

Community  
**Climate  
Action**  
in York



# Welcome

This booklet is a guide for everyone who lives in and cares about York. We invite you all to be part of the journey towards a better city, where both people and nature can thrive for generations to come.

This guide comes out of York Environment Festival, an annual programme of events showcasing and celebrating the work of environment groups in the city. It brings together details of these various groups and offers ways for you to get involved.

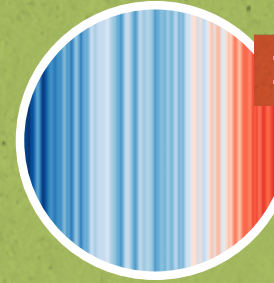
Inside these pages you can find information that will help you live a healthier, more sustainable and connected life in the city. You can also read inspiring stories of people and organisations who are already making York a better place – and find out how to join them.

**Let's  
come  
together to  
build a better  
York for the  
future.**

## How to use this guide

You can read this guide from start to finish, or you can focus on the areas that most interest you. The booklet covers a wide range of themes, from changes you can make at home, to resources for active and sustainable travel, to information about local green spaces and community groups.

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What Next?

# What is climate change?

Climate change is the long-term shift in the Earth's average temperatures and weather conditions.

The world has been warming up quickly over the past 100 years. This has been caused by human activity, in particular the use of fossil fuels - coal, oil and gas - in homes, factories and transport systems.

When fossil fuels burn, they release greenhouse gases - mostly carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). These gases act like a blanket in the atmosphere near the Earth's surface. This causes the planet to heat up, which in turn affects weather systems.

The more the world warms, the worse the impacts of climate change on people and wildlife.

Melting glaciers contribute to sea-level rise and warmer oceans, fuelling more intense storms, and harming sea life and coral reefs. More species are threatened with extinction.

Extreme weather such as heatwaves, heavy rainfall and flooding creates increased risks to human safety and food security.

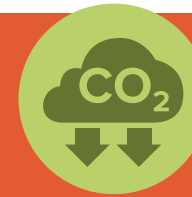
We can already see the impact of this here in York, where we are experiencing increased flooding and hotter summers.

## Where are we now?

As we live through a climate and ecological crisis, York faces many challenges. Our city needs to adapt to growing threats such as flooding and higher temperatures. And to stop those threats from getting worse, we must be part of a shift towards sustainable ways of living and working.

In 2019 the City of York Council declared a climate emergency. The council also set the ambition for York to reduce its emissions of the climate heating greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) to net zero by 2030. Since then our city has made some important progress towards becoming more sustainable and resilient...

Between 2021 and 2023, CO<sub>2</sub>e (carbon dioxide equivalent) emissions in the city dropped by 16%.



Solar panels have been installed on the roofs of schools and other public buildings to provide clean, renewable energy.



Since 2022 over 190,000 trees have been planted at York Community Woodland, with an additional 5,000 trees planted across the city in 2024 and 2025.



The council has offered advice and support for residents and businesses to make their homes and properties more energy-efficient.



Across York, schools are playing an important role in supporting sustainability by drawing up climate action plans.

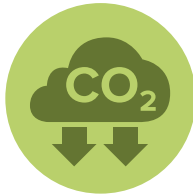


Nature-based solutions, such as introducing wetlands and trees, have been used to build flood resilience in York and across the wider area through partnership initiatives.



But there's still a long way to go...

To meet its goals, York still needs to cut its CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions from 758,000 tonnes in 2023 to 196,000 tonnes by 2030. That's a 74% reduction.



We need to improve recycling rates and include food waste collections in the city.



There are many more homes that need upgrades to improve their energy efficiency.



Traffic levels in the city remain high and did not reduce in 2025.



There are still a number of schools in the city that have not yet produced climate action plans.



# Imagining a better future

What might our city look like in 10 years? 50 years? 100 years?

We invite you all to imagine what a brighter, more sustainable future might look like here in York. How can our city work better for all of us and for the natural world around us?

## Imagine...

... a city with clean air and improved health and wellbeing for everyone.

... a city where all residents live in safe, well-insulated homes heated by clean energy.

... a city with equal access to fresh, healthy, locally-grown food.

... a city full of safe and convenient paths to walk, wheel and cycle along.

... a city where everyone has access to green spaces filled with wildlife.

... a city in which it's easy to repair, reuse and recycle belongings, rather than throwing them away.

... a city where we all have the opportunity to thrive.

**We are the stories we tell. So how can we tell a better story about the future of our city?**

In the following sections, you can find resources to help you imagine and create the York of the future. Read on for ideas, inspiration and practical tips.

# Energy

Carbon dioxide, a harmful greenhouse gas, is released by burning fossil fuels like coal and oil to make electricity. We need to reduce our use of fossil fuels and switch to clean renewable sources such as solar, wind, and tidal power.

## York Minster Solar Panels

In 2025 York Minster installed 184 solar panels on its roof. Alex McCallion, Director of Works and Precinct at York Minster, said: “Extreme weather, brought about by climate change, is the greatest threat to the fabric of York Minster. Together with solar slates on the York Minster Refectory, solar panels at the Heritage Quad and solar film on the Works & Technology Hub, these help reduce our energy consumption by a third. These renewable energy systems, together with retrofit to insulate our buildings and reduce energy consumption, show that if we can do it at York Minster, everyone can and should.”



Find out more:

[yorkminster.org/sustainability](https://yorkminster.org/sustainability)



## York Community Energy (YCE)

Energy is a necessity for all of us. But it rarely comes for free, usually putting pressure on our wallets, the planet or both. YCE is a social enterprise empowering local residents and organisations to take charge of their energy. It offers energy-saving advice and services for local households while also working to establish citizen-owned renewable energy generation.

The Solar City York project, started in 2024, aims to install community-owned solar arrays on several large rooftops across the city. A YCE partnership with Solar for Schools has so far installed solar panels on nine York schools.

However, the cheapest and cleanest unit of energy is one we don't use. YCE set up York Energy Advice in 2021, originally in partnership with St Nicks. The project has supported hundreds of local households to insulate and draught proof their homes, improving their health, and saving energy and money.

### York Energy Advice

The aim is to make homes better for people and the planet. Too many people live in homes that leak heat. They often endure damp and mould issues, as well as high energy bills. Yet one third of York's carbon emissions come from powering homes. YCE's York Energy Advice supports local residents who are struggling with bills and keeping warm, or considering energy-saving home upgrades. Well-installed measures - from insulation to heat pumps - make homes cosier and cheaper to run and reduce carbon.

YCE also hold events to provide inspiration, raise awareness about retrofit, and connect with others, such as the annual York Open Eco Homes events as part of York Environment Festival.

**Find out more:**  
[yorkcommunityenergy.org.uk](http://yorkcommunityenergy.org.uk)  
[info@yorkcommunityenergy.org.uk](mailto:info@yorkcommunityenergy.org.uk)



## YorEnergy

YorEnergy was launched from the Retrofit One Stop Shop York programme, an initiative focused on delivering smart, low-carbon energy solutions to help York achieve its net-zero targets. YorEnergy helps homeowners make their homes warmer, more comfortable, and more energy-efficient, while reducing energy bills and supporting the environment.

Most homes, whether new or old, can benefit from these improvements. YorEnergy's expert team provides a free home assessment to identify the best energy- and cost-efficient solutions for your property.

James from Haxby wanted a warmer home, lower energy bills, and a clear plan to improve efficiency. YorEnergy coordinated a joined-up set of improvements, addressing heat loss, ventilation, and energy generation together. This included roof ventilation, cavity wall insulation, bay window upgrades with secondary glazing, and solar panels with battery storage.

 **Find out more:**  
yorenergy.co.uk  
hello@yorenergy.co.uk  
01904 211221



# Food

What we eat and where we buy our food can have a big impact. Buying food grown in the UK can help reduce food miles and support shops run by your local community.




## Edible York

Edible York is a charity which aims for more people in the city to grow their own fruit and vegetables. It manages growing spaces around York, showing that it is possible to grow food in a small urban space without a traditional garden.

In the autumn the Abundance team picks surplus fruit and distributes it to local people via community food projects. Information is important for individuals and groups who want to garden. Edible York uses its website and social media for providing growing tips, contacts with community gardens and details of local events. Its 'Guide to Community Growing' booklet is available to help new groups.

There are opportunities to volunteer by gardening once a week at an edible bed, picking fruit in the autumn, or providing administrative support. Through this work Edible York believes that people will eat better and be healthier. A network of gardens and gardeners enables neighbourhoods to flourish and reduce loneliness. Edible gardens also have a positive impact through their pollinator-friendly habitats.

 **Find out more:**  
edibleyork.org.uk  
info@edibleyork.org.uk  
Facebook @EdibleYork

## Food Circle York

Food Circle York is a social enterprise founded by Joe Fennerty in 2017 to demonstrate that a food system could be local, seasonal and ecologically aware. They run a range of projects that aim to grow and connect a thriving community of local food producers to consumers.

These include community engagement activities and twice weekly markets at Tang Hall Community Centre.

▶ **Find out more:**

[foodcircleyork.co.uk](http://foodcircleyork.co.uk)  
[food.circle.york@gmail.com](mailto:food.circle.york@gmail.com)

## Good Food York

The Good Food Yorkshire Food Alliance (Sustainable Food Places York) brings together food growers, organisations and communities across York and North Yorkshire.

▶ **Find out more:**

[goodfoodyork.org](http://goodfoodyork.org)  
[info@goodfoodyork.org](mailto:info@goodfoodyork.org)

It connects and supports local food projects, co-develops food strategies and action plans, and acts as a facilitator and catalyst for practical collaboration that strengthens a resilient, local food system.



## Abundance

The purpose of Edible York's Abundance is to harvest surplus apples, pears and plums from local gardens and distribute them free to York residents. This work by volunteers has been going on for more than ten years.

Each year more than two tonnes of fruit have been picked, and in 2025 the weight was 4.5 tonnes - an exceptionally good growing year. Community venues and services receive the fruit and distribute it weekly to the people they work with. Most fruit is from domestic gardens and benefits inner-city residents.

Over the years Abundance has introduced other strands, such as family-friendly community picks, apple-juicing events and making jam and dehydrated fruit.



Positive benefits include enabling residents to eat more healthily for less, connecting people and strengthening neighbourhoods, and giving volunteers the opportunity to learn about fruit growing, caring for trees, cooking fruit and collaborating.

▶ **Find out more:**  
[edibleyork.org.uk](http://edibleyork.org.uk)

## Community Cafes

Community cafes in York provide free, low cost or "pay-as-you-feel" food gifted by the community, local shops, businesses and other food collection services, helping to reduce food waste.

▶ **Find out more:** [livelyork.co.uk](http://livelyork.co.uk)

# Repair and Recycle



Many of the things we throw away, especially plastic, cannot be recycled. They can end up in landfill and in the seas, where they are harmful to wildlife. We need to repair, reuse and recycle more to reduce waste.

## Groves Repair and Share

The Groves Repair and Share is a community initiative in York, run by the Groves Association, offering free monthly repair cafes (usually on the last Saturday of the month 9:30–12:30) at St Thomas Church Hall in the Groves, Lowther Street. Volunteers fix broken things such as household items, clothing and electronics for free, to reduce waste and save items from landfill. They can also build skills by teaching visitors how to mend items themselves.

Visitors have commented that they now think twice about throwing broken and damaged items away, as they have this convenient service locally. Some volunteers first attended as visitors with their own broken items and decided to come back and offer their skills, sometimes shadowing other more experienced volunteers to develop their skills.



### Find out more:

Facebook: Groves Association  
[grovesrepairandshare@gmail.com](mailto:grovesrepairandshare@gmail.com)



## Planet South Bank Street Re-Cycle

Planet South Bank is a group of residents in the South Bank area of York who aim to raise awareness of sustainability issues through various activities and projects, each of which has an element of sociability and fun. These include Gardening at The Nose (the community garden at St Clements Church) on the corner of Scarcroft and Nunthorpe Road, litter-picking, a Spring Fair, film nights and a collection of artwork, poems and stories.

Since 2014, Planet South Bank has run Street Re-Cycle once a year and more recently twice a year. On an agreed Sunday, there is a trail around the

### Planet South Bank said:

“We hope the idea will be adopted by the city in the way that Residents Weekend and York Unlocked have been, and there will be a day when the whole of York will be recycling in their own streets!”



neighbourhood involving households who have signed up to put things they no longer need outside their house. This may include books, clothes, toys and games, bric-a-brac or small items of furniture. On the day, local people can walk or cycle to follow the trail and pick up things they might want for their own household. Items may be sold, swapped or given away.

Street Re-Cycle is a great way to de-clutter and a chance to re-purpose things that otherwise might go to landfill. It's also an opportunity to meet neighbours and new people in the community. Up to 40 households have taken part each time and lots of people have become regular “shoppers” who look forward to the events. Participants have commented on the friendly atmosphere of the event and its positive environmental impact.



## Charity Shops in York

Why not save money whilst shopping sustainably and supporting good causes? Try Goodramgate, which includes shops offering clothes and homewares run by: RSPCA, Oxfam, Mind, Sue Ryder and the British Heart Foundation. Local charity St Leonard's Hospice has shops on Colliergate and Fossgate. For book lovers there are Oxfam Bookshops on Low Petergate and on Micklegate, where you'll also find Amnesty Books.

Last year someone had a Victorian fireplace to pass on and a visitor was delighted to find it practically on his doorstep! Other years people have found musical instruments, bicycles and sporting equipment which has been passed on to a new owner. Some people raise money for their chosen charity and others collect donations and put them into the Planet South Bank pot to support future events.



### Find out more:

[planetsouthbank.org.uk](http://planetsouthbank.org.uk)  
[info@planetsouthbank.org.uk](mailto:info@planetsouthbank.org.uk)

## Acomb Repair Cafe

Acomb Repair Cafe is a volunteer-run initiative dedicated to preventing waste, sharing valuable repair knowledge, helping residents save money, and fostering stronger community ties. Beyond the repairs, the cafe also offers a welcoming space where visitors can enjoy tea, coffee, and cake. It's a friendly, community-focused event.

The Repair Cafe first opened its doors on Saturday September 27th 2025, at Acomb Methodist Church on Front Street, welcoming an incredible turnout with over 40 broken household items brought in to be fixed. The inaugural event, which was part of York Environment Festival 2025, saw a bustling atmosphere as skilled volunteer repairers tackled a variety of repairs, including sewing, knitwear, jewellery, glasses, bikes, electrical appliances, and miscellaneous items that needed mending or glueing. While not every item can be fixed, typically around three-quarters of the items are ready to be used again after the event, with no charge for repairs.



Since its launch, Acomb Repair Cafe has gone from strength to strength. It runs every other month at Acomb Methodist Church, usually on a Saturday morning 10am to 1pm. Repairs are free, but donations are welcome if you are able to. Tea, coffee and refreshments are available at the cafe.

Drop in to any event with your item for repair, or just for a look!

**Find out more:**  
acombrepaircafe@gmail.com  
Acomb Repair Cafe is part of Greater Acomb Community Forum: greateracomb.org.uk

## Community Furniture Store

York was the first Community Furniture Store to open back in 1988. It provides access to quality, affordable preloved furniture and electrical items, giving pre-owned goods a second life through reuse and helping to reduce waste in the process.

**Find out more:**  
Facebook: York Community Furniture Store  
info@cfstores.org.uk  
01904 426444  
Unit 29, The Raylor Centre, James Street, York YO10 3DW

## Repair Cafe Tang

Repair Cafe Tang started in 2025. It meets at Tang Hall Community Centre on the second Saturday of every month 10am to 12 noon alongside York Food Circle market. They promote a culture of repair, reuse and community resilience by inviting everyone to bring their broken items - electrical, electronics, ceramics, woodwork, textiles and jewellery. Volunteer fixers do their best to restore them, saving money and reducing landfill waste.



**Find out more:**  
repaircafetang@gmail.com  
Facebook: Repair Cafe Tang York  
Tang Hall Community Centre, Fifth Avenue, York YO31 OUG

## Household Recycling

Hazel Court and Towthorpe/ Strensall Household Waste Recycling Centres are run by the Council. You can take a range of items for recycling, including: hard plastic (such as toys, garden furniture); textiles, clothes, shoes; electrical equipment, such as hairdryers and batteries.

### Find out more:

york.gov.uk  
Eco Depot, Hazel Court, York,  
YO10 3DS  
Moor Lane, Strensall, York,  
YO23 9ST



## The Recycle Project

Aims to reduce waste across York by collecting reusable items from Household Waste Recycling Centres, carrying out responsible property clearances, and redistributing goods back into the community. The project helps to keep valuable items out of landfill, cut carbon emissions, and support local people and charities with affordable second-hand goods.

### Find out more:

therecycleprojectcic.com  
info@therecycleprojectcic.com  
01904 421894



# Travel

Cars on our roads produce greenhouse gas emissions and harmful air pollution. By walking, taking public transport and cycling when we can, we can help reduce car use in the city.

## York Greenways

York's Greenways are traffic free paths for cyclists, pedestrians and wheelchair users. They form part of the National Cycle Network and link York city centre with the surrounding countryside. Well surfaced and with gentle gradients, they are suitable for families and residents and visitors of all ages. They are havens for wildlife and biodiversity.

Visit their website for maps and more information on where the greenways are and places to visit along them including the York to Riccall 'SOLAR SYSTEM' greenway with a scale model of the solar system, sun and planets, along the route.

### Find out more:

yorkgreenways.org.uk




## York Cycle Campaign

York Cycle Campaign is a volunteer-run group which aims to make cycling in York safe, convenient, and accessible to everyone. As York residents and keen cyclists from all walks of life, they are passionate about fixing the practical issues which stop people hopping on their bikes. Their goal is for more locals and visitors to choose cycling as the most obvious and sensible way of getting around the city - not to mention easy, low-risk, stress-free, and enjoyable.

Their campaign to reduce bike theft through increased

secure cycle parking and @bikeregister marking, provide more segregated safe routes across the city, tackle overgrown vegetation and poorly maintained roads and bike routes, and increase confidence for new and returning cyclists. They work with local councils, the police, universities and colleges to raise awareness of all these issues and how to reduce the risk of collisions and injury.

 **Find out more:**  
[yorkcyclecampaign.bike](http://yorkcyclecampaign.bike)


New members are welcome.

## iTravel York

The iTravel York website ([itravelyork.info/](http://itravelyork.info/)) is a 'one-stop shop' for information about walking, cycling and bus travel in York. If you enjoy cycling, they have leaflets on family-friendly cycle rides and a cycle route map. They also offer cycle training.

For bus travel they have information about local bus services, times, routes, and fares. All First buses are electric.

You can find guides to some great local walks in green spaces, information about local wildlife sites, and some surprising history trails. Each year there is a York Walking Festival with free events, and the website has lists of many walking groups and activities across York.

 **Find out more:**  
[itravelyork.info](http://itravelyork.info)

## York Bus Forum

York Bus Forum aims to be an independent voice for York's bus users and to encourage more people to use buses.

The Forum raises issues with local politicians and bus operators about concerns including: temporary bus stops; bus stop infrastructure; potential re-routing of services; cuts in evening services; the withdrawal of Sunday services; faulty display screens and bus operators' plans for introducing audible and visible announcements.

The Forum meets monthly and everyone is welcome to attend.



**Find out more:**  
[yorkbusforum.org](http://yorkbusforum.org)  
[info@yorkbusforum.org](mailto:info@yorkbusforum.org)

## York Bike Belles

York Bike Belles is an award-winning charitable organisation aiming to enable residents of all ages, abilities and life situations to walk and cycle as the natural way to get around York. The group is also focused on improving wellbeing and community life, and tackling inequalities and the climate and nature crises. They run a friendly and fun programme of free walking, cycling and nature activities, communications and volunteering, all year round.



**Volunteering**  
Make a positive difference to people's lives with a variety of rewarding and enjoyable opportunities.

Activities include:

**Walking Book Group** – walk and talk about books on short monthly walks from the centre of York, ending in a cafe.

**Cycling Without Age Rides** – try an hour in the fresh air on Trixie or Terry, York Bike Belles' Triobike Taxis, pedalled by friendly volunteers, riding together through the city's lovely green parks and spaces. The Rides may especially suit those with restricted mobility who don't get out or meet as many people as they would like.

**Take the Green Route** – enjoy tuning into nature near where you live. A seasonal programme of nature activities offering Nature Walks, Nature Rides, All Ability Cycling Without Age Nature Rides, Nature Workshops, Socials and Wilder Gardening sessions.

**Find out more:**  
[yorkbikebelles.community](http://yorkbikebelles.community)  
[takethegreenroute@gmail.com](mailto:takethegreenroute@gmail.com)

# Green Spaces and Nature

In the UK we are facing a nature crisis. Natural habitats are at risk and many species of animals and plants are in decline. By looking after our local green spaces we can protect and encourage wildlife, as well as improving our own health and wellbeing.

## Wildlife Sites around York

A guide produced by iTravel York (City of York Council) to a selection of easily accessible wildlife sites to be found in the York area. It also lists local volunteering opportunities and conservation organisations.

The guide is available as a free printed booklet from Visit York and Libraries, and online at [itravelyork.info](http://itravelyork.info) (in the Walking Maps section).






## Wild York

Wild York is an interactive website that helps people discover and connect with the green spaces and wildlife around York. It includes community gardens and orchards, scenic routes and well connected habitats. Many of these have thrived through the enthusiasm and effort of committed volunteers over decades.

Using an easy-to-explore map, the site shows parks, nature reserves, woodlands, community gardens and other natural places across the city, with information about what you'll find at each location and who looks after it.

By making York's natural spaces visible and connected, the site encourages everyone to explore their local environment and play a part in caring for it. Wild York helps to bring together local groups, volunteers and organisations to share knowledge, celebrate nature and highlight opportunities to get involved.

 **Find out more:**  
[wildyork.uk](http://wildyork.uk)



## St Nicholas Fields

Once a disused landfill site, St Nicholas Fields (St Nicks) is now a thriving haven for nature just a short walk away from the city centre. The 24 acre nature reserve is maintained by volunteers and is home to a wide variety of plants, animals and insects.

The charity is based at St Nicks Environment Centre, a building designed to exemplify sustainability, energy conservation and energy production from renewable sources including solar panels, modern compost toilets and a 'living roof'.

St Nicks has expanded into managing green corridors around York. Their Nature Based Wellbeing team run both education and mental health peer support services, and their Waste & Sustainability team collect recycling, carry out waste audits and run events across the city. ▶

**St Nicks welcomes visitors and new volunteers.**

## ▶ Green Corridors

This St Nicks project connects fragments of green space across York's urban landscape. This work is linking access to habitats and reducing the isolation of wildlife populations, enabling plants and animals to flourish and improving biodiversity. The initial focus was on the sites which create vital corridors allowing wildlife to travel back and forth to St Nicks, including Foss Islands Cycle Path, Tang Hall Beck and Osbaldwick Beck.

In recent years work has broadened to include external sites to St Nicks. A Heritage Lottery-funded Meadow Keepers project reached across the city helping to support and improve grassland areas. St Nicks has also been working with the Tansy Beetle Action Group, River Foss Society, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England, the Environment Agency, City of York Council and other partners to build a better understanding of York's wildlife sites and the corridors that connect them.

The project focuses on making these connections bigger, healthier and better cared for through hands-on conservation,

habitat restoration, volunteering and community involvement. By bringing together local people, landowners and conservation groups, Green Corridors York helps boost biodiversity, reduce pollution and create better homes for wildlife like water voles and pollinators.

Sharing knowledge is a big part of the work too. Through workshops and collaborative networks, the project helps communities and land managers learn from each other and work together on wildlife surveys, habitat creation and nature recovery.

Wild York (the interactive map) is a key tool for the Green Corridors York project. Since 2022, St Nicks, York Cares and the City of York Council Environment and Communities Team have worked together in partnership with 36 'Friends of' and community groups taking place across 104 sites with over 6,000 volunteers from the local area.

### ▶ Find out more:

[stnicks.org.uk](http://stnicks.org.uk)  
01904 411821  
[info@stnicks.org.uk](mailto:info@stnicks.org.uk)  
Facebook: @stnicks



### Nature-based Wellbeing

A St Nicks project that promotes mental and physical wellbeing by building connections with nature and the outdoors. Ecotherapy offers adults free groups and activities focused on practical skills and conservation, alongside mindful nature-based art and creativity, and heritage craft skills courses, underpinned by 1:1 mentoring. Activities for children and young people also encourage environmental awareness and improved wellbeing.



## Rowntree Park

“After retiring and moving to a new city, Jan wanted to do something practical for the environment and the community but didn’t know where to start. Through volunteering with Friends of Rowntree Park, she now helps care for an area of the park that focuses on flood-resilient planting that helps biodiversity. She attends weekly sessions and has enjoyed learning about nature. It has helped her feel useful and connected.”


Rowntree Park is a 124-acre green space on the south side of York city centre next to the River Ouse. The park includes play areas, tennis courts, a skatepark and basketball court, table tennis, duck ponds, wildlife areas, walking trails and a cafe and library. Friends of Rowntree Park is an independent local charity that helps care for and improve the park, working in close partnership with City of York Council, who manage the site. The Friends fund and maintain

several garden and wildlife areas within the park, with a particular focus on biodiversity, flood-resilient planting and nature recovery. They are part of the Green Corridors project, supporting the development and long-term care of wetland and nature-rich areas within the park and beyond.

Volunteers can sign up for regular gardening sessions on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings, alongside wildlife area conservation days every other Saturday. The Friends and the council also host workplace volunteering days, enabling organisations and businesses to take part in practical environmental action. A wide range of community projects and events are on offer including nature trails, art projects, family activities and seasonal sessions, helping people of all ages to connect with nature.

The Friends of Rowntree Park is funded through memberships, donations and grant funding, which enables them to support volunteering, fund gardening and conservation work and deliver community-led projects that enhance the park for everyone.

Friends of Rowntree Park also run a Forest School which offers nature-based sessions for children with games, stories and activities. During one session, the group spent time pond dipping. One parent said their child now insists on visiting the park “to check on the frogs”. The sessions help young people build confidence, curiosity and a lasting relationship with nature.

 **Find out more:**  
rowntreepark.org.uk

### Other Friends groups in York include:

**Friends of Clifton Backies**  
[www.cliftonbackies.org.uk](http://www.cliftonbackies.org.uk)

**Friends of Glen Gardens**  
[www.glengardens.org.uk](http://www.glengardens.org.uk)

**Friends of Hagg Wood**  
[www.fohw.org.uk](http://www.fohw.org.uk)

**Friends of Hob Moor**  
[www.fohm.org.uk](http://www.fohm.org.uk)

**Friends of Homestead Park**  
[www.homesteadpark.org.uk](http://www.homesteadpark.org.uk)

**Friends of Rawcliffe Meadows**  
<https://rawcliffemeadows.wordpress.com/about/about-us>

**Friends of West Bank Park**  
[www.westbankpark.org](http://www.westbankpark.org)

## York Cares

Set up to offer opportunities for employees to volunteer within the local community, York Cares works in partnership with over 50 voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations who rely on the practical support of volunteers to help transform urban green spaces.

**Find out more:**  
yorkcares.co.uk  
01904 323482  
info@yorkcares.co.uk

## The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)

TCV volunteer groups carry out a variety of practical tasks throughout York and surrounding areas each week, including conservation task days and work on Hull Road Park projects.

Join them to learn new skills, make friends and enjoy being outdoors, whilst improving spaces for people and nature.

**Find out more:**  
01904 414927  
Email: york@tcv.org.uk  
<https://www.tcv.org.uk/yorkshire/tcv-york/>  
Social: @TCVYork

# Take action

One of the most effective ways to make an impact is by joining forces with others. Many groups in the city are already taking action on climate issues. This can be done through education, community building, campaigning and protest.

## York Climate Commission

York Climate Commission exists to champion, collaborate and challenge action on climate change to benefit the natural environment of the city. It also aims to create a healthier, more prosperous and future-proofed city for current and future generations. It is an independent collaborative body representing public, private and civic sectors across York.

Through its activities the Commission aims to embed climate and nature positive practices, to support its vision for 2050 of a sustainable, equitable, thriving city.

**Find out more:**  
yorkclimate.org.uk  
To get in touch with the York Climate Commission, please email [yorkclimatecommission@gmail.com](mailto:yorkclimatecommission@gmail.com)

## York Friends of the Earth

York Friends of the Earth is a lively local area group of the UK's largest grassroots environmental network.

The group meets on the evening of the second Wednesday of the month, either at Friargate Meeting House or online.

Members are currently active locally on the city's rivers and nationally on Planet over Profit, a campaign to end environmental exploitation by big business.

The group is always receptive to new ideas. New members are welcome.

### ▶ Find out more:

<https://groups.friendsoftheearth.uk/groups/york-friends-of-the-earth> or email [yorkfoecoord@gmail.com](mailto:yorkfoecoord@gmail.com)



## York Environment Festival (YEFest)

Established by York Environment Forum in 2020 as York Environment Week (YEW), the Festival has grown in size and impact every year. It is now held over 4 weeks with 100+ events across the city, more than 3,000 participants and over 18,000 website views.

In 2026 YEFest will be back for a seventh year of free events showcasing climate and environment action in York. The Festival, run by volunteers, provides a free shared platform helping to raise awareness of how people in York are working hard to tackle climate change, increase biodiversity and make the city more sustainable. YEFest aims to encourage, increase and inspire more involvement in climate action across the city.

### ▶ Find out more:

[www.yorkenvironmentfestival.org.uk](http://www.yorkenvironmentfestival.org.uk)  
[info@yorkenvironmentfestival.org.uk](mailto:info@yorkenvironmentfestival.org.uk)

## Previous Festival event organisers say:

“This is an opportunity to be part of something bigger, raising awareness, making connections, strengthening partnerships”

“The shared promotion gives us more visibility, and enables us to reach new audiences”

“People came from other parts of York who were interested in seeing a Repair Cafe in their own area”

## Climate cafe/listening circle

A climate listening circle (also known as a climate cafe) is a small gathering which offers a place where fears, uncertainties and hopes about our climate crisis can be safely expressed (over a pint, a hot drink or piece of cake). It's a confidential, respectful, thinking and feeling space where people can meet with others and talk informally about what climate change and ecological breakdown means for them, perhaps find common ground, and listen to others' diverse experiences and feelings. In a climate listening

circle there are no guest speakers, no lectures, no advice and no expectations that you will join any cause or take any action. It's not a therapy group although naturally talking about and sharing feelings can be very therapeutic. The circle is run by trained facilitators who also participate in the sharing and listening.

To keep in touch with Planet South Bank activities, please sign up to the blog via the link on the home page – the blog is used to announce what's going on.

### Find out more:

[planetsouthbank.org.uk](http://planetsouthbank.org.uk)  
[info@planetsouthbank.org.uk](mailto:info@planetsouthbank.org.uk)

## Stop Burning Trees

Stop Burning Trees is a grassroots coalition campaigning to end all public subsidies for large-scale woody biomass power stations due to the environmental, societal and planetary impacts of burning trees for energy.

The coalition includes Axe Drax, a UK based grassroots network that actively opposes Drax - a power station in North Yorkshire - which burns millions of tonnes of imported wood pellets every year.

Find out more:  
[stopburningtrees.org](http://stopburningtrees.org)



## Extinction Rebellion York (XR York)

XR York is part of the international environmental pressure group Extinction Rebellion. They use non-violent direct action and civil disobedience to urge decision makers and leaders to act now to reduce the impact of climate change.

### Find out more:

[xryork.org.uk](http://xryork.org.uk)  
[media.xryork@gmail.com](mailto:media.xryork@gmail.com)

## CliConnect

The aim of YorkCliConnect is to support and strengthen the community that understands, communicates and takes action on the climate and nature emergencies we are all facing. By connecting people, projects and organisations across the city, YorkCliConnect facilitates the sharing of knowledge and resources and reduces duplication of effort. This enables groups to support and encourage one another, growing the community. They run events including science-based workshops, creative performances and socials. YorkCliConnect also curates York Resilience Web, an online resource listing local environmental and social justice groups.

New members are always welcome. There is no membership fee, feel free to make a donation instead.



**Find out more:**  
york.earth  
YorkCliConnect@proton.me

## Global Justice York

Global Justice York campaigns in and around York on Global Justice Now's campaigns such as 'Make Polluters Pay for Loss and Damage caused by climate change'.

**Find out more:**  
[www.globaljustice.org.uk/group/york-trade-justice](http://www.globaljustice.org.uk/group/york-trade-justice)

## People, Planet, Pint

No agenda, workshops or webinars. Just chat over some drinks with like-minded people. Pop down to your local People, Planet, Pint (PPP) to find more about what's going on locally with sustainability and how you can get involved. There is usually a PPP event hosted in York every 2-3 months. This is often held at Brew York on Walmgate but PPP can be found at other venues around the city too.

**Find out more:**  
Find out when the next PPP dates are at [york.earth/ppp](http://york.earth/ppp)

## York Environment Forum

York Environment Forum (YEF) promotes the natural and built environment in York. It is structured as a constituted membership organisation for anyone who supports this purpose. Members include individuals, small enterprises, community groups, businesses and parish councils. The political parties which comprise the City of York Council have a non-voting member each.

Activities include occasional meetings, responding to public consultations, liaising with colleagues in North Yorkshire, and networking throughout York. York Environment Week (now York Environment Festival) was established in 2020 by YEF, enabling environmental organisations to interact with thousands of York residents.

**Find out more:**  
[yorkenvironmentforum@gmail.com](mailto:yorkenvironmentforum@gmail.com)  
[www.yorkenvironmentforum.org.uk](http://www.yorkenvironmentforum.org.uk)  
Facebook: @YorkEnvironmentforum

# What next?

Now that you have the information and inspiration in this guide, what you do with it is up to you.

## You might...

Get involved with a group in your local community – or, if there isn't an existing group in your area, start one of your own.

Seek out advice and support from local organisations to make your home more energy efficient and cut your heating bills.

Speak to people in your area about sustainable changes you can make in your everyday lives, from where you get your food to ways to cut down on waste to how you travel.

Join others in the city to campaign about an environmental issue that matters to you.

Enjoy and care for your local parks and green spaces.

## And the possibilities go on!

There are so many different ways to take action and countless benefits of getting involved. You can cut down on household bills, make your home warmer and healthier,

improve your physical and mental wellbeing, and make new social connections. York is our city. So let's work together to make it better for all of us for many years to come.

# Acknowledgements

A massive thank you to all the groups, organisations and individuals in York who provided information for the guide. Well done to the volunteers from the York Environment Festival team who did the work of putting it together (we've done our best within time and capacity limits). We know that the guide will inevitably be incomplete, and we make no claim that it is definitive or exhaustive. Our sincere apologies where we have missed things out. Thank you to the National Lottery for funding the costs of the graphic design and printing. This guide is also available to view as a pdf on the [yorkenvironmentfestival.org.uk](http://yorkenvironmentfestival.org.uk) website.

## Sources

City of York Council City-Wide Emissions Report (2025)  
City of York Council Plan Progress Report (2025)  
City of York Council Climate Change Strategy

## Disclaimer

The information in this guide is correct to the best of our knowledge and information at the time of printing in May 2026.

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in York on  
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york  
environment  
festival

