

future

spaces

ER WINTER

# Eco Zine

by Birmingham Stories  
Literacy Champions

Gaze up at a magnificent ancient tree,

# Welcome to this Eco Zine, written by Birmingham Stories' Eco Literacy Champions.

Birmingham Stories is a campaign from the National Literacy Trust that aims to raise literacy levels and change the life stories of young people and adults across the city.

We work with local schools, young people, businesses and cultural organisations on a series of engaging activities to spread awareness of the importance of storytelling and literacy at every stage of life.

As part of our campaign, we run a project called Literacy Champions which gathers volunteers from across the city to promote literacy in their communities. From little libraries to book groups, our Literacy Champions spread our messages to communities who need our support the most. Eco Literacy Champions are new part of this project, where volunteers combine their passion for environmental and literacy issues to promote awareness, whilst also helping to raise literacy levels through specialised activities and events.

You have in your hand one of our eco literacy projects. This zine is a collaboration between nine of our Youth Eco Literacy Champions aged 16-24. Each Youth Eco Lit Champ has written an article and designed a zine page about their chosen subject.

Throughout the zine, our Youth Eco Literacy Champions' individual passions and personalities shine through, and we hope this inspires you to think about climate issues you care about. Once you have finished reading, why not compost this zine, or pass it on to a friend and let it inspire them too.

Happy Reading!

**The Birmingham Stories team**

# THANK YOU!

This Zine would not have been possible without the hard work of Birmingham Stories Eco Literacy Champions.

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As I write these words, the closing ceremony of the 2022 27 UN Conference of the Parties (COP) on Climate Change is in full swing.

We don't yet know what this conference will mean for the future of our planet. One thing is sure though, youth representatives have been given the bigger platform they deserve to voice their concerns.

On the 10 of November 2022 a standalone Youth & Future Generations Day took place at COP27, recognising youth as key drivers to accelerate climate action and ensuring that their views, such as removing barriers to education in the world, were taken on board.

It is therefore a privilege to introduce this eco-zine, created by Birmingham Stories Youth Eco Literacy Champions, containing such inspiring, creative and so diverse pieces by talented local young people and aimed at moving the younger generation into action.

From dreams about turning windmills into gummy bears, to celebrating slow fashion, increasing our connection to nature and sharing a vegan jungle-smoothie recipe, this eco-zine is bursting with ideas on how to start your eco-journey.

You can even go further by sharing the eco-zine with all your friends and inspiring them!

We now know that the best cure to eco-anxiety is climate action and that, as climate activist Greta Thunberg once said, no one is too small to make a difference.

Our planet needs us all to take action and ecobirmingham are working across the city to support communities to take practical steps to live more sustainably.

***Ready, Steady, Go... Green!***

**Anne  
ecobirmingham Education  
Co-ordinator and Eco  
Literacy Champion**



Scan me to find out more about ecobirmingham and how you can get involved!



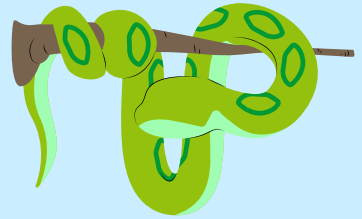
# ITS OUR WORLD

*Iona Mandal*

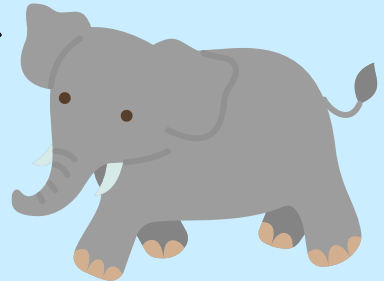
Ostrich feathers on her hat,  
a coat from leopard skin,  
collar and sleeves from real bear fur,  
on her waist a belt of snakeskin.



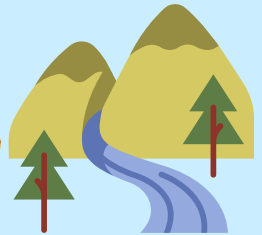
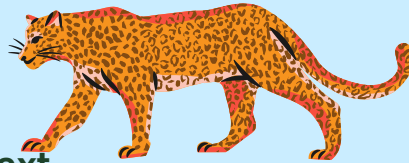
Ivory rings dangle from her ears,  
real corals around her neck,  
she clutches onto her crocodile purse,  
sheep skin boots on her legs.



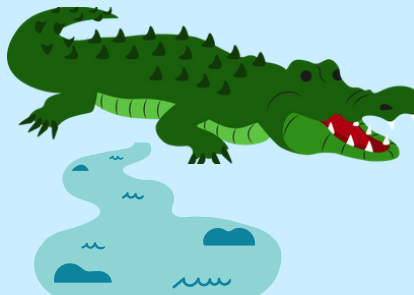
Carrying the world and its continents,  
tropics, poles, and seas,  
Mrs. Posh Ruthless kills to dress,  
and happily, dresses to kill.



Her ignorance and vanity,  
makes poachers greedy and cruel,  
in rainforests, highlands, rivers, and reefs  
threatening species to death.



Every living creature,  
belongs to this world,  
for the present and the next,  
so, learn to value Mrs. Posh  
or it will be too late.



## *A Guide to Being Eco-Friendly on a Budget*

*We all know we should be more eco-friendly in our day to day lives, but that can be difficult when many eco-friendly products are so expensive. So here are some helpful tips to being eco-friendly on a budget.*

### *Browse Charity Shops*

*Charity shops are a treasure trove of clothes, furniture, books, games, and household objects. Buying second-hand not only saves you money but is much better for the environment. It keeps these objects from being sent to landfill and reduces the demand for production which is damaging to the environment. You can also make use of clothing swaps, giving away old clothes that you don't wear anymore in exchange for a different item of clothing.*



### *Buy Fruit and Vegetables in Season*

*Try to buy fruit and vegetables when they can be grown in the UK. For example, winter is a good time for root vegetables like potatoes and parsnips, while summer is great for courgettes, broccoli, and berries (you can find more detailed guides online!). You can even freeze or make jam out of in-season fruits and veggies to enjoy them out of season! If you do buy food from abroad, it's a good idea to buy canned or dried goods as these don't go off quickly so are often transported by boat rather than plane which reduces pollution.*



## Recycle Where You Can

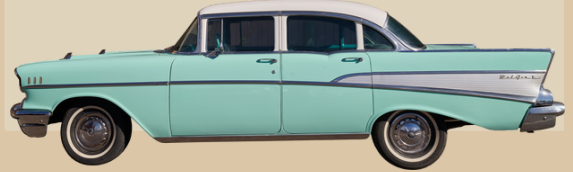
You can donate old clothes in decent condition to charity shops and textile banks. You can even make use of clothes that are unusable – for example, clothes that are ripped or full of holes and single socks – by turning them into rags for cleaning. You can even use them in craft projects. Food-packaging can also be re-used! Rinsed-out bread bags can be used to wrap sandwiches, jars can be used to store food and plastic-tubs can be repurposed as plant-pots. It is also a good idea to keep hold of plastic bottles from shampoo, shower gel and conditioner, which can be re-filled at zero-waste shops, reducing plastic production and waste.

## Get Involved

Spread awareness, research environmental issues, sign petitions or volunteer with projects. There are plenty of ways to get involved and help the environment!

## Carpool

Walking, cycling, or taking public transport is more environmentally friendly than driving. However, if you do need to drive somewhere, consider travelling with a friend. This not only reduces emissions but saves money on fuel.



## Avoid Single-Use Items

Buying or making re-usable items is not only more environmentally friendly but can save you money in the long run. In place of clingfilm, you can make your own cloth beeswax wraps to wrap and cover food. Instead of cotton pads which you throw out after one use, consider buying fabric make-up wipes that you can wash and re-use.



## You Don't Have to be Perfect

Remember that you don't have to be perfect. Even doing just one thing on this list can make a difference!



# NEW BUS-STOPS ARE CREATING A BUZZ!



The Wildlife Trusts, a charity which looks after natural spaces, and Clear Channel UK, a company which designs bus stops, have teamed up to create special new bus stops in cities all over the United Kingdom.

The goal of these new bus stops is to create an environment for bees, butterflies and other insects in the middle of busy cities where there isn't much room for the insects to happily live in.

They look the same as regular bus stops, except above the roof they have a mini- garden, called a 'living roof' – this means there are lots of plants and flowers which attract insects. The plants and flowers catch rainwater when it falls, meaning that nobody has to water the plants.

While these bus stops are very pretty, they also serve a really important purpose. They create safe homes for wildlife who are struggling to find spaces to live and to make their communities bigger.

For example, bee populations in the UK are unfortunately getting smaller: The Wildlife Trust say bees are particularly struggling because it is difficult for them to live in big busy cities without very much green space.

Bees are really important to us because they are pollinators, meaning they visit plants to collect pollen from plant leaves, and then carry the pollen over to the next plant that they visit.

Moving the pollen around means that the plants and flowers are able to make more seeds, or grow fruit and vegetables.

This means that people rely on pollinators to help us grow more flowers, trees, fruits, vegetables and crops, like wheat which we eat, so it's really important that we look after them.

Building more green spaces in cities, like the 'living roofs' on top of bus stops, will help bees and other insects to grow their populations, because they will have more spaces for their families and communities to live in.

The best part about the bee bus stops is that we know that they work and are really popular with insects. The first ever bee bus stop was built in a city called Utrecht (pronounced 'yoo-trect') in The Netherlands. Now there are over 300 bee bus stops in the city, and the population of bees has grown because they have so many more spaces to live.

As well as happier bees, the city of Utrecht has cleaner air and less floods because of the eco-friendly bus stops. Although it might be scary to imagine standing in a bee bus stop, the bees are not interested in the people but the plants above the roof.

Right now, we have 40 different bee bus stops in the UK in lots of different cities, including Glasgow, Leicester and Brighton. The Wildlife Trusts and Clear Channel UK would like to build 150 more bee bus stops in the UK by the end of 2022.



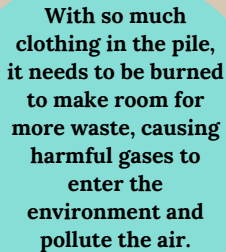


# FAST FASHION: THE NEW MOUNT EVEREST?

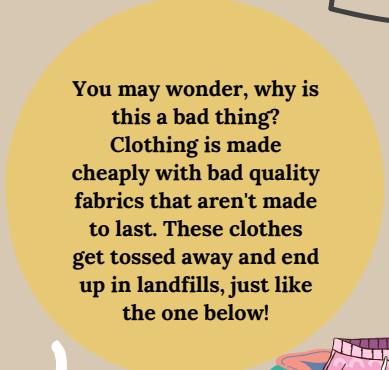
Every year, around 360,000 tonnes of clothing ends up in landfills. Why? **Fast fashion** is the answer.




What is fast fashion?  
It's when new fashion enters the market, stays trendy for a short amount of time and then is replaced by a new trend.



With so much clothing in the pile, it needs to be burned to make room for more waste, causing harmful gases to enter the environment and pollute the air.



You may wonder, why is this a bad thing?  
Clothing is made cheaply with bad quality fabrics that aren't made to last. These clothes get tossed away and end up in landfills, just like the one below!




We can work against fast fashion by being more **sustainable!** This means we make choices about our clothes that are more friendly to the environment.


For example, rather than buying new clothes, we can **upcycle** our old ones!

No more fast fashion. Let's try **slow fashion** for a change!






# Look after the planet Look after yourself




The physical and mental benefits of spending time in nature is often overlooked and undervalued. With most of us spending the majority of our time indoors, it's easy to forget the ways in which we can be kind to ourselves by being kind to nature. This article outlines the ways in which we can all improve our relationship with nature, hopefully bringing some peace and calm to our lives.




One way to increase your immediate connection with nature is by bringing it inside your home. House plants, flowers and container gardens are relatively easy to care for and provide lots of joy and satisfaction. Studies show that even just looking at nature each day can improve a person's mood! During the Covid-19 Lockdown, my houseplants provided me with a sense of purpose; it was lovely to watch them flourish whilst everything else seemed so still. Most plants require sunlight, water and soil to thrive, depending on their species. If you're not sure where to start- succulents look lovely and are easy to care for.

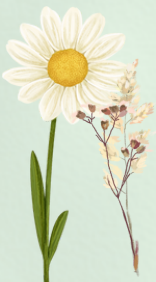
If you have an outdoor garden, try planting different flowers or even your own vegetable patch! A garden requires consistent care and is a perfect way to build your relationship with nature. By planting bee-friendly plants, you can actively help the ecosystem, whilst making your garden look beautiful. Try drinking your morning tea or coffee outside or reading a book in your garden for a few minutes per day. I love to watch my cat play outside in the summer, she makes the best company!



When I'm out and about I like to spot how nature presents itself to us. Recently I've been admiring the autumn leaves falling and the beautiful colours of the trees. I like to create playlists to listen to as I walk, centered on the season it is and responding to the feelings nature evokes. Walking outside- in local parks, woodlands and nature trails- can massively benefit your physical and mental health. Try seeing what wildlife you can spot whilst you're walking, whether it's different kinds of birds, trees or even a neighbour's dog.

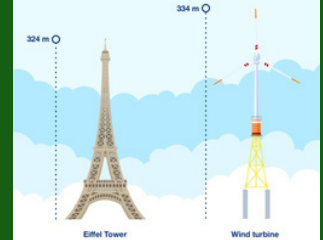


Ultimately, the planet is our home, so it's important we look after it. Recycling, avoiding single-use plastic and buying second-hand are all ways in which we can interact with the environment positively on a daily basis. Perhaps try a vegan or vegetarian meal when you're cooking next. These small acts can make a considerable difference to ourselves and the planet.



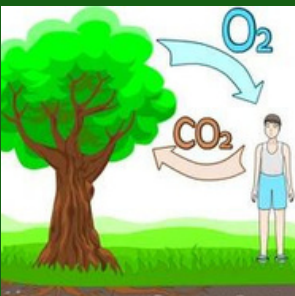
# Can We Turn Windmills into Gummy Bears?

Every day we hear something about how bad climate change is and how it is only getting worse. We see pictures of fires or ice melting. However, it's important to remember that the problem isn't impossible to solve and that solutions are being created every day. For instance, we need more energy from carbon free sources. One of the biggest sources is wind energy, which uses wind turbines. These are huge and so are their blades, which can be as big as a football pitch!



Wind Turbines are a very good way to make energy and so we keep building more of them. However, they also break after a while and when they do it is currently very difficult to dispose of the blades. They are made from fiberglass which is hard to recycle. It takes lots of energy to do this so most of the time they are simply thrown into a hole in the ground. This is damaging to the wildlife and wastes resources. Can we instead build them out of something that can be recycled and reused, even to make food?

A new idea has been suggested that instead of fibreglass we should use resin (a solid mix of glass and plastic). It is just as good of a material but when it breaks it can be dissolved and used again to make other things, one of which is gummy bears! Other examples of things that can be made include windows, car lights and sports drinks. Turning our broken wind turbine blades into other useful things would save us energy and money. It would also protect the animals and plants because we would no longer need to throw the blades into the ground, where they don't break down easily. Would you be prepared to eat sweets made from wind turbine blades if it helped protect our planet?



Recycling and reuse are important ideas as we try to not release any carbon dioxide. The idea of removing waste is based on how nature works. In nature for example, animals breathe oxygen and release carbon dioxide, and then trees use that carbon dioxide to breathe and release carbon dioxide. It is a circle where nothing is thrown away. This can be seen everywhere in the environment where something one creature makes as waste another uses. Humans must find a way to make what we do similar to nature. We need to remove waste as much as possible and find new ways to use things we currently throw away.

However, everything isn't doom and gloom. Examples like the reuse of wind turbine blades show that we can find solutions to reducing waste and making what we do more circular. Humans are incredibly smart, and we have yet to find a problem we cannot solve. It is up to us, especially we younger people, to bring our creativity to find new ways of thinking about how our world works. If we can do that, we can all beat climate change- together.

# WHAT IS PALM OIL?

Palm oil is an oil that comes from palm trees. Today we use it to make 50% of all the products we have in our cupboards at home like food, shampoos, shower gels, and even in toothpaste! As we use so much palm oil we need to grow many palm trees to get enough. Palm trees only grow in very hot countries, which are also the countries where orangutangs live. To make space for all the palm trees we need to grow, big areas of forest in Indonesia and Malaysia are burnt down. We call this deforestation.

# WHY IS IT BAD?

Deforestation is very damaging to both orangutans and the planet. These forests are the homes of orangutans, and deforestation means they will have nowhere to live.

# WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

Orangutans are very similar to humans. In fact, their name actually means 'person of the forest'! They are very clever animals and even use tools to eat their food just like humans do. They learn these skills from their mothers who they love very much. They stay with their mothers for a very long time just like we do - about 7 years!

But because of deforestation, orangutans have lost 80% of their forest homes. As forests are burnt down, mother and baby orangutans can get separated. Without their mothers' baby orangutans cannot live for long on their own. This means if we don't keep their forest homes safe, there might come a time where there are no orangutangs left at all.

# HOW CAN YOU HELP?

You can look out for products that have the FSC symbol on them.

This means that they are orangutan friendly products.

But the best thing you can do, is tell your friends and family all about orangutans and how palm oil puts them in danger. The more people care about orangutans, the more we can all work together to help save them.



# Ethical Consumerism

## Cruelty-free beauty!!

Cruelty-free products are not tested on animals before they're marked as safe for humans to use, which is a more ethical option. This also helps the environment as it means that animals aren't being killed for no reason, so they can continue to breed and promote new life on the planet!

## Meat-Free Monday!

This means not having any meat in your meals on a Monday, and maybe replacing them with meat alternatives instead! If you skip meat one day a week it can reduce your carbon footprint by the same amount as someone not driving their car for a whole month!

## Going Vegan!

The last few years have seen a massive rise in veganism, which means not consuming any animal products or their by-products, like not wearing leather clothes or eating honey, because animals have helped to produce these things. There are lots of replica foods, like vegan cheese, milk and even meat, so you could start by swapping out the normal ingredients of your favourite meal with all vegan products!

***These are just a few suggestions for ways you could try and be a bit more ethical with how you consume products, but giving anything a go is better than nothing, and every little bit helps the planet in its own way!***

# Jungle smoothie recipe

This easy, green smoothie recipe is full of nutrients and very healthy. It is also vegan, which means it has no animal products in it at all. So instead of using cow's milk, you could use almond, soya, oat or rice milk instead. Remember to thaw your frozen fruit in a bowl.

## Ingredients

- ½ banana
- 1 cup of thawed frozen berries (strawberries, raspberries, blueberries)
- 1 cup of thawed frozen tropical fruit (mango or pineapple slices)
- 1 handful of washed spinach
- 130ml almond milk (use soya, oat or rice milk if you prefer)

## Equipment

- Blender
- Bowl
- Measuring cup
- Chopping board
- Fruit knife
- Drinking cup



## Method

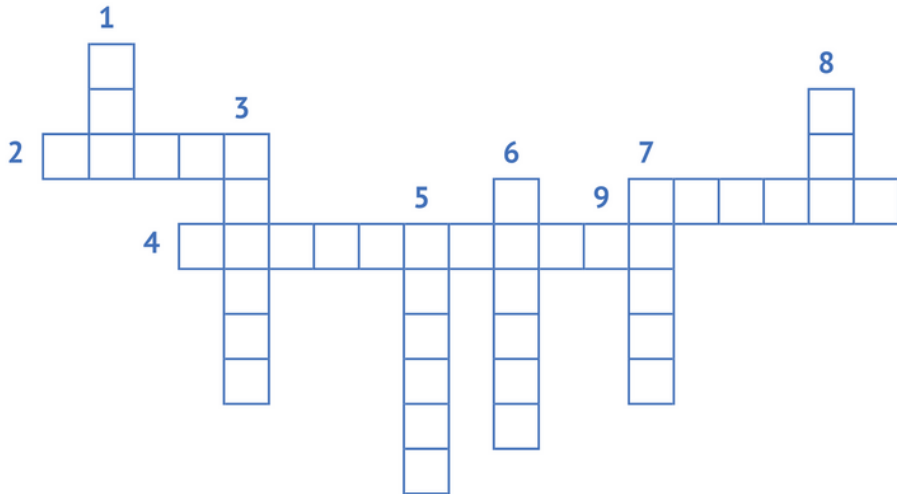
- 1 - Chop ½ banana into smaller pieces and add it to the blender.
- 2 - Make sure your berries are soft and add them to the blender.
- 3 - Make sure your tropical fruits are soft and add them to the blender.
- 3 - Add 1 handful of spinach to the blender.
- 4 - Pour 100 ml of your favourite milk into the blender.
- 5 - Close the blender lid and hold it down. Blend your smoothie until it is smooth then turn it off.
- 6 - Pour out the blender into your cup. Enjoy your tasty and healthy smoothie!

## Fun fact

Did you know that strawberries are not actually berries? This is why they're sometimes called a 'false fruit'.



# Test your knowledge with our nature crossword:



## Across

- 2. A slimy, slow moving creature that carries its home on its back
- 4. An insect with lots of legs and a long body
- 9. An outdoor space, attached to a home

## Down

- 1. A bright, yellow, sphere in the sky
- 3. Usually green, they grow on trees and plants
- 5. A big, grey bird – you might spot them in the park or in the town centre
- 6. The pretty, colourful part of a plant – you tend to see them in spring and summer
- 7. Green blades found on the ground
- 8. Yellow, black, small and buzzy



Gaze up at a magnificent ancient tree,

positivity

green spaces

SUMMER WINTER

Grow!

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