

For discussion at Quinton Ward Forum meeting on 18th May 2021

NATURE (CRISIS) IN QUINTON

Many are aware of the Climate Crisis but not so many of the connected Nature Crisis/Emergency and the urgent need for a Nature Recovery. Yet we have all witnessed the huge decline of species (birds, butterflies, plants etc). Nationally since 1970, 40% of all species have declined and 133 have become extinct. This decline and extinction is a result of the disappearance of, and the lack of management of, green space habitats and a consequent reduction in biodiversity. Local Eco Records show that this is the case here in Quinton.

Over a long period of time Birmingham City Council (BCC) has not found the resources to adequately support Nature in green spaces such as Woodgate Valley Country Park, Quinton Playing Fields, Quinton Meadows Local Nature Reserve, and Pitts Wood. The same is true of Dudley MBC with regards to Howley Grange Recreation Ground (part of Quinton Meadows). Green spaces, especially those for used by firms for their employees' recreation have simply disappeared and, apart from millennium tree planting on Highfield Farm Recreation Ground, there has been little effort to improve habitats in Quinton's Parks/Recreation Grounds.

Currently a two year trial and test 'Future Accelerator Parks Naturally Birmingham Programme' is being carried out by BCC. Whilst full of good ideas including the creation of a "next generation" of Nature Champions, it unfortunately does not have the resources to help the current generation of Nature Champions here in Quinton. It is however encouraging to see that Quinton Meadows Consultative Committee and Friends of Pitts Wood have prioritised volunteer Nature Conservation work and that the Active Residents Group are starting projects to re-wild green spaces of all types and sizes. Of course there remains the question of how these voluntary groups will fund the ongoing and increasing resources (including volunteers) required to be sustainable.

The experience of human beings during this Covid-19 period has confirmed the physical and mental health benefits of Nature to our species. It has shown the importance of having easy access to, and being able to walk in and appreciate green spaces. For this to happen, a Nature Recovery would be required in 30% of the U.K.'s land and seas. I would suggest that as its main priority Quinton Ward Forum discusses how this could be achieved in Quinton.

Peter Beck

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