



**GrassRoutes**

Birmingham Faiths for Eco-Action



**Newsletter**

**Grassroutes** (November 2025)



*A warm welcome to everyone! I would like to congratulate you all on the inspirational journey you have been leading through your faith and care for the environment. Each of you—and your eco-actions—are making a meaningful impact across different sectors of society and communities throughout Birmingham.*

*We currently have two eco-actions projects that have been successfully completed, and ten more that are actively underway. We will have the opportunity to come together soon, but in the meantime, here is a summary of the wonderful work each of you is doing.*

*Maria Fernandes*

### **1-Khalifatul Ard: Stewards of the Earth Festival** by Zoya Khadija Ahmed.

The two-day festival had a strong Islamic foundation. It took place during Ashura (28th–29th June). The event was held in the beautiful Beacon Valley, under a stretch tent in the valley and marquee on the hill, both surrounded by an almost untouched natural landscape.

This setting created a meaningful atmosphere for participants to reflect on the theme “*Care for the Earth, for others, and for ourselves.*”



A series of workshops—such as *Archery*, *Know Yourself: The Art and Science of Health*, *Exploring the Cultural History of the Dalā'il al-Khayrāt*, and *Inaya Permaculture*, among others—gave the participants the opportunity to connect deeply with the festival's themes.

Islamic beliefs and values provided the framework for discussions on different aspects of the natural world.

## 2- EcoDrama- Our Planet Earth by Sara Hadi, in partnership with Mimar.

“Elemental” was a four-day workshop inspired by the Islamic principle of caring for the Earth. The first two days took place at the Dream Chasers Youth Club in Small Heath, and the final two days were held at Birmingham's Eco Park during the half-term holidays. 16 youngsters, from the Somalian community, participated enthusiastically, divided into four groups, each representing one of the natural elements: water, earth, fire, and air.

The activities were led by a team of artists from Mimar, who guided the participants in creating their own poetry and performing it for a small audience.



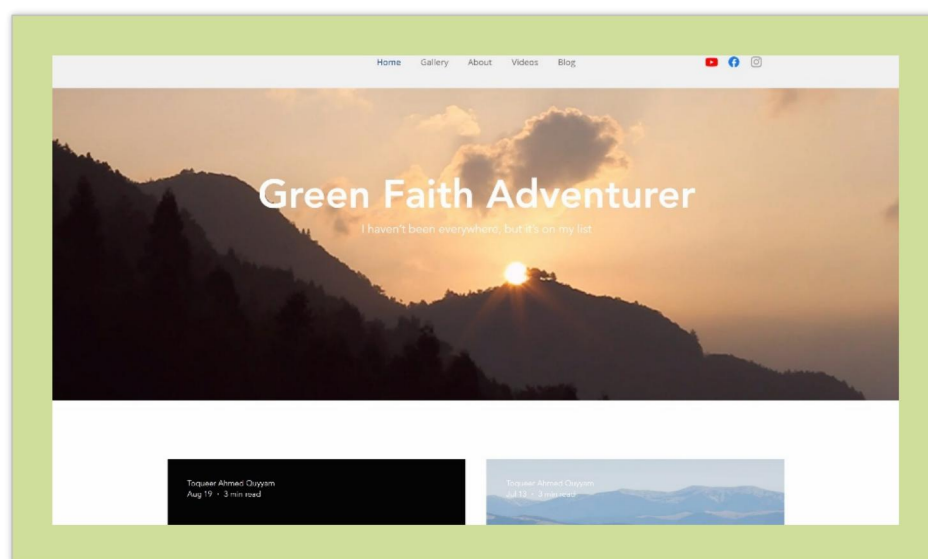
The poems reflected the voices of young people tackling climate problems such as the use of plastic and pollution. On the final day, a group of parents and friends attended the Eco Co-Creative Drama, and expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to see their children perform. The final event featured Ayen Aden, a Somalian Poet Laureate.

### 3 - Digital Nature Communicator- Green faith Adventurer by Toqueer Quyyam

Toqueer Quyyam has used his project to grow and flourish as a Community Nature Communicator, sharing the connections he sees between nature, community and faith. His project activities include:

- Creating a bespoke website where he publishes monthly blogs exploring the natural world in Birmingham and its relationship to his faith. You can view the website in progress here: [greenfaithadventurer.com](http://greenfaithadventurer.com)
- Producing weekly videos and social media content to inspire others to engage with climate and nature topics.

This eco-action project is helping Toqueer strengthen his voice and confidence as a climate and nature communicator, using digital media, both within Birmingham and beyond.



### 4-Caring for our Earth by Fanniza Begum

Fanniza is a very talented young woman whose skills and abilities have grown significantly through the planning and development of her project. Her ideas related to climate action are highly appreciated, especially among women and families.

She has now established her CIC (Community Interest Company), and her “Caring for the Earth” project continues to deliver regular workshops in multiple regions, employing an approach that harmoniously incorporates cultural, social, and faith components.



\* ***Sustainable Fashion***, was all about discovering how to upcycle, sew, and rethink fashion.

\* ***Give Back to Nature: Creating Wildlife Habitats***, was a fun, hands-on experience for families. Children loved using recycled and natural materials to make safe spaces for wildlife. Parents said it was wonderful to see their children learning outdoors, away from screens, and connecting with nature.

\****Sustainable Cooking: Reducing Food Waste***, is still ongoing. People are discovering how to turn leftovers into delicious zero-waste meals and be smarter with what we buy and cook.



“I’ve realised that sustainability is about more than just the environment, it's about connection, community, and well-being.”- Fanniza Begum



## 5 -Faith in Nature- Hodge Hill by Rev. Al Barrett

News coming soon, in the next newsletter.

## 6-Hope Garden by Mary Carroll

Hope Garden, as the name says, wants to be a garden where hope is created, strenghten and delivered for all those who pass by, especially a good number of refugees and asylum seekers. The space of the garden is at the backyard of the Anglican Christ Church in Sparkbrooks.

During the October half-term week of 2025, Hope Garden hosted an Open Community Day with the theme 'Worms', focusing on their role in decomposing organic matter and their contribution to transforming waste into compost. A variety of craft activities was available, including paper plate caterpillar crafts, leaf decorating, colouring, foam caterpillar crafts, face painting, a quiz about worms, and even building a portable wormery for children to take home and observe the process of decomposition firsthand. A fantastic morning, with close to 50 people -adults and children, men and women- coming together to enjoy sessions led by Hope Garden members.



“This day was part of our wider learning about composting and how the process is led by worms, which has opened our eyes to the world around us ( and under our feet!) and give thanks for the wonders of creation and the interconnected world in which we live”- Mary Carroll

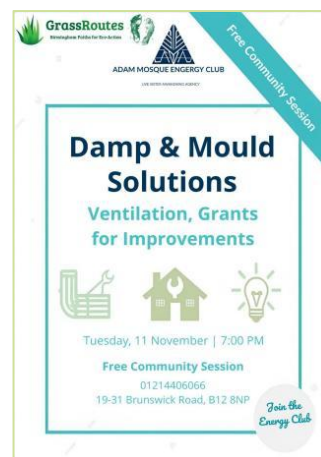
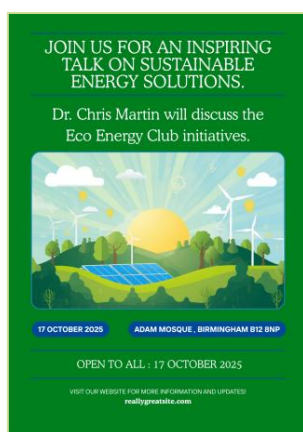
## 7-Eco Energy- Adam Mosque by Dr. Qiam Ud Din

Adam Mosque is a small mosque with a highly engaged and participative community. The idea of creating an Energy Club emerged as a way to support members of the faith community.

The Energy Club was introduced through two Friday sermons: the first delivered by Kamran Shezad, and the second by Chris Martin, both from the GrassRoutes team.

A preliminary listening session then took place with the support of Jason Horner, from Eco-Birmingham.

The first workshop, focused on understanding energy bills, was very well attended. Participants learned about tariffs, meter readings, and how to switch suppliers, with many bringing along their own electricity bills for guidance.



A second session explored methods of saving money through energy efficiency, including LED bulbs, simple insulation solutions, and smart thermostats.

The third session dedicated significant time to preventing damp and mould, covering topics such as proper ventilation and available grants for home improvements.

All participants have been invited to become Energy Champions!



## 8-Common Home by Samuel Ewell

Common Home is a practical, multi-faith climate action project inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical *On Care for Our Common Home/ Laudato Si*. In English, the words “home” and “ecology” come from the same root word in Greek, *oikos*, and this project seeks to bring those two together.

Common Home is rooted in the soil of Christian faith and practice, even as it invites people of all faiths/traditions to rediscover and practice homemaking skills that help us live sustainably and more fully “at home” in the places we inhabit.



The project cultivates an “integral ecology” by promoting gardening, DIY repair, cooking, and the communal sharing of food—simple yet profound acts that foster ecological responsibility, personal wellbeing, and social connection. Through workshops, shared meals, and local skill-sharing events, Common Home seeks to renew the sacred relationship between people, place, and planet.

The opening session of the project was held in the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy of Aston University with a good number of participants. Particularly positive was the approach of the various multi-faith chaplains and the department of well being with all students.



### 9-Brum Unitarians by Susanna Rickard

The open session of the project took place on November the 1<sup>st</sup>, from 2–4pm at Brum Unitarians, with around sixty people in attendance.

The workshop began with a warm welcome, including an introduction to the work of the Unitarians and an explanation of the *eco-action* initiative: a year-long project aimed at transforming parts of the church's plain grass surroundings into an insect-friendly haven. Participants engaged enthusiastically in a range of activities and contributed in a very positive spirit.

The main workshop was led by **Jazmeen Isa Qureshi**, who shared how her love of nature developed—not through trees or plants, but through insects such as flies, wasps, beetles, and cockroaches, many of which were present in and around her family home. She went on to study biology up to postgraduate level. Jazmeen explained that many of the categories used in biology and ecology to describe or classify life-forms are anthropocentric or anthropomorphic. She then facilitated a brainstorming session around the words *Queer*, *Nature*, and *Favourite Insect*. Jazmeen highlighted how our understanding of bugs can evolve over time—and how, over time, bugs themselves can also change their behaviours.

### 10-Sustainability project in GNGS by Amandip Sandhu

Guru Nanak Gurdwara ( Sparkhill) is one of the main Gurdwaras in Birmingham. It serves as an important hub for the Sikh community and offers a welcoming space for anyone wishing to stop by and share in the langar.





The vision for creating a more sustainable place of worship began with Amandip, who courageously engaged the elder community. Since then, a gradual but meaningful journey of mindset change has begun. The need for spaces where the community can gather, reflect, and deepen their faith around ecology was strongly felt, and small group meetings have already started. A study has been done to improve the air quality within the building by introducing suitable plants and externally when seasonal.

An energy audit has been carried out at the Gurdwara, and the committee board has signed a sustainability pledge. Monthly sessions on faith and the environment—covering topics such as energy, water use, and food waste—will be delivered. Each session aims to highlight the Sikh scriptural teachings on the Care of Creation. Eco-Birmingham is providing important support to these efforts. The next Sikhi camp will be held on the 23rd of December.

### **11-Eco Ramadan** by *Bahu Trust*

EcoRamadan is an initiative launching in February 2026 to inspire a more environmentally conscious approach to the Muslim holy month of Ramadan... one that reduces food waste, limits unnecessary transport, conserves water and promotes energy-saving habits while encouraging generosity through charitable giving.

Alongside the new website, [www.ecoramadan.earth](http://www.ecoramadan.earth), the project will aim to bring together mosques to develop a unified commitment to environmental responsibility throughout the month. As Ramadan coincides with Lent in 2026, EcoRamadan will also explore collaboration between Muslims and Christians, highlighting simplicity, modesty and mindful consumption as shared spiritual values that can help address environmental degradation.

