



**GrassRoutes**  
Birmingham Faiths for Eco-Action



**Newsletter**  
**Grassroutes** (May 2026)



**A warm welcome to everyone!**

Spring has been with us for a few weeks now, bringing gentle reminders that birth and renewal are essential parts of the cycle of life.

With the current abundance of colours, shapes, and blossoms—beautiful reflections of the creativity of our Creator—many Eco-Action projects have been flourishing through significant and ongoing activities, that are helping to nurture people, strengthen communities, and care for the land here in Birmingham.

Faith has been deeply woven into practical actions such as composting, planting, pruning, upcycling, and reducing waste.

This month is especially meaningful, as many of the faith communities represented through our Eco-Actions celebrate important festivals and traditions.

We invite you to enjoy this special prayer for the season, along with updates on what is being planted and nurtured through the inspiring work of all the Grassroutes leaders, including the ones that have completed their Eco-Actions.

*Maria Fernandes*

## Prayer for the Cycle of Life

Loving Source of all life,  
we give thanks for the gift of creation in all its seasons.  
For birth and growth, for change and renewal,  
and even for endings that make space for new beginnings.

Teach us to honour the rhythm of life  
as it unfolds in nature and within ourselves.  
May we learn from the blooming of spring,  
the fullness of summer,  
the letting go of autumn,  
and the stillness of winter.

Help us to live gently on this earth,  
caring for the land, the waters, and all living things.  
May our actions reflect respect for the delicate balance of Creation,  
and may we contribute to healing where there is harm.

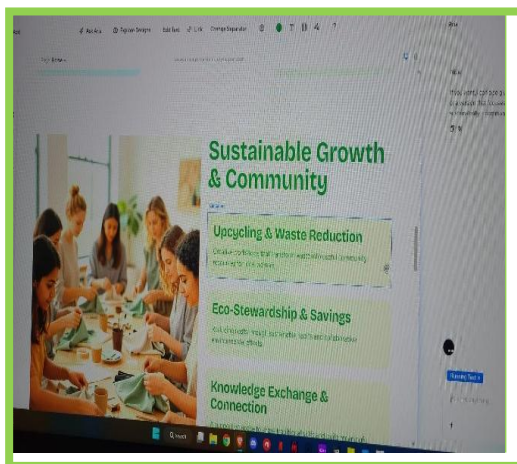
Guide us to walk with gratitude, humility, and hope,  
trusting that every stage of life holds meaning and purpose.

### Caring for our Earth by *Fanniza Begum*

Fanniza completed a series of workshops, concluding her first phase with an open day that brought together several women (and their children) under a shining sun, filled with a variety of activities.

She has been designing and studying ways to improve outreach through her website and professional networking.





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

From May to December 2025, Faith in Nature community have been actively developing the project by strengthening partnership with partner organisations, including WASUP (Balbir Seimar and Zahra Yasin) and Birmingham Community Support (Fanniza Begum).

They have successfully planned and delivered their first “Faith in Nature” day on 27th October, which included activities for older people, children, and families, as well as a shared community lunch.

In addition, they hosted local primary school visits to the church to share the Christmas story, incorporating engagement with the garden space.

**Faith in Nature**  
eco activities for all ages  
making friends with each other & the Earth  
at Hodge Hill Church's community garden

**Elders for the Earth - Wisdom and reflections in a warming World**  
This session invites adults to come together in a relaxed and supportive setting to share their thoughts, memories and hopes about our changing climate and enjoy a nice cup of tea with biscuits

**Date 27 Oct 2025 10:30 - 12:30**  
**Venue: Hodgehill church**

**Session led by:**  
Babbar Seimur - BEM  
Dr Zahira Yousif

World Against Single Use Plastic (WASUP) Founder  
EMAIL: info@wasupme.com

**ECO EXPLORERS WITH FAMILIES**  
ONE-DAY AUTUMN WORKSHOP  
MONDAY 27th OCTOBER 2025  
11:30 - 3:30 pm HODGE HILL CHURCH

Join us for a special ECO EXPLORERS family session!  
This autumn, we'll explore the 4 seasons with fun and creative ECO-WORKSHOP activities.

**Highlights include:**

- Hands-on Autumn Activities
- Compost Binworm Making
- Designed for children aged 4+
- Led by mums and children sharing skills together
- A chance to share your ideas for future eco activities

Families welcome - come along and explore nature together!  
WhatsApp: 07806 51006 or 07958 05515

**Monday 27th October**  
10.30-12.30 Elders for the Earth  
12.30-1.30 Community lunch for all  
1.30-2.30 Eco Explorers with families  
Hodge Hill Church, 242 Coleshill Road B36 8BG  
Contact Al (hodgehillvicar@hotmail.co.uk) to find out more



**Our Land**  
digging deep  
in search of  
common ground

*In times of injustice, division, and disconnection from the earth,  
where can we look for healing?  
What if we start with the ground under our feet?*

A series of conversations for Lent 2026

- 4<sup>th</sup> March - **Leah Gordon** (artist, curator & co-author of *Common People: A Folk History of Land Rights, Enclosure & Resistance*) with **Luke Lerner**
- 11<sup>th</sup> March - **Marchelle Farrell** (therapist, gardener & author of *Uprooting: From the Caribbean to the Countryside - Finding Home in an English Country Garden*) with **Sam Ewell**
- 18<sup>th</sup> March - **Corinne Fowler** (author of *Our Island Stories: Country Walks Through Colonial Britain*) with **Robert Beckford**
- 25<sup>th</sup> March - **Dalbinder Kular** (poet, nature-allied arts facilitator & contributor to *Wild Service: Why Nature Needs You*) with **Anupama Ranawana**
- 1<sup>st</sup> April - **Emma Major** (pioneer lay minister, blind wheelchair user, artist & poet) with **Al Barrett**

**On-site & online, Wednesday evenings 4<sup>th</sup> Mar - 1<sup>st</sup> Apr 2026, 7.30-9pm**  
To find out more, contact Revd Al Barrett (hodgehillvicar@hotmail.co.uk)

“Our last event was in February half-term week. It was pouring with rain, so we had a smaller group than expected and spent most of it inside! But we did some talking together about what we loved most about nature, we decorated some pots and planted some seeds.

And after sharing lunch together we made a whole load of origami peace doves, which were handed out at the Christian-Muslim peace witness at the UKIP march through Alum Rock, the following Saturday, reassuring our neighbours of our unity and harmony as a local community, when the marchers sought to intimidate and fuel division.



We are hoping to grow the regular garden team (with some focused support from CET), and to draw more people in to the partnership-led FiN days, building towards a festival day in summer 2026 (with poetry and music, as well as other contributions).”- Rev. Al Barrett.



**all things bright & beautiful**  
Faith in Nature poetry workshops

connecting together,  
with nature,  
finding words of  
love, loss and hope

for adults & young people 11+  
(with activities for younger children)

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1-3pm  
Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1-3pm  
Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1-3pm  
Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June, 11am-12

Hodge Hill Church community garden  
242 Coleshill Road B36 8BG

with award-winning  
former Birmingham  
Poet Laureate  
**Jasmine Gardosi**  
@jasminegaradosi

**no experience needed - come and learn together!**

You are very welcome to come to any or all of the workshops  
(Tues 26<sup>th</sup> - Thur 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1-3pm)

There will be a simple vegetarian lunch available from 12.30pm each day.

All participants will be invited to come and share our poetry together  
at the **Faith in Nature Festival on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June**, 11am - 12pm.  
There will be music and creative art activities too,  
with summer fair and community café serving from 12.30pm.

**For more details, and to book your place, contact Revd Al Barrett**  
m: 07738 119210, e: hodgehillvicar@hotmail.co.uk





Faith in Nature is an interfaith eco-action project, welcoming people of all faiths and none.  
Hodge Hill Church is a registered inclusive Church.

This project will be inclusive of different ethnic, faith and educational backgrounds,  
as well as diverse ages, genders, sexualities, neurotypes and disabilities -  
and sensitive to any mental health and trauma-related challenges for some participants.



### **Hope Garden** by *Mary Carroll*

Hope Garden members have celebrated Christmas, Eid and Easter in the garden with hot food, games and small gifts.



The team have continued to run well attended weekly sessions where they have planted two apple trees together (planning for future generations).



They have also planted lots of spring bulbs, 'lasagne style', ready to attract spring pollinators as well as nurturing our feverfew and lemon balm plants in the garden.

This term they have specifically planted seeds such as borage, lettuce, coriander and basil in bubble wrap rolls which we are now transplanting ready to both plant and give away to increase pollination across the area of the Hope Garden in Birmingham.



*At the centre for alternative technology. (Wales): learning about sustainable building.*



“The garden members live in poor housing (HMOs and flats, with little or no garden space), so Hope Garden is their space to fill with vegetables and lots of colour from Spring bulbs through to edible nasturtiums of summer. The natural world enhances mental wellbeing”- Mary Carroll.

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

The Energy Club continues to progress very positively, with strong engagement from the local community. Jason Horner, from Eco-Birmingham is supporting the volunteers, who has been taking part in the Energy sessions. During the last session, practical giveaways were provided to all, including energy saving light bulbs, blankets, scarves, gloves and hot water bottles to support attendees.

Looking ahead, the Energy Club will run monthly evening meetings. These will include home visits, question and answer sessions, and group discussions, alongside light refreshments to maintain a welcoming environment.

Community members expressed how helpful and practical they found the support, particularly in learning simple steps to reduce energy use, lower bills and manage household resources more effectively.



**Adam Mosque Energy Club**  
Community Energy Session

Thursday 30 April 2026  
7:00 PM  
Adam Mosque, B12 8NP

**FREE PRACTICAL SUPPORT ITEMS AVAILABLE**

- Lightbulbs
- Blankets
- Scarves
- Gloves
- Hot water bottles

Learn how to reduce energy bills  
Stay warm and save money  
Support for families and households

**IMPORTANT NOTE**  
Basic details required for distribution  
Name, address, and contact number

IN COLLABORATION WITH  
eco birmingham Inspiring Positive Action  
GrassRoutes Birmingham Pathway for Eco-Action

0121 440 6066 For more information, please get in touch!

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME**



In addition, the mosque has incorporated a monthly Friday sermon dedicated to connecting Islamic teachings with environmental responsibility, encouraging a greener, safer and cleaner approach to our surroundings.



**Common Home** by Samuel Ewell





In the last quarter Common Home have been

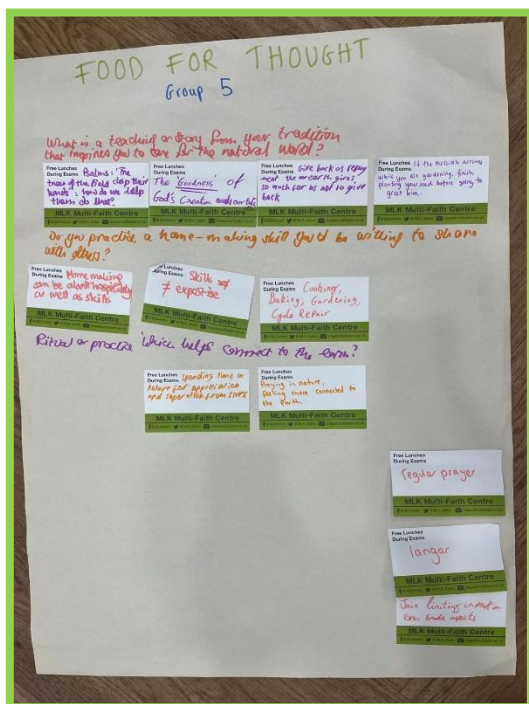
- Connecting with key stakeholders at Aston University (including the Sustainability Team, led by Krutika Ganera, as well as the Enactus Society)
- Recruiting and supporting 2 key staff members to facilitate upcoming workshops and gatherings
- Organizing and convening the **Common Home Launch**.



What felt important about the event was not the number of attendees, but the way the launch created a multi-faith collaboration atmosphere that is in the DNA of the Common Home initiative.

How is your project currently bringing about positive change in relation to...

- Strengthening Individuals
  - Skills-sharing workshops that engage the 3Hs or head, heart and hands (including *Make & Mend* in the winter, and *Room 2 Grow* in spring/summer).
- Strengthening Faith Community Relationships
  - By hosting *Food for Thought* events and Socials with the faith/religious societies at Aston.
- Making a Physical Difference to the area/city
  - Developing ‘phase 2’ of the MLK Mother Garden
  - Launching a ‘sister garden’ and wellbeing area on a neglected patch of land by the canals in partnership with the Enactus Society and Canals and River Trust.
- Addressing Disadvantage
  - Addressing food waste and the student cost-of-living crisis by partnering with TAWS and Incredible Surplus - a project to promote participation and skills sharing, by redirecting surplus food, as a ‘currency’ and form of exchange.



A Christian participant commented to a fellow chaplain, “I really appreciated that question prompt that invited us to explore how faith intersects with care for creation. I have not really explored this connection, and I am looking forward to learning more about what my faith teaches and how to live it out.”



### Sustainability project in GNGS by Amandip Sandhu



After completing the Environmental Pledge and Energy Audit, the Guru Nanak Gurdwara has begun implementing its sustainability plan through initiatives at several levels.

#### Why This Matters

- - Aligns with Guru Nanak’s teachings of sarbat da bhala
- - Reduces food waste, energy use, and costs
- - Strengthens Gurdwara of langar seva
- - Inspires youth to join meaningful seva



### Key Actions (First 6 Months)

- Quick Wins:
  - - Bilingual notice & waste-sorting bins
  - - Portion control guidance
  - - Fix leaks & reduce water use
- Medium Steps:
  - - Compost kitchen waste
  - - Seasonal/local food sourcing
  - - Simple energy audit & upgrades



### Outcomes for the Gurdwara

- - 20–40% reduction in food waste
- - Lower utility bills

- - Cleaner, more efficient kitchen
- - Youth involvement increases
- - Model for sustainable seva in the UK

Winter Camp on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December, with the participation of 150 children taking part in activities throughout the day. This included exercises on where to sit and only consuming faad which will be consumed. Young people are invited to learn the quantity they need to eat, and keep in the tray, the food they think they will consume. No waste! Designing thealis (trays) was interesting and displayed on the board.





The entire community is engaging in this eco-journey, discovering new ways to live Sikh teachings, through environmental key actions, mainly to empower a sustainable langar co-shared leadership and seva for the Planet.

### **Brum Unitarians** by *Susanna Rickard*

The Brum Unitarians are trying to create an insect-friendly edible forest around the Unitarian Meeting House in Five Ways, and nurture relationships with the congregation, local people, and the Birmingham LGBTQ+ community, in harmony with the principles of Queer Ecology & Brum Unitarians' policy of radical inclusion.



A series of events have been held, both internal and public-facing, in which people from Five Ways, Ladywood and across Birmingham participate in directly transforming the land, complemented by creating opportunity for discussion and reflection.

“In the period since autumn 2025, we have been working towards this by our formal launch workshop in November 2025 led by Jasmeen Isa Qureshi, a “queering ecologist””.





Some other activities:

28/02/2026: service reflecting on “The Need To Cut Back In Order To Grow”, inspired by the project, exploring Unitarian ideas of respect for all creation, the tending of community the way that we tend a garden, and reflecting on the following line from Wendell Berry - “And we pray, not for new earth or heaven, but to be quiet in heart, and in eye, clear. What we need is here.”

19/04/2026: seed planting ritual within Sunday service, titled “Growth Potential: Results May Vary”. Attendees were invited in communal silence to plant a cornflower seed for the land, and two seeds in a separate pot to take back home - one for themselves, and one for someone they found difficult, reflecting on what they would like to nurture in themselves and between themselves and the other. Additional seed sowing onto the land directly, after the gathering.



Participants commented on:

“A really clear linkage between normalisation and ecological crisis.”

“I am ‘pulled up short’ having started to recognise how the ‘micro’ – minute organisms – is a fractal of the macro (universe) and in awe of a ‘creator’ ‘breath’ holding all this together.”

### **Learning through our World** by *Malika Khan*

This project is at the beginning, but it is quite promising as the participants will be learning about the different aspects of nature through interactive workshops. The project is broken down into 5 separate days at different locations (Peak district, Bradgate park, Botanical gardens, Birmingham Wildlife Conservation Park and a boat tour through Birmingham Canal) and each day will have a specific focus such as the Islamic teaching of animals at the Birmingham Wildlife Conservation Park, healthy lifestyle for the hikes or the importance of wudu and water waste during the boat tour and these workshops will be delivered through the support of the Bahu Trust.

The project will target the deaf and hearing community and attendees of other projects/activities.

## **Eco Ramadan** by Kamran Shezad

During February 2026, Muslims around the world observed the holy month of Ramadan. As part of this sacred month, Kamran led an Eco Ramadan campaign encouraging Muslims to become more environmentally conscious through practical actions and reflection on faith and sustainability.

Although the [Eco Ramadan](#) website was originally created last year, significant improvements were made this year to enhance accessibility and improve its visibility on search engines. As a result, the website experienced a 2000% increase in views during Ramadan.

In addition, a programme dedicated to Eco Ramadan was broadcast on Unity FM, helping to raise awareness of environmental responsibility within the local community.

A joint [article](#) was also written by Kamran and Bishop Graham Usher, the Church of England's lead bishop on the environment, reflecting on the spiritual lessons of Lent and Ramadan, and how these sacred seasons can inspire people of faith to work towards a healthier and greener planet. The article highlights the shared values of care, reflection and responsibility for Creation.

## **Nature Communicator** by Toqueer Quyaam

Toqueer Quyaam takes a keen interest in local nature issues across Birmingham and actively campaigns for more accessible pathways and connections to green spaces.

As part of his eco-action project, he has developed his own website where he publishes monthly blogs exploring different topics related to nature, environmental awareness and community wellbeing. Although the main phase of the project is now complete, Toqueer continues to regularly update the website with the latest news, reflections and environmental topics of interest.

The project has encouraged greater awareness of the importance of accessible green spaces and the positive impact that nature can have on both physical and mental wellbeing. We encourage you to visit the [website](#) and subscribe to the monthly blogs to stay connected with ongoing updates and discussions.

We had the opportunity to come together for a very special Grassroutes Iftar during the past Ramadan and Lent season, where we broke fast together and engaged in meaningful conversations about the progress and impact of each project. It is truly amazing to see how our network continues to grow, and we look forward to seeing you at our upcoming activities!