



OUR IMPACT

A 5 year review
2020 - 2025

Groundwork Cheshire,
Lancashire and Merseyside.



OUR MISSION

We take practical action to create a fair and green future in which people, places and nature thrive.

WE HELP PEOPLE IMPROVE THEIR PROSPECTS

Increasing confidence, skills, wellbeing and employability and helping those out of work find jobs in the green economy.

WE HELP PEOPLE CREATE BETTER PLACES

Making communities greener, healthier and better prepared for the future and enabling people to work together to bring about change in their local area.

WE HELP PEOPLE PROTECT THE PLANET

Supporting people and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, cut waste and take practical action to combat climate change.



Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside
Impact Review 2020 - 2025





FOREWORD

Remarkably, this year marks Groundwork's 44th year as a charity.

It's a milestone that invites reflection, a moment to acknowledge the remarkable journey Groundwork has undertaken. While the landscape around us has shifted dramatically, particularly in the last five years, one constant remains: our unwavering dedication to changing places and changing lives.

This impact review offers a glimpse into how we are continuing to fulfill that commitment, restoring pride in communities, confronting the climate and nature emergencies and empowering individuals to build brighter futures. We've expanded our reach and deepened our impact by launching new programmes, forging strategic partnerships and venturing into new territories. Collaboration is at the heart of our approach, recognising that true change is achieved together.

This report showcases our work alongside communities, revitalising green spaces for both people and wildlife and demonstrates our commitment to delivering tangible results. Yet, we are driven to achieve even more. Our commitment to environmental stewardship remains paramount, ensuring that every action we take prioritises the health of our planet. We will continue to build upon the positive momentum we've created in our green and blue spaces, fostering thriving ecosystems and vibrant communities.

Groundwork's achievements are a testament to the power of collective action. I'd to extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who continues to support our mission. Together, we are transforming lives and landscapes and creating a more sustainable and equitable future for all.



A. J. Darron

Andrew Darron
Executive Director

5 YEAR REVIEW



Improving peoples' prospects



1897

people supported into education, training, or employment



2037

formal qualifications gained



451

projects delivered



211

schools and educational establishments supported



4862

young people supported to learn and achieve



Creating better places



124

public spaces improved



15.2 Million

M² of land maintained or actively managed



12,097

trees planted



123k

hours of volunteer time



3750

volunteers actively involved



£1.1 Million

value of volunteering



12,308

businesses supported



Protecting the planet



7,792

Green Doctor and other household visits



11,875

people helped to reduce domestic energy use, water use and waste to landfill



£189k

potential domestic carbon savings



£844k

potential domestic energy savings via Green Doctor advice

Improving peoples' prospects

Ken's new start



**DELIVERY
PARTNER**

A young man from Cameroon says that Groundwork's King's Trust Team Programme has helped him to make a great start to his new life in the UK.

Asanji Dariel Ken, or Ken as he's known, came to England fresh from finishing his GCSEs. The move reunited Ken with his mother, who had been living and working in the country for several years. Eager to continue his education, Ken, who was aged 17 at the time, soon faced a setback. With the academic year well underway, starting college straight away wasn't an option. He spent the next few months at home, struggling to find a purpose and gradually becoming more isolated and bored. That all changed when somebody suggested the King's Trust Team Programme.

The programme helped Ken to make new friends and gave him the confidence and motivation to take a positive step forward in his life. He is currently studying for T Levels in computing at Wigan college and looking forward to a bright future.

"I would 100% recommend this course to anyone who wants to do more with their life."



Groundwork has managed the Team Programme across Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside for over 30 years, changing 1000s of young peoples' lives.

Groundwork was the perfect place to start my career

Lots of young people leaving colleges and universities struggle to start their careers. Especially one that would make good use of their qualifications.

Many end up having to rely on Universal Credit to support them whilst trying to find employment. This included Nidal, then aged 25 from Wigan, who has a Master of Science degree in Environmental Science.

After completing his degree and relocating from his hometown in the south to the north, Nidal spent many months feeling frustrated and demotivated by the lack of suitable job opportunities available. Even with many hours of volunteering at conservation charities in England and Wales, he was beginning to wonder if he would ever make use of his degree.

When the Job Centre told him about the government's Kickstart scheme, it was a huge turning point for Nidal. After successfully applying for the role of Conservation Trainee, he worked as part of the Trust's environmental team. It not only provided him with paid employment, but also a chance to gain valuable workplace experience in a varied and very 'hands on' role, which he loved. Nidal grabbed this opportunity with both hands, gaining new skills and knowledge, a new found confidence and a strong CV. This enabled him to secure the type of permanent job role he wanted, as an Environmental Monitoring Technician.

Since then, Nidal's career has gone from strength to strength. Now aged 28, Nidal is currently working in a hybrid role of Environmental Scientist and Ecologist at Canal River Trust covering the North West.

"Groundwork was the perfect place to start my career in the environmental sector.

I gained practical conservation skills and experience that I still use today. The Groundwork team provided me with an incredible, inclusive working environment that made going to work a pleasure!"

Nidal



Aspiring accountant Nali Has His Future All Figured Out

An aspiring accountant from Wigan is an inspiring example of how work experience placements can benefit both students and companies.

Nali (17) always had a head for figures. So it came as no surprise when he decided to study T Level Accountancy at Wigan and Leigh College.

As part of the course you are also required to gain practical, 'real world' work experience and that's where Groundwork came in. When the College got in touch to ask if we could offer a work placement, we were delighted to provide an opportunity to a suitable candidate. After a successful interview, Nali joined our Finance team.

For 11 months, Nali worked for 1 day each week and was based at our Head Office in Wigan. During this time he supported a variety of teams and projects, gaining over 350 hours of practical accountancy experience in areas including sales and purchase ledger and project accounting. He also became proficient in using the latest accountancy software, including Sage.



“Being immersed in a real-world professional setting, has helped me advance my skills and given me practical insights that can't be taught in the classroom.”

Nali

From rock bottom to meeting royalty

A young man from Wigan has spoken of his amazing journey from feeling rock bottom, to sharing his ideas for an app with Apple and meeting King Charles.

Dan (23) says that this amazing transformation in his life all came about thanks to the Team Programme, which is delivered by Groundwork, in partnership with the King's Trust. “After moving to a new area I found it really difficult to make new friends and was just staying in my room all day. It felt like I had reached my rock bottom.”

As part of the programme, the team was invited to the King's Trust North West headquarters in Manchester. The group took part in a session about developing ideas for useful apps, with everyone's suggestions sent off to Apple as part of a competition. Dan's idea for an app about hospital waiting times led to him and another team member being invited to Apple Headquarters in London to discuss it further. This included an overnight stay in a hotel and the opportunity to meet and present their ideas to King Charles.

The programme gave Dan's confidence a huge boost and he has since gone on to secure full-time employment at a local contact centre, which he is thoroughly enjoying.



“This course is the best thing I have ever done.

It has completely changed my outlook on life.”

Dan



Improving peoples' prospects



1897

people supported into education, training, or employment



2037

formal qualifications gained



4862

young people supported to learn and achieve

Getting lives back on track

Our employment and skills programmes support people with mental health issues, isolation and digital exclusion. We provide training, support job searching and help build confidence, to enable people to get their lives back on track and achieve their ambitions and goals.

FROM BENEFICIARY TO EMPLOYEE

Lee Cunliffe recently joined the Trust as a part-time receptionist. Lee had previously completed our Roots To Wellbeing programme and is a great example of how it changes lives. Lee says that taking part in Roots To Wellbeing gave her the courage to overcome her anxiety and the skills and confidence to find employment. She is really enjoying her new role and has quickly become a valued member of our team.

“I feel valued and accepted and I look forward to coming into work everyday.” - Lee



FROM WORK EXPERIENCE TO MANAGER

Being offered a work placement at a local care home as part of her King's Trust Team programme, became a turning point in Elle's life. The programme helped her confidence to blossom and she made the most of this opportunity. Her employers were so impressed that they soon offered her a job.

Fast forward 2 years and Elle not only gained adult social care qualifications, but progressed to becoming the manager of the home and its 17 staff.



Creating better places

Business Improvement Districts

More and more businesses around the country are benefiting from the advantages that being part of a **Business Improvement District (BID)** can bring.

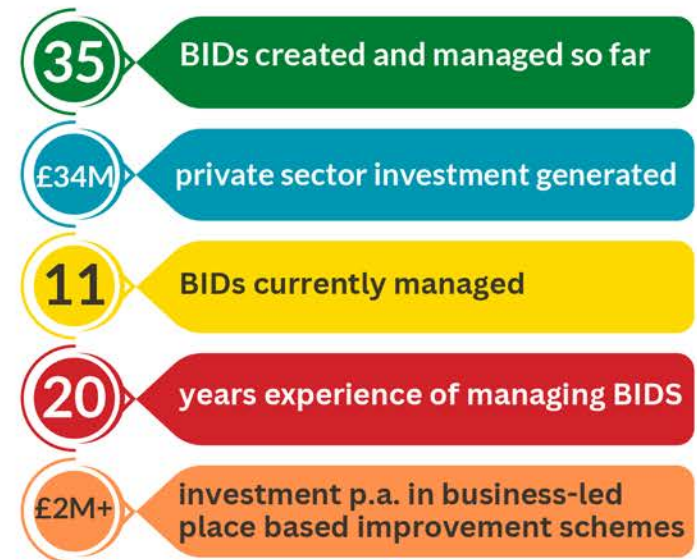
BIDs are a way for businesses to work together and fund extra services or improvements to their areas, creating safe, clean and vibrant locations in which business can thrive.

Groundwork is widely recognised as one of the UK's leading BID experts. For over 40 years we have been working with businesses, communities and public sector partners to create more sustainable communities. During this time we've supported the creation of 35 BIDs, releasing over £34 million of investment, principally in the North West of England.

We have led multiple BID development projects in town and city centre locations including Chester, Crewe, Keighley, Warrington, Northwich, Blackburn, Burnley, Wilmslow and Winsford.

“Groundwork’s BID team have been instrumental in raising the town’s profile at a local and regional level and supporting us when times have been difficult.”

Ellis Wardle - business owner, Northwich.



BID HELPS WARRINGTON TO THRIVE

When Warrington BID had just begun in 2018, it was a very difficult and uncertain time for the world generally and for the retail and hospitality sector in particular. The outbreak of COVID, the introduction of lockdowns and restrictions and changes to the levying system for businesses meant that the initial plans for the BID almost had to be completely overhauled.

Seven years on, the BID continues to go from strength to strength, fostering a thriving local economy and proving a catalyst for positive change.

Ian Cox is the Centre Director for the Golden Square Shopping Centre in Warrington. Having worked in the area for 20 years, Ian can offer a unique perspective when it comes to summarising the impact that the BID has had in the last 7 years.

Ian says “Before the BID there’d been many previous attempts to bring businesses together in a coordinated way to deliver positive change. Ultimately, despite the will and the skills of everyone involved, these efforts were either unsuccessful or short lived, largely because businesses were not working together in a joined-up way.”

“The BID and Groundwork have fundamentally changed this. They have brought everyone together, identifying key issues like marketing and crime reduction and involving them in developing and delivering effective solutions. Working in a more cohesive way has created positive relationships between different stakeholders and also improved communication. Whereas people previously acted independently, they now work together. This means that events and other initiatives are more coordinated, expertly project managed and ultimately more successful.”

WE ARE

Warrington BID



“Groundwork is at the forefront of driving positive change and they’ve already become firmly established as a valued partner within Warrington.”

Ian Cox,
Centre Director,
Golden Square Shopping Centre.

“The BIDs work in developing a positive brand and an identity for Warrington, as well as a social media presence has also made a massive difference. ‘We Are Warrington’ has helped to instil pride in the local area and a recognisable banner under which to communicate the positive changes that are taking place, as well as promoting our regular events.”

“As the BID has developed, so has the business community’s confidence to develop and invest in big events that encourage visitors to the area. Examples like the Christmas Light Switch On and Krazy Races have not only attracted huge crowds, but have also helped Warrington to raise its positive profile across the North West region and beyond.”

“Groundwork has done an amazing job co-ordinating the BID and I have nothing but praise for the hard work and commitment of everyone involved.”



32,728

visitors attended the Krazy Races 2024 event in Warrington



Business Park BIDs currently managed by Groundwork



Town Centre BIDs currently managed by Groundwork



The hub helping a community to grow

Grow Speke is a green community hub in South Liverpool.

It's difficult to believe that just 7 years ago, it was previously a wasteland that attracted anti-social behaviour.

Thanks to a partnership between Groundwork, South Liverpool Homes and the local community, it is now a vibrant community garden and food growing hub where the local community can make new friends, learn new skills and improve their own health and wellbeing.

The site hosts a variety of activities throughout the week that are accessible and free to all. These include;

- food growing and cooking
- horticulture and gardening
- education and training
- health and wellbeing
- arts and crafts
- learning about nature, conservation and biodiversity.

Food grown on site is donated to local people and their families via local community groups. The remainder is taken home by the volunteers themselves as a thank you for their help.

The site contains a polytunnel, 25 timber raised beds, a fruit orchard, 2 ponds and a colourful native wildflower meadow. There is also an apiary with 7 beehives and a registered beekeeper, who looks after the bees on the site. Honey is harvested and sold in jars, with proceeds used to fund the bees' upkeep.



NORTHERN NETWORK

A movement connecting green community hubs

After more than a decade of successfully creating and managing community growing projects across Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside, the Trust now co-ordinates a network of Green Community Hubs across the North of England.

In 2022, Groundwork's Northern Network Pilot secured funding from The National Lottery Community Fund to facilitate the creation of a network of Green Community Hubs. The Northern Network included Groundwork trusts in: Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside, Greater Manchester, North East & Cumbria, South & North Tyneside and Yorkshire.

The aim of this pilot project was twofold. Firstly, to support the development of Green Community Hubs across the North of England, supported by facilitators within the Northern Network Groundwork Trusts. Secondly, to establish the Northern Network as an online and offline network to connect the Green Community Hubs, people, organisations and communities involved in the grassroots development and delivery of Green Community Hubs (GCHs) in the North.

The Northern Network recently secured further funding to expand the project and is currently in its second phase, building momentum to co-create 30 new green community hubs, strengthening its support for already existing hubs and building the wider movement.



In first 12 months





Leaving A Legacy: Windmill Hill Big Local 2014 - 25

In 2013, Windmill Hill in Runcorn was given £1 Million by the Lottery Fund to make their area an even better place to live. In common with other Big Local areas, a resident-led partnership was set up, supported by a number of partners and agencies, to take on the role of developing the plan and overseeing the implementation of projects. Groundwork was appointed as the 'Locally Trusted Organisation' (LTO).

This Big Local Programme will run until August 2025 and the partnership recently took the opportunity to reflect on their impact over the last 10 years. Below are just a few examples:

St Berts Community Hub

Opened in February 2024, this fully accessible community space includes a commercial kitchen. It is used daily by a variety of groups, hosting everything from archery and advice surgeries, to ukulele classes and is also available for community hire.

Improved connectivity with services.

Since 2016, £650k of debt has been written off and local people have accessed over £350k in additional benefits. Just the Citizens Advice Bureau alone has supported over 600 people with over 6000 issues.

Setting up a Youth Club

Through a partnership with Vibe, a Youth Club was created which currently has 144 registered members. Funding has also been identified to continue this vital and popular service.

Events and Activities

Regular events like coach trips, craft clubs, photography classes and community lunches help bring the community together. Increasing community engagement has reduced isolation, built confidence, improved wellbeing and connected different generations.

Community Leadership Academy (CLA)

This academy is a unique feature of skills development within the project. So far, 2 partnership volunteers have completed CLA training, which has helped them to develop leadership and communication skills that will be used to benefit the local community.

Community pride

Regular litter picking events, including use of canal fishing magnets have helped to improve streets, woodlands and waterways in the area. Volunteers working to remove litter in Windmill Hill Woods have since secured the contract with the Woodland Trust to deliver this work commercially.





Garden Cuts Hospital Stays

A green therapy project in Blackpool is helping to reduce the amount of time patients are spending in hospital.

The sensory garden at Clifton Hospital, which includes a polytunnel, was designed and built by Groundwork, in partnership with Blackpool Teaching Hospitals. This previously neglected area now provides a haven where patients, their families and hospital staff can learn new skills, engage with nature and each other.

Regular gardening sessions, alongside 'Wellbeing Wednesdays', have helped people to become more active and mobile and created a sense of community within the ward.

Annie, who is a Nursing Assistant on Ward 2 says; "The project has really helped patients in their rehabilitation and made a visible difference to their health and wellbeing. Patients are making an effort to get up, get dressed and get out into the garden. There's a buzz after each session and everyone gets really enthusiastic talking to each other about what they've done and how they are going to use these skills when they get home."

In the last 4 months, patients have spent over 260 volunteer hours in the garden and the average time patients spend on the ward has been reduced by 9 days."

"This project has really helped patients in their rehabilitation and made a visible difference to their health and wellbeing."

Annie, Nursing Assistant, Ward 2



Creating better places



9 days

reduction in time spent on ward



260

hours of patient volunteering time from Sept- Dec 2024

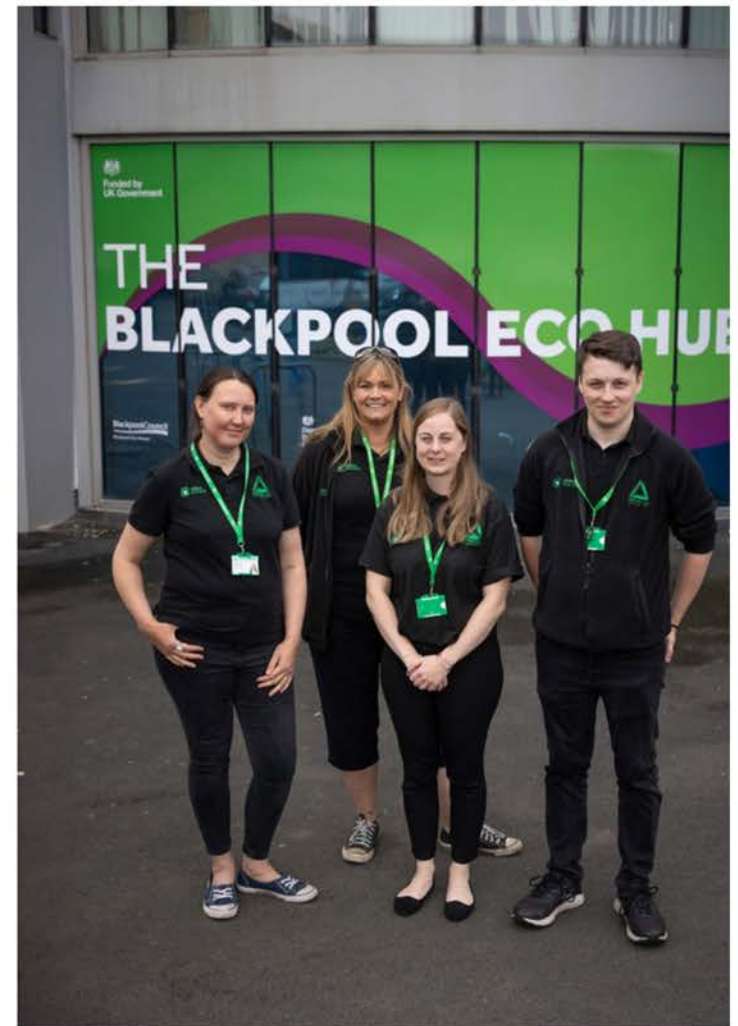
Protecting the planet

BLACKPOOL'S FIRST EVER ECO-HUB

Blackpool's first-ever eco-hub opened in 2024, with a mission to make homes more energy efficient and to make people and the planet healthier and happier.

The new centre has quickly become THE place to go for free impartial advice from experienced advisors that can help you save energy and reduce your fuel bills. With more and more people interested in improving the energy efficiency of their homes and moving away from fossil fuels, the hub also offers a retrofit advice service for homeowners and landlords.

Visitors can explore the latest low-carbon and renewable technologies in action and learn how to transform their homes for a sustainable future. The hub provides independent advice on experienced suppliers, available grants and financing options. Located in the Palatine Library on St Annes Road, the eco-hub is managed by Groundwork in partnership with Blackpool Council.



Green Doctors

Within the last 5 years, changes to the rules on Winter Fuel Payments and an increase in the cost of living have led to more people being in fuel poverty. The number of people needing support to stay warm and well has therefore continued to increase. Our Green Doctor service has continued to develop and now helps more people, in more ways and in more areas than ever before.

Our team is currently working across the region, from Blackpool to Cheshire. In addition to advice and support, the team has recently been able to provide financial assistance through the Winter Support Fund, with eligible households receiving supermarket vouchers and energy vouchers worth up to £100. Air fryers, slow cookers, microwaves, heated electric blankets and self-heated mattress toppers are also available

More recently we have been able to provide white goods for the first time.

Sheila's Story

After realising her electricity meter hadn't been registering properly, 83 year old Sheila was told that she owed thousands of pounds on her energy bill. Our Green Doctors were able to speak to the energy suppliers on Sheila's behalf and her debt was eventually written off.



I am so grateful to have had help from the Green Doctor because I would not have been able to do this on my own."

Sheila



Protecting the planet



7,792

Green Doctor and other household visits



11,875

people helped to reduce domestic energy use, water use and waste



£844k

domestic energy savings via Green Doctor advice

Energy review helps nursery look to the future



Funded by
UK Government



Cheshire West
and Chester

Our Sustainable Business Service is continuing to work with a variety of organisations and businesses across the region to help them reduce their carbon emissions and energy bills, save energy and help the planet.

A recent example is Ash Tree Day Nursery, which is run by Chestnut Nursery, a childcare facility in Blacon, on the outskirts of Chester.

As childcare providers, they are continuously looking to the future and reviewing the impact they are having on our planet. They were keen to reduce their emissions and set a positive example for others to follow.

As the delivery partner for Cheshire West and Chester's UKSPF grant programme, we were able to:

- Visit the site to review all their energy consumption measures, specifically electricity
- Calculate the nursery's carbon emissions and undertook a cost/benefit analysis for solar panels
- Develop an action plan and business case for investment
- Support Chestnut Nursery with the grant application process.

"We are now producing enough electricity to offset the consumption of all three of our settings in Blacon and Saughall. Without Groundwork's assistance and the grant money they enabled us to access, we would never have made it to this point."

Jason from Chestnut Nursery



13 tonnes
of CO2
emissions
reduced



£29,670
in cost
savings

Lindow Moss

- a landscape in recovery



Sitting in the heart of Wilmslow is one of the largest lowland peatlands in Cheshire. Lindow Moss is archaeologically and historically one of the most important lowland wetlands in Britain. It is a home to habitats including a large area of peat bog mixed with wet heath, fen, oak-birch woodland, open water pools and ditches.

In 1984 an almost intact Iron Age bog body was found on Lindow Moss and was named Lindow Man. The Lindow Man is now on display in the British Museum.

In 2024, Groundwork received a grant of £250,000 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund on behalf of the Lindow Moss Landscape Partnership. This funding will be used to develop and deliver the first phase of a 10 year plan, which will restore and interpret the wider Lindow Moss landscape for the benefit of nature, climate and people.



6 key aims:

- Celebrate our cultural heritage
- Encourage improved biodiversity and nature recovery
- Capture and store carbon
- Improve wellbeing and the visitor economy
- Develop new skills for a greener economy
- Place communities in the lead



THANK YOU

We would like to say a wholehearted **THANK YOU** to all of the organisations and people we continue to work alongside.

Together, we are changing places and changing lives.


5 YEAR IMPACT REVIEW (2020 - 2025) Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside

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