



## **PRESS RELEASE**

March 2023

### **Green scheme empowers 5,000 young people to take action**

**A youth-led green revolution is taking place across England, as 5,000 young people create, organise and run environmental social action projects to make their schools and communities better places to learn and to live in by improving access to nature and addressing the global climate crisis.**

The 5,000 young people - called Green Influencers - have all been recruited through the Green Influencers Scheme, a three-year match funded project between educational charity The Ernest Cook Trust and the #iwill Fund. Its target was to recruit 5,000 Green Influencers, which it reached ahead of the Scheme's third annual conference, held in Derbyshire.

At the conference – which was entirely organised and run by young people – some of the Green Influencers showcased work they have been doing and spoke passionately about what the environment meant to them.

This included Green Influencers from Polygon School in Southampton - Jack, Ivan, Aden, Owen, Tyler, Tash and Harley, aged between 12 and 14 – who have set up a project called The Green Phone Initiative to repair broken mobile phones and prevent electronic waste from going into landfill. They've turned it into an enterprise, as the donated phones are mended and then sold on at a small profit. This also helps people on low incomes to buy preowned phones. The team have even made a sales video.

Under The Green Influencers Scheme, The Ernest Cook Trust has given grants to 36 Host Organisations to support the employment of 44 Green Mentors. The Green Mentors' role is to enable young people to lead the way as Green Influencers on environmental social action projects in their schools or communities.

The Green Influencers Scheme is match-funded through the #iwill Fund. The #iwill Fund is made possible thanks to £66 million joint investment from The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to support young people to access high quality social action opportunities. The Ernest Cook Trust is acting as a match funder and awarding grants on behalf of the #iwill Fund.

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The Green Influencers Scheme conference also featured youth-led workshops, showcasing other Green Influencers projects:

- The Planet People (Gosforth East Middle School, Newcastle-on-Tyne) – the pupils are building an eco-classroom, using bricks created from 2 litre plastic bottles, filled with single use plastic.
- Hamstead Hall School Green Influencers, Birmingham – the pupils have been learning about the impact of food on carbon usage and the importance of carbon literacy and have created a resource to teach other schools in their area about these subjects.
- Regional Youth Climate Assembly (RYCA), Yorkshire and the Humber – this workshop looked at a vision for a youth-led green future, how they developed their manifesto and the partnerships which have helped influence social action on a regional, national and international scale.
- HedgeHunters, Hull - working with the University of Hull, the Green Influencers looked at the importance of hedgerows and demonstrated the citizen science app they helped design, which maps gaps in hedgerows.
- Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's Young Rangers – working with Babbling Vagabonds Theatre, Green Influencers created an innovative energy saving campaign via an animated film.

As well as organising the conference, speakers and workshops, the Youth Conference Committee members Mohammed, Olivia, Tasneem and Esther also had key roles on the day as Masters of Ceremony for plenary sessions and running publicity and social media.

Speaking at the conference, **Dr Ian Gambles, Interim Chief Executive of The Ernest Cook Trust**, said everyone had a responsibility to understand and try to solve the issue of climate change and the wider impacts on nature.

He said: "All of us have this stewardship responsibility but children and young people will be here longer, will teach the next generation how to care for our world, and will face the growing challenges of the climate and nature crises as they start to bite deeper through the century. I'm delighted that we have been able to be part of building this fantastic network of mentors and influencers who have done, and are continuing to, do so much to bring these challenges, and the positive ways we can respond to them, to the forefront of young peoples' minds."

**Helen Whyman, Head of the #iwill Fund, added:** "The purpose of the #iwill Fund is to increase the opportunities for young people to take part in high quality youth social action across England. We've seen that in fantastic ways across the Green Influencers Scheme and the work they've been doing in environmental youth social action."

For information about the Green Influencers Scheme visit The Ernest Cook Trust at <https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/> or email [greeninfluencers@ernestcooktrust.org.uk](mailto:greeninfluencers@ernestcooktrust.org.uk).

## **Notes to editors**

### **Green Influencers Scheme**

The mission of the Green Influencers Scheme is to assist young people to create deep, lasting and meaningful connections with the natural environment. Through this scheme young people will learn and build skills which will help them contribute to the local community through environmental action.

The Scheme was developed by The Ernest Cook Trust in 2019 as a match-funded project with the #iwill Fund. Both the #iwill Fund and The Ernest Cook Trust are providing £1.5million resulting in a total of £3million to be spent over 3 years on youth environmental action.

The Ernest Cook Trust has provided grants to registered charities and non-profit organisations across England to employ Green Mentors to help young people between the ages of 10-14 years (Green Influencers) to create environmental projects in local schools, youth groups and communities.

### **Full list of recipients:**

1. Action for Conservation (London)
2. Action for Conservation (Manchester)
3. Action for Conservation (Manchester)
4. Action for Conservation (Bristol)
5. Ambition, Aspire, Achieve (Newham, London)
6. Centre for Sustainable Energy (Bristol)
7. Child Dynamix (Hull)
8. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
9. East Riding Voluntary Action Services (East Riding of Yorkshire)
10. ecoACTIVE (Hackney, London)
11. Endeavour Training Limited (Sheffield)
12. Field Studies Council (Shropshire)
13. Friends of St Nicholas Fields (York)
14. Global Action Plan (London)
15. Global Generation (Islington/Southwark, London)
16. Green Light Trust (Bury St Edmunds)
17. Green Synergy (Lincoln)
18. Groundwork Cheshire Lancashire and Merseyside
19. Groundwork Greater Manchester
20. Groundwork North East and Cumbria
21. Groundwork Northampton
22. Groundwork South
23. Handsworth Association of Schools (Birmingham)
24. Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust
25. Northumberland Wildlife Trust
26. OrganicLea CIC (Walthamstow, London)
27. Prospects Foundation (Accrington, Lancashire)
28. Shropshire Wildlife Trust
29. Somerset Wildlife Trust
30. SOS-UK (Southampton)
31. SOS-UK (Norwich)
32. Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
33. The Children's Foundation (Newcastle)
34. The Oaklea Trust (Kendal, Cumbria)
35. Voluntary Action North East Lincolnshire
36. Wilderness Foundation (Chelmsford)
37. Woodcraft Folk (Leeds)
38. Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust
39. Young Gloucestershire
40. Youth Work Unit Yorkshire and the Humber

## **The Ernest Cook Trust**

[The Ernest Cook Trust](#) offers children and young people, their families and communities, the chance to learn from the land through hands-on outdoor learning activities.

The Ernest Cook Trust is a charity limited by guarantee with the sole charitable objective of education.

The Trust places education at its very heart by offering children and young people a chance to connect with nature and to take action on the environment in a meaningful and positive way.

The Trust awards around £2m per year in grants based on relevance and impact against organisational objectives. Grants are given to schools or charitable organisations for activities in the UK with a particular focus on areas where there are fewer opportunities to experience the outdoors.

## **#iwill Fund**

The #iwill Fund is made possible thanks to £66million joint investment from The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to support young people to access high quality social action opportunities.

The #iwill Fund brings together a group of organisations who all contribute funding to embed meaningful social action into the lives of young people.

The #iwill Fund supports the aims of the #iwill campaign - to make involvement in social action a part of life for young people, by recognising the benefit for both young people and their communities.

By bringing together funders from across different sectors and by making sure that young people have a say in where the funding goes – the #iwill Fund is taking a collaborative approach.

## **The National Lottery Community Fund**

We are the largest funder of community activity in the UK – we support people and communities to prosper and thrive.

We're proud to award money raised by National Lottery players to communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and to work closely with Government to distribute vital grants and funding from key Government programmes and initiatives.

Our funding has a positive impact and makes a difference to people's lives. We support projects focused on things that matter, including economic prosperity, employment, young people, mental health, loneliness and helping the UK reach net zero by 2050.

Thanks to the support of National Lottery players, our funding is open to everyone. We're privileged to be able to work with the smallest of local groups right up to UK-wide charities, enabling people and communities to bring their ambitions to life.

National Lottery players raise over £30 million each week for good causes throughout the UK. Since The National Lottery began in 1994, £43 billion has been raised for good causes. National Lottery funding has been used to support over 635,000 projects - 255 projects per postcode area.

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