

# Birmingham TreePeople

Monthly Newsletter

# Birmingham Roots



Planting, protecting, and promoting trees and the urban forest.

Birmingham Roots, Issue 02, 21/08/23



# Birmingham Roots

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# Features

## A Word from The Chair

This month the urban forest volunteers have surveyed 450 plots in Birmingham, as part of the iTree Eco survey, for the West Midlands Combined Authority. Amazing volunteers have trudged the length and breadth of the city to find the randomly selected plots. A huge thank you to all those who took part, but if you've caught the surveying bug, you may want to consider helping with the Street Tree survey!

Our work with the Urban Forest Accelerator project with the National Trust has also begun. Look out for engagement activities publicised in our emails and social media that you may want to get involved with.



**Tonia Clark, Chair**

## iTree Eco Update



Krish and friends, urban forest volunteers

After the resounding success for the three iTree Eco practical training sessions, the survey kicked off with tremendous momentum from the large group of urban forest volunteers, who have completed this survey quicker than any of its kind before – in only two weeks.

Thanks to the volunteers providing wonderful photos of their enjoyable time undertaking the survey, the BTP socials (found below) have been rife with smiles, and the press release reached the ears of BBC Radio WM. Ian McDermott appeared on Natalie Graham's Wellbeing Wednesday show on the 19<sup>th</sup> July, to talk about the iconic work BTP and its partner organisations are doing in and around Birmingham, with shout-outs for the new employees and volunteers. The link to the show can be found on our blog.

*See next page to continue this story.*

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# iTree Eco: How did it go?

Where are the trees?



Urban forest volunteer, dubbed 'the modest tall man of Frankley'

This citizen science-led survey was preceded by others of its kind and has been modelled on certain American counterparts, but this particular survey has proved to be an amazing feat for the urban forest volunteers and various partners, raising up Birmingham's status as a green city, cementing our status as a Tree City of the World, and proving that when people come together it makes the world a better place.

Thanks are extended to Natalie for our slot on BBC WM, and much praise and admiration goes out to our dedicated volunteers, continuing their journeys into the tree world through this project.

When the survey began, a WhatsApp group was set up for the Trustees and Team Leaders to coordinate with all volunteers, and the chat blew up as they attended each of the random sample plots, spread out around Birmingham, and plotted the trees on the land.

The aim of the survey is to collect these sample plots' extensive data to create a comprehensive database, that will enable urban forest organisations ease of access to identify red wards - or priority areas - in and around Birmingham to target to tree canopy cover increase (see top photo). This will be carried out using community engagement methods and tree planting.



Dee Brettle taking a selfie during the survey

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# BTP Summer Social 2023

Birmingham TreePeople hosted its first Summer Social, for the volunteers and community to spend the day with us, learning about what we do. This included our future projects, awards for the L2 Arboriculture, food and drink and conversation, as well as plenty of updates on current projects (Tree Trails, Street Tree survey, iTree Eco survey, Urban Forest Master Plan, and many more).

The rain didn't dampen these volunteers' spirits because the Birmingham TreePeople's Summer Social of 2023 had a room full in attendance. As our successes and endeavours continue to grow, we wanted to share the day with old and new volunteers, giving presentations, talks and workshops to display our ongoing work in Birmingham. We want to continue building a base of knowledge and a wealth of 'treeformation' for our volunteers and Birmingham's communities, tying into wider projects, partnering with other organisations, to elevate this work onto a wider platform.

After registration and an introduction from Tonia Clark and Ian McDermott, Nina Griffiths gave a thorough presentation highlighting her current work on the street tree surveying. They are assessing the crown die back, overall condition and possible damage of newly planted and old street trees around Birmingham neighbourhoods.



Nina and Tonia leading a presentation on the Street Tree surveys



From left to right, L2 Arboriculture certification holders: Tanya, Tonia, Deb, Willie, Julianne, Steve

The study highlights the lack of biodiversity and various recurring problems, proving that these citizen science surveys are imperative due to their informative results, showing what we can do to improve certain areas.

**Following on from this fountain of knowledge, several volunteers that have undertaken their own quest to further their qualifications within arboriculture we rightly rewarded: Deb Cashmore, Tonia Clark, Willie McGee, Julianne Statham, Tanya Upton, Stephen Watson, and Lawrence Weston (unfortunately not in attendance) were awarded their certificates for completing the L2 Arboriculture course. This is the first course that BTP have run, and the students have done spectacularly, as well as the second course currently running and going well.**

Ian McDermott, having presented the awards, had no time to rest before delivering a detailed presentation on the iTree Eco 2023 survey of Birmingham Coventry and Solihull. As some of you will know, our volunteers completed the survey in a shocking two weeks, exhibiting great determination. *See next page to continue story.*

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# Summer Social: Continued



Ian giving a presentation on iTREE Eco

During the split practical sessions for the Street Tree surveys and Tree Trails, the groups were able to learn from Nina and Dee first-hand, showing the urban forest volunteers how to measure and record street tree data (see left image), as well as selecting the best species of trees to include in your trails.

**We managed to gain two new Street Tree volunteers, but we are keen to find more, so if you are interested in looking after your trees near you, please don't hesitate to contact us.**

The survey intends to supply the information needed to increase canopy cover and green space in key areas, having surveyed the random plots around the City of Birmingham that our volunteers oversaw. This has been a spectacular achievement for us and our volunteers, who deserve the praise, as it has been completed faster than any study of its kind previously, as well as being the largest.



Not only did we provide our survey updates, but Dee Brettle gave an interesting talk on the work she has done, to digitize the Friends of the Parks' Tree Trails, to keep exact locations updated and reducing costs of printed trails. If you have a mobile, playing 'Pokémon Go for trees' is something that can be encouraged as a green prescription, for old and young, and the online data can include seasonal images, provides extensive information at the beginning of each trail (the Friends group involved, the trail and trees).



Dee plotting a tree trail for the group, with Mac identifying species

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# Tree Equity with Woodland Trust



This park in Nechells needs some TLC

Birmingham TreePeople were invited and asked for assistance during a visit and photography session, undertaken by The Woodland Trust, to several Birmingham neighbourhoods in order to capture the differences in tree equity.

The Woodland Trust intends to use this database of imagery to highlight, through the means of an extensive report, the inequality of trees. Lower-income communities and wards have less access to green space, and therefore the pollution and heat island effect is far worse in these 'red wards', thus the trust intends to rectify these inequalities.



Catherine Nuttgens, Urban Lead, interviewing the BTP urban forest volunteers

donning their best outdoor clothing, the two young men helped highlight certain urban and inequitable features within the greenspaces and built-up areas we visited.

Catherine, Amber and Phil visited the City Centre in order to find examples of good tree equity within a large urban environment, but there is still much work to be done and upkeep, in order for Birmingham to remain a Tree City of the World and strive to further heights. We can work with organisation like Woodland to do this, benefitting from shared pools of knowledge and creating comprehensive reports and databases that all arboriculturalists can use in their own cities.

We want to thank The Woodland Trust for inviting us to help them; the work we have done will go towards a greater goal of increasing UK canopy cover and greenspace, bettering our quality of life.



Phil (Woodland) directing Krish & Raghav (BTP volunteers) during the shoot

BTP took The Woodland Trust's Catherine, Amber and Phil to Nechells, a red ward that we are intending to target with our upcoming planting season, to marry our work with Woodland's to create a more comprehensive background and project, working with other organisations to secure the benefits of trees for various communities. Our volunteers, Krish and Raghav, were more than happy to be photographed for the equity project;

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