

S2R

CREATE  
SPACE

S2R

THE GREAT  
OUTDOORS  
PROJECT



ANNUAL 2018/19  
REPORT

THE GREAT OUTDOORS PROJECT

# WELCOME

The Great Outdoors Project is one of several projects delivered by the mental health and well-being charity S2R. We know, from independent academic research and the testimony of our own participants, that connecting people with nature as part of a group in an outdoor activity or an indoor workshop is a great way to improve emotional and physical well-being, reduce anxiety, create social connections and learn about both themselves and the natural world.

We help people to take their first steps into nature on our taster sessions, explore their relationship with the outdoors on mindful walks and through the direct experience of open spaces, to interact and contribute in practical tasks at Cemetery Road Community Allotment, Garden Upcycling or Work Days, to express themselves creatively using traditional crafts, natural art, and photography and to be active and enjoy themselves by walking and running in the biggest gym possible.



“I am once again stunned by the variety of ways we have engaged people with nature and by the willingness of people to engage in our activities. The progressions we see and the stories we collect show the good that this project is bringing to people in Kirklees”

- Jason Kerry,  
Project Leader

1 in 6 people experience mental health problem each week\*



poor mental health cost the national economy

£105b a year\*



dementia in 65+ is expect to rise by

60% by 2030\*



4 - 10% of people in England will experience depression\*

\*Mental Health Foundation

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# DEVELOPMENTS

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“This year we have been listening to our participants and involving them in the planning and delivery of the project. We have been successful in gaining external funding to help us extend the amount and quality of our work and to reach out to more isolated groups, families and older people.

We have worked more closely with partners including the Community Mental Health Partnership which allows us to offer a more comprehensive range of options for people to benefit from.

Our participants have gone on to further volunteering, been offered apprenticeships and in one case progressed on to study Ecology at a degree level. S2R Create Space has raised its profile with employers such as Kirklees Council, Cummins Turbo Technologies and Locala, by attending information events, offering volunteering opportunities and organising staff away days.

We are very proud that all our hard work has been recognised by our commissioners in Adult Community Mental Health and that they have enabled us to continue developing and delivering this service for the people of Kirklees.

I am constantly humbled by testimonies from individuals about their involvement and what it has brought to them. I would like to thank everyone who is connected to The Great Outdoor Project, as you all make it a special and wonderful thing to be associated with. I personally want to thank the staff and volunteers who have worked over and beyond any expectation of them.

Here's to another productive year ahead!”

- Paula Wood,  
Manager



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# OUTCOMES

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We delivered 1627 hours of sessions

We had 781 people attend our sessions

We have worked with 127 partners

Our sessions were delivered across 43 locations

We delivered 408 nature based sessions

This project is grounded in the nationally recognized five ways to wellbeing'. We help people connect, be active, learn, give and take more notice. Using these proven indicators, participants use a self-assessment scale to track their progress. People Also record how relaxed they are. Our outcomes represent an average individual improvement and help us measure the success of the project.

## Connecting people with nature and each other

In summer, we invited everyone who had attend a session with us, to share their ideas for workshops, to ensure our programme is co-produced for the coming year.

At the start of 2019, in partnership with Community Learning Works, we launched our Natures Roadshow aimed at bringing together existing groups in their own spaces to relax, learn and enjoy being together in the outdoors, through cooking, fire lighting and mindfulness.

These taster sessions will be followed up by more in depth, 4 week courses aiming to bring members of these different groups together.

“I’ve not worked in 20 years, I like doing this because it gets me out of the house. That’s why I come on this sort of course. I do this sort of thing to meet people and make friends. We moved here 6 years ago and I don’t know anyone. Put me down for the 4 week course, you’d better come back and do some more!”



On average people felt  
**29%** more **connected**  
to people and their community  
after attending our sessions





On average people felt **27%** more **active** and looked after their physical health after attending our sessions

## Being more active in nature

Our Work Day team get stuck into a variety of practical tasks all over Kirklees. Chopping vegetation, dry stone walling, bridge construction, step making, path clearing, tree planting and planter building.

We travel together by bus and work in partnership with Kirklees Council and numerous community groups. This is physical work, but everyone works to their ability. There is a great sense of cooperation and teamwork along with the satisfaction of a job well done.

Just getting outside keeps you active, your metabolism rises and you burn more energy. Sometimes, however, people are not ready to step outside.

Our monthly Campfire Craft sessions help people through their front door to discover the biggest gym in the world. We can reassure people about the skills as well as give them new ideas and the confidence to help them explore the outdoors.

“The thing I like most is going home on the bus, yawning my head off. Filthy, sweaty and shattered. Then jumping in the shower and have tea. There's nothing more rewarding!”





## Learning and trying new things

Our upcyclers learn new skills and explore their creativity by making garden furniture and planters from recycled wood. The skills and confidence developed here are transferable to other projects like our Work Day sessions and home DIY. Our commissioned planters have made their way to local shops, Lawrence Batley Theatre and Huddersfield Railway Station, all stocked with plants from our Peace Pit Growing Group.

Once again our festive highlight, Wreath Making, delighted participants as they went home with professional quality wreaths that exceeded their expectations. The Great Outdoors Project enabled our very talented volunteer, Tina, to pass on her creative tips ensuring that everyone learnt an array of new skills, enjoyed a new experience and had a sense of achievement.

“Absolutely fabulous new experience. I’ve never done anything like this before.”

After attending our sessions people on average felt **21%** more engaged in learning



## Sharing time and knowledge with others

Our Peace Pit Growing Group gives everyone a chance to give up a little of their time to grow plants for community spaces. Our plants have travelled to Dewsbury Country Park, Mirfield in Bloom, Dewsbury Town Centre, Remembrance Day display at the Market Square in Huddersfield, the Lawrence Batley Theatre as well as to schools and parks across Kirklees. You can leave knowing you have contributed toward improving the green spaces of Huddersfield and hopefully picked up some horticultural skills along the way. The space is also popular with corporate volunteers from Cummins and Lloyds Bank who have both sent teams here to improve their well-being by giving back time to the community.

“I absolutely love working outdoors, at the peace pit growing group every week ... even if it's too cold or too warm I just can't wait to get to these places.”



We had a great harvest of soft fruit this year and we made the most of it by inviting volunteers from Volunteering Kirklees to learn the skill of making jam, one to take home and the other to sell and raise a little income for S2R Create Space.

On average people felt they gave **9%** more of their time to other people



## Taking more notice of the world around you

Sometimes we can step right out of our usual place and experience the world in a new way! Our bat walk does just that. By taking people out on a nocturnal walk our senses take things in in a different way. When we add to that a glimpse into the world of bats, who perceive their world largely through echo location, we can truly think differently about the way the world really is. Our bat detectors bring this ultra-sonic world to life and our friendly bat guides from West Yorkshire Bat Group ensure everyone feels safe in the woods at night.

There are lots of ways to walk, but sometimes you can just walk quietly and be aware of what is around you, be mindful of how your body and mind are feeling and be relaxed in a safe space amongst others you know are there for the same reason. Being in the moment and understanding your place in nature are at the heart of our mindful walks, be it experiencing a hillside view or resting by soothing lake, we take time to take it all in without thinking about what has come before or will come after.

“I particularly remember working in Penny Spring Wood. The breeze was blowing up the valley and I had one of those rare moments of clarity.”



On average people  
**noticed 21%**  
more things  
around them  
after attending  
our sessions







On average people  
felt **21%** more  
**relaxed** after attending  
our sessions



## Using nature to feel relaxed

We've seen that being in nature is the best way to feel relaxed. During our 4 week Nature in You course we visit three accessible green spaces, most of the time introducing people to places they've never been to before. We encourage people to slow down, explore, be creative and engage with the natural environment, which gives people the confidence to revisit these green spaces.

When Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing asked us to do a well-being briefing, we gave them just a little taste of making and using a hand scrub with raw ingredients and essential oils. They then booked a longer team building session with us.

“For me it's peace, totally ...I need space and nature in my life. This is very relaxing, trees and nature and the animals are free...I studied environmental science and it's important for me to connect and remember and think what I want for the future.”

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# SOCIAL RETURN

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The Great Outdoors Project endeavours to capture the stories of our participants, in so doing we can identify just how we are helping them. We can even calculate the value of a timely intervention compared to the cost to society that a deterioration in health might incur. When you read Charlotte's moving story it is obvious that our approach is not only the best solution for Charlotte but also the best value for money as she keeps herself well by using the service.

"After leaving residential rehab for mental health after two years equipped with a tonne of Dialectical Behavioural Therapy skills, I was ready to try to build some sort of structure and purpose to my life. That's when I came across S2R Create Space and The Great Outdoors Project.

Thinking about getting involved and actually doing it were very different things. I signed up for Peace Pit Growing Group and the Work Days. At first I felt anxious. It took me three attempts to walk through the door. Now I attend both these groups. I have to plan ahead, make lunch, take medication and get the bus, all things I wouldn't have been able to do before.

At the Peace Pit Growing Group I like learning about different plants and potting them on as they grow. I enjoy working with others and having a laugh. Equally if I want to, I can work on my own tidying and clearing which usually leads to me back to working with others.

Work Days can be a bigger challenge. We have designated jobs to do. It's all about team work and using inter-personal effectiveness communication so the job is completed with equal effort.

There is a feeling of real comradely working in a team, learning to use tools safely and a huge sense of achievement and satisfaction on completing the task and giving something back to your community.

My confidence and fitness have improved, I've lost weight and I'm no longer scared about meeting new people. I would not be where I am now if it wasn't for S2R and the patience, encouragement and friendships that I have found.

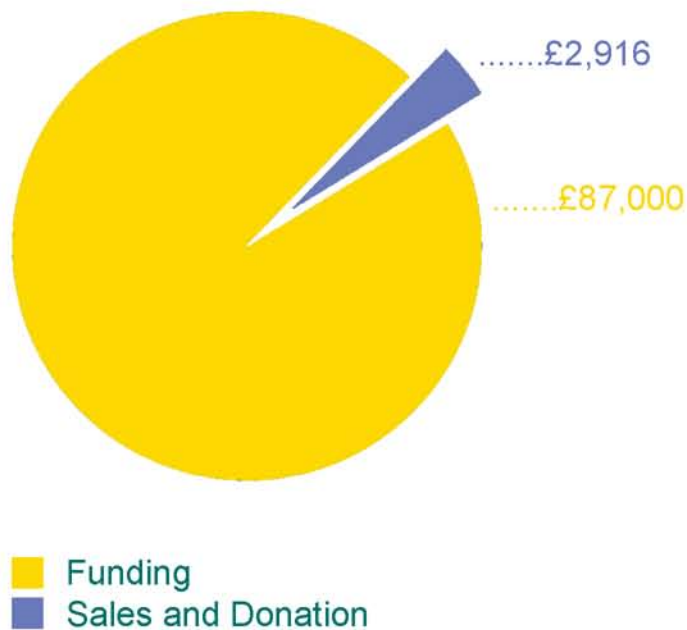
I've started classes at Huddersfield Leisure Centre and I'm in a place I never thought I would reach.

In the future I'd like to encourage new people because one to one peer support is so important. I'd like to help lead the Work Days and help make sure that these activities are peer-led."

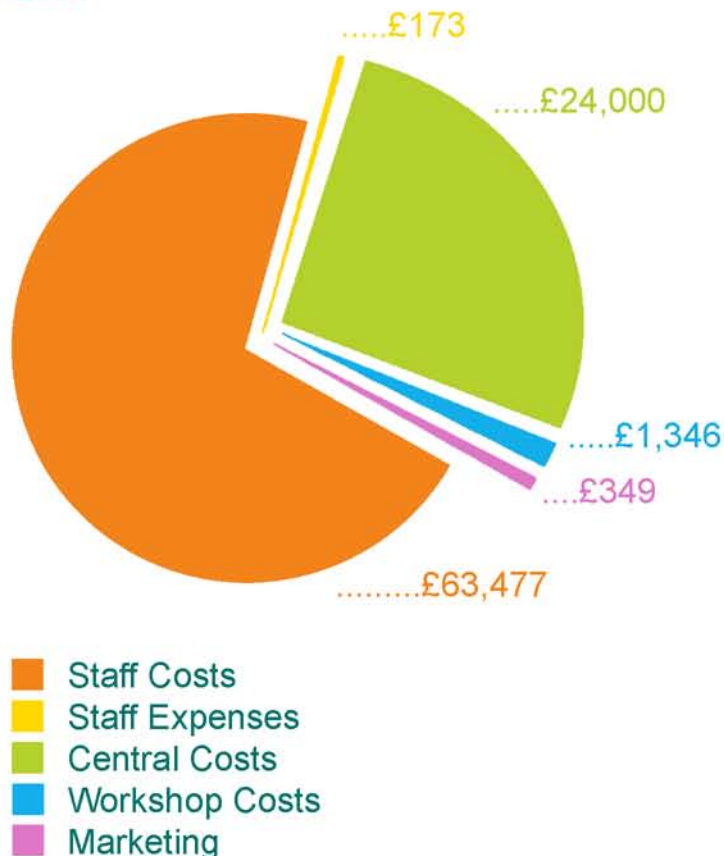


# FINANCE

## Income



## Cost



# NEXT YEAR

We will be able to further develop our ideas to improve outdoor and nature based well-being for everyone in Kirklees! We will strive to build on the partnerships we already have, including The Community Mental Health Partnership, Kirklees Council, schools and community hubs. We will also try to do more outreach with community groups and to improve the length and quality of these engagements by bringing in external funding to strengthen our presence.

We will strive to identify locations and partners in northern and rural areas. We will try to build on our work with older people and people with learning disabilities including those on the autistic spectrum.

We will work with our participants to help identify and achieve their goals, including the opportunity for them to champion The Great Outdoors Project by talking about our activities and their experiences with us.

We are all very excited to be given this chance to keep evolving our service to meet the need of our community.



The Great Outdoors Project would dearly like to thank all our participants, our volunteers for sharing their skills, passion, talents, knowledge and commitment, for running workshops, growing plants, improving green spaces and making our project a safe and friendly place. Also we would like to thank the 127 partner organisations we have worked with this year.

We would like to give a few special thanks to organisations who we work with regularly or who have commissioned work from us.

- Aspire
- Brook Audio
- Community Learning Works
- Cummins Turbo Technologies
- Friends of Norman Park
- Grow to School
- Huddersfield Library
- Kirklees Parks and Green Spaces
- Lawrence Batley Theatre
- Love 2 Meet U
- Moldgreen United Reform Church
- Penistone Line Partnership
- Whitehouse Centre

'I absolutely love working outdoors at the Allotment and Peace Pit Growing Group every week. It's always good to spread your wings and get rid off these old cobwebs, even if too cold or too warm, I just can't wait to get to these places... having mental health myself it just so nice to be involved with other and meet people our there. It's great fun and I learn a lot. I'm hoping with more experience I can move my life a little bit more and become independent on my own.'



## The Great Outdoors Project

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