






# Wilder Kent AWARDS

2026-2027 Guide for Entrants  
**Villages, Towns & Cities**



Find us online

[kentwildlifetrust.org.uk](https://kentwildlifetrust.org.uk)      

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**Kent**  
Wildlife Trust



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**Kent Wildlife Trust is working with schools, communities, developers, and local councils to ensure that we all have access to wildlife in our towns, cities and villages and that wildlife is protected and can thrive.**

**By supporting them to improve existing green spaces, and create new spaces, we can promote and enable people and wildlife to coexist and flourish.**



# 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 villages, towns and cities 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 wildlife

Protect wildlife in your village, town or city by safeguarding and enhancing existing habitats, and create new habitats that provide food, shelter and water to support nature. Use your local knowledge and collective power to work together to advocate for our natural environment.

You could . . .

**Set out a clear policy commitment through your Neighbourhood Plan or Local Plan to create green corridors and networks of habitat to support wildlife in your local area:**

- Map out areas for nature's recovery.
- Set out clear planning policies on habitat protections, restoration and enhancement.
- Explain how you will use these policies to enhance habitats in your area.

**Influence planning applications locally to protect and enhance wildlife:**

- Oppose developments which will damage wildlife and encourage schemes that improve biodiversity.
- Work with specific developments to ensure that the best outcome is achieved for wildlife.



## Create a Biodiversity Strategy for your village, town or city and set out and implement priorities for nature's recovery.

- Commit to manage council owned land and buildings to support wildlife.
- Promote campaigns like “No Mow May” or similar which aim to boost habitats for declining species.
- Manage road verges for nature or join the Roadside Nature Reserve Project in Partnership with KCC and Kent Wildlife Trust.
- Ensure that management companies align their work plans with your biodiversity aims and objectives.
- Form a Climate and Biodiversity Committee to guide all actions within the Council.
- Implement a Pesticide Free village/town/city Action Plan and set a date to become pesticide free.
- Encourage management of gardens and allotments to be accessible and beneficial for wildlife e.g. hedgehog highways, safe exit ramps in ponds.
- Develop or provide support to local wilding projects.



# 2 **GET INVOLVED** Boost sustainability and reduce carbon

The day-to-day choices we make have a direct impact on our environment. Improve the environmental sustainability of your village, town or city to reduce carbon footprint.

## You could . . .

- Encourage accessible green transport to reduce carbon emissions.
- Explore opportunities to access funding for habitat creation.
- Develop and implement an Action Plan to work towards becoming carbon neutral village/town/city.
- Engage and work with young people in the village/town/city to include them in the council's decision making process and let them help to create a more climate resilient place
- Run campaigns to inform and educate residents around various sustainability elements, including food waste, sustainable travel, recycling, use of environmentally-friendly products, and sustainable resource use.
- Install electric charging points to encourage the use of electric vehicles.
- Provide recycling facilities and run campaigns to educate the community about what can be recycled.
- Hold events to encourage people to reuse items or clothing: e.g. clothes swaps, pre-loved sales.
- Encourage local cafes and food outlets to source their food from local suppliers, reducing carbon emissions and boosting the local economy.
- Set up schemes to encourage sustainable travel - e.g. hire-a-bike, or partner with local businesses to run voucher schemes.
- Establish an eco hub or repair cafe by collaborating with members of the local community or local businesses.

# 3 **GET INVOLVED** Inspire and collaborate

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

## You could . . .

- Encourage citizen science projects that record habitats and species in the local area. Ensure that data is sent to the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre (KMBRC) to inform the bigger picture.
- Undertake demonstrable work to protect priority and locally important species e.g. planting native hedgerows or putting up swift boxes in suitable locations.
- Encourage local people/groups to take a nature friendly and sustainable approach to gardening and habitat creation.
- Support schools and community groups to work towards their own Wilder Kent Award.
- Work with local businesses, public bodies or community groups to create a mini nature reserve on available unused land
- Support local landowners and regenerative agriculture projects.
- Support and promote community initiatives which enhance biodiversity in public spaces and private gardens.
- Learn how to host a climate cafe, and hold one in your village/town/city to support those in your community that might be struggling with eco-anxiety.
- Set up a community fundraising day to help a wildlife or environment charity.
- Work with local groups to set up an annual 'BioBlitz' or alternative wildlife surveys, to identify wildlife and monitor populations over time.
- Support or facilitate groups, events, or workshops that support people in accessing nature and the physical and mental wellbeing benefits that it can bring.



# The facts behind our three categories

## 1 Protect wildlife

- Around 3 / 4 of crops require pollination by insects.<sup>1</sup>
- 41% of insects face extinction.<sup>2</sup>
- 30 to 50% of all species could be extinct by mid-century.<sup>3</sup>
- The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world.<sup>4</sup>
- Urban areas are rapidly expanding and we need to ensure that these areas support wildlife.

## 2 Nature based solutions is currently the only reliable way to sequester carbon.

- The average hamburger takes 2,400 litres of water to produce.<sup>5</sup>
- Lighting accounts for 15% of global electricity use. Switching to LEDs will use 90% less energy and last longer than standard lights.<sup>6</sup>
- Decomposing matter in landfills produces methane gas, which contributes 34x more to climate change than CO2.<sup>7</sup>
- Recycling one ton of paper saves 2,548 litres of oil, 26,498 litres of water and 2.5 cubic metres of landfill space.<sup>8</sup>
- Recycling one ton of paper saves 17 trees.<sup>9</sup>

## 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.<sup>10</sup>
- Of 87 schools, 92% reported outdoor learning improved pupil health and wellbeing and engaged pupils with learning.<sup>11</sup>

### References

1. The Wildlife Trusts

2. [wildlifetrusts.org/take-action-insects](http://wildlifetrusts.org/take-action-insects)

3. [dosomething.org/us/](http://dosomething.org/us/)

4. State of Nature Report

5. [sumas.ch/sustainability-statistics](http://sumas.ch/sustainability-statistics)

6, 7, 8 9. [sumas.ch/sustainability-facts/](http://sumas.ch/sustainability-facts/)

10. A Natural Health Service Report 2019

11. Natural Connections Project, LOTC

# Submitting your application

Our awards celebrate the work of villages, towns and cities in reconnecting their communities with nature. Their actions provide local benefits and help 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](https://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](https://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](mailto:awards@kentwildlife.org.uk).










# Wilder Kent

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