



## Cherry's Story

Meet Cherry, who brings so much to all of the sessions that she attends at S2R...

*"My life has changed so much as a direct result of these sessions!"*

### Background:

Since joining us, Cherry has been to several S2R sessions, including our Peace Pit Growing Group, the Birkby and Fartown Library Gardening Group, our Birkby Wellbeing Walks group, Norman Park Work Days and other creative workshops too.

Cherry brings so much to every session she attends. She takes an active role and always takes the time to welcome newcomers. She also uses her exceptional creativity and plant knowledge to help develop the garden, both horticulturally and aesthetically.

### In Her Own Words:

*"Before I started coming to S2R's Great Outdoors Project, I had spent the 18 months or so pre-pandemic in therapy and was quite isolated. Since being diagnosed with a chronic pain condition in 2016, I have had periods of limited mobility, depression, frustration and exhaustion. During lockdown I was able to imagine a different way forward - spending my time more intentionally and aligning more closely with my values as well as my energy levels. I'm an artist, and take a lot of my inspiration from walking and the natural world, but until recently that wasn't something I'd really experienced with other people."*

*"I would often pass the S2R Create Space in town, and always stopped to see what events were on. When I started to attend the sessions, it was like I'd unlocked a secret level! I was overwhelmed by the kindness of new friends with shared interests, like I'd gained a new support system overnight. I feel lucky to have a strong group of close friends, but after moving around the country quite a bit in my 20s, we're all fairly spread out. It was hard balancing that physical distance with the day-to-day reality of chronic pain. My world had got much smaller, and the social life I'd enjoyed before was no longer always accessible to me. Starting to connect with the community here in Birkby has helped me to feel part of the eco-system again, in a new way."*





*“My life has changed so much as a direct result of these sessions! I've made lots of friends through the S2R groups. It's been refreshing and comforting to be around other people who have had similar experiences, and a relief to have a shared understanding.”*

*“I've met one person in particular that has changed everything for me. Not an exaggeration to say that it feels like a once-in-a-lifetime friendship that has already brought me so much unexpected joy. I doubt our paths would have crossed without the S2R gardening group.”*

*“Peace Pit Growing Group was the first regular session that I started going to. I've learnt so much from the group, about growing and caring for the plants but also how we can use them and live alongside them. The confidence I've gained has helped me take an active role in the new Birkby library Gardening Group.”*

*“Feeling like a valued member of the team at the regular S2R groups has helped me feel more confident in my part-time paid work. And in turn, valorising my time in a way that has nothing to do with work and money has helped me feel more in control, engaged and positive about the future. A balance I have never really managed to strike before. Getting more active has also meant I have significantly reduced my use of painkillers!”*

*“I've realised how vital being outdoors is to my wellbeing. Before, I think that still felt quite abstract but now I know it's something I can do easily every day.”*

### **What's Next?**

Cherry's attendance at our sessions is certainly a benefit to the other volunteers, and her enjoyment, enthusiasm and calm manner is positively contagious. We are looking forward to seeing her at many more S2R activity sessions in 2023!