

Exercise 3

Read the article about making urban areas more natural – a process known as urban rewilding – and then complete the notes.

Why we need to rewild our cities

Journalist Josh Mackenzie writes about introducing more nature into urban areas

People are becoming increasingly aware of environmental issues and the importance of the natural world. With so many of us now living in urban areas, there is a growing interest in urban rewilding. This involves getting more plants and wildlife into our towns and cities. I've been looking at ways in which this is happening in my city.

One of the strongest arguments for urban rewilding is that, in the long run, it will help fight the impact of climate change. In many cities, this has led to increased, often very extreme, rainfall. Rewilding in the form of tree planting can make a real difference as trees are able to capture and store rainwater. In my city, there's definitely been less flooding, which has been a problem in previous years.

It's probably true to say that the biggest impact of rewilding is felt on a personal level. One thing everyone notices is that cities are getting warmer. This occurs when heat from human activity is trapped by all the concrete structures found there. As a result, urban areas can be several degrees hotter than the surrounding countryside. This can cause sleepless nights and stress. Simply switching on the air conditioning is only a short-term solution, however. Ultimately, introducing more shade from trees is the way forward – something I've become aware of on my daily walks to work. Clearly, there are costs involved when making such changes. This is why rewilding is sometimes claimed to be anti-business. In fact, over time, in most workplaces, this can save companies money.

It has long been known that spending time in the countryside improves people's health. Even in cities, similar effects may be obtained just as a result of having more green spaces. These are all too rare in cities, but more of them have been created in my neighbourhood recently. From a commercial point of view, this can have a positive impact, in that workers become more productive. Rewilding a city can also have wider implications: it can make the place more attractive, which creates opportunities in the tourist industry.

People often have doubts about rewilding because they fear it involves reintroducing large animals. However, this only really applies to rural rewilding projects. That being said, rewilding might attract more wildlife, like birds and insects, to a city. And we should ignore any suggestions that it means the end of building in cities. In fact, it simply means doing as much as possible to encourage more carefully planned housing developments, which I'm delighted to say is now happening in my area.

In summary, the aim of rewilding is to find a compromise between the needs of humans and nature so that our urban areas are places where both can exist in harmony.



Question 8

Effects of urban rewilding that Josh has noticed in his city:

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