

Green Light Trust - Inclusive Conservation project

We shine a spotlight on two projects funded through the Green Recovery Challenge Fund which focus on improving people's mental health and wellbeing.

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The value of using green spaces for social prescribing (referrals to community health and wellbeing support) is widely recognised by health professionals. Our Space to Thrive report highlights the positive effect parks and green spaces have on our mental health.

In 2020, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) launched the Green Recovery Challenge Fund to kickstart environmental renewal across England. The two rounds of funding have been delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission.

## Inclusive conservation



The Green Light Trust team working with people with learning difficulties

The Green Light Trust's Inclusive Conservation project was awarded £249,800 in December 2020.

The project works with under-represented groups and emotionally vulnerable people whose mental health would benefit from being outdoors. Participants take part in hands-on woodland and conservation courses as part of their social prescribing, working to improve local wildlife habitats in East Anglia.

> "We see the positive impact every day in the people we support."
>
> *Tom Brown, CEO of the Green Light Trust*

One participant said: "Green Light Trust has opened my eyes to the importance of looking after nature and the environment. Being outside helps with my stress."

Tom Brown, Green Light Trust CEO, said: "It is very easy to see how our formula of using nature to help people works. Not only is there plenty of scientific and academic evidence to back the benefits of being in nature, but we see the positive impact every day in the people we support."



Green Light Trust participants making fence posts at Castan Wood, Martlesham, Suffolk

## Nature4All

The Nature4All project run by The Kingswood Trust was also funded by Defra's Green Recovery Challenge Fund.

Community volunteers in Wolverhampton work on the Trust's nine acres of natural space to improve mental health and wellbeing. Volunteers include those from migrant and refugee communities, people with special educational needs, disabilities, and with poor mental health.

> "Many ? young and old ? say that they are living better and happier lives as a result of the project."
>
> *Rachel Wells, Charity Manager of The Kingswood Trust*

Over the last five months, volunteers have learned many nature-based skills, helped to create a tree and plant nursery, and build habitats for bats, bees, and hedgehogs.

Rachel Wells, Charity Manager of The Kingswood Trust, said: "Our Nature4All project is all about what we feel is needed for the many people who have suffered isolation and loneliness during the extended lockdowns. Feedback from those who have been involved in our programmes is that many ? young and old ? say that they are living better and happier lives as a result of the project."

## Considering wellbeing

Heritage has a major role to play in improving wellbeing for people in the UK and we are committed to addressing this in all projects we fund. Read our wellbeing guidance for more information on how your project could support mental health and wellbeing.



Volunteers tend to rose garden.





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## How green spaces can improve our wellbeing