importance of ensuring that they feel like a member of the organisation

Young People's Forum

The key achievements from the YPF were:

- * 45 young people recruited
- * 12 YPF meetings held

The purpose of the YPF was to create a group of young people who could act as a consultative group for London Wildlife Trust; supporting the project and wider organisation in effectively communicating with young people. YPF members attended up to four meetings a year which involved a combination of learning and sharing opportunities, as well as consultation activities and creation of communications content.

The learning from the YPF element of Keeping it Wild can be summarised as:

- * Recruiting for new members each year helped to keep the YPF fresh, but a **mix of new and existing members** helped to strengthen the cohesiveness of the group
- * Providing a range of opportunities to **share interests and views** as well as **learn** more about the conservation sector
- * The importance of ensuring that young people know how the group has helped **influence policy or practice**
- * Giving the group responsibility (and a budget) for **running projects** and activities
- * The opportunity to **network** with other members of the Trust's senior management team and trustees, as well as finding out how charities operate
- * Embedding the group within the Trust's **governance structure** to ensure youth involvement is meaningful and not tokenistic

Youth Accelerator Fund

Key achievements from the Youth Accelerator Fund were:

- * 54 young people attended digital media/marketing workshops
- * 9 young people benefited from paid work

experience

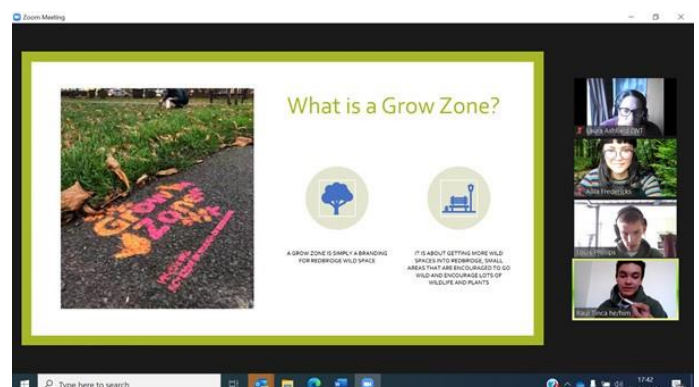
- * 20 young people benefited from youth leadership training
- * 10 young people benefited from GIS training
- * 30 young people attended focus groups to inform youth involvement and digital resource planning
- * 30 young people attended learn and share workshops
- * 5 young people curated a showcase event
- * The creation of the online Wild Youth Hub; a range of resources created by young people for young people, including careers advice, social action inspiration and wellbeing exercises centred around wildlife.



The YAF element of the programme was delivered in year 3 of the project, and provided an opportunity to provide more intensive skills development to young people through training, work placements and opportunities to lead on events and create resources to engage other young people in nature/wildlife.

The learning from the YAF element of Keeping it Wild can be summarised as:

- * The value of **partnership working**; for example London Youth delivering youth leadership training and Open delivering media training and leading the work placement
- * Building in **progression and pathways** into the core programme for more specialised or intensive skills development for young people looking for a career in the sector
- * Ensuring that work placements provide **'real-world' experiences**; the digital media placement provided groups of young people with the opportunity to create a social media campaign for London Wildlife Trust and gave young people a unique insight into both digital marketing and conservation campaign strategies
- * Empowering young people to **showcase** their existing skills; the Wild Youth Hub resources, as well as an important legacy for Keeping it Wild has provided talented young film makers, designers and animators with a platform to promote their work



Case Study : SAP group

CARAS (community action for refugees and asylum seekers) run a community garden in Tooting and their Social Action Project involved making bird boxes for the garden.

“We support young people, newly arrived, but also young refugees and asylum seekers that have been in the country for longer. We’ve had a gardening group set up for a while that takes place every Wednesday in Tooting Community Garden, and supports particularly vulnerable young people. We do a range of different activities, some will be hands on gardening, and depending on the weather, we might do more relaxed activities, we might make a fire, sit by the fire and chat.

We started Keeping it Wild with the Wild Meet day. We had about 10 young people come to that as part of one of our workshops. A few more people signed up after this and we did a trip to Sydenham Hill Wood where we learned more about Keeping it Wild, about the woods and about our local wildlife spots, which was really, really good. And it was great because it got more young people interested in Keeping it Wild, and then they started to come along to gardening club.

They then started to think about ideas of what they could spend with the money; one of the original ideas was a pollinator, but they were also quite keen to get a bat box or a bird box and maybe install a camera like to see what’s there.

Although they are interested in gardening, this is all a new thing that they’re learning about. On the trip, we learnt a lot about the wildlife that you get in London, which I think is so useful, because in London, there’s the assumption because we’re in this big city, there’s not much of it.

I think the biggest barrier is knowing where it is. And lack of access to knowledge about it. I think especially for newly arrived asylum seekers. Getting to know London is a really big task and knowing where places are in the city, even if that’s just local parks. To know where

wildlife places are in London, I think is probably one of the barriers. Travel as well - getting around London. I also think some young people may feel that that’s not something that’s kind of part of their everyday lives, which obviously it should be. I feel like maybe wildlife and access to wildlife could be more of an inclusive thing for them, especially young refugees and asylum seekers.

The trip definitely helped to break down these barriers, showing people that these kind of spaces are actually really close by - a bus journey or a walk away.

The online Wild Meet took place January/February and by that point young people were used to Zoom. It’s never the same [as meeting in person] but I think considering that, it was really engaging. We had quite a lot of young people and the presentations were visual, which is really good because we have a wide range of levels of English so it’s always good to keep words to a minimum and visuals to a maximum.

We did a little bit of media stuff on the trip. And for the last two months we’ve been getting young people to write our tweets and one of our young people on the trip did a really nice one about the trip and during lockdown they were taking pictures of wildlife which was really great, and a lot of young people got really involved in that. The media element, especially during lockdown, was really great. It was something to do and also it got people outside.

Keeping it Wild being youth-led is amazing and I think that really contributes to young people being involved in the environment, knowing about it and also protecting London’s wildlife and learning that it is on their doorstep.

It’s definitely something we’d like to do more of. Depending on restrictions over the summer it would be great to explore different parks in London. It’s given me the understanding that they’re accessible, and it’s given me an urge to go on more trips, or even run youth club in different areas and different green spaces in London, to explore that more and to learn about the wildlife in London.” (youth worker)

CaseStudy:Trainee

“I graduated with a Zoology degree and was looking for something to do. I applied to do the traineeship and wanted to carry on being involved in Keeping it Wild so I also joined the young people’s forum. I loved everything [about the traineeship], it’s one of the most valuable things I’ve done – everyone is so willing to help and support, telling us about opportunities and you feel part of the team.

I enjoyed everything – I really enjoyed the environmental education and community engagement side of things. I had knowledge of ecology and I was mixing what I learnt at uni with the people side of things – and I found I enjoyed the people side of things more. I managed to complete the traineeship before lockdown. I did want to get more experience with children and learning events, but wasn’t able to before lockdown started.

I want to carry on doing community engagement work – I’m applying for graduate roles. I had an interview with TCV but I didn’t get it. But everyone helped me so much, and gave me so much advice and helped me practice the interview. It was definitely a useful experience. And being paid is amazing – I may not have been able to do it if it wasn’t paid”.

Since this interview was carried out, this trainee has subsequently been employed by the London Wildlife Trust.

CaseStudy:Trainee

“I’m 23, I’m from North London and I graduated 2 years ago; I did Zoology. I floated about a bit, did some random jobs, lots of bar work. I did an internship with the bat conservation trust but it was unpaid and that was really difficult. I wasn’t sure what to do so I did a media course. They exposed me to different sectors and gave me a good overview of everything to do with media. I then thought, now what? I did bar work and was doing a bit of TV work when I could, but the hours were nuts. I found out about this from the media trust – one of my course managers used to work for Headliners and saw the opportunity. I saw it was a traineeship that was both conservation and media based and I thought this must be a sign!

It’s going great, it really encompasses a lot. It’s given me a really good taster of all the different jobs you can go into. At university they didn’t really inform you, show you what you can go in to – you were just there to learn and everything else you sort out for yourself. It’s been really nice to do the different things. I’ve come to realise I need to do both conservation and media.

It’s given me a chance to be self-perpetuating in what I want to do. It’s very dependent on what you want to do which is really nice. There are core things you have to do, but you have the opportunity to take the time and do what you want to do, it’s a rare opportunity. One of the only issues is the amount of content – it’s only 3 months. It’s very intensive, balancing both the media and the conservation. You may want to really invest in one area but you don’t really have the time.

The bursary is great – a lot of internships don’t pay anything and you have to work a second job and it’s knackered. It’s important you get a bursary for this job as you need to work later or have the opportunity to do other things, and if I was working elsewhere I couldn’t do that.

I didn’t know much about the Media OCN before this, it’s an added bonus. It attracts people to the role, particularly people who haven’t gone to university.

I’ve realised I need both a creative and conservation side to my life – maybe a comms role [in conservation] would be good. Nowadays you have to have a niche and this has helped show me what I can do. I knew I had the science side and the media side and this has shown me how to combine the two. It’s been amazing, I’ve really enjoyed it.”

Impact: What difference did Keeping it Wild Make?

This chapter considers what difference the project made to the young people who participated, as well as the organisations involved in Keeping it Wild. The data is taken from the national Kick the Dust programme evaluation surveys designed by Renaisi (KtD evaluator), complemented by qualitative feedback captured through the lifetime of the project.

Increase in relevant communications about natural heritage

Keeping it Wild resulted in a large increase in the amount of communications about natural heritage produced by young people. The table below shows the type of content and number of communications produced over the three years of the project.

Type of content	Number
Reinterpretations of well-known heritage	28
Stories about heritage that is not well known/was previously hidden	10
Surveys of natural habits or species	23
Other	13

In addition, the project has resulted in;

- * 54 media blogs/articles
- * 1 exhibition
- * 4 leaflet/flyers produced
- * 4 sets of promotional photographs for three different sites
- * 12 videos or vlogs produced

As well as this increase in communications content, there is also evidence that Keeping it Wild has helped influence and change the way The Trust communicates with its audiences; young people and more broadly. As a result of the communications content produced by the

trainees, YPF and YAF groups, The Trust has started to take a more 'people-focused' (rather than purely 'nature focused') approach to some of its content, has started to use new media platforms that are more popular with younger audiences, and overall has started to take more risks with its communications strategies.

"Before Keeping it Wild we didn't really use Instagram, and now it's a successful channel with over 10,000 followers." (London Wildlife Trust)

Keeping it Wild has also demonstrated the value of having a dedicated communications officer for projects, rather than relying on the central team for communications and marketing support.

"It's been really useful having a dedicated comms resource on the project, it means that we've been able to do a lot more than we would have. And it's been really nice to get more of a thread around people, and specifically young people and photographs on social media content. Things like the social media takeovers, I think it's all been good and it's widened who we're reaching. I think we're starting to look more appealing to a younger age group as a result of the project." (London Wildlife Trust)

Improved heritage

Young people taking part in Keeping it Wild have helped improve their local heritage assets, by taking part in practical conservation activities, wildlife surveying and improving local greenspaces and habitats. Young people have helped to improve 6 London Wildlife Trust nature reserves through the WAD, WAP and traineeship strands of activity and 20 of the SAP projects have resulted in tangible improvements to natural heritage.

The John Muir Trust undertake an audit as part of the award. The audit helps to understand the different types of habitats being improved

by the SAP projects, as well as quantify what has been delivered to improve the habitat, by either practical works or through campaigning activities. Through the SAPs and traineeships, young people have achieved the following:

- * 337 bags of litter collected
- * 121 wildlife habitats created and maintained
- * 611m² of invasive species removed
- * 880m² of scrub cleared
- * 290m of fencing created and maintained
- * 79m of hedge laid
- * 63m of dead hedge created and maintained
- * 171m² of wild meadow seeded
- * 214m of footpath created/maintained
- * 170 trees planted
- * 68m² of reed bed maintenance
- * 129m² of compost created

“We have transformed a dirty neglected garden into a lovely space with bird tables and plants that are great for butterflies and bees.” (youth worker)

Due to the shift in online delivery since March 2020, many SAP groups decided to run online campaigns instead of practical projects. Groups have run social media campaigns, created films and exhibitions as well as promoted their projects online.

“The group worked with the local Conservation Rangers and SPACE studios to produce a Nature Map of Redbridge. The group started with a nature walk around Fairlop Waters with a conservation ranger and we learnt about the flora and fauna. The group then worked with an artist from SPACE studios to learn about photography techniques. The members were then encouraged to take photos of their local favourite areas and over the weeks with the artist they honed their photography and post production skills to get the best photograph. The photos and written pieces will then be put together to produce a Nature Map of Redbridge that will be launched at an Exhibition at SPACE studios and will be available online in pdf form.” (youth organisation)

Enjoyable, engaging and empowering experience

Feedback from young people and youth workers/group leaders was overwhelmingly positive. 97% of WAD participants enjoyed the day, 40% of other participants said it met their expectations and nearly half (46%) stated it was better than they thought it would be. 100% of the young people who took part in the Youth Accelerator Fund programme enjoyed the activities.

The majority of young people felt positively engaged in the experience:

- * 95% of participants felt welcomed
- * 96% felt respected
- * 79% felt a sense of achievement

“I loved everything about today! I loved the smores, cutting, sawing and pond dipping. I really liked the pond olympics, everyone was so nice.” (young person)

“Interesting session and everyone was really kind as well as respectful. Many opportunities to get involved within the session.” (young person)

Most young people also felt empowered:

- * 92% felt listened to
- * 69% felt they were able to influence decisions

“I’m excited to do the research on how to make bug hotels, habitats for the animals and also the best seeds to grow!” (young person)

“I’ve never really had an opportunity to help my community that much on a local scale since Covid began and I thought this was a good opportunity to start up. Our unsustainable attitude towards the environment has always upset me and any opportunity to change this for the world around me sounded amazing.” (young person)

Improved communication

The majority of young people (85%) have a better understanding of heritage as a result of taking part, and 82% feel that heritage is now more engaging to young people.

"It helped me get a lot better connection with nature. It made me realise how important nature is and how important animals are for wildlife. I realise that you do need the wildlife and those animals as well to help us humans... it made me realise how important wildlife is to us humans." (WAP participant)

Increased accessibility

93% of young people agreed that in Keeping it Wild there was something for everyone, regardless of their background, and 94% agreed that the project was easy and affordable to get involved with.

"It's just been so nice to meet new people, I hope to keep in contact with everyone on the Whatsapp group chat. I've learned a lot. It's been good to talk to everyone and try something new. And this is just such a big boost of encouragement for me, to look for more opportunities in conservation and nature. Because, from my background, I didn't get to do many opportunities like this, my background is more physics with astrophysics, so telescopes, quantum mechanics, all that stuff. This is something of a passion for me, I really, really want to do more of this. Thank you so much for giving us this opportunity, and allowing me to have an outlet for creativity and understanding nature and environment and just acting on it." (WAP participant)

More inclusive and diverse

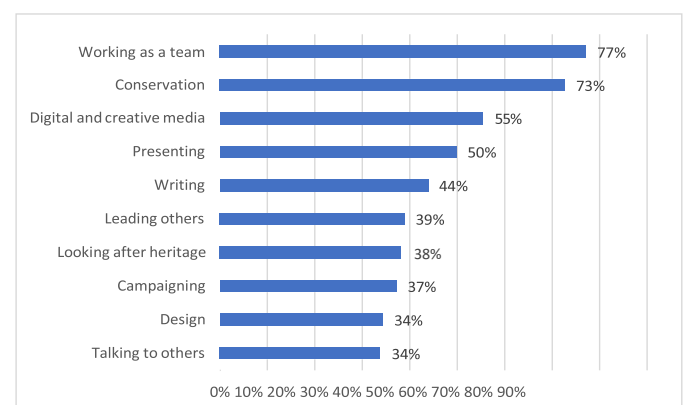
Through Keeping it Wild, London Wildlife Trust helped young people to feel that heritage is 'for them'; with 74% agreeing that heritage represents people like them. 84% of young people who took part in the YAF programme also agreed that as a result of taking part, they

feel that the heritage sector represents them.

"I have learnt so much, from the history of LWT, practical conservation skills, communication about nature, and getting the equivalent of a GCSE. I was able to be out about my gender in a workplace which gave me the confidence to be out. I've found a group of friends to connect with and networked with people. My job applications have gone a bit further in the process of getting the job due to being employed by a Wildlife Trust and I learnt that I was on the right path with what I want to do for my career. I have learnt how to create digitally in a professional setting and it's helped me with personal projects. It has benefitted me majorly and I'm so glad I applied!" (Trainee)

Improved skills and employability

The chart below shows the top 10 skills young people have developed as a result of Keeping it Wild. As well as practical skills, young people have developed softer skills such as communication, team working and leadership. In particular the SAP programme helps young people to develop leadership skills as they are required to design and develop a project idea themselves and receive a small grant to implement the idea.



93% of participants agreed that these skills will be useful to them in the future, showing that the project is helping to develop transferable skills. 92% said they have learnt new things about heritage in a fun and interesting way

and 98% of WAD participants learnt something new.

“It has benefitted me both personally and professionally in so many ways, it has allowed me to gain experience and improve skills (practical conservation, education, community abatement) in a range of different areas. Giving me a much clearer vision of a future career. As well as learn about the city I was born and raised in from a completely new perspective. All of the LWT [team] have been encouraging and welcoming and eager for me to help and learn from them, which has made me feel a valuable part of the team and improved my professional confidence so much” (trainee)

96% of the young people that took part in the YAF agreed that they have learnt something new; 90% felt their marketing and digital media skills have improved and 71% felt their leadership skills have improved. 96% agreed that they have developed skills that will be useful for them in the future.

Data collected by London Youth from the SAP programme also asked youth workers to assess the extent to which young people taking part have improved their skills. The table below shows that young people are developing leadership, communication and project management skills, as well as improving their confidence around delivering projects related to nature and wildlife.

	Average score (out of 10)
Young People are better at managing a project	7.85
Young People are more confident	8.45
Young People are taking more responsibility in the organisation	8.25
Young People are better leaders	8.1
Young People are better at presenting in front of others	7.9
Young People communicate better with others	8.3

	Average score (out of 10)
Young people feel more confident about delivering future projects related to nature/wildlife	8.45

Young people taking part in the project are more aware of potential career options, with 70% feeling there are jobs for young people like them to work in heritage and only 6% disagreeing. 67% of trainees agreed that they have gained more knowledge about jobs in the conservation sector, 89% agree that their CV has improved and 100% agreed that the traineeship was relevant to their career goals.

Four trainees are now employed full-time at London Wildlife Trust and others have secured sessional work with them and other conservation organisations.

“The traineeship definitely made me more employable, I think specifically having London Wildlife Trust on my CV has made people more interested in me as a candidate. After my traineeship, I had several interviews (whereas previously I never had a conservation interview) and now have a paid job in an environmental charity.” (trainee)

Changing perceptions of heritage

Keeping it Wild is helping to change perceptions of heritage, with 87% agreeing that heritage can be interesting to lots of different people, 81% are more likely to take part in other heritage activities and 73% are more likely to volunteer in future.

“I’m most proud of actually coming to the wildlife and actually experiencing it. I’d say I’m more of a city girl, I’m not very used to bugs and stuff. I felt it was a very new experience to me, and the fact I was able to get myself out to the wildlife and the bugs and stuff, I’m glad that I experienced that.” (WAP participant)

Increase in ownership and responsibility

Young people are more likely to take ownership of their greenspace as a result of taking part in Keeping it Wild. 82% are more likely to visit their local greenspace more regularly, 80% have a greater sense of ownership over their local greenspace and 87% feel inspired to take action.

"I hope the long-term impact will be that whenever I want to throw something away... I will remember how much of an impact throwing things away can be... I can make other people aware that it can affect the wildlife." (WAP participant)

82% of the YAF participants agreed that they now feel more confident exploring and talking about the natural environment as a result of taking part, and 93% were inspired to take action.

"We now have young people motivated towards long term environmental social action as well as a pending 5 year plan." (youth worker)

Improved wellbeing

A huge impact of Keeping it Wild has been the ability to engage and inspire young people during lockdown. Providing opportunities for young people to stay connected to each other and their youth clubs, taking part in enjoyable activities and encouraging them to reflect on how lockdown has affected them has helped to provide a positive experience during extremely challenging times. As a result, 77% of young people feel their overall health and wellbeing has improved.

A sample of the trainees (n=16) used the WarwickEdinburgh Mental Wellbeing scale to track changes to their wellbeing over the 12 week placement. The results show that for 75% of these trainees their wellbeing scores improved over the 12 weeks, and on average the scores improved from 49.88 in week 1 to 55.1 in week 12 (out of a maximum of 70).

"It was really nice to have something to work and focus on over this past year which was difficult. I found the growing therapeutic." (SAP participant)

"Socialising a lot... very happy, feel good... fitness as well. It helps me out, being here. Giving myself time and just to look at nature a lot, to have that calmness." (WAP participant)

"Without this project there is a chance that these young people would not have met at all (online or in real life) during the past 5 months due to the pandemic. The project seemed to achieve its aims in helping the community learn more about wildlife, but I think a more direct effect has been the healing effect of the young people sharing their mental health struggles during lockdown and having the chance to really consider how watching wildlife has helped them, and how it will continue to help them during their lives." (youth worker)

Organisational Change

As well as the significant impact on young people, Keeping it Wild has also resulted in changes to the organisations involved in delivering the project. Youth organisations feel more confident to deliver similar activities in future, and youth workers have improved skills and confidence to further support young people to learn about and protect nature and wildlife in London.

Results from the youth worker survey shows:

- * Keeping it Wild offered something different to other activities in their organisation, with youth workers rating this as 9.32 out of 10
- * Youth workers agree they learnt more about natural heritage, rating this as 7.65/10
- * Youth workers are more aware of the natural heritage sector and what opportunities there are, rating this 7.8/10
- * Youth workers feel more confident about delivering future projects related to nature/wildlife, rating this 8.85/10

"Originally, we were a theatre company, but we expanded over the years and these are transferable skills that feed the theatre and theatre feeds this. It's a topic that young people are definitely interested in, and in

terms of us as a company, we work with young refugees and asylum seekers and the impact of climate change in the next 10 years will have an impact on people and we're going to see more and more people coming because of climate change and because of environmental issues. So this is definitely something that is linked with the work that we do and we would like to do more of. It's definitely something that we're really keen on and giving the opportunities to other young people to lead these kind of projects and gaining some skills - it's really important" (youth worker)

"It's helped us gain confidence to run more social action projects. We are better equipped to involve young people in championing for their green or wild spaces in the borough and as a result have been invited to collaborate on a young Soutwark Nature Action Plan in conjunction with TCV, Soutwark Council and other partners." (youth worker)

The partnership working between London Wildlife Trust, London Youth, Headliners and John Muir Trust has also strengthened how each individual organisation works.

London Wildlife Trust

London Wildlife Trust has overhauled its entire approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, with a new strategy, changes to recruitment processes and improved safeguarding policies and processes. As a result of Keeping it Wild, the organisation itself has a more diverse workforce, and has policies in place to build on these successes.

"We've had a renewed emphasis on EDI and that is clearly linked to the success of the project. I do feel like this project has been different, it hasn't been so project confined. And it has managed to reach out and have wider impact, with the EDI work, with communications, with governance." (London Wildlife Trust)

The Trust has also improved its approach to both communicating to young audiences, but also involving young people in decision-making; the Young People's Forum will continue to form part of the governance structure at the Trust and changes to communications messaging and methods will continue through a new

communications strategy.

The organisation has also benefited from extensive learning from the other partners delivering Keeping it Wild around how to effectively engage young people in nature and wildlife, outside of more traditional formal and informal education sessions. The learning from Keeping it Wild has been used in other projects through collaborations, and crucially a new post has been created to ensure this learning is mainstreamed within the organisation. The new Youth Programmes Manager will be responsible for creating work to develop a new strategy with the Director of Learning Youth and Communities, and ensuring that young people's engagement is a priority across the whole organisation; both in terms of education, but also volunteering and employment opportunities.

"The strategic plan, we've written in that young people will be a top priority. I feel like before we dipped our toe in with young people's projects, we ran a few pilots or had the odd element within a project. But I feel that Keeping it Wild has really brought working with young people to the forefront as a priority." (London Wildlife Trust)

Other partners

- * **London Youth** has benefited from working closely with the other project partners and as a result has increased knowledge about nature conservation, and evidence of how using this as a focus for social action can benefit young people, youth organisations and communities. They have also learnt how media, and campaign work in general can be valuable in social action programmes.
- * **Headliners** have also increased their knowledge of nature conservation, but more importantly have learnt how to connect media to other activities, for example how media can be used as a tool to facilitate conversations about nature/wildlife
- * **John Muir Trust** have a better understanding of youth organisations in London, and how to best meet the needs of organisations that may not have a nature or wildlife focus

All partners agree that one of the key successes of Keeping it Wild has been the partnership working, and how this has helped to build more resilient organisations. All are keen to continue working together in future.

Conclusions: Summarising the learning

Overall the Keeping it Wild project has been a huge success. It has reached large numbers of under-represented young people, provided new opportunities to engage with and learn about nature and wildlife, and as a result has inspired young people to take action.

In this section we have summarised the key learning from Keeping it Wild; identifying the critical success factors that led to its success.

Increasing diversity

Keeping it Wild was not just about engaging young people in nature and wildlife; it had a specific focus on reaching groups that are traditionally under-represented in the natural heritage sector. By working with organisations that have existing relationships with groups that support BAME, disabled young people or young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, Keeping it Wild was able to maintain this focus and successfully reach a diverse audience.

As a result, through the Keeping it Wild project, London Wildlife Trust has both inspired young people for whom nature and wildlife had little relevance in their lives, as well as helped connect young people with a passion for nature to the sector and helped build skills, knowledge of career opportunities and networks.

People and partnerships

The partnership employed a team of highly skilled, passionate and knowledgeable staff who were able to successfully engage this diverse range of young people; creating safe, inclusive and enjoyable experiences regardless of their previous knowledge or backgrounds.

One of the main strengths of Keeping it Wild was the partnership; bringing together a group of organisations with different expertise and skillsets created significant benefits for the project, as well as strengthened the individual organisations.

Keeping it Local

The focus on nature and wildlife in London has helped young people to better appreciate what opportunities the city has to offer and the breadth of species and habitats in the capital. It has helped young people to take action to support nature and wildlife in their communities, as well as understand how nature and wildlife can benefit their own health and wellbeing.

Having a focus on nature and wildlife in London as a city, the streets or estates where young people live and even what they can see out of their windows has led to nature becoming more accessible to young people, and more relevant to their lives.

Youth-Led

All strands of Keeping it Wild incorporated elements where young people had a choice, their voices were listened to and they were involved in co-designing their experience.

Young people were given ownership and responsibility for designing and delivering social action projects in their communities, which helped to build leadership and teamworking skills. And the Young People's Forum has seen young people taking the lead on creating communications content, delivering events, and influencing the way in which London Wildlife Trust works. The Wild Youth Hub online resource portal was created by young people for young people and enabled YAF participants to develop and showcase their skills.

Flexible and adaptable

London Wildlife Trust and partners have successfully achieved all the original targets and outcomes agreed with funders. But, more importantly, the project has continually adapted delivery based on what has worked well and less well, improving its offer over the three years.

The individual and collective strengths and commitment of the partnership enabled a quick and effective response to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, and as a result the project managed to continue delivering during all lockdowns and changing restrictions. The ability of the partnership to continue to successfully engage young people in nature and wildlife virtually presented a significant challenge, but the willingness to adapt the programme has demonstrated what is possible to achieve.

What happens next: Legacy

Although it was a fully funded project, Keeping it Wild has led to significant changes in the way London Wildlife Trust (and other partners) works. The commitment to build on the successes and further embed the learning from Keeping it Wild has led to successful funding applications and commitment to continue elements of the project:

- * The paid **traineeship** programme will continue at London Wildlife Trust, with support from the Greater London Authority and National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- * The **Young People's Forum** will evolve with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, as part of the development of a wider youth governance model at The Trust. This will include the creation of a formalised Youth Board and the creation of 'Young Advisors' to act as a conduit between the Youth Board and Board of Trustees.
- * The **partnership** between London Wildlife Trust and London Youth will also continue, with London Youth providing youth leadership training.

Additional funding has also been secured to deliver new projects and partnerships, including:

- * The creation of an annual **Green Jobs Fair**, curated by the Youth Board
- * The development of a new wellbeing focused project, **Nature Nurtures**, which will focus on engaging young women and girls
- * **Partnership working** with BAME-led environmental focused organisations,

including Black Girls Hike and Flock Together

The changes to the way in which the Trust communicates with and engages young people will continue, the new position of Youth Programme's Manager and the refocusing of the Strategic Projects and Engagement Directorate towards Learning, Youth and Communities will ensure that young people's engagement remains a strategic priority at the Trust.

