

IMPACT REPORT

2023/24



GROUNDWORK FIVE COUNTIES



> CHAIR'S STATEMENT

Welcome to our Impact Report for 2023/24, which was a significant period of change for us.

Our charity rebranded from Groundwork Greater Nottingham, a name we have carried for over 30 years, to Groundwork Five Counties. This reflects how the area in which we work has grown over the years.

Over the last year we have continued to pursue our strategy of 'People, Place and Planet'. We are passionate about creating a future where every neighbourhood is vibrant and green, every community is strong and able to shape its own destiny, and no-one is held back by their background or circumstances.

Our strategy defines our high-level purpose – together we can support more people to flourish, enjoy and care for the places around them, whilst being better guardians of our planet.

A heartfelt thank you to every Board and staff member for their hard work, to every partner for their support, and of course to our participants for their trust in us.

A special thanks goes to all our funders; without their financial support we could not serve our communities.

Margot Madin
Chair of Trustees



> FOREWORD

What an incredible year! Together, we've achieved remarkable milestones, empowering individuals and bringing communities closer than ever before.

We celebrated the success of our Building Better Opportunities (BBO) programme, which enhanced employability and transformed lives.

Its legacy lives on through our South Derbyshire-based employability programme Beyond Barriers, opening doors to brighter futures.

Our Green Doctor energy advice service expanded with a team of eleven, offering vital energy-saving advice and a new Damp & Disrepair service, creating healthier, happier homes. We also launched two vibrant green community hubs in Nottingham and Worksop, providing training, volunteering, and a sense of belonging.

Our landscape design and habitat management services continued to create stunning outdoor spaces, bringing people together while offering opportunities for skill development.

We're thrilled to share the full story of our impact within the pages of this report. Thank you for being part of our journey!

Penny Halewood
Executive Director





> ABOUT US

Groundwork Five Counties is a local community-based charity with a green heart. We respond to the wants and needs of the local area in partnership with likeminded organisations, charities, groups and individuals.

For years we have been delivering our projects across Nottinghamshire and areas of Derbyshire. Since our rebrand in 2023 to Groundwork Five Counties, we deliver in much of the East Midlands.

Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland are the five counties where we have the pleasure and privilege of providing outstanding community support.

We are part of the Federation of Groundwork Trusts, which comprises of Groundwork UK and fourteen independent Groundwork Trusts across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.



> VISION

We have a vision whereby together we can support more people to flourish, enjoy, and care for the places around them, whilst being better guardians of our planet.

> MISSION

To empower local communities to live their lives more sustainably. We achieve our vision by:

- > **Engaging**
People are at the heart of what we do.
- > **Understanding**
We listen to the wants, needs and aspirations of local people and their communities.
- > **Responding**
We design appropriate solutions in partnership.
- > **Enabling**
People, communities and organisations are empowered to be part of their own solution.

>> PEOPLE | PLACE | PLANET

> OBJECTIVES

> We are enabling local people

We help people improve their lives and their communities by providing sustainable solutions.

> We are rejuvenating local green spaces

We support people to protect and improve their local green spaces so that all lives flourish.

> We are helping people into green jobs and volunteering

We develop pathways of opportunity to help people into green jobs and volunteering, ensuring we can all be better guardians of our planet



> OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS 2023/24



20,119

beneficiaries supported
across all our projects



119 people

supported into work,
education or training



292 volunteers

gave us 136 days of their
time, valued at £47,000



£107,000

worth of grants
distributed to **91** projects



198 organisations

advised on environmental
and social responsibilities



9,300 hectares

of landscape restored
= 13,025 football fields



3,692

people supported by our Green
Doctor energy efficiency experts



£234,000

total domestic
utility bill savings



122

tonnes of CO2e saved
= driving 361,300 miles



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

> TOWARDS WORK - BUILDING BETTER OPPORTUNITIES (BBO)

7 year project supporting people of all ages and backgrounds to take steps towards getting into work.

Our priority was putting the participant and their needs first. Many experienced low confidence, poor mental health, didn't know what they wanted, or were unsure where to start.

Participants were given a Work Coach, a personalised Action Plan to establish milestones and work through barriers, and online resources. We supported people to get into training or work placements to build up their confidence, experience and skills.

Simultaneously, we worked with local businesses to enable them to let us know what type of candidate they were looking for; allowing us to match participants directly with potential employers.

Out of 3,689 participants:

- > 1,714 had disabilities
- > 782 were over 50 years of age
- > 450 were from ethnic minorities
- > 606 moved into education/training after our support
- > 583 economically inactive people moved into employment or job searching
- > 424 unemployed participants moved into employment





ELLIE'S STORY

Ellie came to the BBO programme feeling isolated, anxious, and she didn't leave the house much. She had been bullied in school and was facing a serious health issue which had left her withdrawn and unable to find employment after leaving school.

By advocating for her, Ellie was given support for her health condition from her GP. With these issues now looked after better, we focused on helping her explore what kind of work she may be interested in. Customer service roles were considered for Ellie, as her job coach believed it would help with her anxiety.

We helped her find and apply for a customer service role in a museum. Ellie worked hard to prepare for the interview and, with the help of our work coach, got the job. She now has a renewed sense of purpose, confidence and feels, most importantly, happy and proud with herself!

Watch Ellie's video by [clicking here](#)

> BEYOND BARRIERS

Following on from the success of BBO, we set up a new holistic employability programme in South Derbyshire, supporting economically inactive individuals to become work-ready.

This support is bespoke to the individual and what they want to achieve; gaining new skills, building up confidence, overcoming barriers, taking steps to get into work, volunteering or education.

Find out more:

www.groundwork.org.uk/beyond-barriers



LIAM'S STORY

25-year-old Liam from Swadlincote has been getting support from Community Coach Claire.

He says: "I've worked with Claire for the last six weeks and in that short time she's improved my confidence, helped me write a really good CV, prepare for interviews and apply for jobs.

"I'm really happy to say I've now got a new job and it's all thanks to her.

"She's been amazing and always there for me. She's helped me throughout the whole process and the result has been fantastic. I can't wait to start my job!"



> GREEN DOCTOR

It has been a very busy year for our Green Doctor project, as our team grew from just one Green Doctor to eleven!

Green Doctors are energy-efficiency experts that help save money on household bills and keep homes warm and healthy.

Their impartial advice helps people take control of their bills, reduce energy waste in the home, and live more sustainably. We provide energy efficiency measures; LED light bulbs, radiator foil and draught excluders.

We help people switch energy providers and access other support where needed. This could be emergency heating, fuel vouchers, benefits or grants, and advice on energy or water debt.

This service is available to people of any age and background, whether they own, rent, are a council or social housing tenant.

Find out more:

www.groundwork.org.uk/fivecounties/green-doctor



3,692

people supported



£234,000

total savings



122 t CO2e saved

= driving 361,300 miles



Photo credit:
Plumb Images



ASHITA'S STORY

Ashita from Leicester was facing an incredibly difficult situation. After losing her husband to cancer, she was left alone with two young children and no idea how to manage the household finances, since everything had been in her husband's name.

She struggled to pay her energy bills or understand what she needed to do.

Green Doctor Cath immediately helped her get emergency supplies from a local food bank to see her through the week. Cath visited Ashita at home to go over her paperwork, helping her navigate the household's finances and apply for benefits. This made Ashita feel more confident to manage the bills going forward.

Cath also showed Ashita how to save money around the home, including changing heating settings, installing draught excluders and radiator foil, and advising on small behavioural changes that result in a reduction of energy consumption.

Ashita was given as much support from Cath as she could, then signposted local organisations that could help her further, offering some peace of mind during such a tough time.



> DAMP & DISREPAIR

Every home should be a safe and healthy place. Damp & Disrepair uses the Green Doctor's expertise and works with social housing landlords and their tenants.

We visit homes specified by the landlord, to identify and tackle the root causes of damp and get issues fixed quickly.

The tenant is given advice on keeping their home in good order, how to make the most of their energy and save money on bills.

This results in improved mental and physical wellbeing, and safer, healthier, more comfortable homes – for the tenant to live in, and for their landlord as part of their housing stock.

The tenant receives a follow-up call two months later, to ensure our advice has been put into practice, and check whether repairs have taken place.

We also offer residents' workshops, designed to build understanding of the importance of proper home maintenance.

Find out more:

www.groundwork.org.uk/damp-disrepair

We visited 200 properties:

- > £44,204 total savings on energy bills per year
- > 53,842 kg of CO2 per year saved = driving 160,000 miles
- > 3,766,920 litres of water per year saved = filling a 25-metre pool 5.8 times

This averages per household:

- > £221 savings per year
- > 269 kg of CO2 per year saved = driving 800 miles
- > 18,834 litres of water per year saved = running a tap for 3,139 minutes





TRACY'S STORY

Tracy from Retford received a visit from Green Doctor Dawn, who advised she turn down her boiler temperature and flow to save money.

Dawn also advised Tracy sets her thermostat to a constant 18 degrees, rather than turning it on high when she comes in from the cold, to keep her home at a constant temperature.

Tracy used to pay £1 a day for her gas, but after following Dawn's advice she's only paying 14 pence per day, allowing her to save hundreds of pounds over the year!

Tracy can now use the money she saves to do fun activities with her grandchildren.

FREE DAMP & DISREPAIR TRIAL

We offer free Damp & Disrepair trials so you can test the positive impact of our service on your housing portfolio.

This can take the form of a number of home visits to addresses you are worried about or have experienced issues with before.

By working with a well-established charity, you can open doors, start conversations and resolve tenants' issues – preventing complaints to the Ombudsman or costly claim farmers, while improving your housing stock.

Find out more:

www.groundwork.org.uk/damp-disrepair

> SMILE - BEFRIENDING

Far too many people live with loneliness and in isolation. It can mean days, weeks or even months, without regular contact with friends, loved ones, neighbours, or strangers.

This silent epidemic often affects those who are unemployed, retired, or have disabilities.

Our SMILE befriending programme aimed to bring people together, offering weekly phone calls or visits from a volunteer befriender. Volunteers provided support, from just listening to assisting with appointments, walks, and other activities.

We hosted monthly community events for people to meet and do activities, with our volunteers in attendance to ensure participants would always know at least one friendly face.

This project came to an end in March 2023, but not before we made sure each participant was given the tools and resources to continue the good work we did with them.

18 volunteer befrienders across Nottingham:

- > supported **225 people** to be less socially isolated
- > helped **167 people** take part in sport and physical activity
- > encouraged **84 people** to attend community-based activities





> HONG KONG BNO

The Hong Kong British National Overseas (HK BNO) scheme enables visa holders and their dependents to live in the UK.

We supported Hong Kongers in Nottinghamshire integrate into their new life, through one-to-one support and community events.

We progressed their English language skills and understanding of British culture, helped them to navigate health care services and schools, developed their employment skills, and improved their overall wellbeing.

This project ended in 2024 but further employability support for Hong Kongers started later in the year.

Find out more:

www.groundwork.org.uk/hong-kong

We supported:

- > 247 people to integrate into their local community
- > 129 people develop language skills for socialising and/or work
- > 104 people with their employment skills and find employment
- > 44 people to access education
- > 35 community events in Nottingham and Worksop



GRANT MANAGEMENT



£107,000 in funding
distributed to **91** projects



> TESCO COMMUNITY GRANTS

Tesco Stronger Starts is a quarterly community grant offering up to **£1,500** for local causes.

We promote the scheme, assist with applications, and act as a liaison. Each quarter, three causes are voted on in Tesco stores, with prizes of £500, £1,000, and £1,500.

Every six months in selected Tesco stores the Golden Token draw takes place. One lucky customer who finds the golden token can choose which local organisation wins an extra £5,000!

Find out more: www.tescostrongerstarts.org.uk



> AREA BASED GRANTS - NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

From 2019 - 2024, we were the Lead Organisation for the Nottingham City Council's Area Based Grants programme in Area 3 (Aspley, Bilborough, and Leen Valley).

We partnered with 12 local organisations to deliver services supporting community associations and the voluntary sector. We managed the grants scheme, oversaw projects and monitored progress.

We participated in area forums to address local needs, including sport. One of the funded projects was the Premier League Kicks football programme to encourage 8-18 year olds to be more active.

After the programme ended, we helped partners develop their own direct services. In total, we distributed **£245,682** to **11 local groups**.



> HOLIDAY ACTIVITY FUND

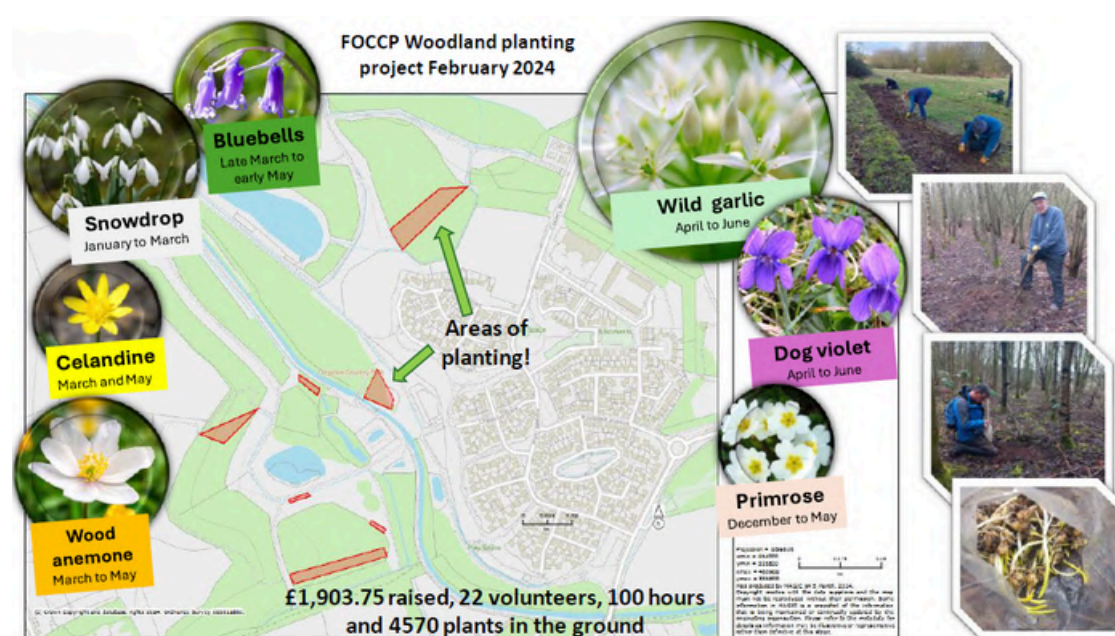
We distributed **£84,292 of grants** by managing Nottingham City Council's Holiday Activities with the Area 3 Partnership.

The funding supported children eligible for free school meals or deemed vulnerable, helping them access healthy food, stay active, and engage in activities promoting personal development, education, safety, and social inclusion during school holidays.



The Toy Library in Nottingham was funded through this project. During children's play sessions healthy food was made available, which would disappear as quickly as it was put out!

In addition to feeding hungry kids, attendees received recipe kits to take home, complete with ingredients to make fun, healthy meals with their families, teaching them about healthy eating through a hands-on cooking activity.



> SAVE OUR WILD ISLES

The Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund was founded by RSPB, WWF, and Avida.

It supported local communities in taking action for nature by matching £2 for every £1 raised.

As a bid enabler, we assisted communities with applications, delivery plans, and fundraising pages, while also promoting the Fund through community events and serving as a local ambassador.

We worked with **248 individuals** and hosted/attended **15 promotional events** and **43 networking events**.



GREEN SPACES



> WELLIES IN THE WOODS & GET INTO NATURE

Being outside is proven to be good for mental and physical health, but many children are spending their formative years inside.

Wellies in the Woods and Get into Nature are two play groups that encourage children and their grown-ups to go outdoors and enjoy local green spaces. Session blocks typically last between 6-8 weeks, providing a weekly outing with free or low-cost activities that can be replicated at home.

By combining play with education and creativity, families can experience how fun being outside is, improve their wellbeing, make new friends, and spark a love for nature.

We offer a variety of activities, including interactive story time, scavenger hunts, crafting, and learning about nature. Why not take a look and see if we are running sessions in your area, and come have fun?

Find out more:

www.groundwork.org.uk/wellies

Results:

- > **461 children and adults** took part
- > Over **85%** of parents reported **improved mental wellbeing**, including self confidence and sense of achievement
- > Over **90%** of parents reported **improved connection with nature**, including children wanting to play outdoors
- > Over **60%** of parents reported **improved skills** like attention, listening, sharing, etc.
- > **New friendships** and **support networks** formed for families
- > **Children with SEND** were able to participate on the same level as those without SEND



9,300 hectares

of landscape restored
= 13,025 football fields



292 volunteers

gave us 136 days of their
time, valued at £47,000



> HABITAT MANAGEMENT

We are dedicated to enhancing green spaces for the benefit of communities and the environment.

We work alongside 'Friends of' volunteering groups and recruit our own volunteers. We offer training in green skills, fostering pride in local spaces, and improving mental and physical wellbeing.

Our team handles various habitat management tasks suitable for all ages and abilities, from litter picking and wildlife recording to coppicing and hay raking.

To find out more about volunteering, visit:

www.groundwork.org.uk/fivecounties/get-involved

> CORPORATE SUPPORT

We're proud to have the support of businesses in the East Midlands.

In September 2023, we hosted a corporate volunteering day for British Gas Zero staff at New Lount Nature Reserve, Coalville.

Twenty staff members helped clear overgrown areas, create wildlife habitats, and improve accessibility. The partnership highlighted the positive impact corporate volunteers can have on local ecosystems.

Corporate volunteering fosters team bonding, giving back to their community, and gives employees the chance to try something new. A rewarding workday for all involved! Participants said:

"This is so much better than being behind a desk."

"The day has been fantastic! I hope British Gas gives us the chance to come back next year and work with you guys."

Find out more:

www.groundwork.org.uk/fivecounties/corporate



> LANDSCAPE DESIGN

We strongly believe in the transformative power of green spaces and landscapes. Everyone needs inspirational places for learning, playing, meeting friends or just passing through.

Places that are a home for nature, that people enjoy, and that help to attract business investment. In 2023/24 we provided full landscape design services - from inception to completion.

This included community engagement such as consultations and workshops, strategic assessments and feasibility studies, full design and implementation of works, and maintenance of the sites.



SELSTON COUNTRY PARK

We took on this project on behalf of Ashfield District Council, to make Selston Country Park in Nottingham park more inviting for families.

We implemented a large climbing centre piece, packed with challenges and fun for children which provide physical, social and cognitive benefits.



BEFORE



AFTER

CO-OP BRETBY CREMATORIUM

This crematorium in Burton on Trent wanted to make improvements to their entrance, which was just a patch of grass.

We incorporated improvements to the pavement surfacing around the pond area, driveway and entrance, with many new plants and shrubs to give the area a better and more sustainable feeling.

Co-op also wanted to give visitors a quiet, beautiful place to sit and find peace. Two empty brick courtyards were identified to turn into something meaningful.

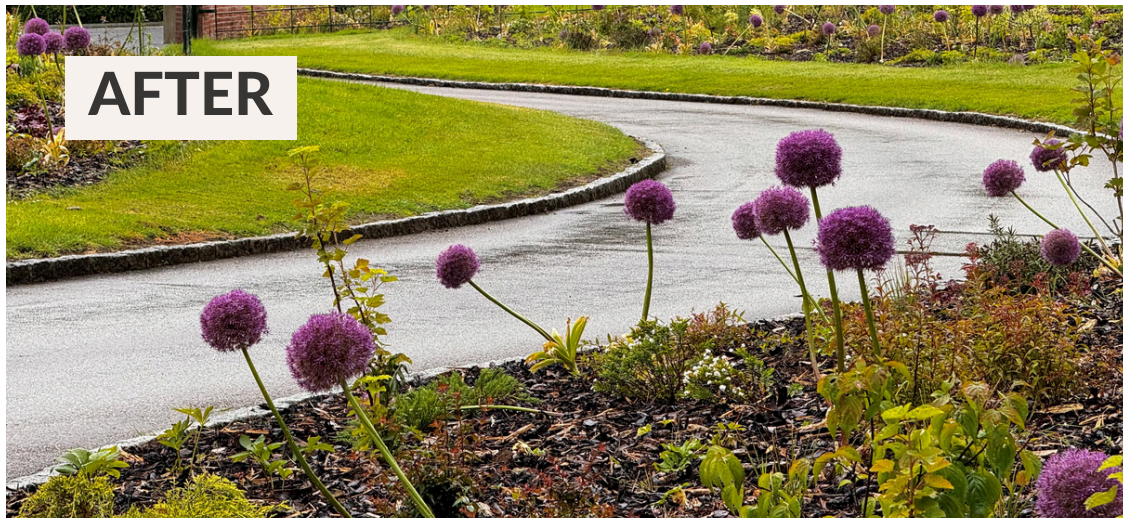
We transformed the 'Cedar' and 'Willow' courtyards into inviting, accessible spaces to reflect and remember.

We used sustainable and recycled materials, we planted shrubs and plants in muted colours in raised beds.

BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE:
WILLOW COURTYARD



AFTER:
WILLOW COURTYARD



BEFORE:
CEDAR COURTYARD



AFTER:
CEDAR COURTYARD



THANK YOU



We are so grateful to everyone who has supported us this year - volunteers, funders, partners, and Trustees.

Every minute of time given, every pound of funding, and every promotional effort goes towards fulfilling our commitments and supporting **People, Place, and Planet.**

With special thanks to our funders:

Amber Valley Borough Council
 Ashfield District Council
 Bassetlaw District Council
 Bolsover District Council
 Bassetlaw CVS
 Boots Charitable Trust
 British Gas Warmer Homes
 British Gas Zero
 Broxtowe Borough Council
 Cadent Foundation
 Cemex
 Central Government via Inspire Culture
 Comic Relief
 Community Vaccine Champions Fund
 Department for Levelling Up, Housing
 & Communities
 Derbyshire County Council

Duffield Millennium Trust
 Duffield Parish Council
 Education and Skills Funding Agency -
 Community and Family Learning -
 Nottingham City Council
 Energy Industry Voluntary Redress
 Scheme
 Enterprise car rental
 Football Foundation via Active
 Notts/Derbyshire Trust
 Gedling Borough Council
 Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire and
 Merseyside
 Groundwork East
 Groundwork UK
 Heanor & Loscoe Town Council
 Housing Plus Group

Jones 1986 Charitable Trust
 Lady Hind Trust
 Matlock Town Council
 National Energy Action
 National Grid (Community Matters
 Fund- Fuel Poverty)
 National Grid (Energy Affordability
 Fund)
 National Lottery Community Fund and
 European Social Fund
 National Lottery Community Fund
 National Lottery Heritage Trust via
 Groundwork UK
 Nottingham City Council
 Nottingham College
 RS Logistics

Rushcliffe Borough Council
 Save our Wild Isles
 SEGRO
 Shakespeare Martineau
 South Derbyshire District Council
 Tesco Stronger Starts
 The Co-operative Bank
 The Gray Trust
 The Land Trust
 The National Forest Company
 The Warburtons Foundation
 Thomas Farr Charity via
 Nottinghamshire Community
 Foundation
 UK Shared Prosperity Funding
 William H Brown



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