

Climate And Nature Champion Scheme

Report of the Inaugural Meeting 2025

The Inaugural Meeting of the Climate and Nature (CAN) Champion Scheme took place online on 19 November 2025. Danny Moody, Chief Executive of Northants CALC, opened the proceedings and welcomed the attendees and special guests. There were over 70 CAN Champions in attendance – the audience was engaged and interactive right from the start.

Danny Moody presented the first talk – an overview of the scheme, including what led to the scheme's formation and the responsibilities of being a CAN Champion. The scheme, launched by Northants CALC, was developed in response to a countywide survey conducted in early 2025, which revealed strong engagement and a high level of existing climate and nature initiatives among parish and town councils in Northamptonshire. Inspired by the successful Police Liaison Representative Scheme model, the scheme officially began on 1 July 2025, inviting all 271 parishes in Northamptonshire to appoint a CAN Champion. The role, open to councillors, officers, or members of the public, is designed to serve as the council's advocate for environmental sustainability, biodiversity, and climate resilience. CAN Champions are responsible for liaising with environmental initiatives at various levels, sharing updates and best practices, encouraging community participation in projects, promoting awareness, and supporting the development and monitoring of local climate and nature projects. The scheme seeks individuals who are passionate about environmental issues, possess strong communication and organisational skills, and are eager to collaborate and stay informed.

The scheme aimed to appoint CAN Champions in all parishes, with a target of at least 100 appointments by the end of 2025—a goal already surpassed with 118 CAN Champions appointed by the inaugural meeting. Champions represent a mix of councillors, officers, and community members, with broad representation across the county and particularly strong uptake in larger parishes and town councils. Ongoing support is provided through a dedicated website, regular meetings, newsletters, and direct contact with Northants CALC staff, ensuring that CAN Champions are well-equipped to foster meaningful local action on climate and nature issues.

Danny Moody introduced special guest, Ellen Pentland, from the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire – with a focus on the “Team Wilder” Project. The Trust is one of 46 UK-wide trusts managing over 100 nature reserves and working to support communities in caring for local wildlife. Team Wilder, which launched in 2021, aims to reconnect historically excluded groups with nature and provide meaningful community support, using community organising principles. Having

seen success in Northamptonshire, the initiative is now expanding into Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, with all staff trained in this collaborative way of working. Team Wilder offers CAN Champions connections to existing community projects, support, advice, and training for environmental initiatives, and links to other relevant organisations. The Trust also collaborates closely with the Northants Biodiversity Records Centre (NBRC) to provide historical ecological data for parishes. In return, Team Wilder encourages CAN Champions to share updates on local nature-supporting activities and to contribute records to the NBRC, helping to build a clearer picture of the region's ecological health.

Following the presentation from Ellen Pentland, a Q&A session was held and various opportunities for improvement and development were identified. Northants CALC will follow up every point raised.

In closing, Danny Moody said that he believes that the CAN Champion Scheme is unique in England and that it has enormous potential.

Danny Moody wrapped up proceedings and thanked all CAN Champions, guests, and speakers for their attendance.