

Note: The piece below has been reproduced from the Summer 2022 edition of *Basildon our borough*, pages 12 – 13. The complete magazine can be accessed here: https://www.basildon.gov.uk/media/11262/Basildon-Council-Basildon-Our-Borough-Summer-2022-edition/pdf/summer_2022_magazine_ACCESSIBLE1.pdf?m=637916795068570000

A conversation with... our new Biodiversity Officer, Josh Childs

Basildon resident Josh Childs joined our team recently as the council's Biodiversity Officer. We spoke to Josh to find out a bit more about his role and the person behind it.

What sort of work do you do?

My job centres around trying to improve the biodiversity across the Basildon borough, to benefit the wildlife and residents' enjoyment of our outdoors.

I'm currently working on the 26-acre extension to Wickford Memorial Park. It's exciting because we're transforming former playing fields into a vibrant nature reserve with lots of different elements that will look really attractive and greatly benefit climate change. We've planted over 3500 trees on the site already with a community orchard being planted later this year, a new wildlife meadow, inland ponds have been installed with aquatic plants, plus we've installed a new corridor between the park and the extension so it's much more accessible.

You care about improving biodiversity – why should other people?

With biodiversity, once we've lost it, it's hard to recreate what it once was. We'd lose all our lovely green spaces; we'd lose our wildlife and pollinators and we'd lose all our food that relies on pollination. Try and do your bit, even if it's only little, we can all try to be a little more eco-conscious. You can look to buy environmentally friendly packaging, planting pollinator friendly flowers, or helping out in your local green spaces... even just taking a watering can and giving a street tree some life. In a modern world, it's a good feeling knowing that you're doing something that genuinely helps to improve our environment for future generations.