

DIGEST

ISSUE 014 / AUTUMN 2025



Image: © Edwyn Norcup

AGM YEAR REPORT

We are a committee of 12 volunteers now but the range of how work has increased proportionately this year.

We have gained new skills and experience and links to many other groups to help them get funding and establish themselves within the community of Beeston.

We are grateful to all the committee members, including Tamar who once again continued to offer us her excellent graphic design and IT experience.

We welcome alliances and we engaged with and supported other local community groups and organisations such as Beeston Green Umbrella, the local Hong Kong immigrant community, Beeston Repair Café, Chilwell Grove Avenue Allotments and Incredible Edible.

CONTENT BY
GARY SMERDON-WHITE

In the main we have continued to develop a productive working relationship with our elected Councillors and Council Officers, meet regularly and trust that we will be consulted on matters of community interest. During the year we supported them in moving the Water Head Sculpture and ensured it was cleaned up and the area around it planted out.

We have also met with our MP, Juliet Campbell, and are glad to continue to extend invitations to her for our events and meetings.

Projects we have managed

This year Light Night in January was almost completely managed by Jeanie and BCS, with funding from the Government's *UK Shared Prosperity Funding* (UK SPF, previously called Levelling Up). This was a success, despite a very cold night, helped by volunteers who provided over 1000 hours of work to us, in addition the communications reach on the project was over 50k people. Next year we intend to measure volunteering time and communications reach across all our work because these are important performance indicators for us and some funded projects attach a value of £11.44 per hour on volunteering.

During the year our Lady Plaques project, funded by donations, continued by recognising the contribution made to society by women with a close association with Beeston. Two new plaques were installed and unveiled.

Beeston is famous for its Street Art and we're delighted to give the project a home. Our chair, Jeanie O'Shea, has linked organisations to artists, led guided tours and given talks to a variety of organisations across Beeston and its surrounding area. Thank you, Jeanie

With the help of volunteer, Robert Howard, a Beeston Civic Town Map taking visitors through the historic, heritage, attractions and transport offerings of Beeston was produced and distributed to local students and organisations. It was so successful, we had to reprint.

The Future

We have nearly £14k in our accounts but of that £4,3k is either committed to projects in 2025/26 or held on behalf of other local community groups. So we have a healthy usable balance of nearly £9k going forward and we intend to keep membership costs at 2024/5 levels.

Our community projects have balanced income and cost but Light Night this year was big and risky in that we could not be sure of covering our costs. It is unlikely that we will manage such a large project in the next few years.

Our membership number has remained steady over the last few years, around 170 members, with a few leaving and a few new people joining. Our committee numbers increased in 2024/5. We welcome new committee members, people who would like to help on an *ad hoc* basis, and more members. Please encourage your friends to join us! We even welcome more ideas and suggestions if we have the resources.

civic design awards 2025 winners presentation

19 NOVEMBER 2025
7 PM

RBL, HALL CROFT
BEESTON

WHAT3WORDS///
INNER.HOOT.MOVED

WELCOME DRINK
ON ARRIVAL

DESIGN AWARDS



TEAM

Every October we have a reshuffle, with new members joining our Committee and others stepping away, even if only for a time...

CONTENT BY
TAMAR

We have a long history of inclusivity, and warmly welcome and value diversity at all levels. We actively appeal seek to appeal to everyone, and want to remove barriers which may prevent people currently under-represented from volunteering or engaging with decision-making in our shared community. Being more civic is for everyone.

We are incredibly grateful to everyone (past and present) who's been part of the team. We're sorry to see Karen Stainer step down as Vice-Chair and committee member, but we're delighted she is staying on as an active volunteer, because she's fab and we need her! Sara Goodacre is also stepping away from Committee, but remains a welcome friend to call on from the wings on ecology and greening matters. **Thanks so much**, both.

Newbies

Last year we finally managed to cojole Mike Spencer into joining the team – he has been invaluable ever since, of course. We're delighted that Sue Spencer will now join him. A formidable duo! Dr Stef Kruczowski has stepped up the plate this year, too. Stef has been so generous and supportive with his experience and time; guest speaking at our talks, judging our Design Awards, AND a walk guide – so it kind of makes sense to make it official and commandeer him onto the group chat. How lucky are we?!

Team members volunteer their time, and so the Society takes great care to ensure that no one is overburdened. Each of us only does what we can, nothing more. Committee members often have their own projects on the go too, and find the mutual support and sharing of ideas being a team member both helpful and valuable for those projects too.

The Civic Society is always keen to bolster and support local grass roots projects; we find it brings much mutual benefit.

We're fortunate to be have been able to continue the Society's tradition of a broad spectrum of experience and skill in the team each year, as in previous years. But we're not The Experts. We always appreciate member participation: help, advice and constructive criticism or helpful suggestions are very welcome indeed.

Be kind!

This year, the team consists of:

JEANIE O'SHEA
CHAIR + TRUSTEE
BEESTON STREET ART | LIGHT NIGHT

GARY SMERDON-WHITE
HON. TREASURER + TRUSTEE
LHL | PLANNING

MERVYN BROWN
HON. SECRETARY + TRUSTEE
EVENTS

DR CLYDE DAVIES
DR JANE HARVEY
DR STEFAN KRUCZKOWSKI
LAURA PRESCOTT
MIKE SPENCER
SUE SPENCER
CHRISTY TANG
CHRYSE TINSLEY
TAMAR FEAST (TRUSTEE)

DR PETER ROBINSON (PRESIDENT)

Want to learn more?

If you'd like to learn more about what's involved in volunteering, and being in a committee, Charity Excellence have some great free resources, which you can access [here](#) (requires signing up). For more information about what is involved in Charity committees, or being a Trustee – please see the [Government's guidance information](#). Alternatively, just get in touch for a chat.

PLANNING + HERITAGE

Planning applications and protecting our local heritage remain our core duty – and with applications ever-increasing, and potential changes in Planning and Local Authorities in the pipeline it's never seemed more important. We always need help!

CONTENT BY
TAMAR
GARY SMERDON-WHITE



Riverside 23/00447/FUL

Since the planning application was refused by the Local Planning Authority, Applicants for developing Riverside had appealed to the Government Inspectorate. This was disappointing, but not a surprise.

We are delighted that, after a rather rare 'site visit', the Planning Inspectorate found in favour of the Council. **The Appeal was dismissed!** [The Full Decision Notice](#) states,

"The appeal raises the following:

- The effects of the appeal scheme on the character and appearance of the area including on the non- designated heritage assets of the Canalside Heritage Centre, Beeston Lock and the Lock Keeper's Cottage,*
- The effects of the appeal scheme on the living conditions of existing occupiers, and*
- Its effects on highway safety."*

We feel this was the right decision – the Council's refusal was based upon sound, strong grounds, and many objections backed this up. It was the wrong building in the wrong place, and would have caused significant damage.



25/00690/FUL

Construct two detached dwellings and two semi-detached dwellings following demolition of existing buildings

Land Between Hall Croft And Barrydale Avenue Beeston Nottinghamshire NG9 1EL

We're commenting on this application (which supersedes a previous, expired application which was granted permission but not acted upon within the 3 year period). Demolition of the existing garages was undertaken without the period of permission. Enforcement were aware.

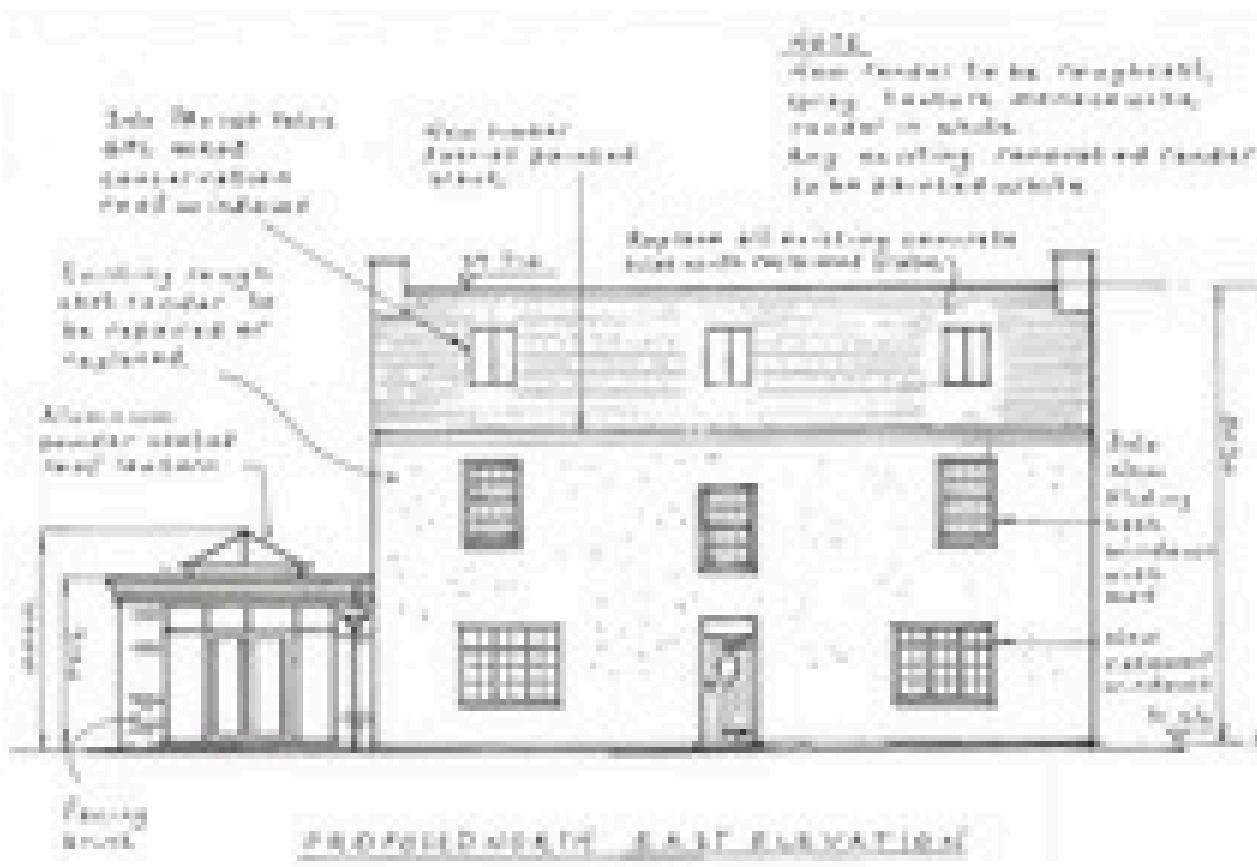
We are watchful regarding promises - including replacement trees:

"Two new trees will be planted in the rear gardens [...] to compensate for the removal of the trees on the frontage and improve the street scene along Barrydale Avenue. The trees will be specified by the arboricultural consultant."

We will be making material **objections** to the Chatsworth Grey brick with black mortar, and modern, glazed gable frontage and white render of the design

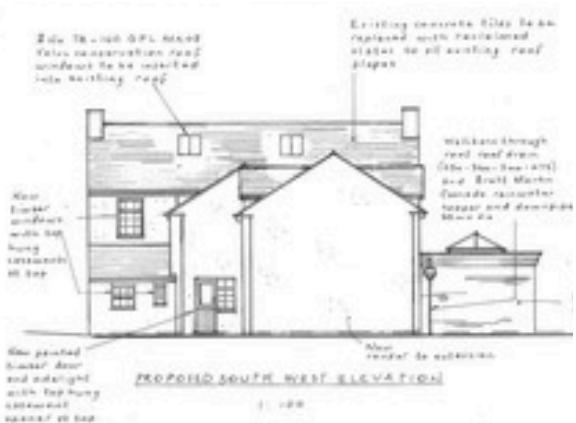


– which is incongruous and rather overbearing so close to our West End Conservation Area (WECA) containing some of the oldest buildings in Beeston, and would set a worrying precedent. We also will raise points about SuDs for the driveways on Barrydale. (See images)



25/00322/FUL

Construct two storey and single storey extensions and insert velux windows to front elevation, to enable use as a single dwelling.



8 West End Beeston Nottinghamshire

We **supported** this application, which is the adjoining site to 25/00690/FUL and being developed by the same agent.

The existing condition of the building was poor, and was being occupied as flats. It is a prominent building in the street scene, and a gateway building to the boundary of WECA. This proposal endeavours to convert the property back to a large family home, and includes 'retrofirst' elements in materials and design, already the red brick wall has been built very nicely, and together with reclaimed materials and heritage detailing could really make a positive impact on WECA.

Tree felling

We continue to monitor applications to fell trees, which always increase at this time of year. We're especially watchful around trees with TPOs or in Conservation Areas. Often there are no, or weak grounds for felling or excessive tree work.

We endeavour to object to all instances without sound grounds for mature tree felling. There have been quite a few recently.

We do **support** applications too! We are always supportive of responsible pruning and tree management, and will support felling where sound reasons are given – especially when tree replacement, and factors such as biodiversity mitigation or leaving deadwood for habitat etc are cited by the property owner.

Local Heritage List

We are working with Toby Ebbs, Broxtowe Conservation officer to draw up a list of local assets which should be on a Local Heritage List to protect them from demolition or unsympathetic alterations. Chryse meets with Toby on a regular basis to progress this work. Thank you, Chryse.

Volunteers

To offer much needed help watching and /or commenting on planning applications send us a message to be added to our Planning WhatsApp group.

Design Awards 2025

Our Design Award presentation evening is on 19 November 2025. You are invited to attend! There will be welcome complimentary drink, and winners presented with their awards. We will also be announcing the People's Choice result (still time to vote – deadline is 31 October), and the winner of our kids' competition to design the Dreamiest Bestest Building Ever! – so should be a really lovely event to attend, even if you've never been to one our events before.

Find out more:

beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/designawards

**DESIGN
AWARDS**



10 hours · 17 hours · 11 hours · 10 hours



If you're on social media, why not give us a follow.

With content and sharing on events, news and anything to pass the time of day in Beeston, our social media channels are all monitored by volunteers who live, work or study in Beeston.

They're a great way to keep in touch with what's happening in your area, and to contact us for speedy responses!

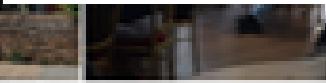
Find us on socials, and YouTube:
@beestoncivicsociety



Instagram
Facebook



Threads
YouTube



TREES REVISITED

Our summer programme of walks guided by local experts closed in October – with a bang of Tree Walk. Here's some highlights.

WRITTEN BY
MERVYN BROWN

PICTURES
EDWYN NORCUP

Starting at the north end of Broadgate Park, academic humanities geographer who specialises in cultural histories – Jo Norcup – lead forty or so members and guests on a revised route taking an alternative Autumnal look at feature trees on the park and in our town. Along the High Road, to the Church yard, heading to Manor Lodge, on Church Street. Our route encompassed more than a dozen examples of native trees, concluding with welcome refreshments at the Crown Inn.

We are immensely grateful to all our walk leaders and to the members and non-members who attended – the donations from these events have increased greatly over the last few years.







AUDIENCE...

WITH STEWART CRAVEN + MIKE SPENCER

TRENTARCH: THE RIVER PROJECT*

WEDNESDAY, 15 OCT 2025, 7pm

WITH ALAN SIMPSON + CHRIS CARTER

TRANSPORT FUTURE

WEDNESDAY, 05 NOV 2025, 7pm

WITH DR VICKY PALMER + PANEL OF GUESTS

GEN NEXT

WEDNESDAY, 03 DEC 2025, 7pm

WITH PROFESSOR PETER MURPHY

PUBLIC SERVICE

WEDNESDAY, 07 JAN 2026, 7pm

WITH SARAH ROBERTSON

GREEN GAUGE

WEDNESDAY, 04 FEB 2026, 7pm

WITH CHRYSE TINSLEY

GROWING PLACE

WEDNESDAY, 04 MAR 2026, 7pm

Venue: Royal British Legion (RBL), Hall Croft, NG9 1EL

Times: Doors from 6:30pm / event 7pm

Entry: FREE* (members) DONATION (non-members)

All welcome.

Refreshments available to purchase.

Find out more:

BEESTONCIVICSOCIETY.ORG.UK/TALKS

* + our AGM



PARK ART

One day I was in Cator Lane park with my kids and I was thinking this is a gorgeous park, I love the trees and the community orchard, but that utility box is ruining everything...

CONTENT BY
JANE HARVEY

On Sunday 28th September, bright and early, Darrell aka the artist @soapspray90 started transforming a large graffitied Severn Trent Utility Box in Cator Lane park. Utility boxes are everywhere and they aren't something you necessarily notice, even when they are covered in (in this case) offensive graffiti. It's just something that sort of seeps into your consciousness and forms part of the general feeling you have about where you live. So when Jeanie O'Shea started to transform the utility boxes in the area as part of the street art programme, I loved it because it gives you a little lift when you walk past them, showing people someone does care about our shared spaces. Years later I joined the Civic Society committee. By being around the amazing group of people that make up the committee, I realised



that I could also make changes to our shared spaces.

Inspired by Jeanie I set about trying to improve the box, this was in February 2025. What I thought would be easy, was not! Hats off to Jeanie and the thousands and thousands of volunteer hours she must have given to get Beeston Street Art to where it is today. I had to:

1. Find out who the box was owned by - a local mum from school helped me figure out it was Severn Trent.
2. Get permission from Severn Trent - another local mum with links there helped with contacting them.
3. Get permission from the council to access the land - again with help from the members of the committee, Mervyn and Mike.
4. Find an artist - through help from Jeanie and her Beeston Street Art facebook page, and thanks to Laura for the moral support
5. Develop the idea with the artist SoapSpray - who was incredibly helpful (as was Laura's liaising)

6. Get feedback on the idea from other local parents, the committee, people with knowledge of local wildlife.

7. Find funding with help from the other members of the Committee, particularly our treasurer Gary.

8. Working closely with Helen Faccio, the councillor who funded the piece, complete the necessary documentation and again with help from Gary sort out the finances.

9. Arrange the day for painting - which ended up being swapped about a bit due to weather and other unforeseen circumstances.

10. Write press releases, take photos for press etc again helped by the committee.

But it was all worth it as I sat for about 5 hours on Sunday morning and watched Darrell transform the box. I also had a great time chatting to people using the park and explaining what was going on. Overall I was proud to show my kids that with a bit of effort and help from people in the know, changes can be made to where we live.



SOAP, Cllr. Helen Faccio, and Jane with the new artworked utility box; (inset) the box beforehand.

BEE MORE CIVIC

Buzzing into Beeston: a Beeston Bee Trail soon to take flight, and here's a sneaky advanced peak at what's coming soon...

CONTENT BY
LAURA KONSEK
BROXTOWE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Join the Buzz!
Trail maps will soon be available at The Plane Tree, and other local independent businesses in Beeston Centre. Share your journey using **#beestonisbuzzing** and help spread the buzz!

Broxtowe Borough Council, in proud partnership with Beeston Civic Society and funded by UKSPF, is thrilled to launch the Beeston Bee Trail – a vibrant, interactive experience celebrating bees, biodiversity, and Beeston's unique community spirit.

Starting this autumn, the trail invites families, nature lovers, and curious explorers to find a series of native bee markers across Beeston town centre. Each stop offers a glimpse into the vital role bees play in our ecosystem, with creative touches and surprises along the way.

The Heart of the Hive

The trail's central hub is The Plane Tree, a welcoming community space and local favourite that will serve as the starting point and gathering area for trail-goers. Coaster Prizes by Coasteroo.

The first 100 participants to complete the trail will receive a set of limited edition coasters, crafted by Lee at Coasteroo, Kimberley.

Trail Highlights

- Bee-themed markers and facts
- Photo opportunities for socials
- Limited edition prize for first 100 to complete the trail
- A celebration of nature, community, and creativity.

Watch this space!



Funded by
UK Government



#BEESTONISBUZZING



BEESTON BEE TRAIL

a local trail all about bees...

Six bees hide around Beeston – will you
follow our trail and find them all?



beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/buzz

 Beeston
AND DISTRICT
Civic
Society



Broxtowe
Borough
COUNCIL

GREENING BEESTON



We, as individuals, should try to reduce our own plastic consumption as much as possible and to recycle everything we can.

CONTENT BY
JANET POLIAKOFF
GREENING-BEESTON.UK

RECYCLINGINBEESTON.WEEBLY.COM

Last year I wrote about the harm that plastics can cause to marine wildlife. Already micro-plastics have been found all over our planet, including inside our own bodies. According to a report in the *Lancet**, micro-plastics can potentially cause huge damage to human health, particularly to children. Similar harm may also be inflicted on other creatures on Earth, and yet we continue to manufacture more plastic every year.

Recent UN talks aimed at a global plastics treaty ended in stalemate, because oil-producing countries wanted to keep the market for the plastics made from their oil. Scientists are working to find ways to make plastics from natural materials that will be biodegradable, as in the bottle illustrated.

Maybe you have a shop nearby that allows you to refill your own plastic container with, for example, detergents? If you buy larger containers, there will be more of the product for a given amount of plastic. In the case of soap, you can avoid plastic altogether by buying soap in bars rather than the liquid form.

*The Lancet Countdown on health and plastics
Landrigan, Philip J et al.
The Lancet, Volume 406, Issue 10507, 1044 - 1062

ECOTRAIL-NG9

Would you like to save energy and reduce your running costs? Of course you would...

CONTENT BY
SUE SPENCER

Perhaps we can help. This autumn, Greening Beeston, a local group of energy-conscious volunteers, is launching **EcoTrail-NG9**, a website and self-guided tour in the NG9 area featuring homes whose owners have made energy saving changes - from low-cost simple actions such as fitting Thermostatic Valves to radiators, to more extensive projects such as the installation of Photovoltaic Solar Panels and Heat Exchangers.

A QR code at each property takes the visitor directly to that property's page on the **EcoTrail-NG9** website where they can see the energy saving actions the owners have undertaken. Most importantly, they can also read in the owners' own words about the benefits gained as well as any problems encountered along the way.

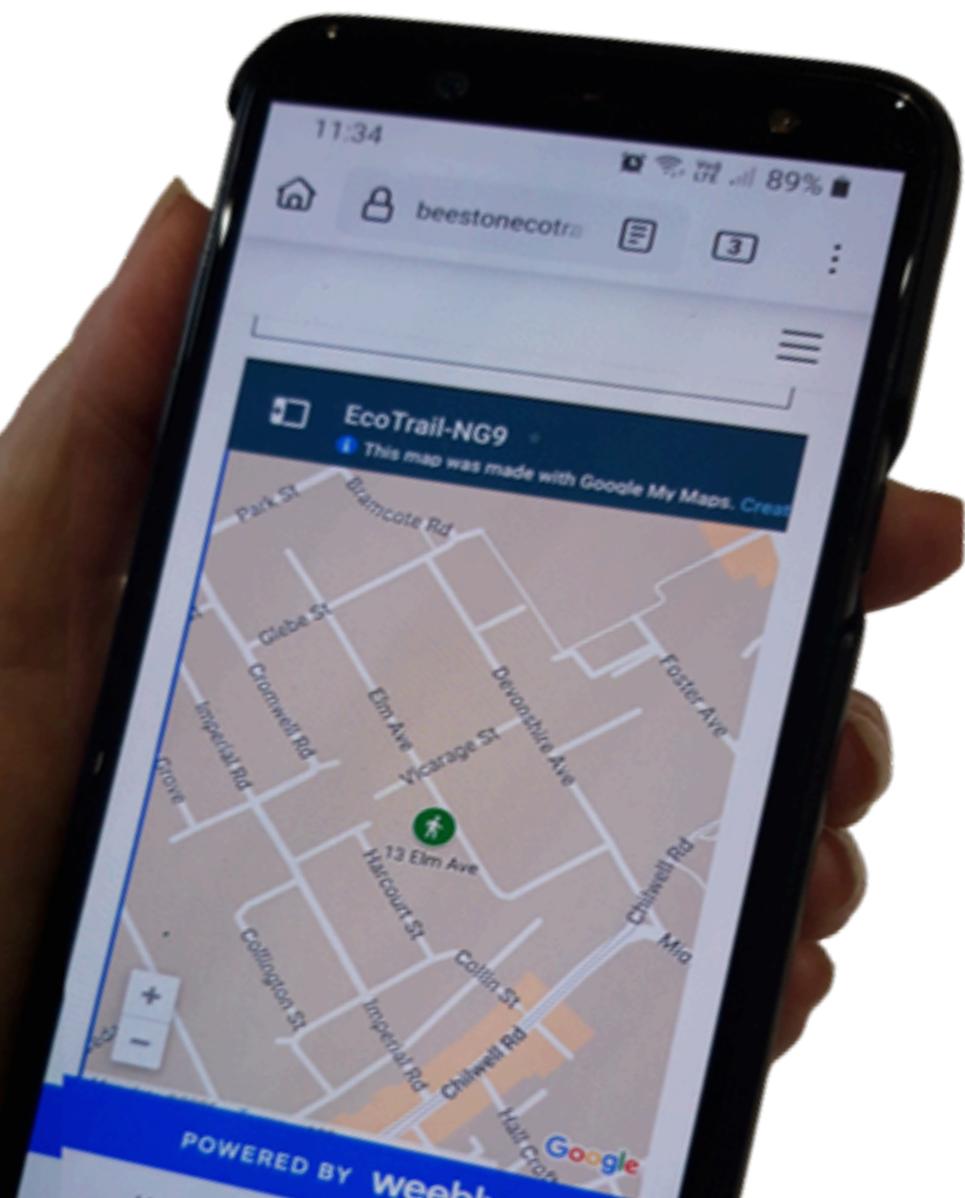
We hope that by seeing a property that 'looks like yours', you will be inspired to make changes to your own home. We are not energy saving experts so there is a page with links to independent expert advice from Nottingham Energy Partnership, HeatHub, Groundwork and others.

If you've undertaken energy saving projects in your own home and would like

to be part of **EcoTrail-NG9** please contact us via the website's application form. Or, if you're thinking about making energy saving changes and would like some inspiration, take the tour or check out the website from the comfort of your sofa.

At Greening Beeston, we believe our town can play a part in promoting sustainability. So, we encourage you to help make **EcoTrail-NG9** a success that other communities will want to copy!

ecotrail-ng9.uk
greeninginbeeston.weebly.com



GROWING-ON TREES

A reminder to all tree lovers: there is something very simple that we can all do this season that will bring you joy and in a small way help fight the climate crisis.

As you walk anywhere in this season you will see trees full of berries or nuts or wings or cones. Just collect a few of these from healthy trees that you find attractive. Find a plant pot, fill three quarters full with earth and sprinkle in your tree seeds. Top the pot up with earth, water it well and put it in a shady place. All that remains is to check now and then to make sure that the earth in the pot is damp and pull out any obvious weeds that grow.

There is no guarantee unfortunately that the seeds will germinate or that mice or squirrels won't forage your carefully planted seeds but you could well be rewarded in Spring with a few baby trees. Tree growing is so satisfying and so very simple. You can't eat them but they really give you a warm feeling inside as you watch them come up. You can recognise first the immediately slightly woody stem, see the first, often unidentifiable two leaves form. See the next two leaves unfurl into a recognisable tree species.

[cont.]



Once they are big enough to handle you can transfer them into their own pot so they have room for their roots to spread. The next winter you will anxiously watch their leaves fall leaving a forlorn, dead looking stick. You will wonder if they will survive the winter. And the next spring when your stick produces first buds, then leaves, the happiness that brings always surprises you. And if you can nurture these lovely saplings to a height of 30 cm or more, you can plant them out in a permanent place with Canopy 2050.



CONTACT US

Here's how you can get in touch with the right person or team for the job.

Please **bear in mind that we're all volunteers** – we always respond as soon as we're able to!

To contact a member of the committee personally use
[their first name]
@beestoncivicsociety.org.uk

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hello@beestoncivicsociety.org.uk

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chair@beestoncivicsociety.org.uk

Secretary: Mervyn Brown
secretary@beestoncivicsociety.org.uk

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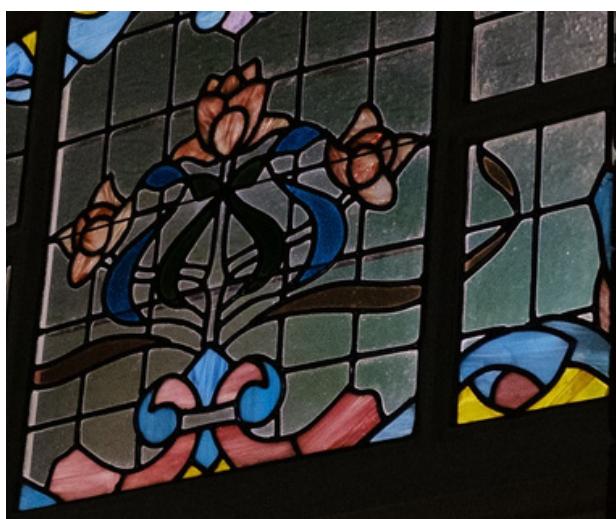
Beeston Street Art / Light Night:
beestonstreetart@gmail.com

Design Awards:
designawards@beestoncivicsociety.org.uk

UP CLOSE

Can you recognise these local places from their nighttime detail?

CONTENT BY
JANE HARVEY



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Editorial deadline for next issue 29 January 2026
Email anything to include: designer@beestoncivicsociety.org.uk