

February 2026



Welcome to the February Sustainable Schools Leicester eBulletin.

After a quieter January, we have lots of projects and events coming up soon, so read on to find out more.

Upcoming events and competitions:

World Wetlands Day is on Monday 2nd February

National Nest Box Week starts Saturday 14th February and runs until the 21st February.

World Wildlife Day is on Tuesday 3rd March

Litter Less Leicester - Monday 23 February to Friday 3 June 2026. Find out more below.

Grow Your Own Grub competition – Sign up deadline is Friday 6th March. Find out more below.

Deadline for submissions for our March eBulletin = Wednesday 25th February 2026



We joined the trees and Woodlands Team along with other volunteers to help plant 180 trees in the Beaumont Leys area to replace those lost to disease.

Year 5/6 students at Evington Valley Primary School have been looking at flooding and planning Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that can be built in their school grounds to help.

Take care and, as always, if you need any help or support do get in touch.

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Follow us on Social Media

The Sustainable Schools Team have their own social media channels where you can keep up to date with all things related to sustainability in schools.



[EnvEducationLeicester](#)



[EcoSchoolsLCC](#)



[EcoSchoolsLCC](#)



[EcoSchoolsLCC](#)



schools.leicester.gov.uk/eco-schools



SustainableSchools@leicester.gov.uk

Grow Your Own Grub Mealbarrow Competition 2026

Leicester's Grow Your Own Grub Mealbarrow competition is back and is a great way to encourage food growing in the school community. For 2026, we have chosen a 'rainbow' theme for the event, meaning you need to choose a rainbow-themed link and base your menu and food growing on that! Take it in whichever direction you wish and you might reach the pot of gold at the end!

- Source a wheelbarrow (ask around or get in touch if you are struggling)
- Grow at least 5 ingredients in your "mealbarrow"
- Provide compost, seeds and/or plug plants to grow (*some seeds provided after the training*)
- Attend an optional, **free**, in-person food growing training **on Thursday 19th March, 3:30-4:45pm at Beaumont Leys Library**
- Design and submit a healthy 3-course menu by **Friday 15th May**
- Submit a simple report on the growing process by **Friday 19th June**
- Advertise the competition and the celebration day (**Saturday 4th July**) to parents & and families via school newsletters and the school's social media channels



Registration to take part is now open – [click here](#) to complete the form. Deadline for registration is **Friday 6th March 2026**. Any questions please email Victoria.brown@leicester.gov.uk

Carbon Literacy Project – upcoming training dates

In February 2019, Leicester City Council declared a climate emergency. We are working to reduce carbon with the aim of the city becoming zero carbon. In order to raise awareness of the climate emergency, we are using the Carbon Literacy Project as a way of accrediting school staff in becoming Carbon Literate. By the end of 2025, the DfE have said that each school will have a sustainability lead who will have taken part in Carbon Literacy Training. Any school staff, governors, and managers can take part.

Virtual training: Tuesdays 14th, 21st and 28th April 2026, 4-6pm (all 3 sessions needed)

To sign up to one of the training, please complete the [eform](#) or scan the QR code →

Cost is £50 per person for school staff / governors from Leicester City schools or £70 for non-school staff and staff outside of Leicester City. This includes the individual and course accreditation fees from the Carbon Literacy Project.



Carbon Literacy Training -
2025/2026



Eco Schools Green Flag Award – support available

The Eco-Schools programme is a pupil-led initiative that empowers young people to lead sustainability efforts within their schools and communities. The programme provides a simple, seven-step framework that guides schools on their environmental journey, focusing on ten key topics, such as biodiversity, energy, litter and transport.



This structured approach ensures that schools develop long-term, sustainable habits, turning environmental action into an integral part of school life.

There is still plenty of time to sign up and register for the 2025-26 award.

Last year, 42 schools achieved their Green Flag awards.

If you need any help or support with your application or any step of the process, feel free to get in touch and ask as Vicky can come to your school to go over steps with you and your eco group, or can provide support via Teams or phone call. Email Vicky at victoria.brown@leicester.gov.uk.

Free tree saplings

Before Christmas we offered some free fruit trees for schools via Biffa. All the trees were claimed and planted.

We have now been donated some native trees saplings (such as hazel, rowan and alder) from the Council's Trees and Woodlands team to give to schools to plant in their grounds. We only have a few so email Vicky if you wish to have a tree and we will allocate them on a first-come first-served basis.

The trees are saplings, around 5ft tall and so will be provided with a ground stake which will need hammering into the ground, and possibly a tree guard to protect from damage from mowing and grazing animals. They might also come with a mulch mat which you will then need to source your own mulch to cover, to protect the roots and provide nutrients for your tree. Due to their size, you will need to dig a hole of about 40cm wide and deep, and it will need a growing space of 1.5m radius around the tree.

The trees will be delivered as soon as possible and **will need planting within 24 hours of delivery** as they are bare root.

If you need help with planting, please request this when emailing, along with what help you will need, such as advice, spades etc. Contact Vicky at victoria.brown@leicester.gov.uk for your free tree(s).



Litter Less Leicester

The Sustainable Schools team at Leicester City Council are running Litter Less Leicester again this year! This project runs from Monday 23 February to Friday 3 June 2026.

We are aiming for as many schools as possible to become Litter Less Champions, running litter awareness assemblies or sessions and carrying out litter picks in your school grounds or local area.



Why take part?

- Get students involved in a great project to **raise awareness** about and **reduce litter** at school and in your community.
- **Borrow litter picking equipment** for a half term (if required and subject to availability).
- Links to **Eco-Schools topics** litter, waste, marine and school grounds to help achieve your Green Flag!
- Receive a **free virtual or in-person assembly** (or resources to run your own) on litter, **or individual class sessions**.
- Have fun and help to keep the environment free from litter!



All you need to do:

- Attend an optional webinar on Weds 11th Feb 2026, 3:45-4:15pm to find out more.
- Carry out at least **5 litter picks**.
- **Weigh and record** how much you collect (luggage scales can be borrowed for this).
- Write a **short case study** (100 words) once completed with 2 photos (template provided).

If you would like your school to take part in this project, please complete our [eform](#)

For more information, please contact Vicky Brown, Education Officer at victoria.brown@leicester.gov.uk

FREE assemblies and workshops on waste management, reduction and recycling for Leicester Schools

Did you know Leicester City Council's Waste Management team offer FREE assemblies or bespoke workshops on waste reduction and recycling for Leicester Schools. They offer a range of activities tailored to your school for all things recycling and waste related, including assemblies, workshops and classroom presentations, tailored to your needs and covering a range of topics.

For further information on the FREE activities we can provide please contact Kimberley Tilley, Service Development Officer (Waste Management), Leicester City Council - kimberley.tilley@leicester.gov.uk or [0116 454 6742](tel:01164546742)



Eco-Schools Celebration – Sign up now!

Celebrate the work that your school has completed this year by attending our Eco-Schools Celebration event. Bring along up to 6 students to display your Eco-Schools project/s and celebrate your Eco-Schools Green Flag award. Special guests will come round and chat to your students and see their projects, before awarding prizes for different categories.

Taking place on Friday 12 June 2026 (9.30am-2.15pm) at City Hall, Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ.



[Eco-Schools Celebration 2026 - sign up form \(initial expression of interest\) – Fill in form](#)

If you have any initial questions, please contact Vicky Brown at victoria.brown@leicester.gov.uk

**Did you know that thanks to Active Travel England, your school could be eligible to take part in WOW – the walk to school challenge - for free?
(ONE fully funded place left for a Leicester City School)**

WOW – the walk to school challenge is a pupil-led initiative from UK charity, Living Streets. Pupils self-report how they get to school every day on the WOW Travel Tracker with those who walk, wheel, cycle, scoot or Park and Stride at least once a week awarded collectible WOW badges.



WOW has been helping to reduce congestion and pollution at thousands of schools for 20 years. Last academic year, the Walk to School Outreach project helped create 17.8 million new walking journeys and removed over 3.4 million car km from the roads at peak times.

Visit livingstreets.org.uk/WOW or email cate.dearn@livingstreets.org.uk to find out more and to see if your school is eligible. *(There is ONE funded places available for a Leicester City new school/school that have not taken part in recent years. We can check eligibility when you get in touch. Please also note that spaces on this funding stream are limited and are being allocated on a first-come, first-served basis so do get in touch at the earliest opportunity if you are interested to find out more)*

Living Streets – We Walk, Free Primary School Assemblies



Schools across the UK are joining Living Streets to walk, wheel, scoot, and cycle towards healthier futures. Our free, online We Walk assemblies inspire KS1 and KS2 pupils to make active travel part of their everyday life – all from the comfort of their classroom!

WE WALK FOR WELLBEING - on Tuesday, the 4th and Wednesday the 5th of February, Living Streets are offering primary Schools the chance to join a free, 20-minute curriculum-aligned Teams assembly packed with interactive, fun and accessible content that is designed to help pupils:

- explore how walking and wheeling can improve your health.
- learn how to take care of your physical and mental wellbeing.
- discover examples of how people have improved their health through active travel.
- take part in quizzes, discussions, and interactive activities.

To find out more and register your place on one of the assemblies, [click here](#).

Climate Ambassadors information webinars for education settings

Our education system and the nurseries, schools and colleges within it play a critical role in driving action to address climate change and nature decline.

As part of the Department for Education's [Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy](#), all education settings are expected to have a [climate action plan](#) and a [sustainability lead](#) in place.



A number of organisations are working together to offer a wide range of **free** support to nursery, school and college leaders and educators to enable them to act on climate and nature.

If you are working within **any role in an Education Setting**, please join this introductory webinar to find out more about the **free** support offered from the Climate Ambassadors programme. This session will:

- Give a clear overview of the Department for Education's four climate action pillars,
- Share examples of work done by Climate Ambassadors and other settings,
- Introduce the Climate Ambassadors Climate Action Plan Template and other supporting resources, and
- Provide guidance on how to request Climate Ambassador support

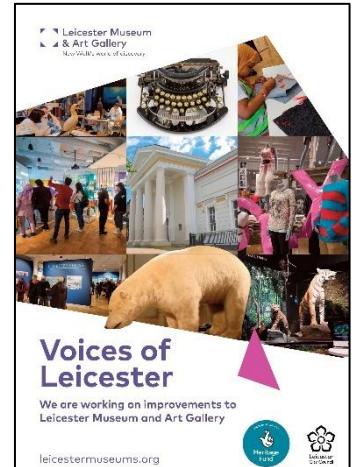
Find the full list of webinars and sign up on the Eventbrite page:

[Introduction to the Climate Ambassadors Programme Tickets](#)

Have your say! Voices of Leicester: a global city – [School survey](#)

Leicester Museum and Art Gallery is in an exciting development stage. In addition to current works to create a new café and suite of art galleries, we're also working on plans to develop other parts of the museum. These later works are part of a National Lottery Heritage Fund project called Voices of Leicester and include the creation of two new social history galleries on the ground floor of the museum, and a new family friendly environment gallery on the first floor.

The environment gallery will explore issues around climate change and our changing planet. In support of this new gallery, we will also be developing learning programmes and resources for schools linked to the environment.



We are keen to hear from teachers and their students about **what stories we should be telling**, how they feel about **environmental issues**, and **how you might want to get involved**.

If you have **5 minutes** to complete this **short survey** that would be great and very much appreciated:

[Voices of Leicester: a global city - Teacher survey](#)

Learning Through Landscapes - Local School Nature Grants are back for 2026!

Supported by the People's Postcode Lottery, we're offering:

- Two hours of quality outdoor learning training for your staff;
- £500 worth of outdoor equipment for your school;
- A climate curriculum pack worth £150;
- A climate audit of your site; and more!



This is your chance to tell us how a grant would benefit your school or setting in your own words. Every single application is read by a member of LtL staff who is excited to hear about your site, your cohort, and your experiences, so don't hold back!

Applications are open to schools and early years settings in England, Scotland, and Wales **until 13 March**. If you've received a Local School Nature Grant in previous years, you're instead eligible for our LSNG XL programme, which offers up to 30 hours of CPD training, alongside equipment and resources.

Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity to embed outdoor learning and play into the school day! Not sure where to begin? Take a look at our advice for writing a winning Local School Nature Grant application, plus a deep dive into the training available through the project. Good luck!

Apply now: [Local School Nature Grants - Learning through Landscapes](#)

Need help?

How to write a winning application: [How to write a winning Local School Nature Grant application](#)

How the training could benefit you: [Local School Nature Grants: How can outdoor learning training benefit you?](#)

Ernest Cook Trust – Outdoor Essentials Grant for schools



The Outdoor Essentials Grant is an award to UK state-funded schools to remove barriers and enable pupils to connect to nature and learn outdoors.

An award of £500 is offered to primary and special schools and a double award of 2 x £500 (£1,000) to secondary schools. Priority will be given to schools with underserved pupils in areas of high deprivation.

Grants are available for the following options:

- **Nature & Nurture - School grounds improvements**

To enable young people to be connected to nature and the recognised benefits that this has to their wellbeing, this grant is available to schools to enhance 'nature on the doorstep' through improvements to school grounds or areas within their local community.

- **Transport & Travel - Transport costs to Outdoor Learning venues**

This grant supports school travel and transport costs to any centre or provider that can facilitate these ambitions, including: Outdoor Learning centres, forest schools, countryside parks, woodlands, national parks, farm parks, farms (including city farms), coastal areas and beaches.

- **Wellies & Waterproofs - Outdoor clothing**

The cost of living crisis has highlighted inequalities in people's abilities to access the outdoors. Being unable to access appropriate outdoor clothing and equipment has been identified as a key barrier for schools who want to

engage in Outdoor Learning. This grant helps to fund outdoor clothing to enable children and young people to learn outdoors.

- **Teacher Training - Training in Outdoor Learning**

Feedback from schools has indicated that training would help strengthen the skills and confidence of staff to deliver outdoor learning; this will in turn benefit children and young people and enable stronger nature connection and environmental engagement. The grant can be used towards outdoor learning training of your own choosing.

To find out more, check eligibility and to apply for a grant, go to <https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/everything-outdoors/outdoor-essentials-grant/>

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