

Big Community Challenge 2025 - Connected by Nature Application Form

Overview

York Cares is proud to present the Big Community Challenge 2025, taking place from 22 September to 16 October. This year's theme, Connected by Nature, celebrates the ways in which natural spaces support wellbeing, community connection, and environmental action. We are delighted to once again partner with St Nicks and the City of York Council's ECO Team to deliver a city-wide programme of hands-on environmental volunteering.

What's Happening

Over four weeks, employee-volunteers will have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of outdoor activities designed to improve biodiversity, connect people to nature, and enhance much loved community green spaces.

We will have full day, morning or afternoon sessions available to book, see [Connected by Nature Challenge Schedule](#) for the capacity of each site before applying:

AM Session	9am-12noon
PM Session	1pm-4pm
Full day	9am- 4pm with 1 hour break.

Location

Dates & Capacity

<p>Rowntree Park</p> <p>Rowntree Park was a gift to the City of York by Rowntree & Co. in 1921 and is a memorial to the Cocoa Works staff who fell and suffered during World War 1. The park has been awarded Green Flag status every year since 2004.</p> <p>Objectives: Habitat Restoration and Site Enhancement Project</p> <p>Type of tasks: Digging out ponds, weeding and planting of wetland plants, pollinator plants and wild garlic</p> <p>Creating wetland features, enhancing native flora, improving site accessibility and aesthetics, managing grassland and riverside habitats and restoring species-rich grassland.</p>	<p>Tuesday 23 September</p> <p>Wednesday 24 September</p> <p>Thursday 25 September</p> <p>Friday 26 September</p>
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<p>Collectively, these tasks support long-term ecological resilience and promote a diverse and functional landscape for both wildlife and visitors.</p>	
<p>River Foss</p> <p>The River Foss is a tributary of the River Ouse. The source of the River Foss is a spring situated adjacent to, and flowing into, Oulston Reservoir near Newburgh Priory, north of Easingwold. From there to the Blue Bridge in York, where it joins the River Ouse, the River Foss is 31km (19.5 miles) in length.</p> <p>Objectives: St Nicks, Bull Lane Entrance Restoration and Habitat Improvement Works</p> <p>Type of tasks: Bull rush clearing, scrub clearance and reed planting</p> <p>Restoring the Bull Lane entrance to the St Nicks site, carrying out adjacent habitat works, undertaking general gardening and clearance tasks and supporting wider planting and weeding efforts.</p> <p>This multi-faceted project contributes to the long-term maintenance and enhancement of the site's biodiversity, visitor experience, and environmental resilience.</p>	<p>Tuesday 30 September</p> <p>Wednesday 1 October</p> <p>Thursday 2 October</p> <p>Friday 3 October</p>
<p>St Nicks Nature Reserve</p> <p>Based at St Nicks Environment Centre hidden behind residential properties in the Tang Hall area of York. A thriving 24 acre nature reserve that is free to explore 24 hours a day 365 days a year.</p> <p>Objectives: Grassland Restoration and Scrub Management</p> <p>Type of tasks: Scything and raking, inverting and sowing, scrub species and wildflower planting.</p> <p>Maintaining open grassland, improving soil conditions and biodiversity, carrying out targeted scrub clearance, and planting native species.</p> <p>These tasks aim to enhance the ecological value of the site by promoting a diverse, structurally varied habitat mosaic and supporting species-rich grassland communities.</p>	<p>Tuesday 6 October</p> <p>Wednesday 7 October</p> <p>Thursday 8 October</p> <p>Friday 9 October</p>
<p>Rawcliffe Country Park</p> <p>Originally part of the Rawcliffe Estate, the land was predominantly agricultural until the late 20th century. In the early 1990s, as part of urban development and conservation efforts, the land was designated as a public park. Over the years, the park has been meticulously developed to foster local wildlife and provide a green space for the community.</p>	<p>Tuesday 14 October</p> <p>Wednesday 15 October</p> <p>Thursday 16 October</p> <p>Friday 17 October</p>

<p>Objectives: Woodland Thinning, Meadow Management, and Habitat Creation</p> <p>Type of tasks: Deadhedge creating, thinning woodlands for habitat management, scything</p> <p>Carrying out traditional scything, thinning woodland areas, constructing dead hedge, and creating or restoring a bee bank.</p> <p>These tasks support the development of habitat creation at the site, as well as supporting the maintenance of the woodland and forest areas.</p>	
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Important Notice

Please note that the tasks listed are indicative and may vary depending on the site, weather conditions, and progress made by other teams during the challenge. *The Big Community Challenge* is a hands-on volunteering event and will involve physically demanding activities. For those who may require less strenuous options, our Community Partners will offer alternative tasks where possible. If you or someone in your team has specific needs, please contact Megan at info@yorkcares.co.uk before booking to ensure the opportunity is suitable for your team.

Unless you are contacted directly, please assume that your session will go ahead as planned - cancellations will only occur under exceptional circumstances. Unless there is a yellow weather warning in effect, or our Community Partners advise based on health and safety, sessions will go ahead in all weathers. We kindly ask that all team members read the confirmation document carefully and come prepared with appropriate clothing and footwear for outdoor work.

We are unable to reserve or confirm bookings without a complete list of participant names. We require all volunteers to complete our [Volunteer Registration Form](#) ahead of their activity to ensure that we have emergency contact details, any medical information we need to be aware of, and also photo permissions.

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Application Form

Big Community Challenge Application Form

Team Leader:

Organisation:

Email address:

Telephone number:

Please indicate your preferred choice of sessions, dates and times:

	Session:		Day/Date:	Time: AM/PM/All Day
First choice				
Second choice				
Third choice				

Please indicate below whether you will be able to attend the celebration event on the 16 October, 5-7pm

Yes

No

Maybe

If yes, how many members of your team will be able to attend?

Please list the names of all team members below. Please make sure your preferred sessions have the capacity for your team.

The Team Leader must be taking part in the activity alongside the team.

Please send your completed application form to email info@yorkcares.co.uk