

Greening Communities






In urban areas, construction and development have gobbled up green space, with 60 percent of residents being too far away from the sort of green space that the World Health Organisation recommends is essential for wellbeing.

Across Europe, 43,000 lives might be saved annually if the World Health Organisation's green space recommendation were to be implemented.

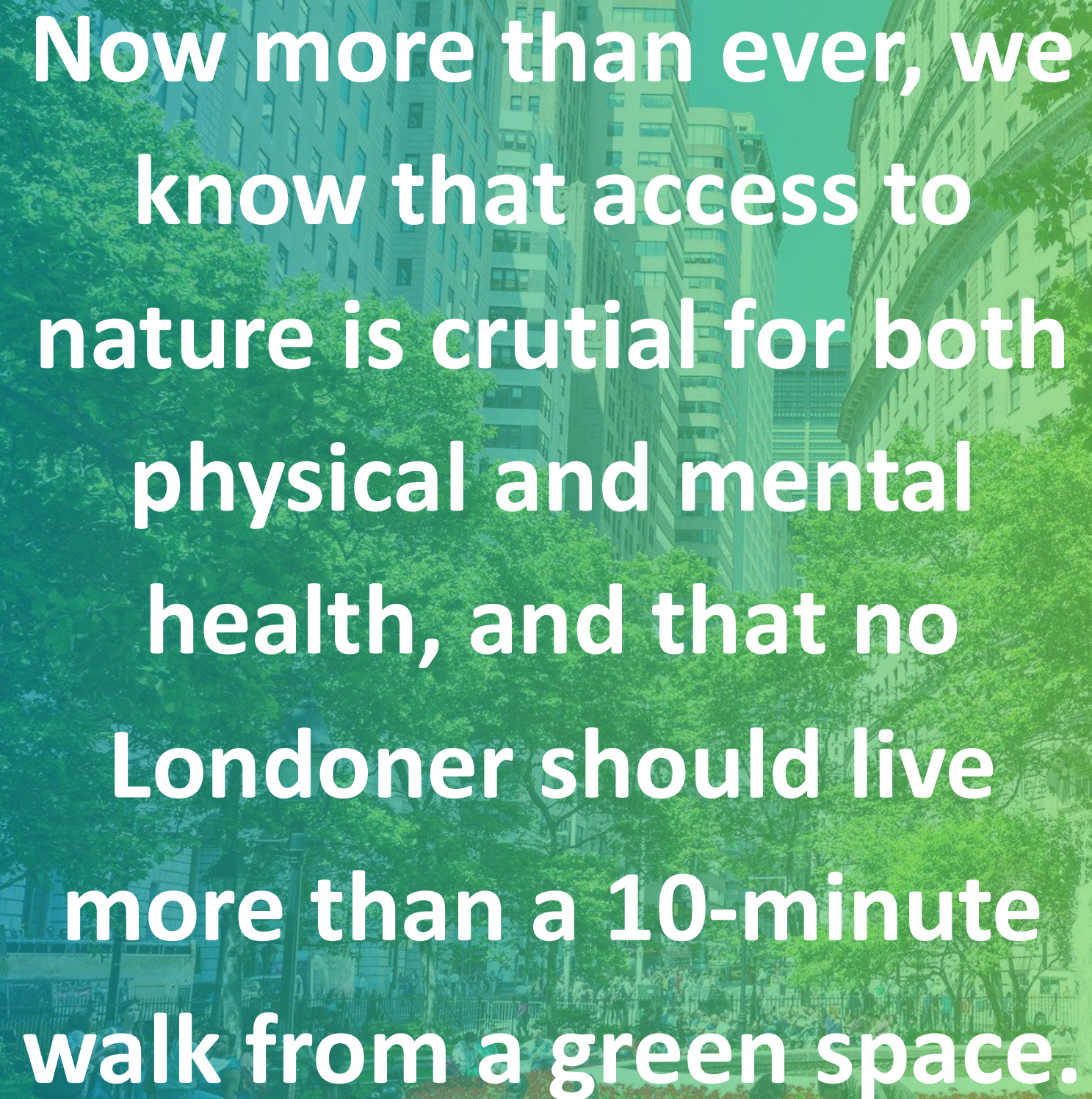
Seeds for Growth charity was launched in 2006 envisaging a better world for all. Greening Communities helps the residents of housing estates to transform ugly wastelands into beautiful gardens.

Gardens create spaces to grow healthy food and provide a safe environment in which children can play and adult neighbours can bond.

A young boy and girl are standing in a garden, smiling and holding fresh vegetables. The boy is holding a head of broccoli and a bunch of leafy greens. The girl is holding a head of broccoli and a head of lettuce. The background shows a lush green garden with various plants and trees.

Cities that build and maintain well-connected green spaces are likely to have healthier, happier citizens.

Professor Alistair Griffiths, Royal Horticultural Society



Now more than ever, we know that access to nature is crucial for both physical and mental health, and that no Londoner should live more than a 10-minute walk from a green space.

Due to the spread of industry and farming, British biodiversity is in jeopardy, and fewer than 40% of urban residents have access to the green space the World Health Organisation has identified as essential for both physical and mental health needs.

Greening Communities are doing it, having for instance, inspired the Mayor of London to commit to ***“bringing nature closer to Londoners and to protecting, restoring, and improving green spaces in the city”***.

A group of people are working in a community garden. In the foreground, a woman with curly hair wearing a blue tank top and a dark apron is leaning over a raised garden bed, tending to a tall green plant. To her right, another woman with long brown hair is looking down at something in her hands. In the background, a third person wearing a red and black plaid shirt and light blue denim shorts is standing. The garden features several raised beds made of metal or wood, some containing various plants and flowers. A chain-link fence is visible behind the garden, and the scene is set outdoors on a sunny day.

**Upgrading and greening
misused or abandoned
urban areas creates
important spaces for
wildlife.**

**Diverse flora and fauna improve
pollination and encourage
ecosystems to thrive. Green spaces
even help to reduce noise pollution.**

Green spaces are indisputably beneficial

People who spend two or more hours outdoors per day, report better health and greater sense of well-being than those who rarely venture outdoors, and are far less prone to obesity.


Community gardeners are 3.5 times more likely than their non-gardening neighbours to eat enough fruit and veg.

One study found that gardeners engage in 30% more physical activity than non-gardeners, and physical activity in green spaces is thought to be more beneficial than that in pricey fitness centres.

Community gardens provide women with safe spaces in which to work out.

Extended exposure to nature has even been shown to hasten the recovery of cardiac patients.

Gardening improves balance and motor skills and speeds recovery from illness, and can be especially joyful for those with dementia.



**Gardening can
provide a sense of
pride and purpose...**

that enhances well-being. Cultivating neighbourhood green spaces reduces feelings of loneliness and isolation, and have been found to reduce depression.

Children who spend time in natural environments commonly have stronger immune systems, and superior cognitive development. The more time spent in nature, the less kids are known to misbehave.

There are those who believe woodland walks save £185m a year in mental health costs. All in all, increased green space is estimated to have saved London close to a billion pounds in healthcare costs in the past half-decade.

An aerial photograph of London, England, showing the River Thames, the Houses of Parliament, and Big Ben. A large, semi-transparent green circle is overlaid on the image, containing text. The text is in a light orange color for the main heading and white for the sub-paragraphs.

The cost of failing to expand green space is terrifying to contemplate.

Demand for domestic cooling in London is expected to triple by 2050. The risk of flooding also grows even greater as the planet warms. Community gardens to the rescue! They provide shade and cool outdoor space, and soak up rainwater that might otherwise overwhelm sewer systems.

Plants breathe in carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen. Their roots improve the soil by removing chemicals and heavy metals. The production of healthy, fresh, and often organic produce that doesn't need to be transported hundreds of miles also reduces tenants' carbon footprint.

A woman wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a light-colored t-shirt is working in a garden. She is using a long-handled tool, possibly a hoe or a shovel, to tend to the plants. The garden is lush with green foliage, and there are other people visible in the background, suggesting a community garden setting. The overall scene is bright and sunny, with a strong green tint.

Community green spaces... what's not to love?

They produce organic fruit and veg consumed metres, rather than hundreds of kilometres from where they were grown. Fresh healthy food enhances health, and gardening is good exercise!

Working in the fresh air with neighbours enhances mental wellbeing. Plants transform carbon dioxide into oxygen, and provide new habitats for birds and insects.

Plants cool the air and absorb noise. More exposed soil reduces the danger of flooding.

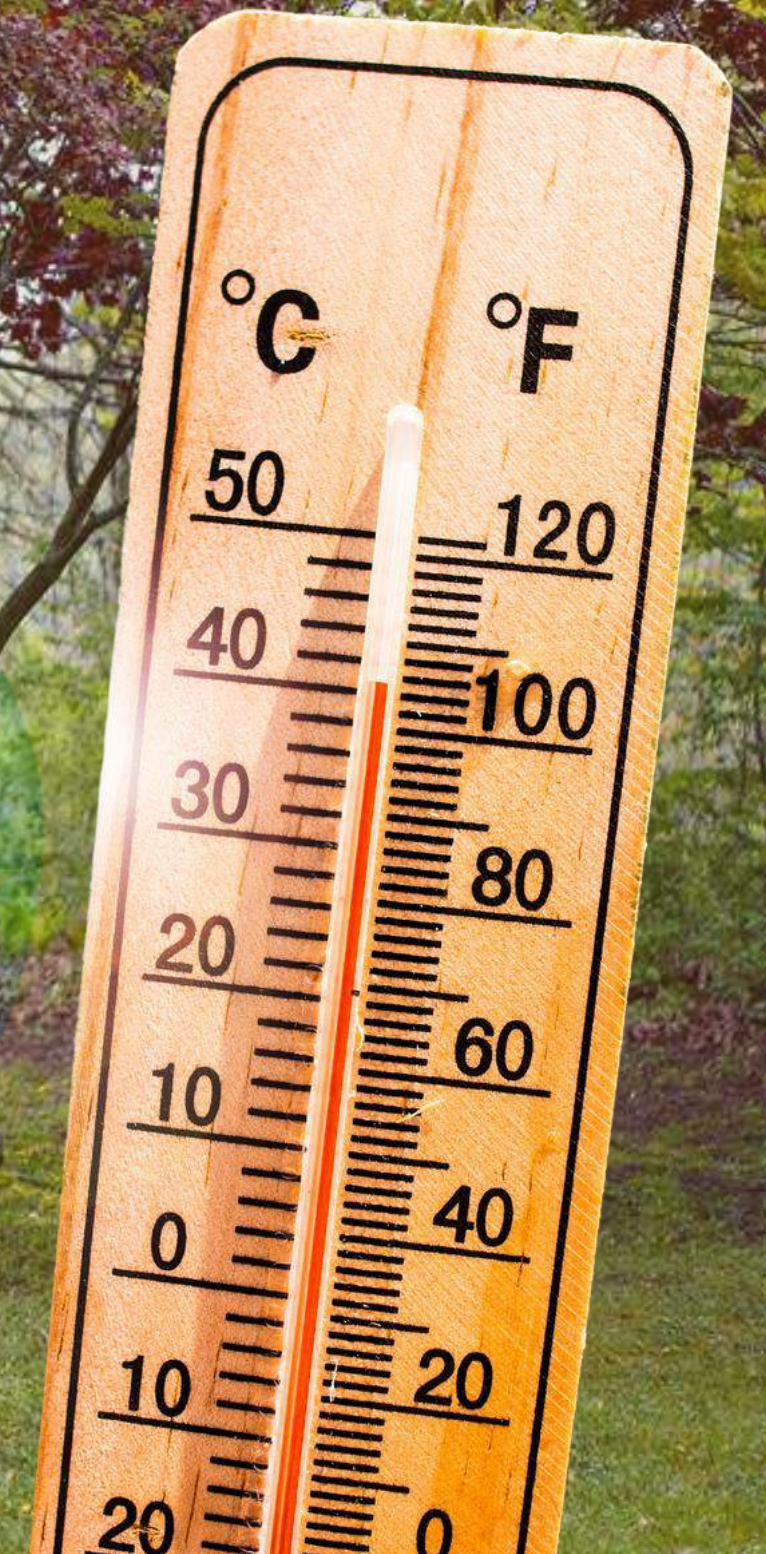
 **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**



Greening Communities delivers 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals enumerated by the United National General Assembly as a blueprint for a more sustainable global future.

**Neighbourhoods lacking green space
become 'heat islands' when the
temperature soars.**

**Community gardens greatly
reduce residents' discomfort,
providing pleasant places to cool
down at no cost.**



We'll start in London...

...and then be franchised to voluntary service organisations in cities and small towns based on the 'Hub and Spoke' model that ensures uniform best practice. Each satellite will ideally oversee five different green 'projects' per year - rooftop gardens, planting orchards, and housing estate gardens.

Over five years, Greening Communities will have created 2,750 community-led green spaces - attracting 15 million annual visits by the fifth year.



**Impressive,
but who's
going to foot
the bill?**

We will lobby the UK Government to establish a £3 million fund that will give 100 new franchisees £30k start-up grants

Moreover, Greening Communities will be paid for by carbon offsetting - known as sequestering.

The payments could generate £1 million annually for the charity.

A hand is shown on the left side of the frame, holding a coin as if about to drop it into a stack of coins. There are three stacks of coins of varying heights. The tallest stack in the center has a small green plant with several leaves growing out of the top. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting with a white table and some blurred objects. A large, dark green, organic-shaped graphic overlay is on the right side of the image, containing white text.

Additionally, we'll seek £50,000 start-up cash sponsorship from the construction and energy sectors.

Greening Communities thereafter will not only pay its own way, but also generate a surplus to be used for further expansion.



Inflation can toss a spanner into even the best planned works.

With that in mind, we have conducted an extensive SWOT analysis and formulated a multi-pronged strategy to minimise risk.

COMMERCIAL: There is a danger that garden construction will in future become a lot more expensive. With this in mind, Greening Communities will wherever possible, negotiate fixed prices with preferred suppliers.

PROJECT DELIVERY: To minimise the chance of satellite projects being delivered late or inadequate, Greener Communities will issue clear practice guidance and delivery standards.

We believe in strong alliances



Groundwork UK has raised £96 million in support of community organisations combating climate change and poverty issues in its 40 years of existence. Groundwork focuses on strengthening local communities.

WAYWARD

Wayward offers new garden or greening project design services and then subcontracts development to garden construction companies, but customarily leave it to communities to get the ball rolling.



Operating in London, Reading and Birmingham, **Thrive** doesn't create new gardens for other organisations, but are a potential partner for the training of volunteers.

Accountability

Volunteer gardens may be referred to other organisations for vocational training, work experience, to get employment, or to become self-employed.

As appropriate, we'll note the ethnicity, gender and disabilities of participants in our programmes. We will record the number of community gardens opened, their cost and by how many people they are enjoyed.

We will further record how many elderly and disabled participants we are able to recruit, how much time they spend on the project, and what they grow.



Greening Communities

an initiative of



www.seedsforgrowth.org.uk