



ANNUAL REPORT

2025/26

THE GREAT OUTDOORS PROJECT

Helping You to Thrive in Nature...

The Great Outdoors Project is one of the many projects delivered by the mental health and wellbeing charity S2R Support to Recovery. We know from independent research and the testimonies of our own participants, that connecting people with nature as part of a group in an outdoor activity, an indoor workshop, or an online session is a great way to improve emotional and physical wellbeing, reduce anxiety, create social connections and learn about both ourselves and the natural world.

For over 10 years, S2R has been offering all* adults in Kirklees the chance to take their first steps into nature to benefit their wellbeing. Anything that builds your connection with nature can be good for your wellbeing, whether it's a walk out on the moors, or making soap indoors using natural products. We can help you get active with our walking groups, learn new skills like nature identification or aromatherapy, connect with people in our growing and nature craft groups, notice what is around you with Art in the Park and mindful walking, and give back to our environment and your community by improving biodiversity with outdoor volunteering.

**Participants must be able to work in a small group setting, either independently or with the help of a carer.*

SINCE ATTENDING THIS PROJECT,

96%

OF PARTICIPANTS SAID **CONNECTING WITH NATURE** IMPROVED THEIR WELLBEING



"I NEED TO GET OUT, IT CLEARS MY HEAD."

"I DON'T KNOW IF YOU REMEMBER, I CAME TO S2R BACK IN 2018 WHEN I HAD A MENTAL BREAKDOWN AND I JOINED A WALK WE DID IN THE WOODS. I NEVER SAID THANK YOU. MY HEAD WASN'T IN THE RIGHT PLACE BUT IT REALLY HELPED!"

"NOT LONG AGO, I WAS IN THE SAME POSITION OF BEING ABSOLUTELY TERRIFIED OF GETTING BACK OUT INTO THE OUTSIDE WORLD. THE OTHER WALKERS HELPED ME FEEL BETTER."

Support to Recovery

PROMOTING POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

**S2R
CREATE
SPACE**
Promoting Positive Mental Health



GREENHEAD PARK WELLBEING WALKS

Walking is one of the best forms of exercise there is, and it's free! So come and enjoy the great outdoors and peaceful landscapes of Greenhead Park with us.

Our walks take place at 1pm every Wednesday, come rain or shine.

Meet us outside the entrance to Huddersfield Leisure Centre for a gentle stroll around the park, looking at points of interest on the way and then heading back to the leisure centre. The whole walk takes about an hour and everyone is welcome!

Please book in advance of your first session by emailing us at: contact@s2r.org.uk
Wear clothing and footwear suitable for walking and feel free to bring a drink with you too.

Registered Charity 1122199 | Limited Company 6418312

**S2R
CREATE
SPACE**
Promoting Positive Mental Health

Support to Recovery

PROMOTING POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

**S2R
THE GREAT
OUTDOORS
PROJECT**

Autumn Wreath Making Evening Workshop



All materials
plus warm drinks
and biscuits
will be
included!

On Tuesday 23rd September from 6 - 8pm (evening session)

Join S2R for this creative evening workshop and celebrate the autumn equinox. We will make a beautiful wreath from scratch using natural materials, foliage and flowers to create a seasonal decoration for your home. All materials will be provided so come along ready to get creative and connect with nature!

£20 per person, per session

Advance booking required. Suitable for ages 18+ only. Book in person at S2R Create Space, 5-7 Brook Street, Huddersfield HD1 1EB or online: www.s2r.org.uk/book-online

Registered Charity 1122199 | Limited Company 6418312

"I WENT ON A LOVELY WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP THIS EVENING, AND NOW WE HAVE A PRETTY FRONT DOOR! THANK YOU S2R!"

"I ENJOY THESE SESSIONS AT S2R, I SHARE WITH PEOPLE WHAT I'VE BEEN UP TO. THEY KEEP ME GOING, WHEN I'M FEELING A BIT DOWN."

"I'M NOT QUITE READY TO TELL MY STORY YET. I'M NOT QUITE THERE YET, BUT I FEEL MUCH CALMER NOW. MY ANXIETY CAN BE VERY HARD TO MANAGE, BUT YOU'VE ALL BEEN SO FRIENDLY."

This Year at S2R

The Great Outdoors Project is a place where our passionate facilitators use their creative skills to connect you with nature and improve your wellbeing. We actively seek everyone's ideas and encourage you to help shape our journey together. So thank you to all our wonderful facilitators, partners and participants for making our project the special place that it is.

Jason Kerry *Manager of The Great Outdoors Project*

Operating This Year...

Every year, we provide a programme of regular activities as well as a menu of one-off and seasonal sessions. Our regular activities connect people with nature for wellbeing and provide them with like-minded communities to connect with and the changing menu of additional sessions adds variety for new and existing participants.

Our mental health objectives always come first, but in delivering this, we contribute to other agendas such as: the environment, loneliness, employability, building community capacity, exercise and physical health. Our wellbeing outcomes are stronger because our activities have real world significance and social value.

Nature is at the heart of our Great Outdoors wellbeing toolbox and much of our activity is focused on protecting and preserving it. We are always working towards our climate pledge; supporting Kirklees towards its target of net zero by planting trees, growing native species for rewilding, improving greenspaces through volunteering, encouraging climate literacy and awareness with courses on nature identification, aromatherapy, natural products and cleaning solutions.



Linking in with other practitioners adds value to both our offers. This year, we worked with Artist Helen Thomas and the Cultures of Climate Change Project. Helen spent time with our women-only walking group the Friday Wanderers, focusing on the wildlife of Dewsbury Country Park. Our approach to engagement with nature was also recognised in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy which can be found online [here](#).

We worked with The Sustainable Living Research Centre at the University of Huddersfield for an academic paper to help them understand some of the barriers to communities taking ownership of local community gardens. [Read the full article here](#).

The Sustainable Living Research Centre at the University of Huddersfield also helped us run workshops to co-design a new shelter for our polytunnel group. These dreams were then made real by local company Actiform, who constructed it using waste material from their modular building company. Watch the video [here](#) or take a look at our [case study](#).

The Great Outdoors Project supports volunteers at the Huddersfield Repair Café by giving them a monthly space to work from that helps them to save the planet, one toaster at a time.

We also worked with Environmental Consultants Alkins Realis and learned a lot about measuring water quality in streams through the invertebrates we discovered there. The Friends of Grimescar community group now keeps a regular check on the stream's biodiversity and water quality.

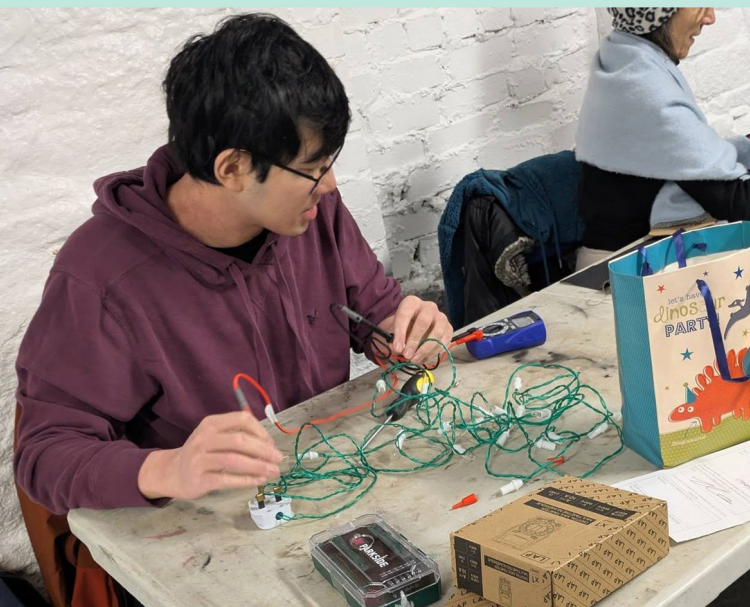
Social Value

We choose to deliver our service in a way that benefits the wider society, as well as the participants we work with by working with schools and colleges, gifting plants, improving the environment, providing work placements and supporting wellbeing in local businesses. Since the start of the current contract, we have logged £96,551 of work on the independent Social Value Portal.

Hidden Outcomes

Not all of our outcomes are easy to quantify or explain. Our peer support, informal signposting, advice for partner organisations and cascading of skills and mental health awareness through our communities are all benefits created by our activities, but the stories and outcomes for these benefits are not always so easily captured.





We Delivered...

966
HOURS OF
FACE-TO-FACE
SESSIONS

3,000
VOLUNTEERING
HOURS

50
PARTNERS
WORKED
WITH

466
SESSIONS
DELIVERED

18,451
WEBSITE
VISITORS

402,653
VIEWS ON
FACEBOOK

3,336
ATTENDANCES AT
OUR SESSIONS

544
NAMED PEOPLE
ATTENDED
TGO SESSIONS

Outcomes Framework

Every quarter, we ask our Great Outdoors Project participants how the project is helping them, using some very simple questions. We are always listening out for how our work is helping individuals, their families and the wider community. Throughout this report you will find statistics, quotes and observations drawn from our monitoring. We use this information to celebrate our successes and help shape our programme in the future.

Connecting People with Nature and Each Other

When we are isolated, we can lose confidence and miss out on important social interactions that are so valuable to our wellbeing. The Great Outdoors Project engages participants feeling the effects of loneliness, helping them to feel more connected.

Staff Wellbeing Events

As part of our commitment to social value, we offer nature-based wellbeing sessions to staff teams from businesses in Kirklees. This has enabled us to reach a group of people we would not normally reach and prompted some important conversations for staff who are feeling increasingly isolated working from home. Our facilitators tell us that it is here, in these sessions, working with individuals who may not identify as needing mental health support, that some of the most profound benefits of our work are the most obvious. All of this good work happens through the mediums of pizza-making, aromatherapy and jam!

Peace Pit Growing Group

Peace Pit Lane Council Depot is the home to our poly-tunnel growing group. A vibrant community has grown up here over time. At 4 hours, it is one of our longest sessions, offering participants the chance to stretch out as well as opportunities for peer support and learning. Participants find their niche here, surrounded by nature, their peers and supportive staff and growing plants that find their way to lots of other volunteer and community groups across Kirklees.

Our participants have always had the opportunity to help shape how this group works and to contribute their own unique skills, but this year we have taken another step forward. The group has become an independent community group with its own constitution and bank account. This will enable them to open up on days when S2R and Kirklees Council staff aren't there to support them and to apply for funds to grow the group together, in a way that suits them.

"MY MENTAL HEALTH HASN'T BEEN GOOD LATELY. JUST A BLIP, BUT I'M SO PLEASED I COULD CONNECT WITH YOU ALL TODAY."

SINCE ATTENDING THIS PROJECT,

71%

OF PARTICIPANTS SAID
THEY FEEL MORE **CONNECTED** TO
PEOPLE AND THEIR COMMUNITY



Being Active

Being active makes us feel good and helps to improve our wellbeing. TGO offers a wide range of opportunities for people to be active.

Walking Groups

Taking regular short walks is probably the single best thing you can do to improve your physical health and it's great for your mental health too. Walking in a group is a great way to connect and socialise, and TGO offer a variety of weekly groups from our Greenhead Park Wellbeing Walk to the ladies-only Friday Wanderers and self-led groups like the Active Birkby Club and Dewsbury Library Walking Group.

Cemetery Road Community Allotment

Each week, our allotment group meets to grow flowers, vegetables and friendships. With all the barrow pushing, digging, composting, bending, kneeling and standing, it's a full 3-hour workout, but you won't notice because of the good company and hot tea. Just being outside helps us to burn calories compared to being inside.

Move More Kirklees

This year, because of our experience in getting people moving for their wellbeing, TGO was invited to be part of a steering group overseeing the development of a successful and sizable bid to Sport England.

SINCE ATTENDING THIS PROJECT,

68%

OF PARTICIPANTS SAID THEY
KEEP MORE **ACTIVE** AND LOOK AFTER
THEIR **PHYSICAL HEALTH** BETTER



**"I COULDN'T DO ALL THIS WALK AT FIRST,
NOW I WALK EVERYWHERE IF POSSIBLE!"**



**"THIS IS MY FIRST TIME EVER USING
A SEWING MACHINE. I DIDN'T THINK
I'D GET IT SO QUICKLY!"**

SINCE ATTENDING THIS PROJECT,

75%

OF PARTICIPANTS SAID THEY
SPEND MORE TIME **LEARNING** NEW
THINGS THAT INTEREST THEM

Learning

As we get older, we sometimes forget to make time to learn new things. But learning is a powerful way to improve our confidence and self-esteem as well as unleashing our curiosity and creativity, creating new perspectives and new connections in the brain.

Natural Crafts

Throughout the year, TGO offer a range of crafting activities from seasonal wreath-making to natural products surface cleaner. Using our passion for the environment and the healing qualities of nature we teach soap making, aromatherapy, upcycling, candle making, natural dyes and even natural remedies. What you learn here may even inspire you to start a journey that could lead to gifts for friends and family or even your own small business. Some of these sessions are also held outside normal office hours to help working people access them too.

Volunteers and Work Placements

We have put a robust volunteer process in place to ensure volunteers get what they need from a placement with us, whether that's the pleasure of gifting us their time and skills, or learning new skills with us to help them in the future. This year, we took on two work placements. One trained to be a walk leader and has gone on to paid employment but still helps on our Greenhead walks. The other provided valuable support and co-facilitated a variety of sessions, culminating in running her own two-week upcycled clothing workshops with a view to becoming a community artist and facilitator herself.

Notice

Noticing things around us and slowing down can help us to focus on the present and helps avoid patterns of thought that leave us reliving the past or worrying about what might happen in the future. When we do this, we become more grounded and content in what we have right now.

Art in the Park

Art in the Park started when artistic members of our walking group began noticing the nature around them and wanted to spend more time in these landscapes to create drawings and paintings. In time, other creatives have become involved; making poems, songs and even electronic music from samples taken there. These acts of creativity force us to take time to notice what is around us and be in the moment.

Art in the River 2025

We were commissioned to work with some of our participants to create a piece of temporary public art for Holmfirth Art Week. This time, as well as noticing the world around us, our participants were tasked with looking inwards and reflecting on the idea of flow. What does that idea mean to us? How does it make us feel? These fascinating discussions were then transformed into a linear piece of textile art for others to reflect upon which was displayed outdoors over the festival period. Find out more about the project and the final piece of art we created in our [case study](#).

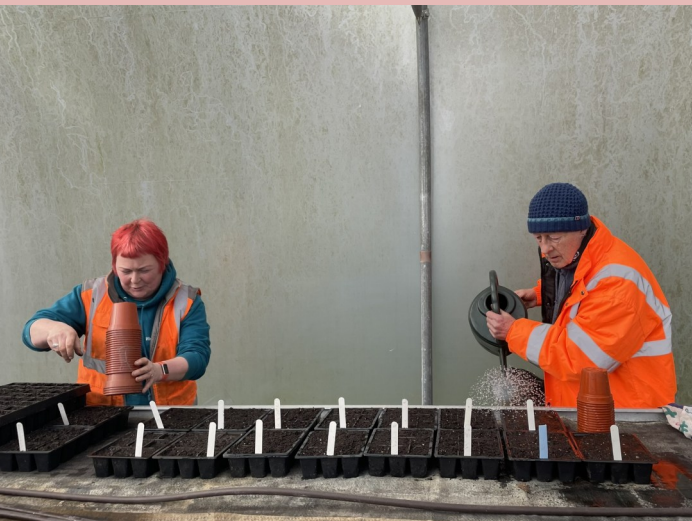


**“I AM SLOWING DOWN AND NOTICING
WHAT IS AROUND ME, NOT JUST
WALKING FROM A TO B.”**

SINCE ATTENDING THIS PROJECT,

76%

OF PARTICIPANTS SAID THEY
TAKE MORE **NOTICE** OF THE
THINGS AROUND THEM



SINCE ATTENDING THIS PROJECT,

53%

OF PARTICIPANTS SAID THEY
GIVE MORE OF THEIR TIME,
SKILLS AND THINGS TO OTHERS

Give

Giving our time and skills to friends, the environment and the community has been shown to have positive effects on our mood, cholesterol levels and even weight loss.

Outdoor Volunteers

Recent studies show strong correlations between long-term wellbeing and environmental volunteering. Our outdoor volunteers regularly get positive feedback from the communities and groups they help. Building confidence and volunteering time for worthwhile tasks brings them into the moment and pushes away intrusive thoughts. [Ian's Story](#) tells us how the Outdoor Volunteers helped him.

Peer Support

The nature connections provided by our activities are great for mental health and provide a fertile environment that promotes peer support. Current participants welcome new people, encourage them and make them feel welcome; sharing their experiences, knowledge, skills and passions. All this provides additional benefits alongside the facilitator participant relationship. Peer support benefits are hard to quantify but the feedback we receive demonstrates that it is happening and it frequently leads to new friendships providing additional support beyond TGO sessions.

**“I LIKE PLANTING TREES. IT FEELS LIKE
I'M DOING SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE CAN
APPRECIATE WHEN I'M NOT HERE ANYMORE.”**

Confidence

Getting outdoors and connecting with nature whilst building on The Five Ways to Wellbeing can bring about some profound changes for our participants, including improved confidence and the ability to make important life decisions which helps them to take ownership of their own mental health and wellbeing. We achieve this by creating safe spaces and by giving people the opportunity to push their own boundaries whilst still feeling supported. Taking part in our workshops and connecting with others gives people confidence to do things that they would not do before.

Garden Upcycling

Helping people gain confidence using hand tools and creating things out of recycled wood is a great way to boost self-esteem. Participants arrive having never used a saw before and leave with a piece of bespoke furniture, a sense of satisfaction and the skills to do it all again when they get home!

Welcome Morning

Every week, new participants can informally visit our base at Brook Street to meet our staff, find out about our activities and have a good look round. It is a good opportunity for us to discover what they want to achieve, put their fears to rest and put any adaptations needed in place for individuals. We regularly meet people who are very anxious, but most leave much more at ease and feeling confident to take that next step. Sometimes they even join us for a walk that very afternoon, often accompanied by referral partners who support them. Many of these referral partners have become regulars who are now confident to 'socially prescribe' TGO services to their clients.

Gaining Confidence

We have noticed a mismatch in feedback we receive from participants and observable improvements our facilitators see in people's confidence levels. Our outcomes framework relies on self-reflection, but when we talk to our participants, it seems they are less likely to notice or feel able to recognise that they are growing in confidence. Levels of confidence are a more nuanced thing to quantify than simply asking "*are you more active?*". This highlights the importance of our quotes and case studies in reflecting the full picture.



"SINCE YOU INTRODUCED ME TO THE COUNTRY PARK I HAVE BEEN CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO COME HERE WITH MY HUSBAND AND EXPLORE THE PATHS WE WALKED. I FOUND A FEW MORE WALKS I CAN TAKE THE GROUP ON!"

SINCE ATTENDING THIS PROJECT,

55%

OF PARTICIPANTS FELT MORE **CONFIDENT** TO SELF-MANAGE AND COPE BETTER

Website Statistics

- ⇒ 18,451 total page views
- ⇒ 9,806 site sessions
- ⇒ 5,945 unique visitors to the site
- ⇒ 5,527 brand new visitors



Development, Vision & Targets for Next Year

The development aims for The Great Outdoors Project in 2026/27 are:

Include More Formal Volunteering

Our volunteering process is now solid and both volunteers and S2R are mutually benefitting from a more formalised approach. In 2026, this will be officially recognised by Third Sector Leaders through their quality award.

Champion Community Volunteering Opportunities

We will continue to signpost our participants to suitable volunteering opportunities in the community and offer help to groups that want to learn more about mental health and wellbeing to make their groups more accessible to people who have experienced trauma.

Environmental Pledge

The Great Outdoors Project remains committed to the Kirklees Council Environmental Pledge helping us towards net zero.

Working Together Better Partnership

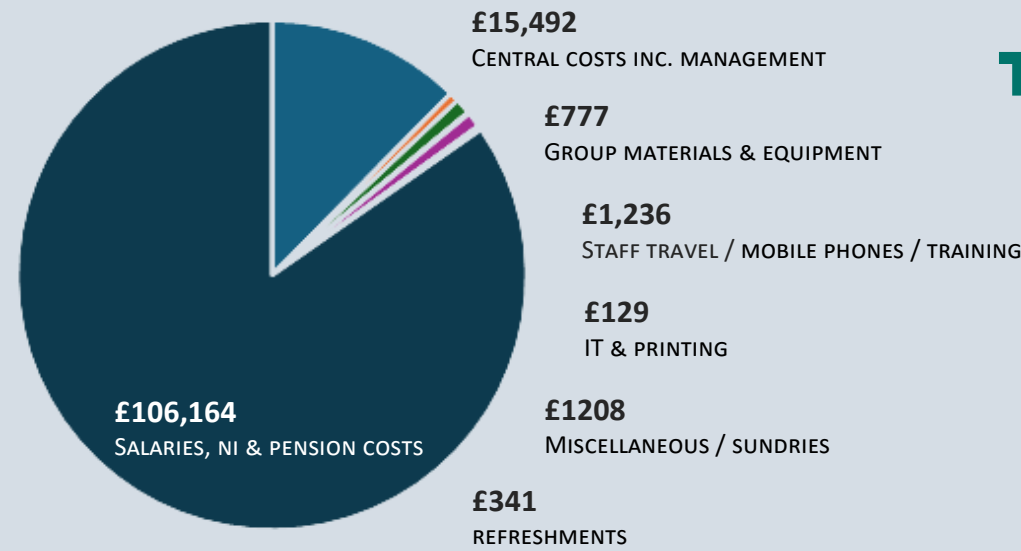
We will continue to work with other commissioned partners in the Working Together Better Partnership.

External Funding

We will seek to enhance our outdoor wellbeing offer by bringing in external resources and funding.

Social Value

We will continue to operate a delivery model that seeks to benefit both the wider community and individuals that access our service.



TGO Finances

The Working Together Better Partnership

Across 2025/26, we continued to be very committed to partnership working across Kirklees, especially as part of the Working Together Better Partnership where we come together with seven community mental health charities to help adults in Kirklees find their way to better mental wellbeing.

Each charity brings its own strengths, including creative and nature-based activities, employment and peer support, advocacy, information and advice, counselling and therapeutic groups. By working together, we can offer people a wide range of support and make sure help feels joined-up and complimentary.

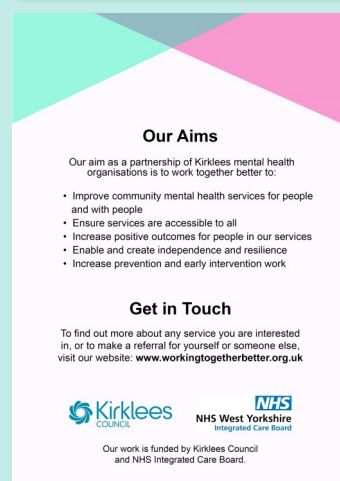
Much of this work happens behind the scenes. Partners meet regularly to share learning, plan projects, develop joint communications and agree priorities. We also share expertise - for example around neurodiversity - so that everyone across the partnership can offer the best possible support.

During 2025/26, Working Together Better:

- Developed a shared "Theory of Change", setting out the impact we want to have on mental health in Kirklees and how we will achieve it together.
- Listened to local people through community consultation to understand what matters most to them about mental health and wellbeing.
- Set up a simple internal referral system, so people can move between partners smoothly (with consent) and get the right support at the right time.
- Created a Participation Strategy to ensure lived experience shapes all our work.

We also delivered four much-loved community events:

- A vibrant and intimate International Women's Day celebration in Dewsbury with creative and wellbeing workshops.
- A summer event at Crow Nest Park for Carers Week and The Great Get Together with information stalls, games, Tai Chi and music-making.
- The return of the Lantern Parade to Crow Nest Park for World Mental Health Day.
- A Volunteer and Peer Champion celebration in December, thanking those who make our work possible.



TGO Case Studies

Every project we run here at S2R has its own unique impacts and we have found that statistics can only tell us so much about the nature of our service. The same is also true of our participants. Every person that sets foot into The Great Outdoors Project comes with their own story, and experiences their own unique journey whilst they are with us.

The staff team here at S2R listen carefully to what our participants have to say, so we can tell personal stories that really highlight the difference our project makes to individuals, local communities and to the environment. These stories are then transformed into case studies, like the one pictured here, which show the everyday detail of our work at S2R, beyond the scope of an annual report.

You can read the Art in the River 2025 and Ian's Story case studies (pictured here) and lots more besides on our website: www.s2r.org.uk/case-studies.



Partnership Work and Co-production

This year, The Great Outdoors Project has worked with 50 partners; forming mutually beneficial partnerships with organisations from large national charities and local government to small, constituted and un-constituted community groups. This is because connecting people with the environment to improve wellbeing is on so many people's agendas, and when it is done well, in partnership with strategic bodies and local communities, it can generate positive outcomes that are more than the sum of their parts and deliver enormous social value.

Our primary aim is to improve wellbeing and in doing so, we connect people with their communities, create social capital, improve greenspaces, reduce waste, improve climate awareness and link families with nature-based activities. A free resource in a time of a cost of living crisis, TGO could not do what it does alone; it is what it is because of the strong and productive partnerships we have built.

Co-production and a person-centred culture is all part of our trauma-informed approach here at S2R. In plain English that means we are listening to what our participants want and involving them as much as possible in deciding what we do, how we do it and even in delivery where we can.

Participants often suggest new ideas and our default position is yes! We will make the activity safe, get the right person in to deliver it and even look for funding if necessary. We listen out for ideas in sessions, on social media and in our annual survey. Many of our staff and our board members have lived experience of mental health and have used our service in the past. This helps ensure lived experience is guiding us strategically and at an operational level. We are also part of the Working Together Better Partnership strategy to help participants have influence over the wider mental health provision in Kirklees.

Eventually, ideas can outgrow TGO because they can be pursued better elsewhere. Recently we helped two peer-led walking groups find their feet and helped Kirklees Community Growing Group to become constituted. We also support the Huddersfield Repair Café by providing them with a venue and helping them to reduce landfill and improve the wellbeing of their volunteers.



"SPENDING TIME IN THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - AS A RESIDENT OR VISITOR- IMPROVES OUR MENTAL HEALTH AND FEELINGS OF WELLBEING. IT CAN REDUCE STRESS, FATIGUE, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION. IT CAN HELP BOOST IMMUNE SYSTEMS, ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND MAY REDUCE THE RISK OF CHRONIC DISEASES SUCH AS ASTHMA. IT CAN COMBAT LONELINESS AND BINDS COMMUNITIES TOGETHER"

- UK GOVERNMENT 25 YEAR ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (2018)

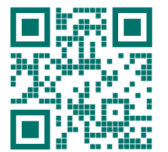


The Great Outdoors Project

To find out more about this project call/text: 07541 095 455
email: contact@s2r.org.uk, or visit: www.s2r.org.uk

S2R Create Space, 5-7 Brook Street, Huddersfield HD1 1EB

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