

# YOUR PARK

## FIVE YEARS OF IMPACT

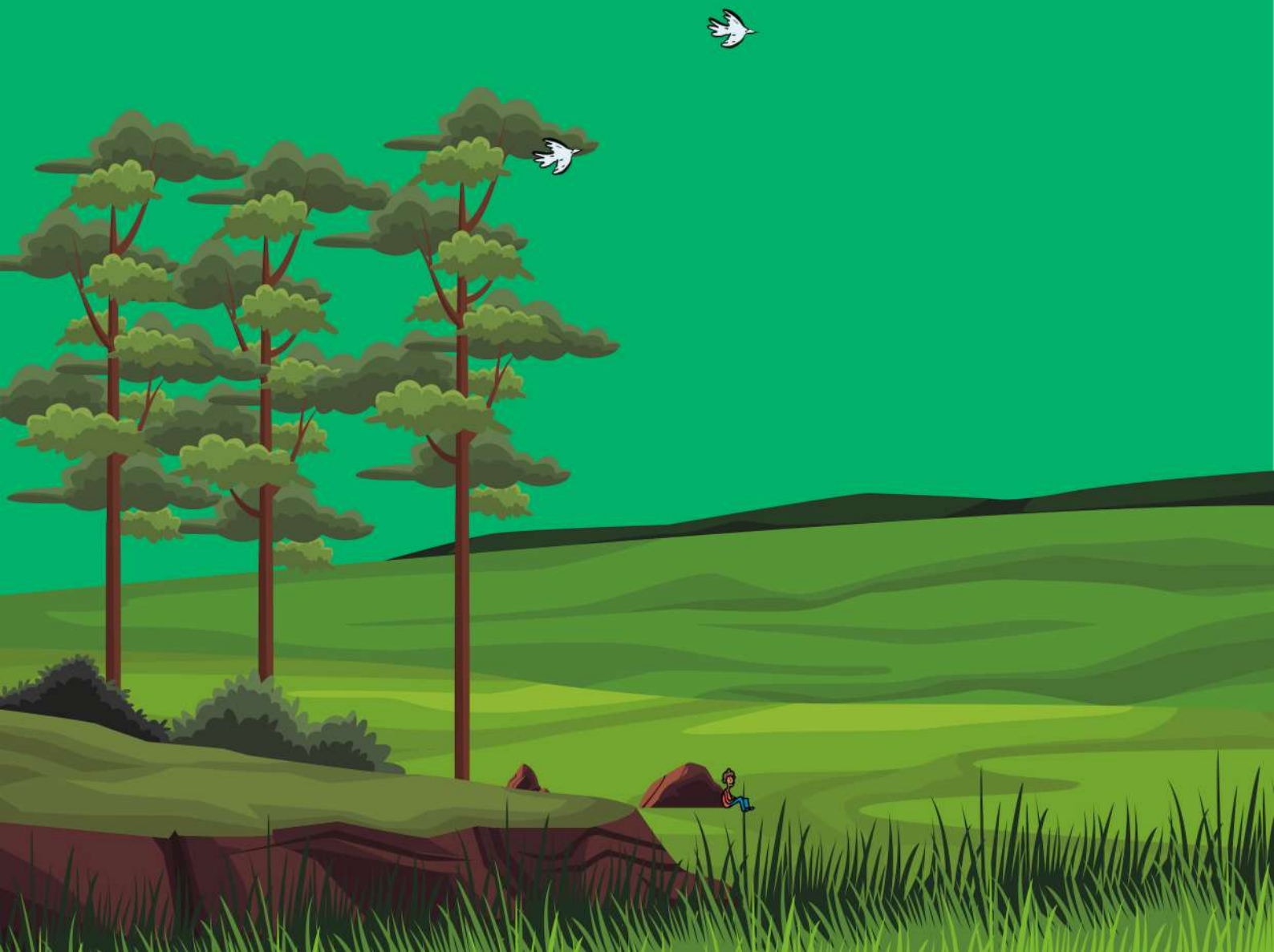
Celebrating five years of achievements on our doorstep and the sustainable value of parks



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# The story so far



2024 marks Your Park's fifth anniversary. We are looking back at five years of transforming communities and looking forward to a world where everyone can access and enjoy parks' transformational health and wellbeing benefits.

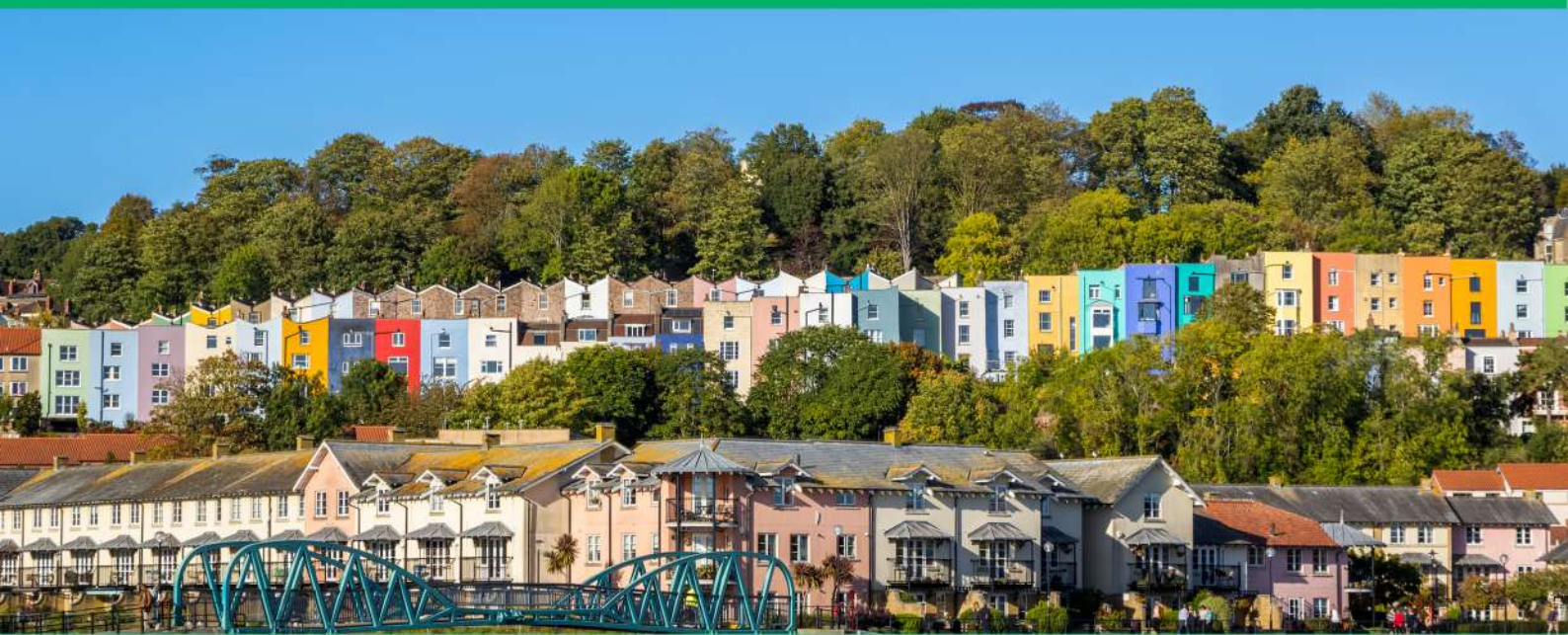
Since our inception in 2019 we have:

Established one of the **UK's leading Green Social Prescribing** services for complex mental health conditions, Roots to Wellbeing

**Reintroduced natural habitats** to tens of urban parks across Bristol and Bath with the community, through Park Activator Programmes

Launched the **UK's first project to transform access** to parks for underrepresented groups

Celebrated and supported the **hundreds of parks volunteers** whom our parks rely upon





# YOUR PARK

REIMAGINING PARKS



2019 TO 2024 - CELEBRATING FIVE YEARS OF IMPACT

**55** parks transformed for people and nature

**30094** interactions reaching **3944** people

**45** Team Days with **1558** volunteers

**265** mental health sessions

**£1.2** million raised for our community

**162** groups supported

**609** in park sessions with **1208** people



# Why parks?



Before the 1840s there were no public parks in Britain. As towns grew, they encroached onto fields and residents were excluded from accessing the natural world and its health benefits.

**It was at this point that parks were created, so everyone could benefit.**

Whether we dedicate our lives to working in parks, enjoy the odd picnic or run, or cherish the opportunity to get some fresh air at lunchtime, we should all be concerned: our parks are neglected and this not only affects nature, but reflects society's lack of inclusivity and innovation.

**Nearly 200 years later and entire communities remain excluded from parks' benefits, affecting our health, wellbeing, quality of life and economy.**

During the pandemic, this inequality was starkly highlighted. Whole parks were cordoned off. But even now, under-represented groups such as Disabled people lack access to outdoor space.

**Defra estimates that the NHS could save £2.1 billion per year if everyone regularly used parks.**

However one in eight British households do not even have a garden (ONS, 2022). **We estimate that one in every three residents in Bristol and Bath cannot easily access green space.**



# Parks Problem Tree



## Branches - Impact

- **Disenfranchised communities** face social isolation and diminished quality of life have a limited access to green spaces and recreational opportunities.
- **Health disparities** persist and worsen as individuals in under-served communities experience barriers to physical activity, nature exposure, and mental well-being.
- **Ecological degradation** leads to loss of habitats for wildlife, decreased biodiversity, and reduced ecosystem services, impacting environmental health and resilience.

## The Trunk - Our core problem

Parks are **not accessible** for all.

## The Roots - embedded causes

- The lack of awareness and support for the importance of parks perpetuates inadequate funding, maintenance, and protection, hindering the preservation of these vital community assets.
- Physical, economical and societal barriers to accessing nature and outdoor recreation opportunities, worsening physical and mental health outcomes for marginalized populations.



# Our focus



Our communities, parks and green spaces need a variety of things to change in order for them to thrive. So our strategy focuses on three key areas:



## Health

Improving physical and mental health through holistic support services including green care, and outdoor activities



## Access

Championing, enabling and consulting underserved communities to improve access to parks so everyone feels safe, enjoys and benefits from parks and green spaces



## Nature

Creating, enhancing and sustaining natural habitats through community gardening, enabling our diverse communities to respond to Ecological Emergency Action Plans and benefit from nature-rich spaces





“

Through health, accessibility, and nature we're forging fresh bonds between people, parks and communities.

And that's not all—we're sparking a sense of ownership, urging communities to nurture both themselves and the nature around them.

**We create parks that truly reflect the diversity of our communities.”**



Charlee Bennett, CEO





## Health

The health benefits of spending time in nature are undeniable, and we're harnessing the power of parks to promote physical and mental wellbeing.

Through initiatives like Roots to Wellbeing and Wild and Well, we're providing opportunities for communities to engage in outdoor activities and reap the rewards of green spaces.

**But our approach to health is about more than just exercise.**

It's about fostering a sense of connection and belonging, reducing social isolation, and improving overall quality of life.

By creating welcoming, inclusive spaces where everyone feels

safe and supported, we're paving the way for healthier, happier communities.



# Roots to Wellbeing



## Spaces of Serenity

In 265 sessions we have created reliable spaces of serenity and support amidst nature's embrace. Each session, averaging around 7 participants but up to 15, served as a sanctuary for those seeking solace and connection.

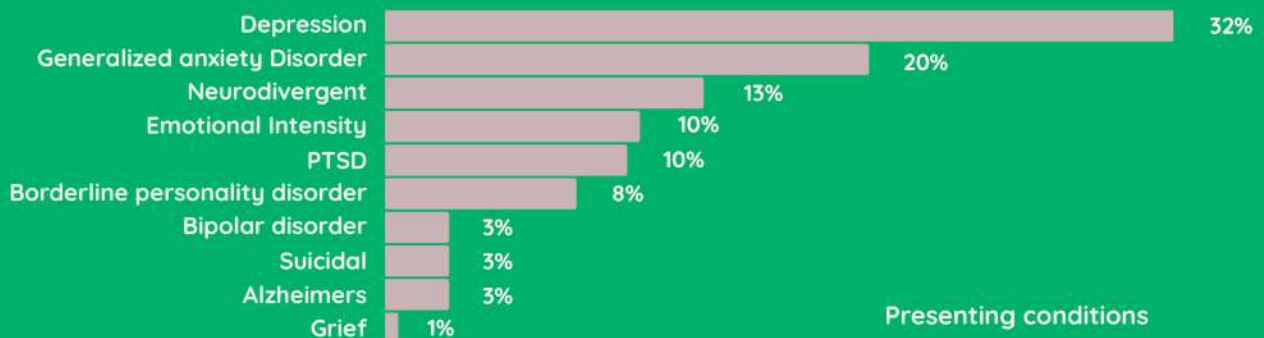
## Brighter Days Ahead

Picture this – over 50% of our participants reported a noticeable decrease in anxiety levels, whilst a whopping 76% expressed feeling measurably happier after engaging with our Roots to Wellbeing program. These numbers aren't just statistics. They represent countless smiles, eased minds, and renewed hope.

**76%**  
**FEEL HAPPIER**

## Embracing Connection

As we celebrate these numbers, let's not forget the countless stories of connection, resilience and growth that lie behind them. In fostering these connections, we're not just improving parks, we're building stronger, more vibrant communities.



## Inviting All In

Through targeted outreach efforts and engaging taster sessions, we have welcomed diverse members of our community into parks.

Through referrals from local organisation and health professionals, we created a space where individuals with diverse stresses and disorders could come and heal together.

## Life-changing pathways to brighter futures

We progressively reconnecting isolated individuals to social life through volunteering, employment, introduction to other services.

Nearly a third of our participants (29%) took significant strides forward through finding fulfilling volunteer opportunities or securing employment.

# 29%

**ENTERED INTO  
EMPLOYMENT OR  
VOLUNTEERING**

BE AMONGST FRIENDLY PEOPLE  
I WAS A LITTLE RETICENT ABOUT ATTENDING  
'OTHER' THERAPY GROUP BECAUSE SO MANY  
GROUPS HAD BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL. MY EXTREME  
ACTIVITY WAS NOT UNDERSTOOD BY THE OTHER  
ATTENDEES OR THE FACILITATORS WHO NEEDED ME TO  
'FIT IN' TO FULFILL THE NECESSARY CRITERIA OF THEIR  
COURSE.

AT ROOTS, I DISCOVERED SOMETHING COMPLETELY  
DIFFERENT, THEN MY LIFE CHANGED.  
AFTER 50 YEARS OF SUFFERING TO SOME DEGREE  
I FINALLY FELT AN ACCEPTANCE WITH OTHERS AND FOR  
MYSELF. I WAS AMONGST OTHER HIGHLY SENSITIVE  
PEOPLE WHO ALTHOUGH ANXIOUS, DEPRESSED AND  
OFTEN SOCIALLY WITHDRAWN WERE ACTUALLY 'REAL',  
WITHOUT PRETENSE OF FACADE AND TREATED ME AS A  
VALUED EQUAL. THIS WAS VERY HEALING FOR ME.

IT IS THE GENTLE, RELAXED AND FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE  
WITH THE KIND ACCEPTANCE AND ALLOWANCE TO 'JUST  
BE ME' THAT I FIND MOST PLEASING ABOUT ATTENDING

# Wild & Well



Wild and Well is all about rebuilding a community network around parks, reconnecting individuals who are passionate about green spaces and eager to make a positive impact. Through initiatives like recruiting **13 community champions** and organising networking events, we are fostering collaboration and engagement to revitalise parks for health and promote wellbeing in neighbourhoods.

## Action Heroes

Wild and Well isn't just talking the talk, we are walking the walk, quite literally, with nature walks and community meetings. We roll-up our sleeves, get our hands dirty and make a real difference where it counts—in our local parks and communities.

**400**  
**MEMBER**  
**GROUPS AND**  
**PROFESSIONALS**

## Community Power-Up

Imagine a team of local superheroes rallying their neighbourhoods, sharing stories, and igniting a spark of community pride. That's what Wild and Well's champions are all about. They're the heart and soul, bringing people together, and making sure everyone's voice is heard.



## Access

At Your Park Bristol & Bath, we believe that parks should be for everyone. Sadly the people who could most benefit from using parks, are least likely to access them.

Our approach is centred on breaking down barriers and ensuring that everyone feels welcome in our green spaces.

Through targeted research and community engagement, we're identifying the unique challenges faced by under-served communities. From Disabled people and unpaid caregivers to different ethnicities, we're working truly hand-in-hand to co-create solutions that make nature and green space more accessible and inclusive.

Our commitment to accessibility extends beyond park infrastructure. We champion social inclusion, ensuring that under-served communities have a voice in decision-making processes.



# Parks 4 All



Parks 4 All is the UK's first project to transform access to park heritage for Disabled people and carers, women and girls, minority ethnic groups, and people in low income areas. This improves park accessibility, enhances health and wellbeing and fosters a sense of ownership over local green spaces.

We co-developed Park Access Assessments (PAA) with DP&C. Residents and organisations use PAA to assess and report parks' accessibility so information is more accurate, appropriate enhancements can be made and activities introduced.

The PAA reveals key changes required for accessibility. We make small but vital changes to the least accessible sites or where an improvement would have the biggest impact.

We co-developed accessible nature-based volunteering including sensory walks and habitat creation. We also support other to fundraise for change.

With plans to expand the project to other parks in the future. The project also aims to raise awareness among local decision-makers and council officers to garner support for accessibility initiatives.

**85%**  
**CAN ACCESS  
PARKS MORE**

# Nature

Nature is supported by everything we do. Our parks are more than just recreational spaces, they're vibrant ecosystems teeming with life.

Parks provide nature connection opportunities on people's doorsteps. Through habitat enhancement projects and community gardening initiatives, we're nurturing biodiversity and creating thriving natural habitats for everyone to enjoy.

Our approach to nature goes beyond conservation. We're on a mission to reconnect people with the natural world, inspiring a sense of wonder and wellbeing.

From educational programmes to hands-on volunteering, we're empowering individuals to make a difference in their local environment and benefit from doing so.



# Park Activator Programme



The mission? To bring back the buzz of nature to green havens. We welcome the community to regular community gardening sessions across both cities, specifically targeting areas of green space and multiple deprivation.

The Programme empowers local communities, boosts biodiversity and has created sustainable habitats for pollinators in 55 parks. From wildflower seed sowing to plug planting, we are rolling-up our sleeves to make parks bloom like never before.

With over 600 volunteers getting their hands dirty, the Programme is making waves. We work with local businesses and universities too.

We have planted thousands of bulbs, built habitat enhancements such as bug hotels and nesting boxes and delivered top-notch training courses. And the feedback? It's all thumbs up from participants and FoGs, showing just how much the community cares.

# 87%

**UNDERSTAND  
HOW TO IMPROVE  
THE ENVIRONMENT**





# Thank you



We extend our sincere thanks to the following supporters on behalf of the community, for their substantial between 2019 to 2024.

Accenture  
 Airbus  
 Arcadis  
 Arup  
 Atkins Global  
 Aviva  
 Bath and North East Somerset Council  
 Bath University  
 BAE Systems Maritime  
 Bristol BID  
 Bristol City Council  
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 Wessex Water  
 Wildstar TV

**Our loyal Park Companions and every individual donor**




## Join us


Help thousands more people benefit from high quality, welcoming parks filled with nature and opportunities to connect.

**Donate** [yourpark.org.uk/support-us](https://yourpark.org.uk/support-us)

**Volunteer** [yourpark.org.uk/support-us](https://yourpark.org.uk/support-us)

**Partner** [yourpark.org.uk/partner](https://yourpark.org.uk/partner)

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Your Park Bristol & Bath is the working name of the Bristol & Bath Parks Foundation, a registered Charity in England and Wales no 1182217.