# Local charity seeks 20 businesses to help unlock vital access to Bristol & Bath's parks and green spaces

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Grassroots nature-based charity, Your Park Bristol & Bath, is appealing for 20 local businesses to get their walking boots on and help raise vital funds for the two cities' parks and green spaces.

The charity released shocking figures last month that show one-third of the local population struggle to access their local park. It launched its 12-month campaign, *Reimagining Parks*, to tackle the barriers, with an initial fundraising target of £30k by October to kickstart the work needed and much bigger ambitions by the end of the 12 months to make significant impact across the 580 or so parks and green spaces across the two cities.

It's now launched its 100km Challenge and it's hoping to raise £10k, with 20 businesses each signing up and committing to raising a minimum of £500.

> Charlee Bennett, chief executive of Your Park Bristol & Bath, said: "Our Reimagining Parks campaign is off to a great start, with lots of support from the local media and some generous donations and encouragement from our loyal supporter base. But to hit our 12-month ambition and ensure everyone in our region is able to benefit from the nature on their doorstep, we really need local businesses and organisations to get behind us.
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> "We're looking for 20 businesses to sign up to our 100km Challenge and commit to raising a minimum of £500 each. All they have to do is walk or run 100km during the month of September – or cover the distance any other creative way they choose – and it has the added benefit of encouraging their employees outdoors into their local parks and green spaces."

The charity says the majority of parks and green spaces across the two cities are not inclusively designed, which significantly impacts access to them – in particular, for Disabled people and carers, women and girls, minority ethnic groups, and people in low income areas. The three key factors preventing people from having the confidence or ability to get out into their local parks are physical accessibility, personal safety and mental wellbeing.

Your Park's *Reimagining Parks* campaign has set a huge ambition for everyone in Bristol and Bath to have a park that is accessible to them within a ten-minute reach of where they live, work or study. That means making them physically accessible for Disabled people and their carers, designed with the safety and enjoyment of women and girls in mind, and used to support people with mental health issues.

> Charlee says: "Parks are nature-rich, free to use, community assets that are good for everyone's mental and physical health, but they have historically been designed through a very narrow lens. That means there are literally hundreds of thousands of people in our two cities who feel unable to make the most of their local green spaces.
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> "It's actually not difficult to make parks more accessible – it involves simple measures like creating wheelchair-friendly access, having accessible toilets, clear sight lines for safety, and introducing inclusive activities such as sensory walks and wellbeing activities. Unfortunately, many of these measures are not possible within the shrinking budgets that local authorities have available to them.
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> "Our campaign is not just changing landscapes, it's fostering inclusivity, safety and wellbeing. It's a huge campaign for a small charity like ours to take on, but through our work with local communities over the last five years, we are absolutely clear on what needs to be done and we are determined to start delivering the changes now."

Its initial plan is to create one exemplar park in Bristol (Hartcliffe Millennium Green) and one in Bath (Brickfields Park) to show what a fully accessible and safe park looks like. It also wants to expand its *Roots to Wellbeing*
GP-referral green social prescribing programme that provides weekly sessions in local parks for people with mental health issues to reach 300 more people.

For more information about the Reimagining Parks campaign, please go to https://yourpark.org.uk/reimagining-parks.

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