



**GiGL**

Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC  
the capital's environmental records centre

# DiscoverLondon User Guide



**Discover London**



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# 1. About DiscoverLondon

Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC (GiGL) is the capital's Local Environmental Records Centre – we mobilise, curate and share data that underpin our knowledge of London's natural environment.

DiscoverLondon (DL) is GiGL's online public data portal where you can investigate dynamic maps of our green city. It's been designed to help the general public find and explore parks and publicly accessible wildlife sites, to showcase featured London projects and to support recorders with vice county and base mapping.

DL can be accessed [here](#). In using the data portal you agree to the GiGL website's general [Terms of Use](#). DL was built using ESRI ArcOnline App Experience Builder.

This mapping guide provides information on how to use DL, as well as detailed descriptions of each layer with associated copyright and source information.



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## 2. How to navigate

### Home page

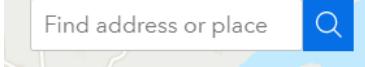


The home page allows you to navigate to any of the map pages within DL. Click on the map icons to start exploring.

### Map pages

There are a number of map pages in the DL portal that allow you to explore the nature in the capital. For a full description of each map, please go to [3. Layers](#) within this guide.

The information below will help you navigate the DL portal.

 <b>Search</b>	Type in the search bar located in the top right of the map (or top left for Spaces to Visit and Wildlife Sites) to search for addresses or places within London. For Spaces to Visit and Wildlife Sites, you can also search for names of sites. To refine your search, you can click on the drop down arrow on these map pages to display the search options.
 <b>Menu</b>	Click on this icon in the top right of any of the map pages to open the menu. You can navigate to any page on the portal by click on the titles, including the home page. You can click on the Menu icon again to close it
 <b>Legend</b>	Click on this icon in the top right of any of the map pages to open the Legend. This will tell you what information is on the map and what the colours and icons represent. Click on



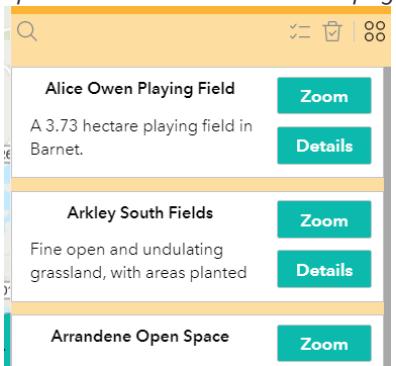
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	<p>the Legend icon again to close it.</p>								
	<p><b>Information windows</b></p>								
<p><i>Rivers and Waterbodies, Wildlife Crime, London's Landscape and Recording Support map pages</i></p>	<p>When opening the map a window at the bottom of the page (on desktop) will automatically be expanded. This tells you a little bit about what you're seeing on the map and where to find more information. To close or open this window, click on the blue arrow.</p>								
<p><b>Site lists</b></p> <p><i>Spaces to visit and Wildlife Sites pages only</i></p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Site Name</th> <th>Action Buttons</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Alice Owen Playing Field</td> <td>Zoom, Details</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Arkley South Fields</td> <td>Zoom, Details</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Arrandene Open Space</td> <td>Zoom</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Site Name	Action Buttons	Alice Owen Playing Field	Zoom, Details	Arkley South Fields	Zoom, Details	Arrandene Open Space	Zoom	<p>When opening the map a window to the left of the page (on desktop) will automatically be expanded. This tells you a little bit about what you're seeing on the map and where to find more information. It also includes a list of all sites in London.</p> <p>Click on the 'Zoom' button to zoom to the selected site on the map. Click on the 'Details' button to follow a link to more information on the site, hosted on the GiGL website.</p> <p>Click on the magnifying glass in the top left to open the search bar. When this is open, you can search the list by the site name, or type in a borough to see all sites within that borough. Click on the black arrow pointing left to close the search bar. To close or open the window, click on the blue arrow.</p>
Site Name	Action Buttons								
Alice Owen Playing Field	Zoom, Details								
Arkley South Fields	Zoom, Details								
Arrandene Open Space	Zoom								

## Pop-ups

On all the map pages, you can click on the map layers to open up a pop-up window with more information. More information on each layer is given in [3. Layers](#).



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### 3. Layers

#### Base map: Esri's World Topographic Map



**Description:** This vector tile layer provides a detailed basemap for the world, symbolized with a classic Esri topographic map style. This layer includes highways, major roads, minor roads, railways, water features, cities, parks, landmarks, building footprints, and administrative boundaries, designed for use with shaded relief for added context.

**Sources:** Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. For details on data sources contributed by the GIS community ,view the map of [Community Maps Basemap Contributors](#).

**Terms of use:** This work is licensed under the [Esri Master License Agreement](#). Alignment of boundaries is a presentation of the feature provided by data vendors and does not imply endorsement by Esri or any governing authority.



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## Spaces to Visit



**Description and sources:** Spaces to Visit shows publically accessible open space sites in Greater London. Click on any site to open a pop-up with more information, including a link to the full site description hosted on the GiGL website.

This is a sub-set of sites from GiGL's [Open Space database](#). GiGL manages a database of information about London's more than 12 thousand open spaces, their features and facilities. The data are updated when London boroughs, site managers, members of the public or other stakeholders inform GiGL of changes or during verification checks carried out by GiGL using other data sources. Data are updated on an on-going basis as information becomes available.

The sites selected for inclusion in the Publicly Accessible Open Space map on Discover-London are those open spaces that have public access, based on information collated by GiGL, and are likely to have local interest in the form of Friends Of group or neighbourhood group. This excludes sites where there is no access to the public and certain primary uses. It includes primary use categories: amenity green space, common, community garden, Country Park, formal garden, park, public woodland, recreation ground and village green, plus additional sites added on a case-by-case basis.

**Copyright and terms of use:** The open space database includes a collated data which have been compiled from a range of sources. Data providers retain copyright on their data and GiGL have the copyright of the overall database. Some features are derived from Ordnance Survey data.

Indicative mapping of the sites is presented on Discover-London for public information only for personal use, not for commercial use. Please refer to the terms of use for this website for more information <https://www.gigl.org.uk/terms-of-use/> and visit our Access Our Data pages <https://www.gigl.org.uk/access-our-data/> on the GiGL website if you need to access data in a different format.



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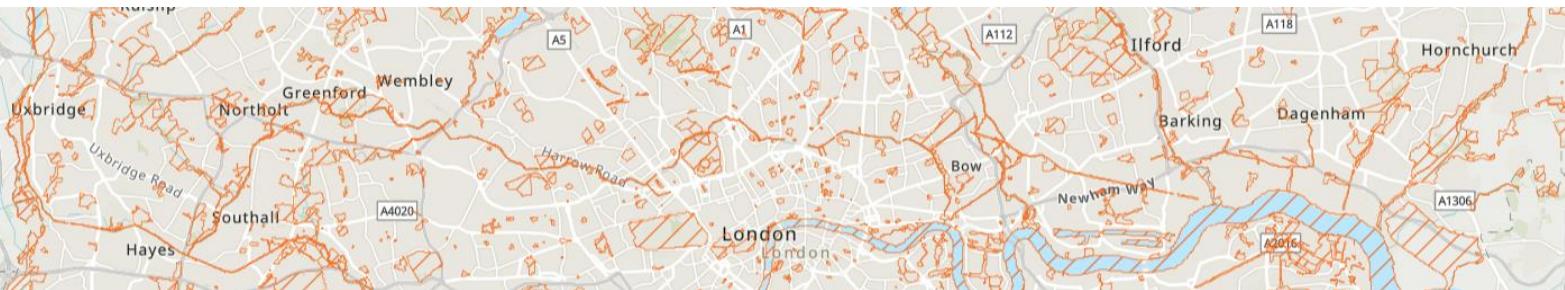


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## Wildlife Sites



**Description and sources:** Selected sites from GiGL's [Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation \(SINC\)](#) database. Click on any site to open a pop-up with more information, including a link to the full site description hosted on the GiGL website.

London's equivalent of Local wildlife sites, these sites are recognised for the important habitats they support. SINCs are designated by a panel of local ecological professionals. This is a non-statutory designation, although SINCs are still afforded a high level of protection within the planning system. Development that negatively impacts on a SINC will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where mitigation can be proven from the beginning. There are three tiers of sites: Metropolitan, Borough (Grade 1 and 2) and Local.

The sites selected for inclusion in the Publicly Accessible Wildlife Sites map on Discover-London are those SINC sites that have public access, based on information provided by Local Planning Authorities. This excludes SINC sites where there is no access to the public, such as railway linesides.

**Copyright and terms of use:** The SINC dataset is a collated dataset which has been compiled from a range of sources. Data providers retain copyright on their data and GiGL have the copyright of the overall dataset. Some features are derived from Ordnance Survey data.

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## London's Landscapes



London's Landscapes shows different landscape scale classifications within London. Click on any layer to open a pop-up with more information.



### RSPB Futurescapes

These are the RSPB's UK-wide programme of landscape-scale conservation initiatives. More information, including terms of use, can be found on the RSPB website [here](#).

Click on any Futurescape on the map to view its name and a link to more information hosted on the RSPB website.



### National Character Area profiles

These divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, and cultural and economic activity. Their boundaries follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries. This dataset is available under Open Government Licence v3.0. More information can be found on the gov.com website [here](#).

Click on any profile on the map to view its name and a link to more information hosted on Gov.com.



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## LWT Living Landscapes

London's Living Landscapes initiative seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the capital's wildlife. London Wildlife Trust (LWT) wants to connect fragmented natural green and blue spaces to form vibrant landscapes and to work in partnership with London's diverse communities to enjoy and help their natural environment. More information, including terms of use, can be found on the LWT webpage [here](#). Click on any Landscape on the map to view its name and a link to more information hosted on the LWT website.



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## Rivers and Waterbodies



### Environment Agency main rivers

A layer showing all major statutory watercourses in London, as designated by the Environment Agency. More information on this dataset can be found [here](#).

Click on any river on the map to view its name.

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### Environment Agency River Catchments

A layer showing all river catchment boundaries in London. Catchments are defined as an area of land from which all surface run-off flows through a series of streams, rivers and, possibly, lakes to a particular point in the water course such as a river confluence. This data also contains areas of land which drain directly to the coastal or estuarine waters, rather than through a river water body.

Click on any catchment on the map to view its name.

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### Urban River survey

The [Urban River Survey](#) is a scientific assessment method and suite of tools that supports the work of river managers in urban environments. The survey, which is a development of



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the Environment Agency's River Habitat Survey, records information on the physical structure of 500m stretches of urban rivers and their margins.

Click on the points on the map to view survey results recorded at that location. Click on the link in 'More Information' to view the full details for this location, hosted on GiGL's website.

Indices calculated from survey data are used to assess the relative physical quality of individual surveyed stretches within the range achievable in an urban environment. The Urban River Survey does not evaluate chemical or biological quality. It does assess the quality of the physical structure of riparian and aquatic vegetation.

The Urban River Survey is the product of 10 years of research by Angela Gurnell in collaboration with Angela Boitsidis, Lucy Shuker, Geraldene Wharton, and May Lee, conducted at Queen Mary University of London, King's College London, and the University of Birmingham, and funded by the Natural Environment Research Council, Natural England, and the European Commission.

### [Thames Water for Wildlife Results](#)

Results of the [Clean Water for Wildlife Survey](#) collected as part of [The Thames Water For Wildlife project](#), which ran from 2015 to 2017. The project helped thousands of people to connect with their local freshwater environment through community involvement—increasing people's knowledge, enjoyment and appreciation of the freshwater habitats around them.

The community survey aimed to assess water quality across all types of freshwater habitats. Volunteers used quick kits to measure the levels of two widespread nutrient pollutants, nitrate and phosphate. The aim was to discover amazing 'clean' unpolluted water where wildlife can thrive and to raise awareness of the true extent of nutrient pollution affecting freshwater life today.

Click on a point on the map to view more information on each survey, including the date and overall score. The full Thames Water for Wildlife report can be found [here](#).

### [London River Restoration Projects](#)

Information on river restoration projects within Greater London, provided by the



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Environment Agency. Each point shows the approximate location of river restoration opportunity projects, based on information provided by The Catchment Partnerships in London (CPiL).

Click on a point on the map to view more information for each project, including its status and catchment location. Click on the link in 'More Information' to view the full project details hosted on GiGL's website.



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## Recording Support



### Recording Area

-  LNHS Inner London Recording Area
-  LHNS Recording Area

### London Natural History Society (LNHS)

The [LNHS](#) is a local natural history society within the UK concerned with recording the wildlife of London. The LNHS helps local recorders to find, identify and record a wide variety of species across the LNHS

recording area, which covers a 20-mile (32km) radius from St. Paul's Cathedral in central London.

The boundaries on the map represent the inner and overall recording areas in London. Click on either area on the map to view its name and display a link where more information can be found.

The society aims include to foster the appreciation and study of London's wildlife and natural environment and assisting in the conservation of wildlife in the London area by helping to record London's wildlife. Society activities include running both indoor and outdoor events throughout the year and producing a number of publications, including the annual London Naturalist and London Bird Report. The LNHS library is housed at the Natural History Museum, London.



### London Boundaries

The boundaries of London's boroughs, which are the local government areas within Greater London. Click on any borough on the map to view its name.

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### Watsonian Vice Counties



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Vice County Name

-  Berkshire
-  Buckinghamshire
-  Hertfordshire
-  Middlesex
-  North Essex
-  South Essex
-  Surrey
-  West Kent

Watsonian Vice Counties divide areas of the United Kingdom into regions for the purpose of biological recording and data gathering, originally defined by H.C. Watson in 1852. These divisions were based on historical counties of Britain with larger areas subdivided to make them more uniform. Each has been given a name and number for easy identification.

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## Wildlife Crime



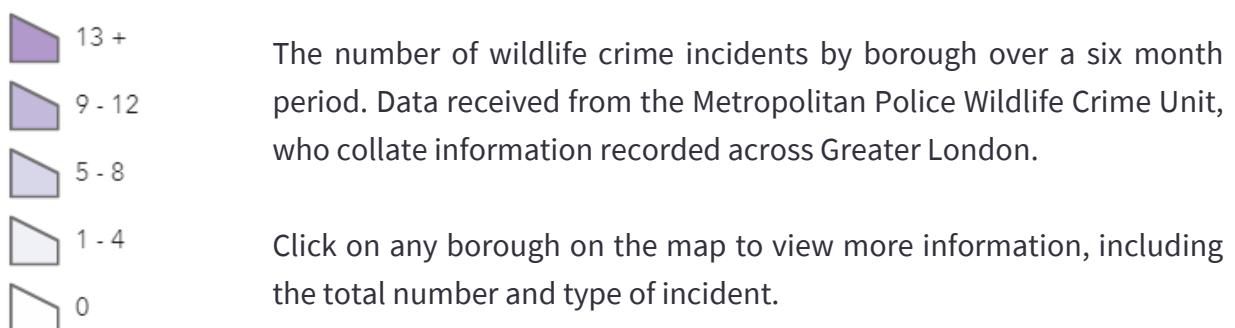
### ● Wildlife Crime Intelligence by month

Information provided by the Metropolitan Police Wildlife Crime Unit, who collate records across Greater London broken down by ward. Each point represents a different incident that occurred within a month to act as a summary of different crime types within wards. Click on the points to view information on the incident, including the crime type. Classifications are provided by the Metropolitan Police.

If you have you witnessed wildlife crime in London you can contact the Metropolitan Wildlife Crime Unit on 020 7230 8898 or [wildlife@met.police.uk](mailto:wildlife@met.police.uk). More information can be found <https://www.worldanimalprotection.org.uk/>.

Total no. incidents

### Wildlife Crime 6 Month Overview



If you have you witnessed wildlife crime in London you can contact the Metropolitan Wildlife Crime Unit on 020 7230 8898 or [wildlife@met.police.uk](mailto:wildlife@met.police.uk). More information can be found <https://www.worldanimalprotection.org.uk/>.

### ★ Wildlife Crime Case Studies



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Case studies of wildlife crime incidents. Data received from the Metropolitan Police Wildlife Crime Unit, who collate information recorded across Greater London.

Click on a point on the map to view more information, including the type of incident, and a link to more information hosted on the GiGL website under 'More Information'.

If you have witnessed wildlife crime in London you can contact the Metropolitan Wildlife Crime Unit on 020 7230 8898 or [wildlife@met.police.uk](mailto:wildlife@met.police.uk). More information can be found <https://www.worldanimalprotection.org.uk/>.



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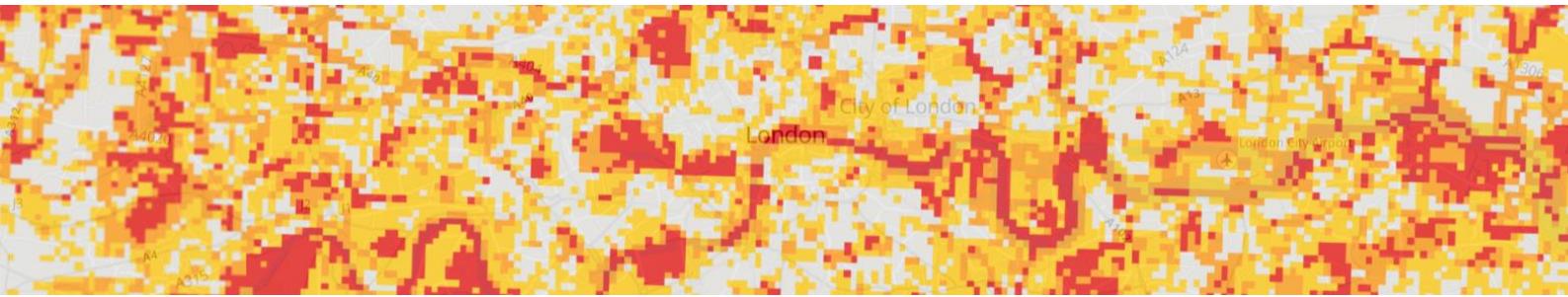


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## Biodiversity Hotspots for Planning



-  0 (no known protected species, site or habitat impact areas present)
-  1 (impact areas for one of the categories present)
-  2 (impact areas for two of the categories present)
-  3 (impact areas for all three categories present)

The Biodiversity Hotspots for Planning (BHP) dataset provides developers, homeowners and LPAs an indication of areas, where data are available, that have potential impacts on biodiversity and are likely to be relevant to local planning decisions by applying biodiversity criteria developed by GiGL, based on the original “[Planning for Biodiversity?](#)” research.

‘Hotspot’ areas indicate a detected presence of sensitive biodiversity that could potentially be affected by development. Original records can be accessed from GiGL to assist the decision-making process.

*Please note that areas without these biodiversity indicator records may still have undetected biodiversity so should also be considered for biodiversity potential on a case-by-case basis. The dataset is purely indicative and an ecological desk study must still be commissioned as evidence for planning applications.*

More information on this dataset and a downloadable open data version can be found [here](#).



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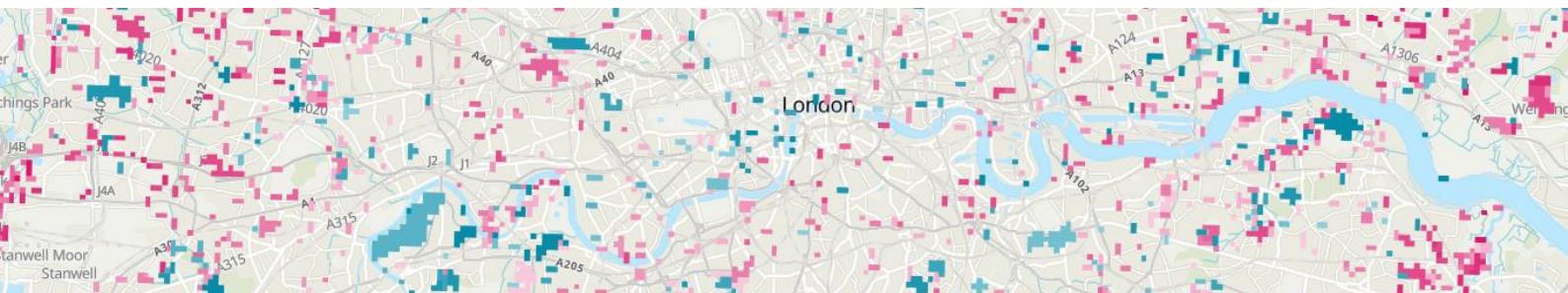


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## Woodland Opportunity



GiGL worked in association with CPRE London to map woodland opportunities in London's Green Belt. The project was hence expanded to cover all of Greater London and has highlighted key sites for woodland creation, expansion and connectivity. It accompanies research by CPRE London on woodland advocacy, with the aim that together these resources will be actively promoted to a wide range of stakeholders to catalyse action on tree planting at the identified key locations.

The **woodland opportunity** layer was generated by excluding several sensitive sites where woodland is not suitable then scoring the remaining land based on various factors. Considerations included:



- Whether the area is considered suitable for the creation of woodland based on its existing habitats.
- Whether the area is better suited for the creation of alternative priority habitat, e.g. acid grassland. These sites were scored negatively.
- Whether the area is publicly accessible and could alleviate a current deficiency in access to open space.
- Whether the area is within a flood risk zone; woodland creation could alleviate flood risk.
- The percentage of a site already under canopy cover; a high percentage suggests greater suitability for woodland creation.

The highest scoring sites are those with most potential for woodland creation.

Some land uses, such as golf courses, were deemed unsuitable for woodland habitat creation but have potential for planting **woodland features**, such as hedgerows or scattered trees. These features are important in enhancing connectivity. The sites underwent the same scoring process above and are shown in a separate woodland features layer. More can be read about GiGL's methodology [here](#).



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