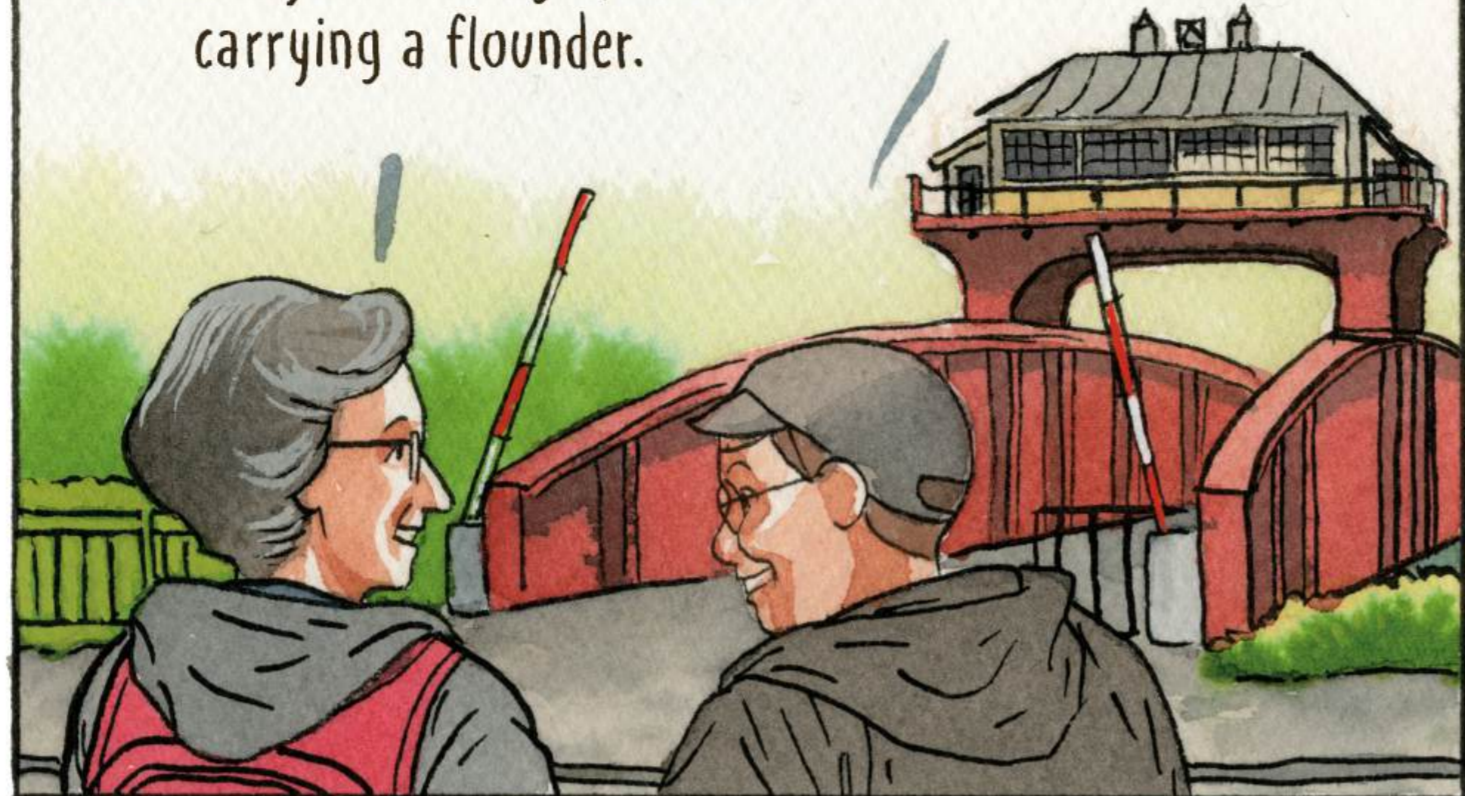


I'd like people to know and value Hull's urban wildlife more. I've been an urban naturalist for a long time. I got my first binoculars when I was 12. I started to visit my local park, watch birds and learn their songs.



The most exciting thing I've seen near here is an otter. It was slowly swimming upstream carrying a flounder.
Oh, really?



Swallows!



Have you ever wondered where they get mud for their nests? Because everything is tarmacked over. There are no puddles anymore.
Right.



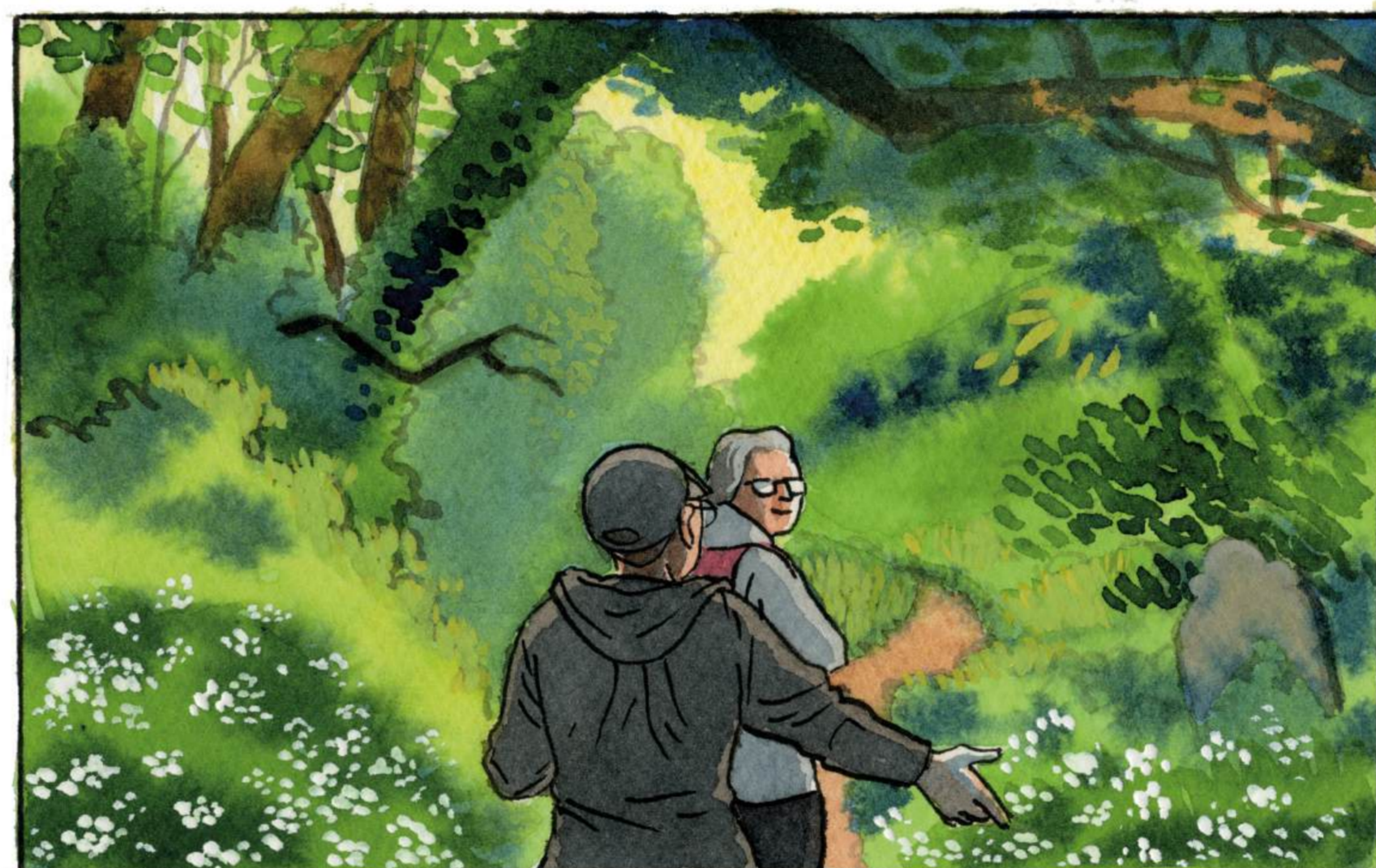
Here they get it from the river bank. But in the inner city we've lost lots of swallows because they don't have any nest material.



There used to be a village here called Sculcoates. But the growth of the city just swallowed it up. This is the village cemetery.



One volunteer is maintaining this place so that you can walk along the paths. He's about to retire and is happy to steer other volunteers to continue the work.



Here, in the winter, you get redpolls, which are not very common. It's amazing when you make a little bit of space for wildlife, it returns in unexpected ways.



There are water voles in Hull too. The population in the UK has declined massively because of the American mink.



Minks don't like coming into the cities, so water voles have remained here.



Oh look! This is called kidney vetch



It's amazing how quickly the wildlife changes. I was here two weeks ago and I didn't see any.

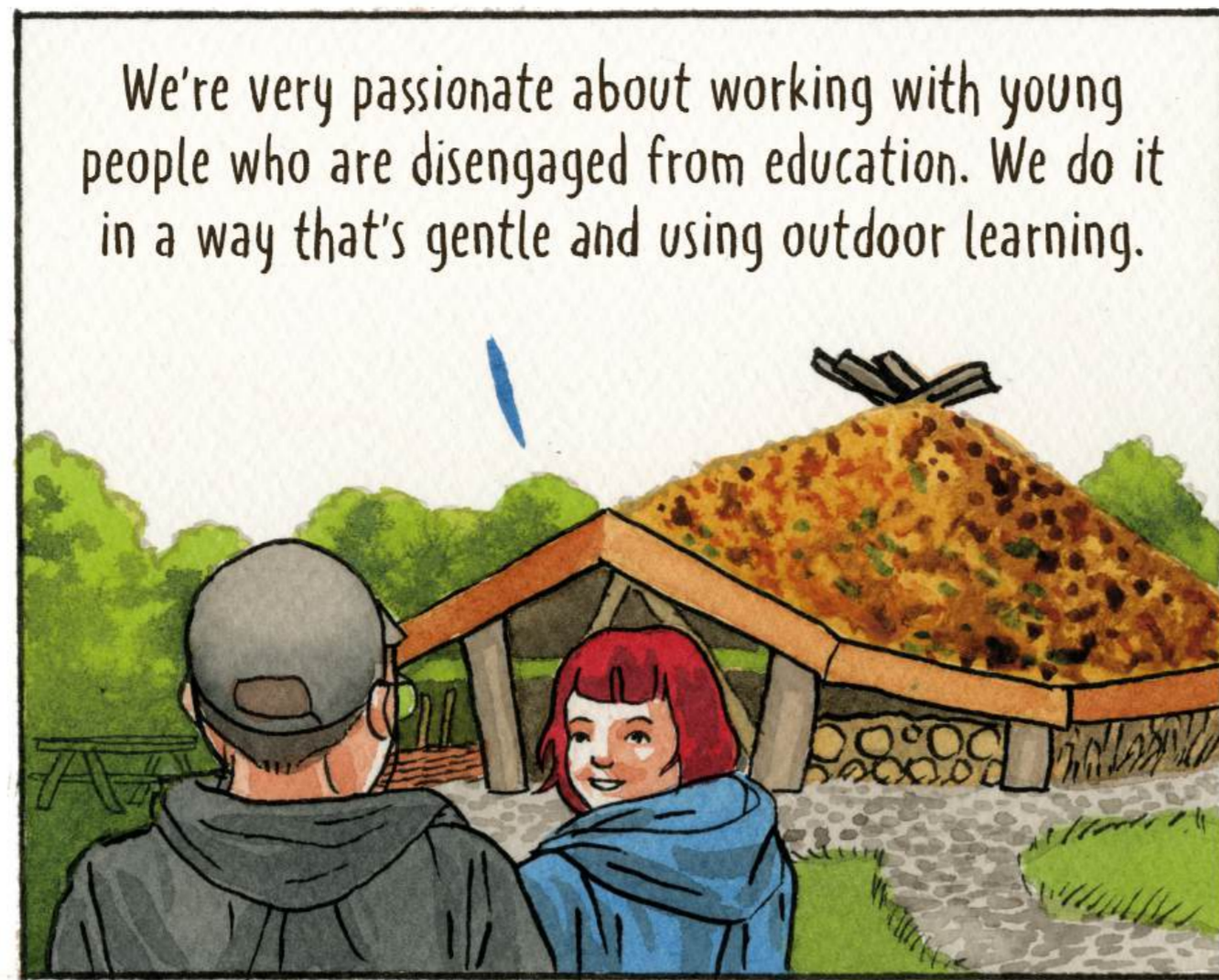


Kidney vetch likes free draining soil. So it likes brownfield sites. It has a good place to grow there. With no one disturbing it.





The project Rewilding Youth is based here at East Hull Community Farm, which is a charity. The farm is open to the general public.



We're very passionate about working with young people who are disengaged from education. We do it in a way that's gentle and using outdoor learning.



It's all about getting young people outdoors and connected with themselves through connecting with nature. Watch your head!

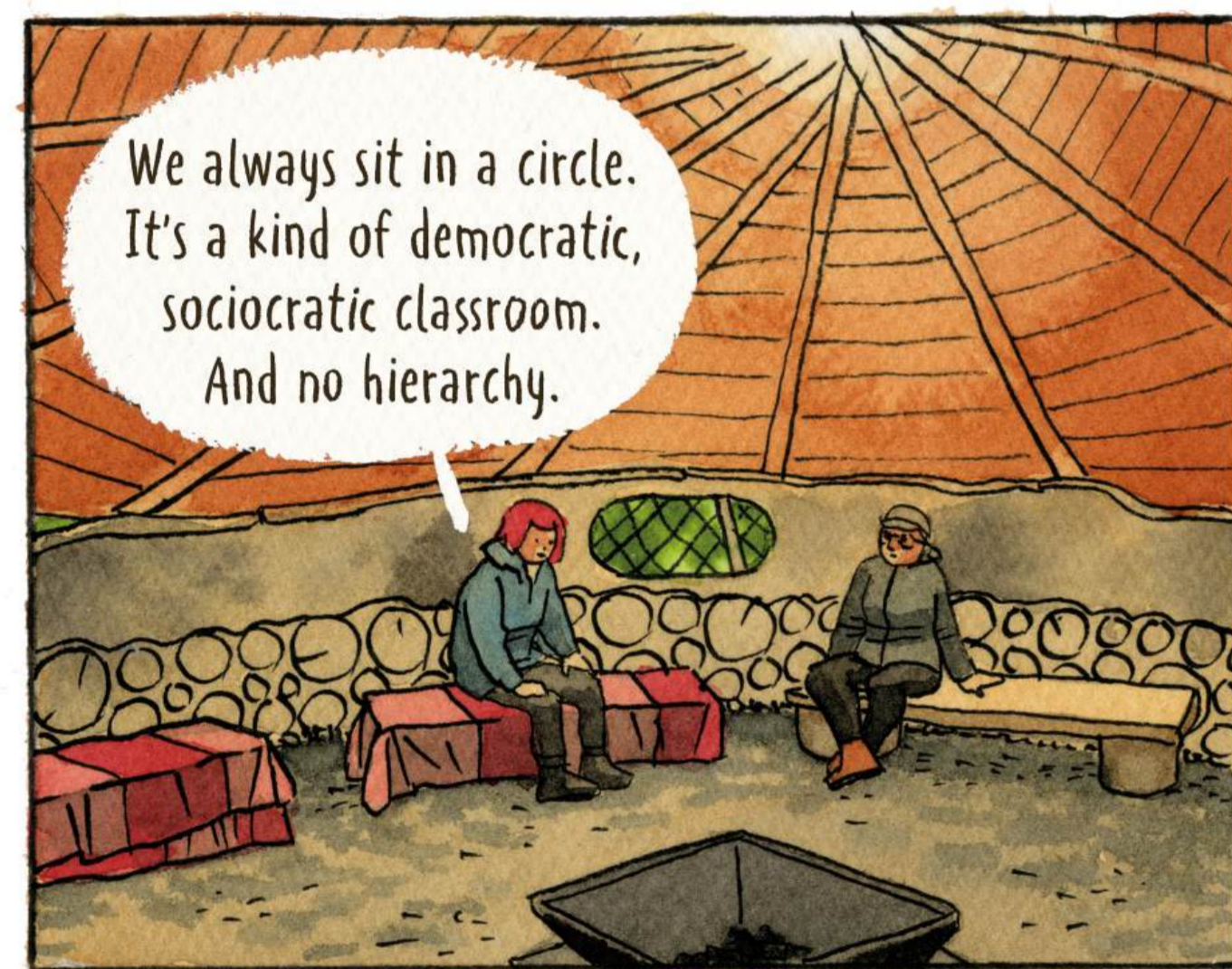


What a wonderful place!

It just feels really calm and lovely. We have fires in here, cook food and do all of our work. Drink a lot of tea.



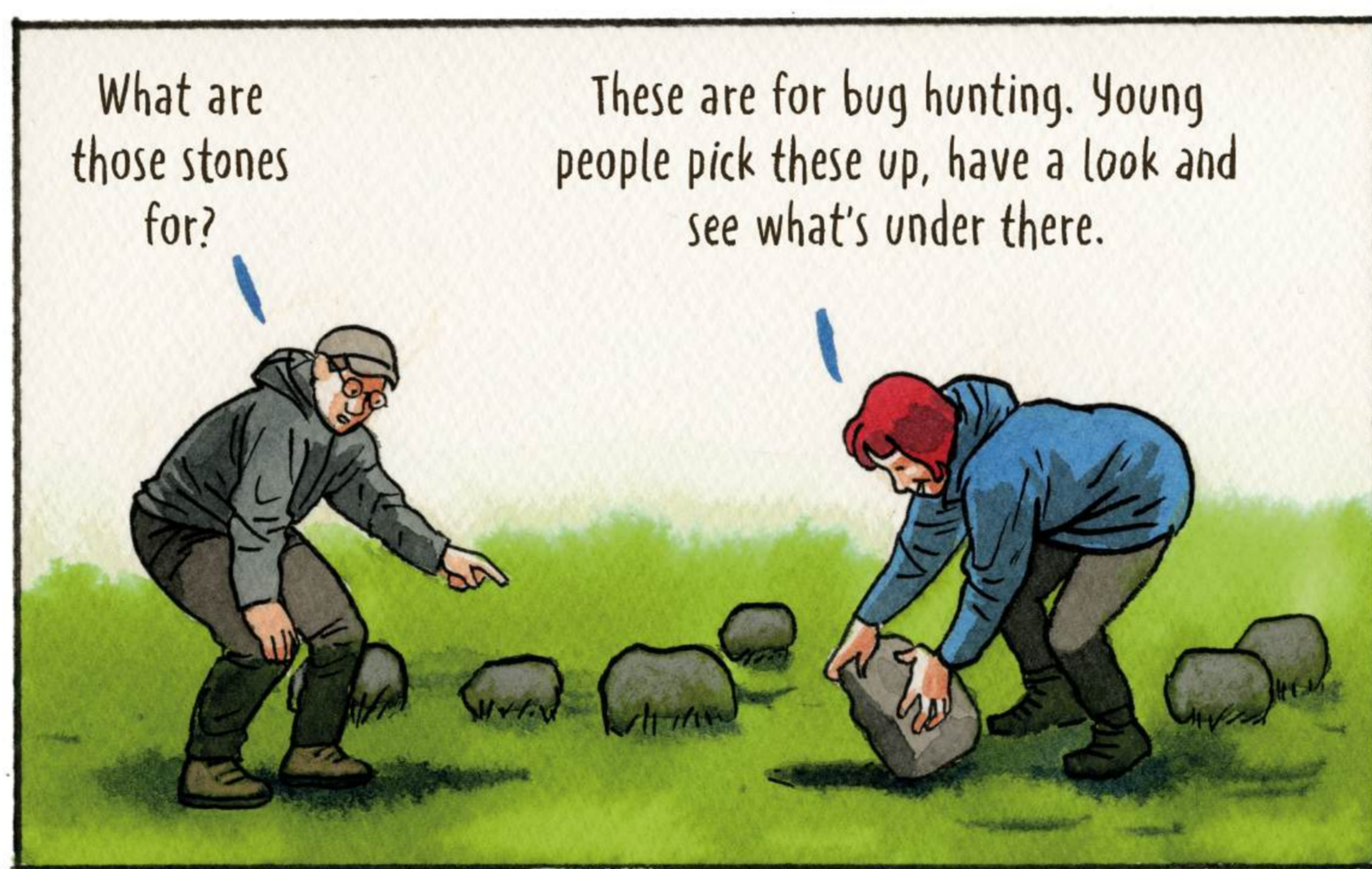
We do a lot of dad and family work, a lot of female only work. We're starting to work with young people who are identifying transgender or non-binary.



We always sit in a circle. It's a kind of democratic, sociocratic classroom. And no hierarchy.

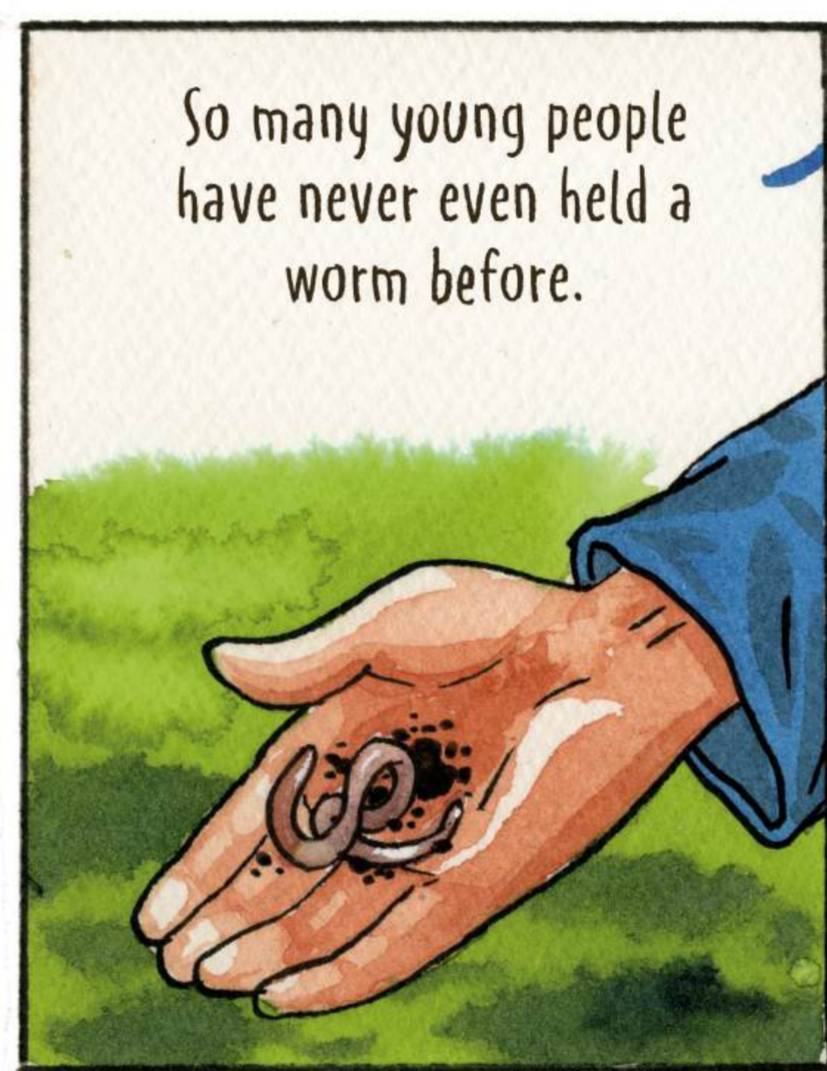


We do a lot of wild therapy, nature therapy, nature art, nature crafts, A lot of walking and earth building



What are those stones for?

These are for bug hunting. Young people pick these up, have a look and see what's under there.



So many young people have never even held a worm before.

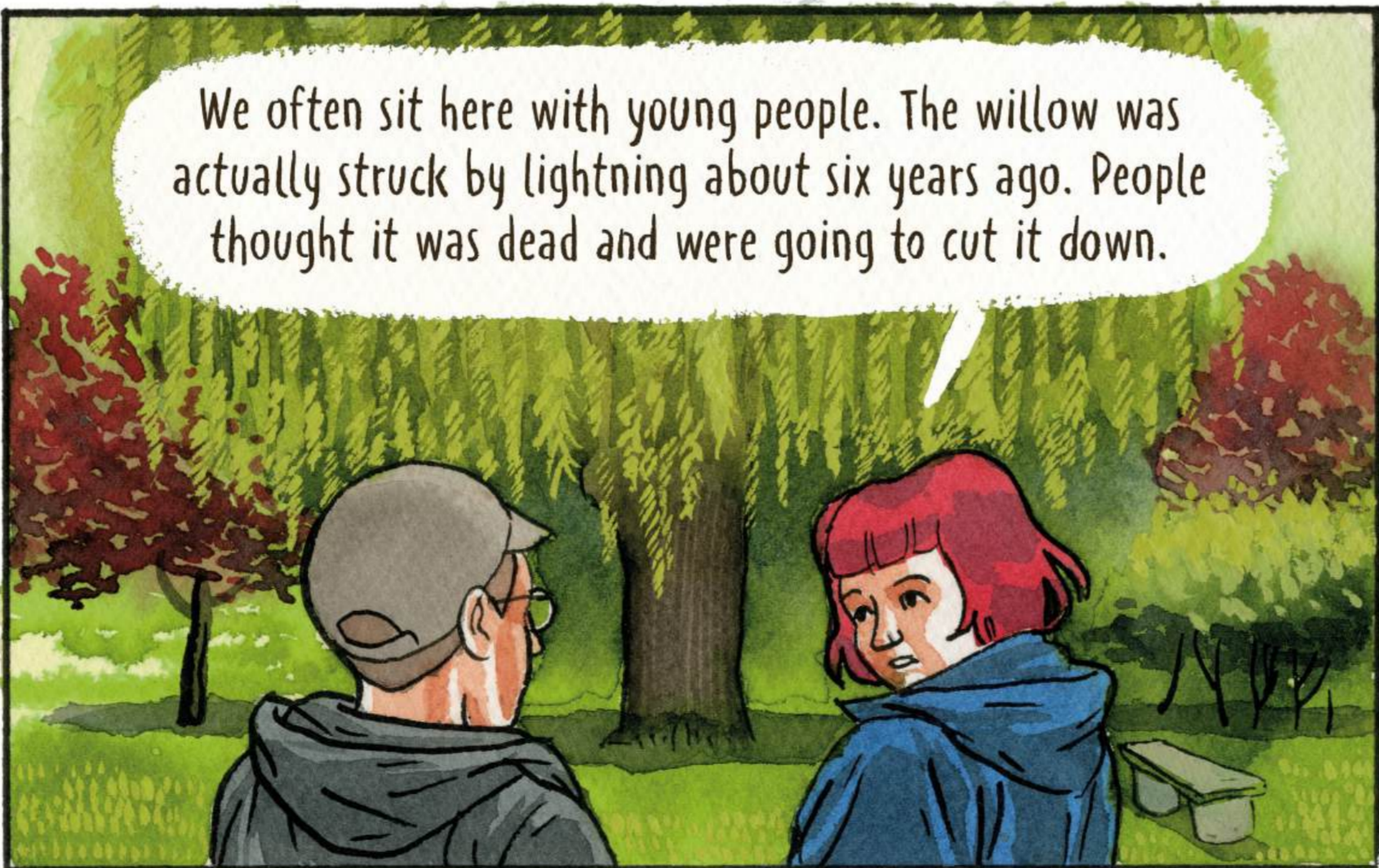


We are constantly changing and trying to respond to the needs of the people. Hull's got some really big housing estates. We run twelve week projects there.

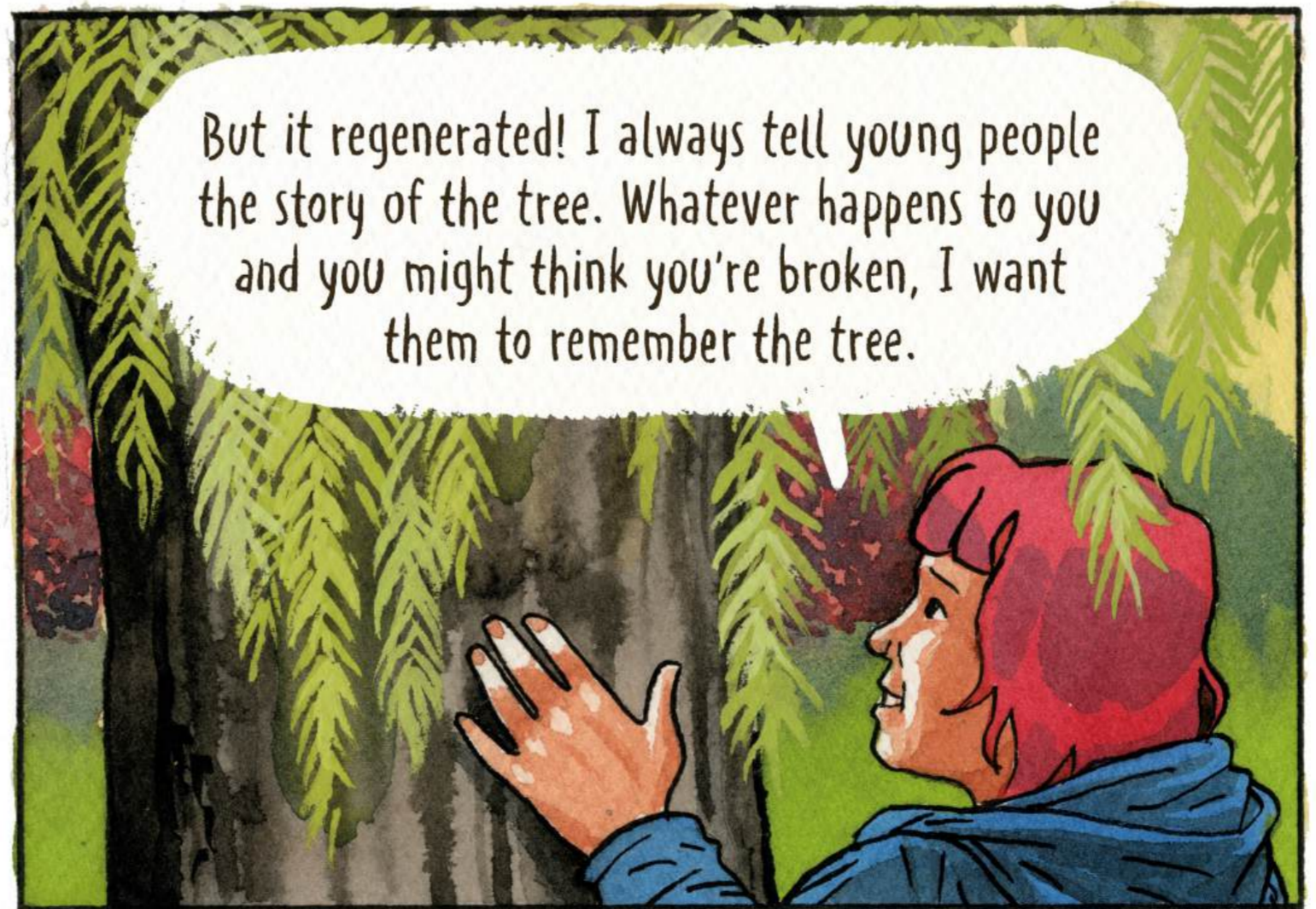
And do you use existing sites? Like Noddle Hill?



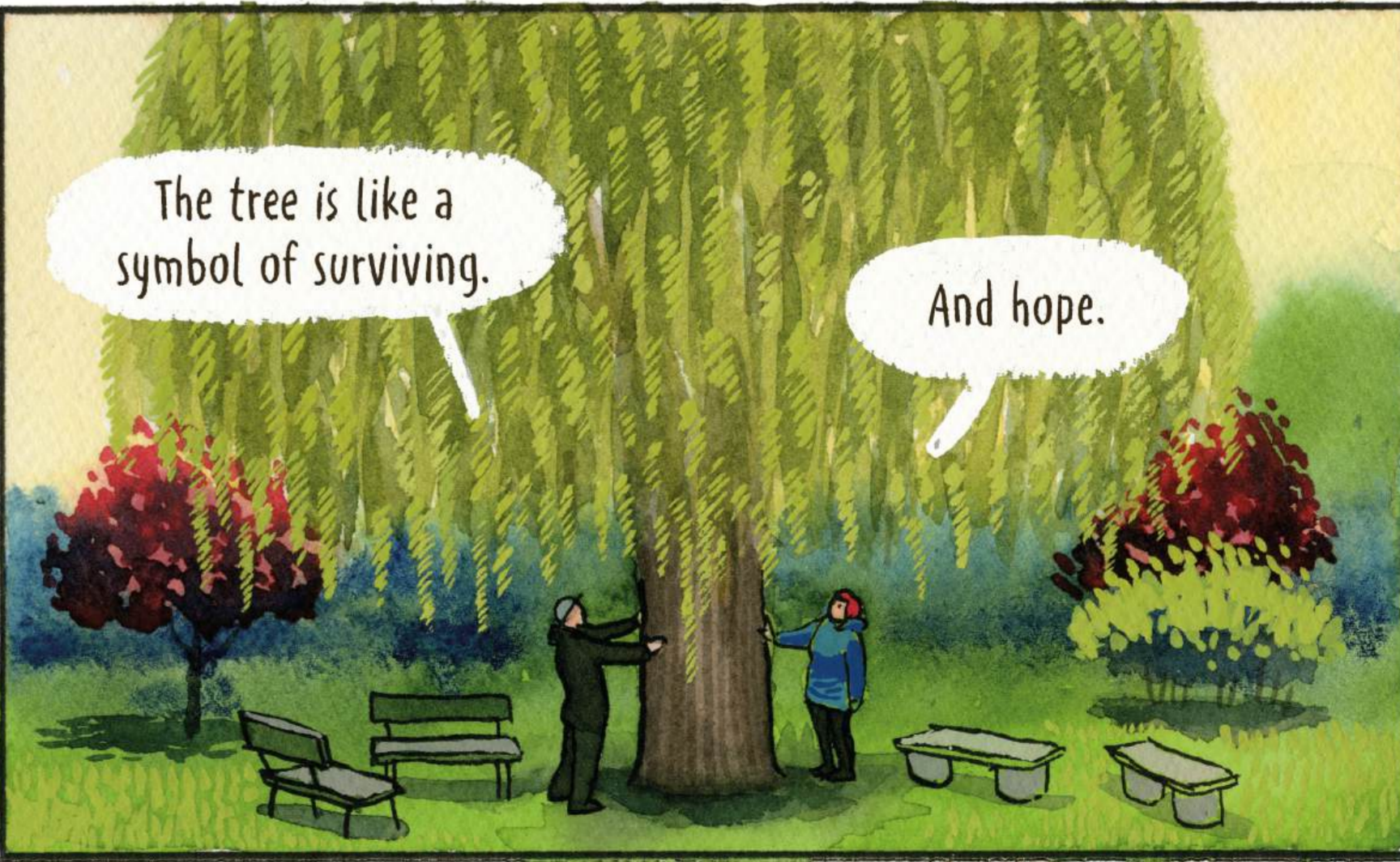
Yes. It's important to us to link young people to the spaces that are already near them, rather than putting them on a bus and taking them to areas like the Lake District, where you have to have a car and money to travel to.



We often sit here with young people. The willow was actually struck by lightning about six years ago. People thought it was dead and were going to cut it down.

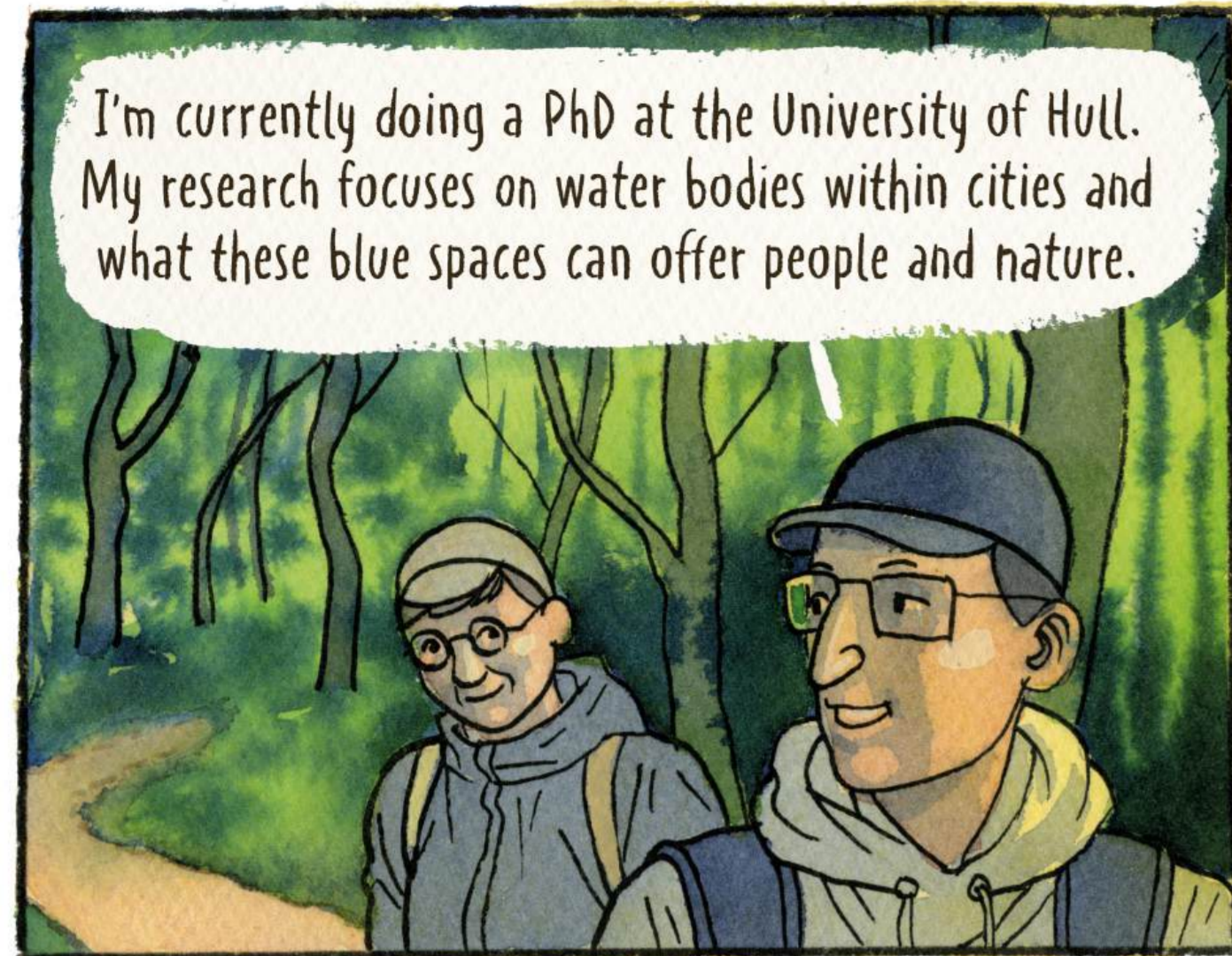


But it regenerated! I always tell young people the story of the tree. Whatever happens to you and you might think you're broken, I want them to remember the tree.



The tree is like a symbol of surviving.

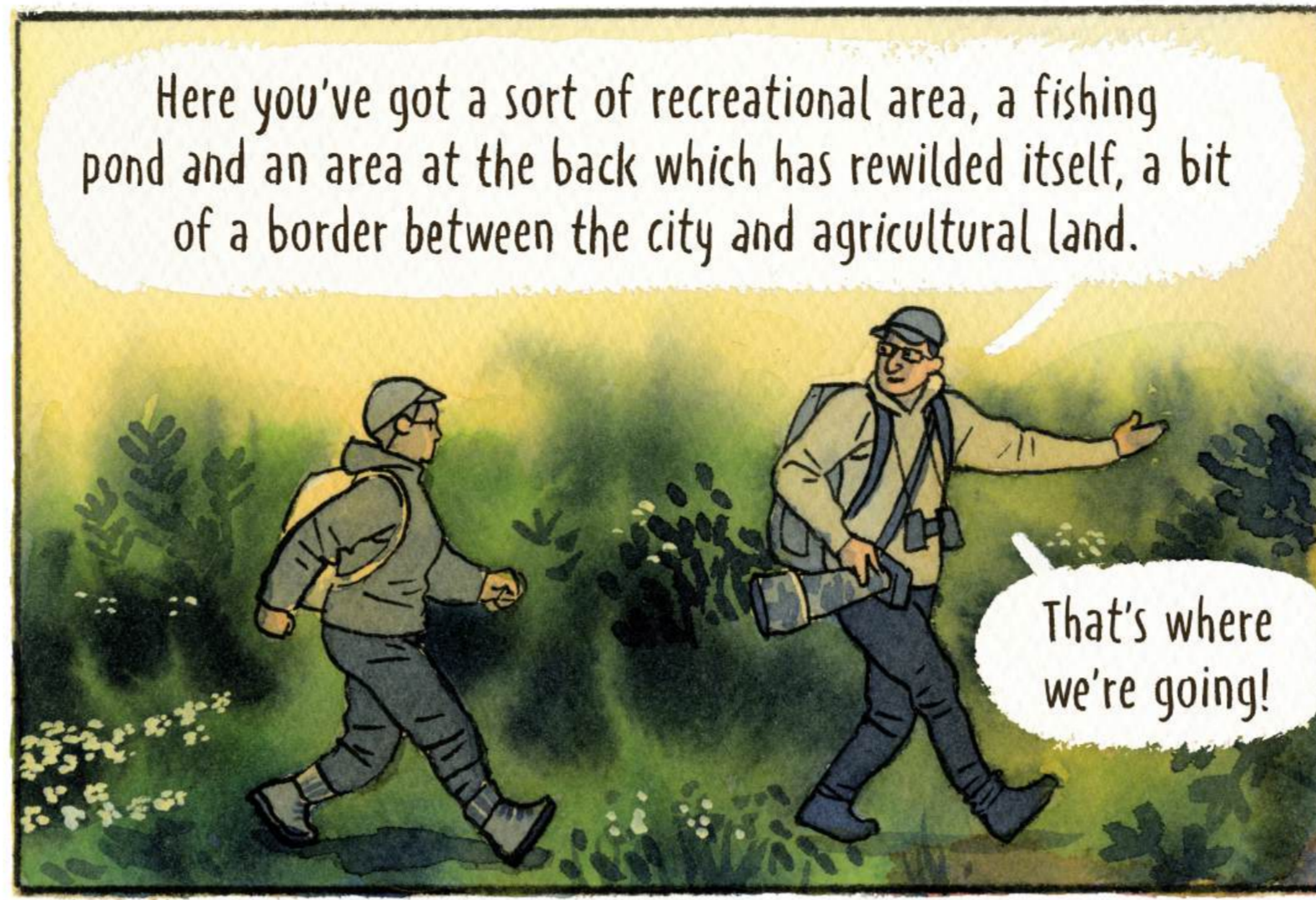
And hope.



I'm currently doing a PhD at the University of Hull. My research focuses on water bodies within cities and what these blue spaces can offer people and nature.



This is Noddle Hill. It's on the edge of Bransholme council estate which is one of the biggest council estates in Europe.



Here you've got a sort of recreational area, a fishing pond and an area at the back which has rewilded itself, a bit of a border between the city and agricultural land.

That's where we're going!



Look! Over there!



Barn owl.

Amazing!



This place is a prime example, that if you've got a high quality habitat, the animals just find it. It's almost like nature's ready to go, we just keep it pushed back.



What animals can be found here?

You've got rodents, badgers, hares, bats, stoats, weasels. And there's mink, unfortunately...



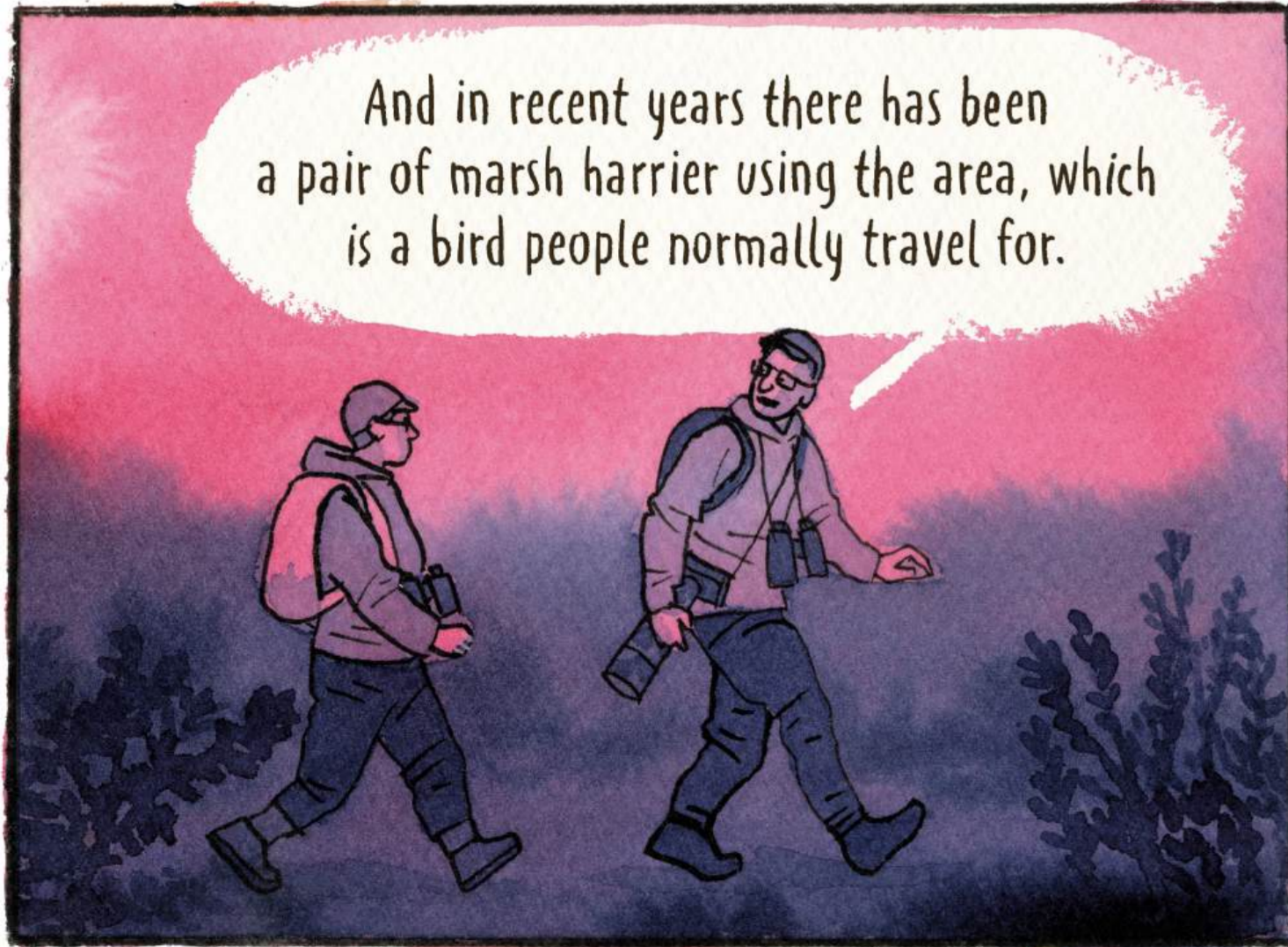
People see quite a lot of grass snakes here, which is really interesting. There are good populations of toads, frogs, and newts.



Hull's bird list is over 220 species, and this is one of the best areas for bird watching. It is exceptional for warblers in the summer. There are also other species less commonly seen in the city, yellowhammers, tree sparrows and linnet.



And then we have birds of prey: kestrels, buzzards, barn owls, short-eared owl, hen harriers, sparrowhawks... In Hull the density of sparrowhawks in the urban area is unbelievable.



And in recent years there has been a pair of marsh harrier using the area, which is a bird people normally travel for.



But most of the birds people are travelling to see, are already here. On our doorstep.

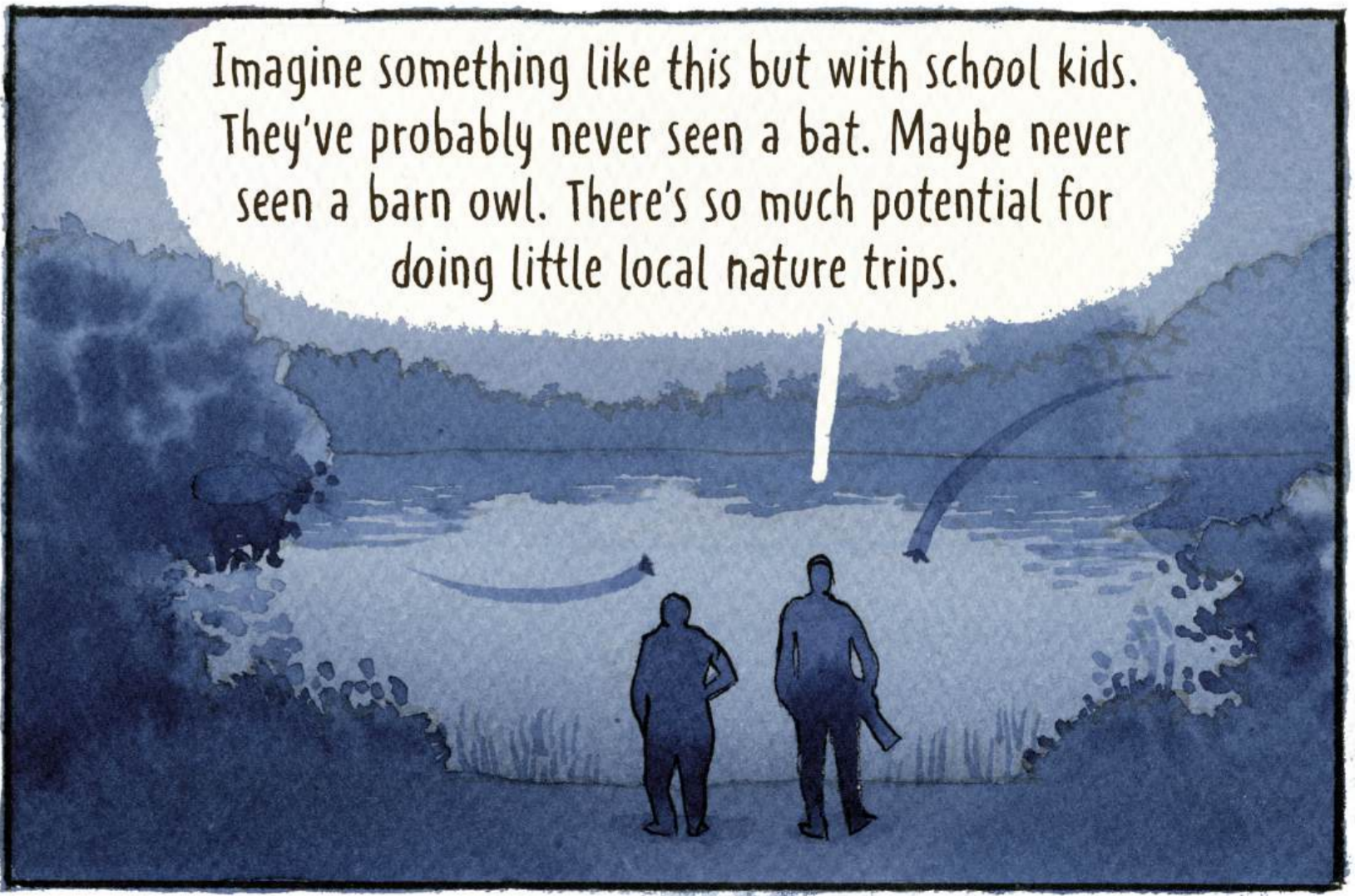


Let's stop here for a moment.



Wow! A bat! Another one too!

It's a common noctule.



Imagine something like this but with school kids. They've probably never seen a bat. Maybe never seen a barn owl. There's so much potential for doing little local nature trips.