

Southampton National Park City & Urban Wild 2026



What is a National Park City?

“A large urban area that is managed and semi-protected through both formal and informal means to enhance the natural capital of its living landscape.

A defining feature is the widespread and significant commitment of residents, visitors and decision-makers to allow natural processes to provide a foundation for a better quality of life”



What if...?

- Housing developments incorporated nature into the fundamental design?
- Urban design considered the needs of hedgehogs, bees and butterflies?
- It was easier to influence decisions about public spaces?
- There was equal access to nature, which created a sense of belonging?
- Local food sovereignty was a serious priority for local authorities, Universities and businesses?



Why do we want National Park City status?

- Link between New Forest and South Downs
- Tourist destination/desirable place to live and work
- Health and wellbeing
- Combat biodiversity loss
- Living our best lives
- Community cohesion



www.southamptonnpc.com/sign-the-charter

How do we get it?



- Widespread consultation – imagine the National Park City
- Engage community groups, faith groups, business community, decision-makers
- Implement the vision – trying ideas from all stakeholders
- Submit portfolio to the National Park City Foundation

www.nationalparkcity.org/the-journey-book/

Current Status

- 'Nominated' National Park City - Step before submitting portfolio
- London, Adelaide, Chattanooga, Breda - established National Park Cities
- Glasgow, Cardiff, Belfast, Rotterdam - fellow Nominated National Park Cities.
- Gathering portfolio evidence over next six - 12 months
- Originally aiming to submit by Sept 2026 but now revising this to be longer term.



Current Projects



Current Projects

Young Placemakers Scheme (18-25 year olds)

Itchen Biodiversity

Cycling and Walking Trips to New Forest

Urban Wild



Urban Wild 2026 - How to Get Involved?



Art Designs/Competitions

Children have been contributing amazing art to add to our event arrows and signs for Urban Wild.

Two prompts:

- Draw your favourite green or wild space
- Draw some Southampton wildlife



www.inaturalist.org/projects/wildlife-of-southampton-common

Other Uses for Submitted Art

- Any education groups in St Denys - looking to reach out to people in run up to 23rd February and St Denys Festival
- Encouraging kids to put themed drawings in their windows - theme is 'Pirates' but can use any river imagery!
- Looking at creating a newspaper with any creative artwork generated over the week.



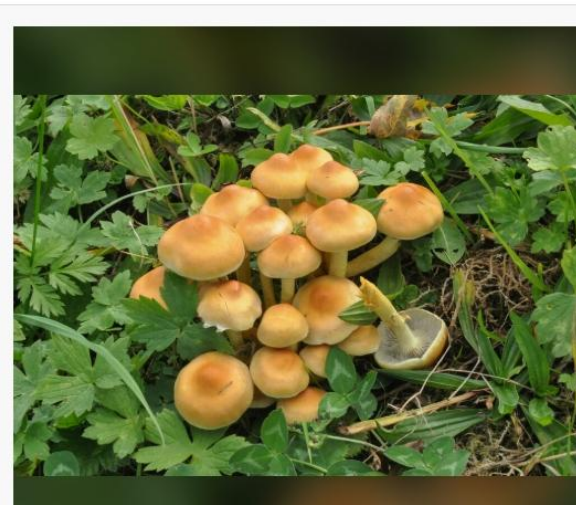
Celebration Proposals for NPC Status

- Submission from older students, particularly art and design dept. of colleges
- Creative submissions using fungi typically found on The Common
- Incorporating into a city trail - hopefully with support of Go! Southampton
- Needing to request this fairly early - this side of the school year. Advice is very welcomed!

Hairy Curtain Crust (*Stereum hirsutum*)



Sulphur Tuft (*Hypholoma fasciculare*)



Questions?

 *southampton@nationalparkcity.org*

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