

Item 35
Hedgehog Highway Project

The council received the following letter which Cllrs are asked to consider.



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Firstly, thank you for taking the time to read this letter!

I am writing to all Councils, Parishes, Towns and Wards in the UK to ask them to take part in this amazing project!

Hedgehogs R Us Highway Project

With hedgehog numbers in decline and hedgehog awareness on the rise, there has never been a better time to get involved in hedgehog conservation.

A Hedgehog Highway is a 5 inch gap in a fence and is essential in the battle to prevent the extinction of our endangered spiky friends. This gap allows them access to forage for food and meet mates. A Highway surround raises awareness to their plight and encourages others to take part.

I am asking for each area of the UK to use a small portion of their assigned funds to purchase just ONE box of hedgehog highway surrounds and make them available for their residents. These could be situated in a Town Council building, a Town Hall or even a Local Shop or Post Office?

Each box of 50 is £150 and includes:

- * 50 Hedgehog Highway surrounds & 50 information leaflets
- * A display box & window sticker showing you are part of the project.

Depending on what your budget guidelines allow you to do, you could:

1. Give the highways to residents for free
2. Sell them for £3 each to regain your invested money
3. Sell for the suggested resale price of £5 and use the £100 profit for a community project / hedgehog project of your choice.



The project will be receiving a lot of publicity in the coming months via [Social Media](#) and I really hope that you choose to take part.

My dream is to make the whole of the UK one giant Hedgehog Highway and for that dream to come true, it needs EVERYONE to take part.

Money is donated to Hedgehog Conservation for every box sold too!

If you would like to order or have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch and thank you for caring.

Linda Cook, Founder of Hedgehogs R Us

BECOMING A HEDGEHOG HERO PARISH



Emma Mainwaring, Community Coordinator at Ecclesfield Parish Council, shares how councils can help protect hedgehogs.

As a semi-rural parish, Ecclesfield in Sheffield has the best of both worlds, having a mixture of urban and rural areas.

Initially, we were struck when we realised that hedgehogs are vulnerable to extinction. We realised we hadn't seen one for years in the places they used to be plentiful.

We formed a Hedgehog Working Group comprising of councillors, officers, an advocacy officer (from a local wildlife organisation), and a local resident.

We investigated the different things we could do to encourage the parish to become more hedgehog-friendly. We used excellent resources like the British Hedgehog Preservation Society and Hedgehog Street - which is run by the People's Trust for Endangered Species and the British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) collaboratively.

ACTIONS

- Spoke to our grounds keeper to make sure he checked areas before he used any of his motorised garden equipment. We stickered up the strimmer and mower with some of BHPS' machinery labels as a reminder to users
- Included an information insert within our local paper which went to 5,000 homes and put postcards in local businesses to maximise the reach
- Sent Hedgehog Hero packs to 13 local schools to promote the plight of hedgehogs in an age-appropriate way. Each pack had a poster, letter to parents explaining hedgehogs were vulnerable to extinction, and a leaflet for children with different ideas to encourage hedgehogs and wildlife in their gardens.

The packs were well received. We also asked children to send us photos of any hedgehog activity in their gardens and then added them onto our Hedgehog Hero Honour Roll! - <https://bit.ly/3tmodnY>.



PICNIC DAYS AND AFTERNOON CRAFTS

Building on the success of the hedgehog packs, we started thinking longer-term about how we could engage a wider group of people and other areas of nature. We decided to host nature picnic days, across different parks within our parish, to inform children and adults of how to harness nature in their gardens.

We handed out hedgehog highway plaques (purchased from BHPS), to those people who had hedgehogs in their garden to ensure hedgehog holes were kept open.

We had colouring competitions and prizes as well to increase interest, participation, and encourage conversation.



We made connections with Chapeltown Library where we hope to facilitate a craft afternoon for children and adults based around learning how to knit a hedgehog.

Alongside all the facets of our initiatives, we have been pushing our campaign through our website and across social media. As a result of our work, we have gained Hedgehog Hero status and have been named on the British Hedgehog Preservation Society's website.

We are still very keen to look after our hedgehogs and nature, and therefore have widened our Hedgehog Working Group to encompass all areas of nature and renamed it as such.

Our upcoming initiatives include working with a local school, wilding an area, introducing bug hotels and a hedgehog house, and implementing our nature camera to hopefully capture our spiky residents on screen. This camera will then be moved around schools within the parish.



TIP: The key to the success we have seen, came from cutting the campaign into bitesize chunks, having a multi-pronged approach, and forming great partnerships.

LATEST ACTIONS:

- No Mow May
- ScareMows – scarecrows made by residents, promoting No Mow May in their garden to encourage biodiversity
- Signed up to move towards becoming plastic free
- Adding an additional category to our garden competition - best nature-friendly garden.

I'm happy to help other parish councils become a little more hedgehog aware - you can email me at emmamainwaring@ecclesfield-pc.gov.uk.