



Wilder Kent AWARDS

2026-2027 Guide for Entrants
Universities



Find us online

kentwildlifetrust.org.uk      

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Kent
Wildlife Trust

Contents

Who are we?	3
Wilder Kent Awards	4
Why enter the Wilder Kent Awards?	5
Get involved - Protect and restore nature	6
Get involved - Sustainability and carbon reduction	8
Get involved - Inspire and collaborate	10
The facts behind our three categories	12
Submitting your application	13



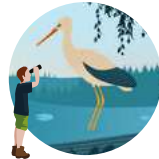
Who are we?

Kent Wildlife Trust is the leading conservation charity in the South East and one of 46 national Wildlife Trusts.

For over 60 years we have been saving and improving habitats to ensure that Kent's wildlife can thrive and people can enjoy the natural world around them. With your help, we can continue to do this for generations to come.



We work with landowners and developers.



We run education programmes for people of all ages.



We manage over 80 reserves and nearly 10,000 acres.

Our vision

To ensure that 30% of Kent's land and sea displays increased climate resilience and contains abundant wildlife.



We defend and restore

Ensure that Kent Wildlife Trust Group (KWTG) is delivering the highest possible impact in the face of habitat loss and climate change.



We inspire and collaborate

Build a groundswell of support for Wilder Kent 2030, scaling up our engagement to reach a larger, more diverse range of people.



We strengthen and grow

Diversify KWTG's income sources and strengthen its systems, whilst operating sustainably.



Wilder Kent Awards

Background

The natural world isn't just something for us to enjoy; it sustains us. The decline in nature puts our very survival and prosperity under threat. It doesn't have to be like this, together we can create a Wilder Kent.

We are delighted that you are considering entering the Wilder Kent Awards and joining the other wonderful universities that are doing their part to make a Wilder Kent. We can't wait to hear about all of the ways you are helping to restore nature by taking positive action to promote a Wilder Kent.



Entering

All of the award criteria are outlined in this guide and there are multiple award tiers (commendation, bronze, silver and gold) that can be achieved. The more criteria you meet, the higher your award will be.

By entering, you will be showing your ambition to connect people with nature and protect wildlife for the future. Any achievement is a helping hand for wildlife and the scheme allows you to increase your award level year on year so you can help wildlife for as long as possible.

No matter how many criteria you can meet we would like to thank and congratulate you for your efforts in helping to create a Wilder Kent.



Why enter the Wilder Kent Awards?



There are many benefits to entering:

- Help tackle 'Nature deficit disorder'.
- Improve your health and well-being, physically and mentally.
- Personal satisfaction that you have made a real difference.
- Safeguard nature and wildlife for future generations.
- Enjoy new experiences and learn new life and craft skills.
- Spend time in the fresh air and appreciate nature.

Last year, we celebrated...

90 winning groups:

10 Commendation, 31 Bronze,
25 Silver, 22 Gold

25,000+ people recorded as having
taken positive action for nature

An estimated 400,000+ people
recorded as having benefited
from the various projects

An estimated 67.7 hectares
improved/restored for nature
as part of the various projects

Get started!

There are dozens of ideas over the next few pages for simple things you can do to start making an impact and help us create a Wilder Kent.



1

GET INVOLVED

Protect and restore nature

Protect wildlife in your community by creating and developing new habitats that provide food, shelter and water to support nature. Work together to advocate for our natural environment.

You could . . .



Have a wildlife garden / space supporting a range of wildlife.

[Learn more](#)



Plant a wildflower meadow or ensure areas of long grass are managed for wildlife.

[Learn more](#)



Install, clean and maintain a range of bird boxes in suitable locations.

[Learn more](#)



Install and maintain hedgehog homes, feeding stations and hedgehog highways.

[Learn more](#)



Install and maintain bat boxes in suitable locations.

[Learn more](#)



Install and maintain minibeast homes in suitable sites.

[Learn more](#)



Leave food for wildlife during winter months and clean feeders regularly.

[Learn more](#)



Reduce outside lighting and light pollution to support nocturnal animals where possible.

[Learn more](#)





Ensure that no chemicals are used on university grounds.

[Learn more](#)



Introduce and maintain a pond that will sustain a variety of wildlife.

[Learn more](#)



Install simple water sources for wildlife and keep them clean.

[Learn more](#)



Work with the site team to maximise available spaces for wildlife.

[Learn more](#)



Have a site management plan which schedules actions throughout the seasons.

[Learn more](#)



Reduce artificial surfaces and increase green spaces - turn grey to green!

[Learn more](#)



Create a range of habitats, including field margins, hibernaculums, deadwood piles and dead hedges.

[Learn more](#)



Plant native trees, hedgerows and shrubs.

[Learn more](#)



2 **GET INVOLVED** Sustainability and carbon reduction

The day to day choices we make have a direct impact on our environment. Improve the environmental sustainability of your university to reduce your carbon footprint.

You could . . .



Carry out regular litter picks both on your site and in the community.

[Learn more](#)



Promote recycling and provide easy access to the right facilities.

[Learn more](#)



Encourage students and staff to start walking to the university.

[Learn more](#)



Switch off electrical equipment when it is not in use.

[Learn more](#)



Actively compost waste and use it to make things grow.

[Learn more](#)



Have a community allotment or kitchen garden and grow produce to be sold or used in food outlets on site.

[Learn more](#)



Take action to reduce carbon emissions whilst travelling.

[Learn more](#)



Reuse and re-purpose old materials to help wildlife.

[Learn more](#)



Use environmentally friendly cleaning products on site and advocate for their use at home.

[Learn more](#)



Use water saving devices in any older toilets and washrooms.

[Learn more](#)



Monitor and improve your university's energy consumption.

[Learn more](#)



Ensure that energy is from renewable sources or a green energy provider.

[Learn more](#)



Create a policy to reduce or eliminate single use plastic wherever possible, and enforce it on site.

[Learn more](#)



Increase the amount of locally sourced food that is served.

[Learn more](#)



Reduce food waste and educate students on why this is important.

[Learn more](#)



Monitor and improve your university's water consumption.

[Learn more](#)



Use rain butts to capture rain water for use in university gardens and nature areas.

[Learn more](#)



Use paper saving devices in any older toilets and washrooms.

[Learn more](#)



Encourage litter free lunches and the use of non-disposable utensils and compostable packaging.

[Learn more](#)



Reduce meat and dairy consumption and educate students on why this is important.

[Learn more](#)



3 **GET INVOLVED** Inspire and collaborate

Learn about the wildlife in Kent and how we can support it. Deliver activities that engage and inspire others to get involved with their natural environment and support nature.

You could . . .



Have a Wilder Kent Committee made up of staff and students who meet regularly, create an action plan and monitor progress.

[Learn more](#)



Ensure students have a chance to learn about Kent's wildlife throughout the course of their studies

[Learn more](#)



Encourage students to grow nectar rich plants at home and consider providing free seeds.

[Learn more](#)



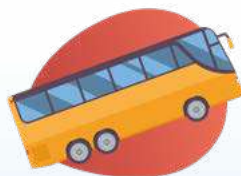
Engage with the community in creating wild areas locally for all.

[Learn more](#)



Speak up and advocate for nature by supporting and promoting local nature campaigns and projects.

[Learn more](#)



Organise group visits to local nature reserves and sites.

[Learn more](#)



Encourage staff to integrate outdoor learning and take learning outside wherever possible

[Learn more](#)



Run outdoor mindfulness sessions to connect with nature.

[Learn more](#)



Work with a local business or group to improve multiple areas for wildlife.

[Learn more](#)





Carry out a fundraising day to help out a wildlife or conservation charity of your choice.

[Learn more](#)



Conduct surveys – such as a BioBlitz – to identify wildlife on site and monitor it.

[Learn more](#)



Write to your MP about a local wildlife or climate issue.

[Learn more](#)



Create a 'Manifesto for Wildlife' – a video diary, a journal or blog detailing your Wilder Kent Awards journey – and share it with Kent Wildlife Trust.

[Learn more](#)



Inspire other education providers or groups to take part in the Wilder Kent Awards and further support us in creating a Wilder Kent

[Learn more](#)



Don't stop there!

These pages have given some good ideas for how you can help Kent's wildlife and educate the next generation of nature-loving enthusiasts. Check out our Actions page for more ideas on how you can help wildlife kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/actions

But it doesn't end there! Come up with your own ideas and involve as many people as you can. Once your university is achieving gains for wildlife, why not involve other nearby universities and begin to create a wilder network across your local area?



The facts behind our three categories

1 Protect wildlife

- Around 3 / 4 of crops require pollination by insects.¹
- 41% of insects face extinction.²
- 30 to 50% of all species could be extinct by mid-century.³

2 Sustainability and carbon reduction

- The average hamburger takes 2,400 litres of water to produce.⁴
- Lighting accounts for 15% of global electricity use. Switching to LEDs will use 90% less energy and last longer than standard lights.⁵
- Decomposing matter in landfills produces methane gas, which contributes 34x more to climate change than CO₂.⁶
- Recycling one ton of paper saves 2,548 litres of oil, 26,498 litres of water and 2.5 cubic metres of landfill space.⁷
- Recycling one ton of paper saves 17 trees.⁸

3 Engage with nature

- 95% of participants with low levels of mental wellbeing reported an improvement in their mental health in six weeks after starting a Wildlife Trust programme.⁹
- Of 87 participants, 92% reported outdoor learning improved pupil health and wellbeing and engaged pupils with learning.¹⁰
- Of 448 participants, 90% reported they felt happier and healthier.¹¹

References

1. The Wildlife Trusts
2. wildlifetrusts.org/take-action-insects
3. dosomething.org/us/

4. sumas.ch/sustainability-statistics
- 5, 6, 7, 8. sumas.ch/sustainability-facts/
9. A Natural Health Service Report 2019
- 10, 11. Natural Connections Project, LOfC

Submitting your application

Our awards acknowledge the work of universities that are helping adults and young people reconnect with nature. Their action benefits us locally and helps tackle the global environmental threats we all face.

Throughout your journey, please fill in your submission form to keep track of how you are meeting each of our awards' criteria. All the while, ensure you are collecting supporting evidence. Your evidence may include photos and videos, reports, data, other certificates or press coverage. Find a comprehensive submission guide here kwtg.uk/wka-guide.

Once you have filled out your submission form and gathered your evidence, you are ready to submit!

Upload your evidence:



kwtg.uk/WKA-upload

To be considered for the 2026 award ceremony, all supporting evidence must be submitted to us by **Sunday 31st January 2027**

For help contact us by emailing awards@kentwildlife.org.uk.





Wilder Kent

AWARDS



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