

# Community Engagement: Understanding & connecting with diverse audiences

Lynne Collins

Inclusion Senior Adviser

ps – it's the summer solstice and Insect week...

# Net Zero



We will be maximising the contribution that Nature Based Solutions makes to our net zero ambitions, with a particular emphasis on supporting the restoration of peatlands and the expansion of woodland cover through natural regeneration and planting.

Our activity this year will channel effort into delivery of the Environment Improvement Plan and new statutory targets on reversing biodiversity decline, net-zero, water and air quality, woodland restoration and commitments to transform the agriculture and fisheries sectors.

# Aims of the Connecting People with Nature Programme



**The programme is ambitious in its aim to deliver systemic change through the following 5 year aims:**

- More people connected with and acting for the natural environment
- More people spending time in nature
- More people benefitting from the natural environment
- Better quality accessible nature-rich places close to where people live
- Better access to high quality nature further afield
- More resilient environment that protects people from environmental harms e.g flooding, air pollution



# Why are diverse audiences important to climate change and nature recovery?



Marian Spain, Chief Executive of Natural England, said:

Using green infrastructure to bring the sights, sounds and smells of nature into every city, town and street will not only create nature abundant, beautiful spaces for everyone to enjoy but will help tackle climate change too.

Natural England is committed to expanding access to nature as the benefits of spending time outdoors are extensive; it reduces stress, increases physical activity and improves wellbeing. We look forward to working with developers, local planning authorities and communities to create a future where nature is on people's doorsteps to improve the quality of all our lives.

# State of the sector



## Listening to the stories of 'others'

**"...there is a clear need to carve out spaces to listen, and to tell other stories about ourselves, to engage in kinds of worlding that might be more conducive to a coexistence based on recognizing conflicts rather than brushing them off as irrelevant or non-existent...certainly there are no guarantees of such an attempt but we cannot even begin to tell such a story without engaging the stories of others seriously"**

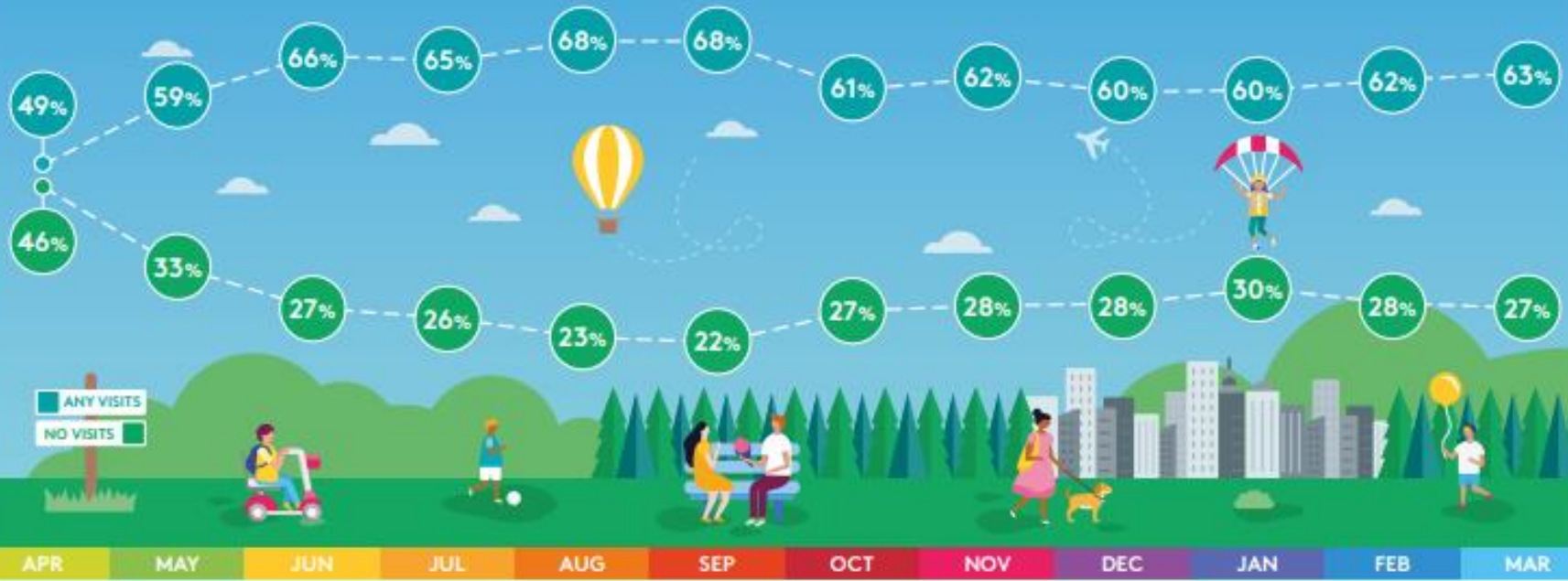
(Blaser 2013)

We can't all live  
next to the coast



# THE PEOPLE AND NATURE SURVEY FOR ENGLAND

APRIL 2020 - MARCH 2021



## VISITS TO GREEN AND NATURAL SPACES IN THE LAST 14 DAYS



### ETHNICITY

Black people significantly less likely to have visited green spaces than white people



53%

Black people



63%

White people



### AGE

65+ age group significantly less likely to have visited...



55%

of adults 65+

25-39 year olds were most likely to have visited...



66%

of adults 25-39



### INCOME

Lower income households were less likely to visit green spaces



46%

£0 - 14,999



61%

£15,000 - 49,999



73%

£50,000 or more



### LONG TERM ILLNESS

People with long term illness were significantly less likely to visit than those without.



55%

with long term illness



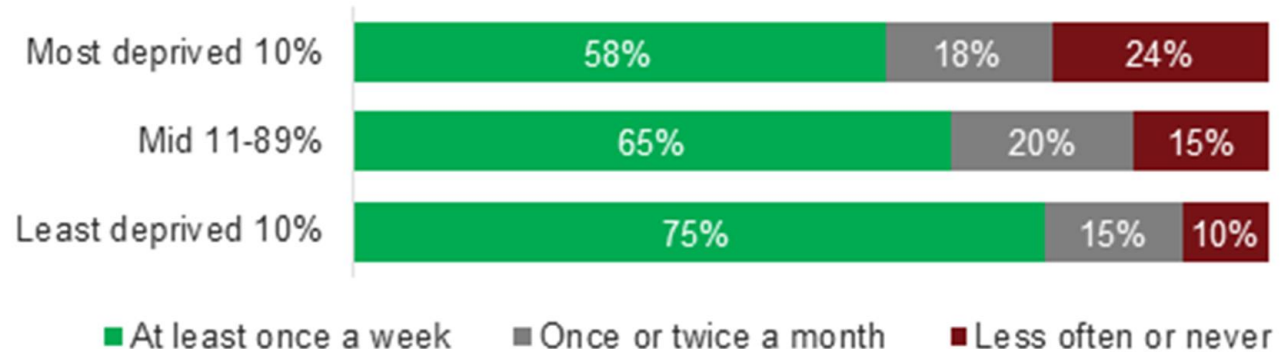
67%

without long term illness

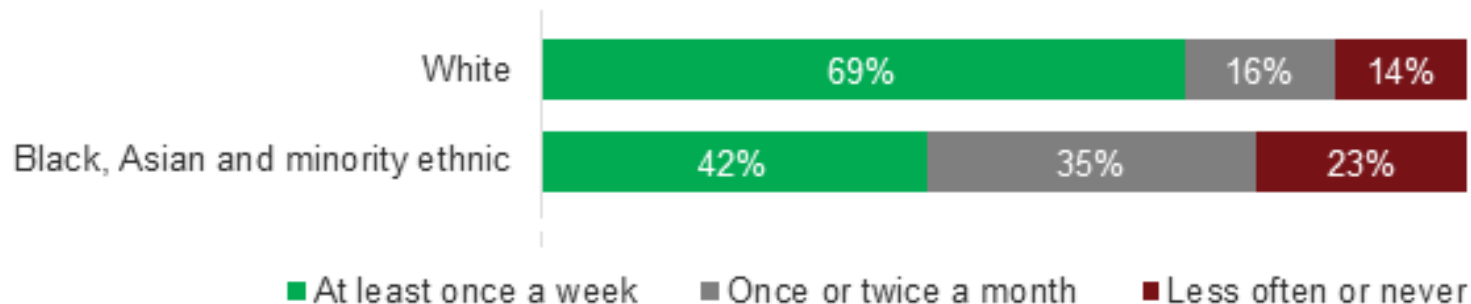
# Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment

**MENE  
Data  
2009-19**

## By index of multiple deprivation

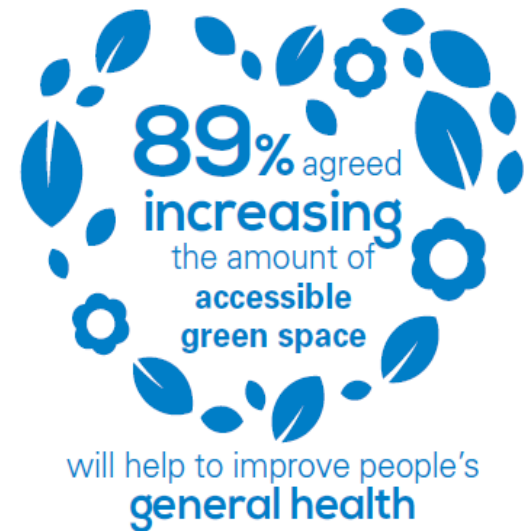
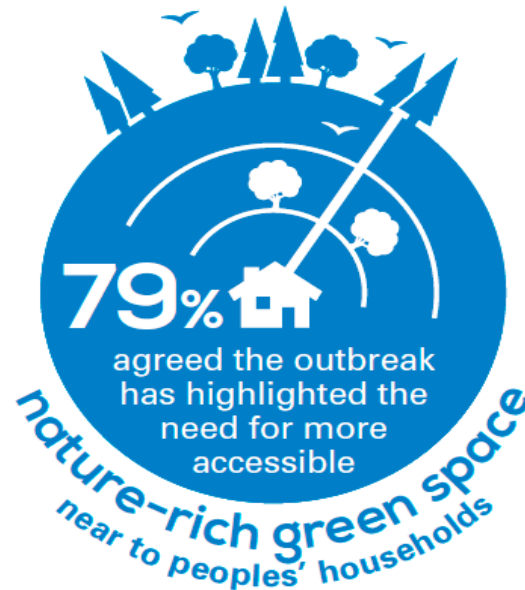
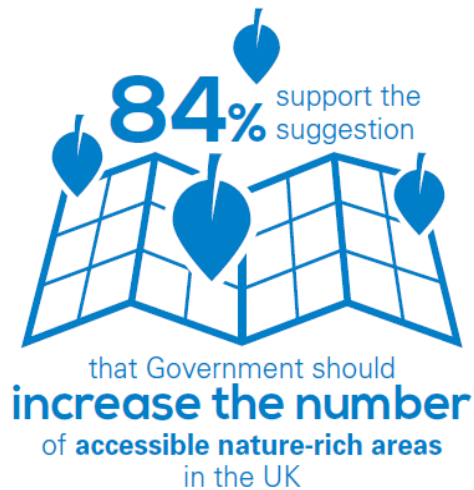


## By ethnicity



# An opportunity to harness nature connection

**60% of people have become more appreciative of nature / local environment during lockdown (YouGov)**



# Included Outdoors evidence



Engagement with nature has been shown to have a range of health and wellbeing benefits. However, evidence from Natural England's [Monitor of Engagement with Natural Environment Survey](#) (MENE) – and its successor the [People and Nature Survey](#) (PaNS) – shows that nature spaces in rural and urban environments are not accessed equally by everyone and that factors including age, ethnicity and socio-economic status seem to play a role.

There is a range of evidence, ranging from academic research to first-hand experience, that provide insight into the barriers and enablers to accessing and engaging with nature spaces and the outdoors for specific groups.

[the 'Included Outside' publication series](#) Highlighted older people, people living in low income areas, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, and people living with disabilities that are the social groups under-represented in accessing nature spaces.

# Highlights from MENE: Cambridgeshire: Access to Green Space



- Main barrier for Cambridgeshire residents is being busy at work
- 67% of population visit a green space at least once a week, 5% never visit a green space
- Most visited type of green space is urban park (15/16)
- 44% visit countryside, 54% visit town/city, 2% visit seaside resort/town
- 62% of people travelled less than 3 miles to a greenspace
- 60% of people travelled to green spaces by foot
- The highest motivating factor for visiting a green space was for Health and exercise followed by Fresh air and relaxation

# Race and ethnicity data

2011 census data



Local Planning Authorities Ethnicity	White	Mixed	Asian	Black African/ Caribbean	Other
Bedford	126,846	5,386	17,932	6,202	1,113
Cambridgeshire (7)	574,987	11,081	25,638	6,010	3,494
Central Bedfordshire	238,722	4,789	6,402	3,614	854
Essex (14)	1,313,856	20,885	34,860	18,709	5,277
Hertfordshire (11)	977,495	27,497	72,581	31,401	7,088
Luton	111,079	8,281	60,952	19,909	2,980
Northamptonshire (7)	632,822	14,182	25,427	16,923	2,598
Peterborough	151,544	4,948	21,492	4,164	1,483

## Area map



## Population

**678,900**

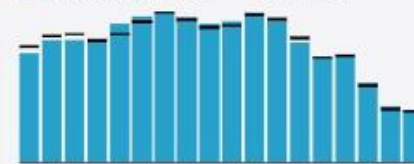
people

**56,490,000** people in England

Rounded to the nearest 100 people

## Age profile

Cambridgeshire (England)



0 years  
% of all people, 5 year age bands

NATURAL ENGLAND

## Household deprivation

Cambridgeshire (England)

Household is not deprived in any dimension **53.4%** (48.4%)



Household is deprived in one dimension **32.7%** (33.5%)

Household is deprived in two dimensions **11.4%** (14.2%)

Household is deprived in three dimensions **2.4%** (3.7%)

Household is deprived in four dimensions **0.1%** (0.2%)

% of all households

## Ethnic group

Cambridgeshire (England)

Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh **5.8%** (9.0%)

Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African **1.4%** (4.2%)

Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups **2.8%** (3.0%)

White **88.6%** (81.0%)

Other ethnic group **1.3%** (2.2%)

% of all people

## Religion

Cambridgeshire (England)

No religion **43.2%** (36.7%)

Christian **45.1%** (46.3%)

Buddhist **0.5%** (0.5%)

Hindu **1.1%** (1.8%)

Jewish **0.3%** (0.5%)

Muslim **2.1%** (6.7%)

Sikh **0.2%** (0.9%)

Other religion **0.6%** (0.6%)

Not answered **7.0%** (6.0%)

% of all people

# Inclusion



# Green Infrastructure Standards



There are five key standards:

- Urban Nature Recovery Standard
- Urban Greening Factor
- Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard
- Accessible Greenspace Standards
- Green Infrastructure Strategy

# Pathways to Nature Connection

- Senses
- Emotion
- Beauty
- Meaning
- Compassion



PIC•COLLAGE



# Listen and make a difference



- 'I don't want to only be the scarf in the photo'
- 'White middle class men need to self educate'
- 'Amplify storytelling that is already happening'
- 'Bring in excluded voices through collaboration'
- 'Generate stories at multiple scales and multiply storytellers'
- 'Change engagement to custodianship and care in an inclusionary way'
- 'Fail quickly'





# Think of a project/community



- What do you want to achieve?
- Who do you want to connect with?
- What are the barriers?

# Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity is not

- A Mental Health illness.
- Something that needs to be cured.

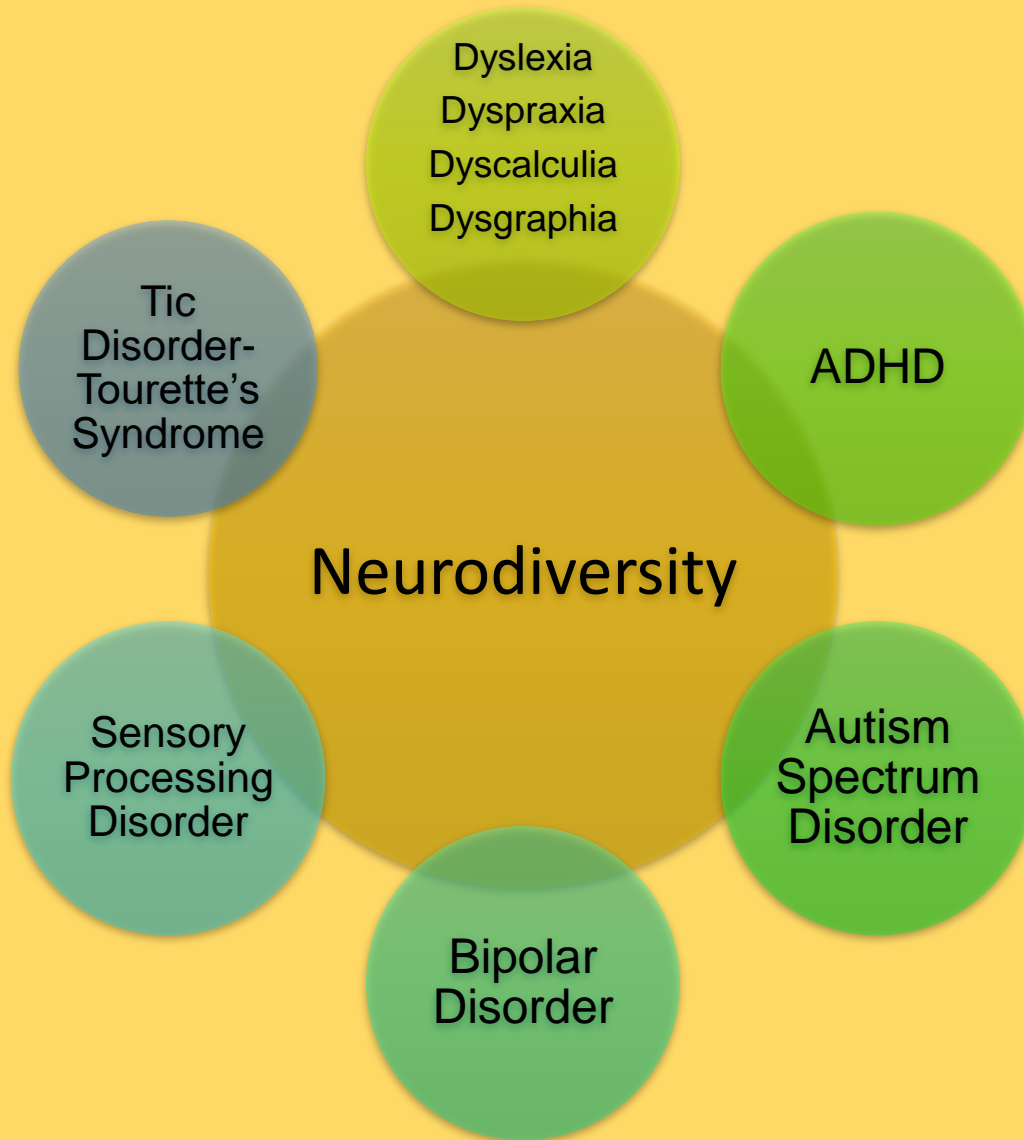
What is Neurodiversity?

It is different ways the brain can work and interpret information (just like a Smartphone). People naturally think about things differently.

Most people are neurotypical, meaning that the brain functions and processes information in the way society expects.

(The Brain Charity, 2023)







# Things to work through



- How prepared are you to fail
- Who is your community
- Who do you know in your community
- What is your life experience
- How well do you listen
- What are your community assets
- What does inclusion mean to you



# Things to work through



- How current is your Green Infrastructure map
- How diverse is your friends group
- Do you use producers to run events
- List and connect with groups
- Eat, Share, Laugh, do
- Make a difference



# Questions and Next Steps

## Next Steps...



- Comments / reflections / questions
- What else is already happening that could be scaled up?
- How can/are you working together?
- Who do you know?
- Can you connect Local Authorities with community groups?
- Can you help with funding applications?
- How do you amplify the stories?

