

What does Tree House mean to you?

An Evaluation – April 2018



Overview

Five years ago, a group of people living around Newsham Park in Liverpool began something they hoped would increase the quality of their own lives, and that of those who lived near them. This report summarises an attempt to establish what impact, if any, their efforts have had for both people and place. It seeks to understand, integrate and share findings from an anonymous online survey¹, independent research², and participant evaluations of specific projects, as well as informal feedback gathered through face to face contact and from social media. It links these findings to other more academic research in this field which support this local and anecdotal evidence. It seeks to explore why, if this practice is as powerful as that evidence suggests, there is a continual to struggle for it to be taken seriously by those with the power and resource to make it mainstream. It also asks what, in the light of these findings, is the right path forward from here for those involved locally?

In the beginning

In 2013 a group of local people got together and created a thing called Tree House. We say ‘thing’ because our vision was to create something which was unlike anything else we had ever been part of. There would be no fixed hierarchy or roles of ‘leader’. We would not seek to go down the well worn path of seeking staff or a building. We would not create a membership list or impose rules. Instead we had guiding principles and the motivation to invite people along who, in that they wanted to feel better about themselves and the world, were like us. A drive to engage people who didn’t want to find someone with the answers, but who were motivated to be a part of something which they could help to shape and grow. Who was involved, and who influenced what happened and when, would be who turned up. We worked on the assumption that there was already capacity locally, and all we needed to do was reveal it. We thought, if we did this, it would help on three levels; it would help people feel better about themselves, it would help us to get to know others and together feel less lonely, less powerless and, that this in turn would lead us to take action in our park, and on our high streets, to make things better. This activity would not only make these places look more beautiful and feel safer and cared for, but would also persuade those with power, influence and resource to respect us, and invest in us, our ideas and our future. Together creating a place where we were all more

The whole point of this activity is to make the connections; to reconnect people to themselves, enabling them to gain a greater understanding of their capabilities and capacity, and then, to connect them to a wider range of services, support, people, resources, opportunities and ideas, which will enable them to take responsibility for their own conduct, and the future trajectory of their life

*Tree House Business Plan
September 2013*

¹ What does Tree House Mean to You – On Line Questionnaire through Survey Monkey 79 respondents – all the quotes in Green Boxes throughout this document are taken from anonymous feedback on line

² Tree House Well Being Conversations Dr Koen Bartels, Bangor University, 14 October 2016

fully involved in the pursuit of our own enhanced wellbeing and in shaping and informing the wider social and economic regeneration of our neighbourhood.

How have we done?

Towards the end of 2017 we sought to ask whether we have made any difference. Whilst we had secured funding and delivered projects we had failed to secure the funding or developed the partnerships which could make current levels of voluntary contribution sustainable. The question was did it matter if 'it' stopped and, if so, what value could be ascribed to the activity of the organisation and its impact? And, if it did matter what steps could be taken to secure that it was, in some form, sustained? The evidence set out below brings together quantitative data, such as levels of participation (numbers, activity involved and how often), and the results of two (anonymous) on line surveys, with feedback from earlier research and evaluation we have carried out³ to provide what we think are the answers to these questions and our grounds for these assertions.

"To be back here, to be doing this after the loss of my mum reminds me that I can still feel safe and happy. Here I am amongst kindness and friends. Feeling that whilst doing something useful makes it perfect"

Feedback from a Gardener after an 18months absence

What have we being doing and who has taken part?

Over the past 5 years we have hosted and facilitated a wide range of activities in and around Newsham Park. These include regular weekly gardening, yoga and wild play sessions as well as more seasonal activities, such as bulb and tree planting, dog days, the restoration of our bandstand, street art, film nights, fetes, environmental cleanups and litter picks, environmental enhancement projects and art and craft activities. We have also undertaken activity through which we have sought to campaign for positive change locally, catalyse the restoration of community assets, stir people into action or invite people to take a lead to create a new activity, share a new experience or meet new people. This is so that we can appreciate more actively what we already have which is of value, and overcome some of the ill founded prejudices which prevent our society working in all our best interests. This has included our Feel the Love? Show the Love annual event as well as Philosophy in the Park, film and discussion nights, personal and professional development programmes (locally and in Walton HMP), inviting people to 'Change the world without really trying', commissioning an animation through which to communicate our

experience of the 'normaliser' machine⁴, compeering, and creating a bridge between the refugee and local community in a Taste of Home funded by the Red Cross. All these have been led by local people and their passions and have been either self funded, covered by local donations or funded through small and medium sized grants⁵. We have involved 1000s of people over this time. Attendees at gardening, for which we have kept a fairly accurate record, 377 individuals have come along who, between them have given 3688 hours of

³ This includes participant evaluation of programmes and events and feedback through social media and conversations locally

⁴ <https://vimeo.com/229281870> follow the link to Re-Root

⁵ £81,506.50

their life to our park, and equivalent of a donation of £55,320⁶. Some have come once and planted one tree, and some (the top five contributors have put in 1469 hours between them coming every week, and more, for five years. Over half contributed 2 hours or less but are equally valued. Attendees at yoga, which has been running since 2014, have been 220 separate individuals with a regular participation rate of 20 in the summer and 6 even on the coldest of days. Wild play, which has been running every Saturday since 2015, attracts as many as 17 kids in the summer and 9 in the winter who, along with their parents, are now regular visitors to the park. These sessions have also been facilitated by volunteers. A total of 204 yoga sessions have been provided of which 82 have been donated an equivalent of a cash donation of £2050. 204 wild play sessions have been hosted supported by two volunteers a contribution in kind of £10,200. These calculations do not include a wide range of other activities we've hosted include silent yoga, word craft and vegetable gardening.

We have also collectively had an obvious and positive impact on the common ground we share, Newsham Park. Our most obvious impact is the reduction in littering and dog fouling here.⁷ This is not the outcome of increased enforcement activity but rather evidence of a shift in social attitudes. It seems that, the more we have come to regard this as 'our park' the less inclined we are to mess it up. We have also maintained our flower beds, created a veg bed, taken back our part entrance from abandoned sofas and fly tipping, planted 10s of 100s of bulbs, 3450 whips and 59 standards. We have created new spaces in our park, breathing new life into redundant areas. An unused bowling green has become a community orchard and old foundations a mindful 'green room' with a compass and yoga circle.

We have commissioned a personal, and personalised map of the park which weaves stories of connection.

Loved every minute of planting trees today in Newsham park. Such a great idea especially for the future generations to get stuck in. Make trees and memories grow xxx

Comment on Facebook

In our survey, our respondents reflected both that broad range of activity and level of involvement. Of those who responded to our survey, 72% had been involved for two years or more. And the people who have become involved have been just as varied. They have included people aged 4 to 84 and of every colour, class, creed, religion and background. From ex offenders to barristers, refugees, asylum seekers, psychologists and politicians everyone has come, at one time or another, to help, and in a range of ways, to be helped. Most have been local, but some come from much further afield to plant a tree,

including people here on their holidays from Europe and further afield. They have included people with time, energy and money to give and people who are at one of the most vulnerable points in their lives. People have come who are experiencing psychosis, or who are in the process of withdrawal from alcohol abuse, or drug dependency, or are recovering from severe life traumas, such as an illness, bereavement, the awareness of a terminal diagnosis, a redundancy, a bankruptcy, a divorce, a prison sentence, a heart break or a betrayal. Together, we have sought to connect with what is beautiful in ourselves and the world and,

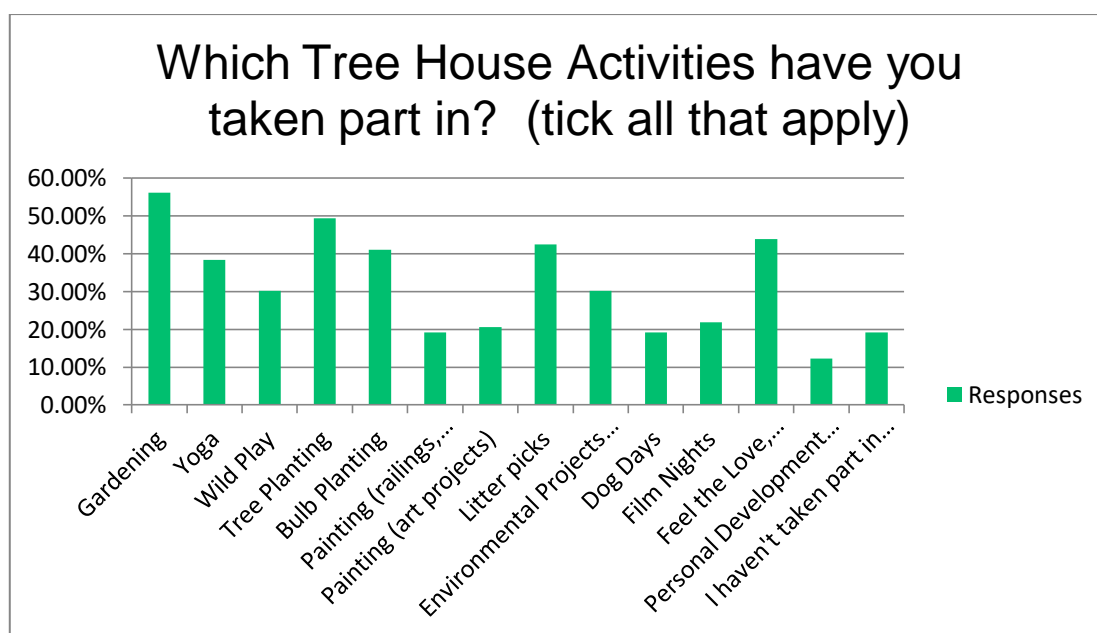
"I was doing Yoga next thing Lady on the left said to me that her older brother had Mental Health Issues and thought he was an orange. I said why don't bring him along to Yoga and she said I have he is here in my pocket"

⁶ Valuing contributions in kind at £15 per hour EU guidance for match funding

⁷ A recent litter pick party returned disappointed to report that they couldn't find any!

celebrate and enhance it. In doing so we have shared perspectives in a way which cuts across generational, cultural and other gaps in understanding and experience and have found teachers everywhere, including, and perhaps even especially, the very young.

Everyone has something to share, something to give. Joining together with others with a shared purpose in a shared space, however momentary, is healing. It makes people feel less alone and more tolerant and accepting of others. It makes them feel useful by reminding them of what they have to offer. We are not claiming to be an emergency service but, once the crisis is over, we are help be a gentle bridge from fear, anxiety and abnormality back to lives which feel more manageable. Often that means that, after a while, we do not see people anymore and that they go back to busy lives where there is little time for park life. That feels okay. They are always welcome back without judgement or need for explanation and people have rejoined after years when we don't see them. The point is to enable people to find support and connection when they most need it and to make it feel much more normal to feel vulnerable and less shameful to need support⁸. It is not to build an organisation, a business, a membership, a set out outputs or a cult. Those who keep on being involved are those for whom this has become a way of life, a way of thinking and acting which to give it up now would be to give up some part of their very selves.



What has been the impact on individuals?



The impact we envisaged for individuals would be two fold. Firstly, it would help people of all ages to feel more connected and confident, and it would enable them to be more physically active. On a fundamental level, this would mean that, by getting involved, people would in fact, be serving their own interests and, through their experience, they would come to that realisation themselves. There are mountains of research⁹ which backs this up. It turns out that to

⁸ Our attitudes to vulnerability and how they trap us into states of anxiety are brilliantly explore by Brene Brown: Daring Greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent and lead. Penguin Putnam 1212

⁹ Social prescribing and the benefits of nature – presentation to the King's Fund Conference on Social Prescribing 2017 Dr William Bird <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/William%20Bird.pdf>, B. Nygren, L. Al  x, E. Jons  n, Y. Gustafson, A.

feel good, as well as exercise and good food, we also need to spend at least some time outside, we need to be with others and we need to be engaged in some kind of purposeful activity in which we can make a difference, no matter how small, to the world we share¹⁰. We need, in short, to feel useful and, if the impact we make is a tangible one, so much the better. So what is the evidence from our practice?

Impact on Mental Wellbeing

Over half of our respondents did not regard their mental wellbeing as either good or very good prior to becoming involved. 17% of people said their mental health was poor or very poor, with a further 35% rating their mental state as only 'fair'. When we asked what difference their involvement had made, over 90% responded by saying that it made them feel more confident and connected (45% much more). This is a critical finding since most research¹¹ indicates that loneliness and a sense of dislocation from the world is crippling for humans, both physically and psychologically. It further suggests that, if people, particularly after a crisis, are not supported in a timely way to overcome the natural inclination to stay somewhere 'safe' (often indoors and away from other people or new situations), this state of self exclusion can become chronic. Making being outside in the park and being with strangers feel safe *"I feel sweet, okay and safe - (translation 'feel very lucky and safe')"* makes that space accessible at all times and other barriers much easier to overcome *"I was feeling stressed and sometimes lonely before joining in with Tree House activities"*. As the group is so diverse and there is no normal way of being to judge yourself against, we find that people become happier and more confident being themselves *"much more at home in my own being"*, and *"Makes me feel relaxed and happier and much more able to cope"* and *"Feel 100% better mentally"*.

We also know from anecdotal evidence that these networks enable people to connect way beyond the park. People make new friendships, find sources of advice, support and inspiration as well as pursue newly discovered interests or remember and renew old ones. Because there is no segregation along categories of 'need', everyone has access to everyone else and to lots of ways of choosing, behaving, earning, acting, eating and living. Not tying people who are vulnerable to others who are vulnerable in the same way, means that ways forward emerge

"I know people that are looking after things. People that care. I like knowing people that aren't just my friends. You can find out about loads of stuff in the park from all different people."

Tree House's best success was to create the space, the atmosphere and the necessary dynamics in the group to enable people to show their true self and connect with others. They created an emotional shelter where people (was) feeling safe not feeling the need to fake or lie to avoid being judge or rejected. Besides, it should furthermore be highlighted that some of us were foreigners and we felt comfortable talking about deep topics even not being the English our first language. This was a great example of integration.

Norberg & B. Lundman (2010) Resilience, sense of coherence, purpose in life and self-transcendence in relation to perceived physical and mental health among the oldest old, *Aging & Mental Health*, 9:4, 354-362, DOI: [10.1080/1360500114415](https://doi.org/10.1080/1360500114415), Page, M. (2008) Gardening as a therapeutic intervention in mental health. *Nursing Times*; 104: 45, 28-30.

¹⁰ Langer EJ and Rodin J The effects of choice and enhanced personal responsibility for the aged: a field experiment in an institutional setting. *Journal of Social Psychology* 1976 Aug;34(2):191-8.

¹¹ Hawkey, L. C., Cacioppo, J. T. (2010). Loneliness matters: A theoretical and empirical review of consequences and mechanisms. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 40, 218-227. doi:10.1007/s12160-010-9210-8 [Google Scholar](#), [Crossref](#), [Medline](#), [ISI](#)

naturally which could not be envisaged in another type of social network. The focus on the activity means that such ties emerge naturally and no one feels forced to connect with others for whom they feel no empathy or to offer help they do not, genuinely, wish to give. This authenticity in relationships is important in creating an environment which is genuinely enabling.

This impact represents incalculable savings, reducing the costs of negative life events for individuals, their families and

society as a whole. Research looking at the impact of similar support mechanisms¹² suggests that access to these local, purposeful networks in a post crisis period plays a significant part in restoring people's capacity to return to 'normal' life. Life without them can really kill you. Even when you are not in crisis these things

continue to be important. Even where people reported their mental wellbeing as 'Very good' at the start, they still registered an improvement through their continued involvement. This is important to us as enabling people to find *their own* sustainable route to *greater* wellbeing has been at the heart of everything we've done. It is a biological imperative to know we belong and that our life has meaning and purpose¹³. Eye to eye contact with someone we know and trust bolsters our immune system sending feel-good hormones surging through our bloodstream and brain and helps us live longer¹⁴. It is



even better if all this takes place outside in the fresh air in a natural environment which is beautiful. Linking people to places and the people they love is far from a nice irrelevancy in these times of dramatically reduced funding and competing priorities. It turns out it is, in fact, a matter of life and death¹⁵.

Even when people are not directly involved, witnessing the difference that other local people make increases their levels of pride and confidence in their community and their sense of interconnection in a network wider than their work colleagues, families and friends. It makes us, as a community, feel better about ourselves. In a local social media world full of burglaries and bad news stories, it is good to be reminded that there are positive and productive things happening too. Other opportunities also become much more accessible, perhaps because the world simply feels a whole lot friendlier? This can mean that involvement in Tree House for a significant minority is a very important first step in a self driven process of enrichment for that individual in all aspects of their lives and the beginning of something new.

Well done guys xxx proves there is still good people in this world xxx

Comment on Facebook

¹² Yildirim, Y., Kocabiyik, S. (2010). The relationship between social support and loneliness in Turkish patients with cancer. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 19, 832–839

¹³ The secret of living longer may be your social life Susan Pinker Ted Talk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptlecdCZ3dg>

¹⁴ Relationship quality and oxytocin *Influence of stable and modifiable aspects of relationships* Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Wendy C. Birmingham, Kathleen C. Light First Published May 23, 2014

¹⁵ Loneliness and Social Isolation as Risk Factors for Mortality *A Meta-Analytic Review* Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Timothy B. Smith, Mark Baker, First Published March 11, 2015

Physical wellbeing

We also envisaged that our activity would have an impact on people's physical wellbeing. This was because some of our activities are physical, like yoga and gardening. It is also because the act of going outside, and being involved in anything which requires moving your body and increasing your heart rate, whether it be a



dog show or scraping paint off a bandstand, is better for you than watching telly. We also thought that, if people came into the park other things going on there, like the Newsham Park running and Cricket Clubs might feel more accessible. So how have we done?

In our survey, a third of people said that they were either not involved in any activity at all or were very unfit and inactive before becoming involved. The impact, for 47% of respondents, is that being involved meant that they are now more active and feel physically fitter. Again, a sense

of being welcome and included, whatever your individual needs, seems very critical *“they are very understanding of my illness (osteoarthritis everywhere)”* and the idea that physical activity can be as much about managing conditions and dealing with pain better as it is about ‘getting fit’, is also important *“Helps me manage my COPD much better”*. It is worth continuing even when other factors mean that your overall physical condition is worse *“physically my body has deteriorated - no bearing to Tree House involvement”*. For nearly half of those involved being so, had left them feeling physically better. For a programme of activities which is not a health or a sports programme, we are very proud of that.

To achieve this we have had to think carefully about how we to manage our relationship with external funders. It has also limited the number of partnerships we were able to form. The process of obtaining the information that was needed to justify receiving funding conflicted with the objective of engaging the most vulnerable people in physical activity. In our experience people from Liverpool (or at least those we engaged with) have a very particular relationship and attitude to authority. Form filling, logos and interventions from governing bodies are met with suspicion and this is a barrier to engagement. This was particularly the case for those who had, in one way or another, been abused by a system which had been purporting to help them. Even ‘basic’ information, such as a name, was met with a response such as ‘Peter Pan’. Many people are very distrustful of systems which seek to reduce them to category or a number and perhaps have good reason to be so?¹⁶ Therefore it was a response that had to be respected and understood in order to engage people but which meant that, whilst often delivering on the headline purpose objective of a programme such as engaging the ‘hardest to reach’, we risked failing to meet the contractual requirements of the funders brief.

“It's so nice to be able to step out the door, go to the park and bump into people you know through being part of Tree House. Even just saying hello to people makes you feel better and less lonely”.

We also worked to change attitudes towards exercise. To move away from a notion of formal classes provided by others, to something that you yourself are in charge of, and which, can be fitted round a normal

¹⁶ Accounting in the service of the holocaust W Funnell Critical perspectives on Accounting Volume 9, issue 4, August 1998 p435-464

life. Mindful yoga is an example of this and, over time; its impact has been to reduce people's reliance on an 'expert' to lead them. There is a collective attitude which enables people to learn how to do things together. Like much of what we do here, it is an organic process. Outdoor Yoga has been readily accepted in an area which people once deemed unsafe and the idea of providing it outside, frankly, ridiculous. It has welcomed and included people from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures including Asia, Italy, Poland, America, Sudan and beyond. To join in you don't even need to be able to speak English or be able to hear¹⁷. This shared experience has served to reinforce a vision in our minds of a park full of diverse and inclusive opportunities for people to help themselves find their own path to greater wellbeing.

What also is increasingly becoming self evident is the strong connection between people's sense of social integration and their physical wellbeing. Focusing just on increasing levels of physical activity is not enough. Indeed the most predictive life style characteristics of those who live long are not their diet, or the amount they exercise, or whether they smoke or drink (although these are all important), but the quality of the relationships that they have. This is true in respect to the bonds they have with members of their family, but also, and

"I swapped a university degree for a social education here with Tree House. My brain is wired to affirm thought with feeling. For two years in university I struggled to recall information for longer periods than my assignment due date. Module results told me I was doing well which infuriated me because I wasn't learning. Now I have faces, and stories and self transformation to support and challenge theory. I have an unquenchable curiosity which is satiated by relationships of value. Experience is woven into a memory bank that I didn't seem to have access to before. And the best part about this type of education is.. I trust it. "

more



importantly, the degree to which they have day to day and face to face interaction with the society of which they are part¹⁸. If you say good morning to your neighbours, if the person walking towards you in the park smiles at you, if the woman at the bus stop says hello and if you are confident that, if you fell in the street, someone would come and help you up, then you are more likely to live longer than someone who does not believe those things. We are social animals so when we feel that the fabric of the society around us is weak, we suffer. We might not be

¹⁷ We developed 'Silent Yoga' with involvement from members from the Deaf Community and whilst they no longer attend (transport to us no longer funded) we retain the capacity to welcome and include those from this community in our practice using BSL.

¹⁸ Loneliness and Social Isolation as Risk Factors for Mortality Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Timothy B. Smith, Mark Baker, Tyler Harris, David Stephenson First Published March 11 2015 – this provides support for the assertion that being chronically lonely has more impact on physical wellbeing than smoking. ¹⁸ <http://neweconomics.org/2008/10/five-ways-to-wellbeing-the-evidence/>

¹⁸ Love Matters: How affection shapes Baby's Brains Sue Gerhardt 2014

consciously aware of it, but our bodies know. Feeling part of something which is beyond you and your tight circles of family, friends or work colleagues is not only desirable to your long term physical wellbeing, it is essential.¹⁹

What has been the impact on our wider sense of wellbeing?

The foundations of our practice are heavily influenced by research which underpins the New Economics Foundation 5 ways to wellbeing.²⁰ These reinforce the fact that at every stage of our lives²¹ in order to be truly healthy we need to stretch outside our own boundaries and be more actively connected to the people and the place around us. At Tree House, we are seeking to engage people outside, in a green space which is beautiful already but, through their efforts can be made more so. It provides opportunities to engage in all five ways to greater wellbeing and learn how, as individuals, we can make more use of a resource which, for us, is essentially free, to have ourselves healthier and happier lives.



from both people and the environment, growth, becomes a natural consequence of the experience. Social, constructivist and experiential learning theories suggest that the prerequisites for true learning stem from action, reflection and responsibility, principles which lie at the very heart of Tree House's philosophy. All the opportunities we make available offer those involved a chance to engage in autonomous experimentation. Wild Play in particular enables children, and their families, to be reintroduced to risk and self governance (and dirt!) whilst having the opportunity to build their own learning experiences through play and collaboration. The park offers them a perfect environment for their curiosities to flourish.

We trusted that, if we created opportunities for others to connect and develop too, they would join us in making an accessible, mutually supportive place where we could all learn to thrive. So how did we do?

Sometimes it is a bit hard to keep giving up time, effort and energy when other people appear not to respect it but on the whole it is well worth the effort.

So we can enable ourselves to realise that it is not so much what we earn, own, look like, or wear but more who we are, who knows and cares for us, and how we contribute to the world around us, which makes us thrive as humans. We hoped that by, actively noticing and appreciating each other and our surroundings, we would make a stronger connection to them. One of the most valuable things about connecting *within* our community is the rich learning environment it provides. With a natural library of information available,

"When I was feeling depressed I knew a session in park would bring hugs, smiles, a sense of achievement and being useful and belonging"

How has being involved enhanced your sense of wellbeing?

| | |
|---|--------|
| Connect with the people around you find new friends and form good relationships. | 79.66% |
| Be active and engage regularly in physical activity. | 50.85% |
| Take notice of your immediate surroundings and the wider world around you. | 55.93% |
| Keep learning, be curious and motivated to meet new people and enjoy new experiences. | 61.02% |
| To give, be generous, help out, make a difference in your world and be caring and kind to others. | 61.02% |

As well as providing evidence that being involved helps people feel better about ourselves, there is also a sense that a community, of sorts, is being created which, if sustained over time, can be relied upon as a source of kindness and company. The fact that this also creates visible change in the physical environment that people share reinforces this. It reminds people that they have skills and capabilities. It empowers people because we have achieved something tangible together which will go on giving pleasure to others for decades to come. But part of it comes from the difficult stuff. This includes the fact that, when people come together, there are bound to be points of conflict and that our efforts in the park are often stolen, vandalised and despoiled because we are working in a public park. The fact that these issues have to be overcome, or endured, makes relationships more robust and creates a context which insists that people build the resilience to cope with setbacks and disappointments. This means that the confidence being developed is road tested and that this is not just a bunch of people “doing nice stuff in the park”. Rather, as a group, we are engaged in the much more serious endeavour of making society work, so that we can enjoy spaces in which no one is control, but everyone has some responsibility. The range of people involved, and the life experiences they bring with them, means that the conversation is as likely to be about child abuse, post traumatic stress and accessibility of services as it is about rose pruning, or how to stake a tree. Litter picking also provides a constant reminder of the darker side of park life the debris left behind painting, as it does, a picture of boredom, indifference, drug use, fear (hidden knives and improvised weapons), prostitution and drinking. Gardening with its seasons and its setbacks and triumphs often provides a useful metaphorical backdrop to such discussions. Healing, like nature, has its own processes and, whilst planning anticipation and action are all good, some things have to happen in their own good time and require gentleness, nurture and patience.

I think it's really important for Tree House to continue. It would be such a shame if all these beautiful things stopped happening. All the trees, the new environments wouldn't have happened without it. It's all the small changes that make the big difference. Kids and adults are thinking about nature - its important

It also means that the focus of the activity is not ourselves. In fact, the impact on our wellbeing happens best whilst we are focused on doing something else. This ‘triangulation’²² means that relationships are not self focused, or lost in self analysis, but are constantly related back to our capacity, individually and collectively, to achieve things in the world outside. The fact that there is no membership, or established roles or responsibilities and a constantly dynamic and changing active group, means that ways of working

²² Triangulation involves using multiple perspectives in order to produce common understandings and avoiding creating dependent one to one relationships or establishing hierarchy.

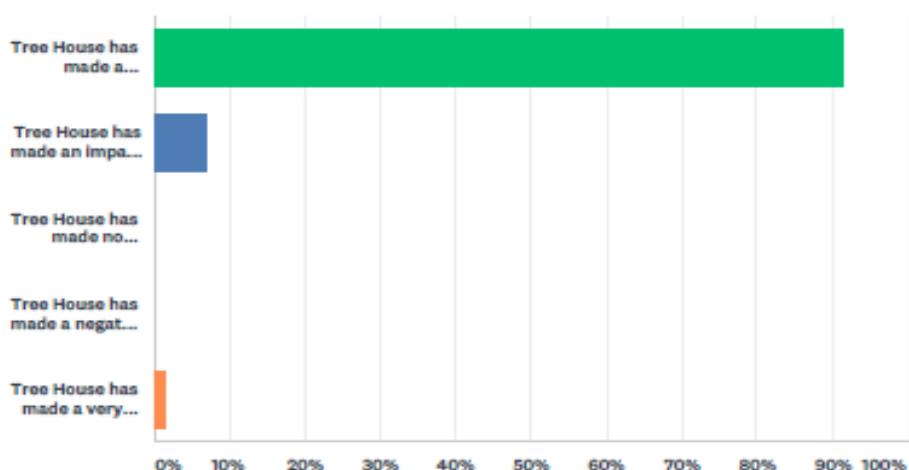
together need to be constantly renegotiated and first principles constantly revisited. All of which are skills and capacities which when practiced ripple out to have a positive impact on people's lives far beyond the park or the street.

What has been the impact on the physical environment of the Park and the Street?

The activity we have been involved in has, indisputably, had a positive physical impact on the park. The Bandstand, whose restoration we began, has been repainted, 54 standards planted, and nearly 3800 whips, and 10s of 100s of native bulbs. We have adopted an unloved part of the park and re-imagined it as a 'green room' bringing yoga and mindful practice into the park. Creating an environment for this practice has led us to repair hedges, plant trees, roses and bulbs and paint a compass on the floor which visually connects us to the wider world. We have removed graffiti, litter picked, and repainted information boards, park benches and railings. We have campaigned for, and seen the installation of, litter bins and have sought to secure and inform other forms of investment in the park. We have also spent 100s of hours ensuring that the rose and flower beds, which were slowly being grassed over, have been weeded, replenished and nurtured.

Q8 We also have an aspiration to act together to make Newsham Park even more beautiful as well as safe and welcoming for everyone. What is your assessment of the difference we have made?

Answered: 70 Skipped: 4



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Tree House has made a significant and positive impact on the local environment | 91.43% | 64 |
| Tree House has made an impact on the local environment | 7.14% | 5 |
| Tree House has made no difference at all | 0.00% | 0 |
| Tree House has made a negative impact on the local environment | 0.00% | 0 |
| Tree House has made a very negative impact on the local environment | 1.43% | 1 |
| TOTAL | | 70 |

| # | PLEASE PROVIDE FURTHER DETAILS OF THE ASSESSMENT YOU HAVE MADE. | DATE |
|---|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Tree House has mad a massive difference to us. It feels like there's real community here. I've lived here all my life and never felt that before we joined. It feels safer | 1/4/2018 10:17 AM |
| 2 | Colourful, brighter cleaner- THE LAKES ESPECIALLY. IT MAKES YOU PROUD TO KNOW THE PEOPLE MAKING IT HAPPEN. IT MAKES IT FEEL POSSIBLE OUTSIDE OF THE PARK. | 1/4/2018 9:51 AM |
| 3 | Its made more nature. Its educational. if I know more its better for the animals, and for me | 1/4/2018 9:45 AM |
| 4 | it helps bring people together and it helps the kid look after and think about their surroundings. | 1/4/2018 9:42 AM |
| 5 | It's wonderful to see the community coming together through the park's activities, where better to provide opportunities to meet people, than on your doorstep - where you get to know your neighbours, do something positive for the environment and look to the future. | 12/4/2017 6:23 PM |
| 6 | Tree House always work hard to bring activities into the park it is a great way to help people make friends it is very important to all the people who come here. | 11/29/2017 5:37 PM |

In our survey, respondents were extremely positive about the impact our activity has made in the park, with nearly 100% judging it to both significant and positive. What is even more important to us is the range of reasons people gave for giving us this very positive assessment.

Our aspiration was to make use of a local asset to help people to connect to themselves, to each other, and through a shared purpose to a wider world. We could not have asked for a more positive affirmation that, in those terms, we have succeeded. We have never made our philosophy overt, we have not held briefing meetings or preached at people. So the fact that so many people used words which echoed our founding values and philosophy is incredibly affirming. The themes which come up, again and again, are those of celebration, connection, safety, appreciation and gratitude towards people and place and, dare we say it, some hope for the future?

I recently visited Newsham Park and what a delight it was. No litter, children safely playing and a great atmosphere to be had. Well done to all the Treehouser's who have brought my childhood park back to life. X

Comment on Facebook Page March 2018

We know that all of this work gives pleasure and pride to many people because they tell us so. We know that we have also had an impact on people's attitudes and behaviour, even when those who have never directly contributed to what we are doing. This is even both in relation to litter and dog fouling as well as attitudes towards wild life and wider environmental concerns. In the past, swans were killed, eggs destroyed and squirrels hunted for 'fun'. Litter and dog mess was someone else's problem to deal with. The question was not whether you should drop litter or leave your dog's mess, only that you should avoid being caught doing so. Attitudes change when it is your friends and neighbours who start cleaning up after you and not because they have to (in the early days it was always assumed that we were doing community service as it was the only ready explanation for why people would choose to do this) but because they found the results of your behaviour so offensive they were driven to remove it. This led to a shift in culture, particularly in relation to dog mess. People started challenging other people to pick up after themselves and, suddenly, it was no longer socially acceptable because WE had decided that it was so. The sense that this is OUR park, rather than one that those in authority 'let us' use, is a very fundamental shift in attitude. One which is absolutely essential in a world where 'they' do not have the power and resources to look after

our places in the way, and to the standard, that pleases us. A shared sense of ownership is leading, slowly and with exceptions, to a shared sense of pride and responsibility. This indicates a movement in our loci of control and this, in turn, affects decisions people make about themselves. Decisions, that would have seemed impossible before suddenly seem attainable. People stop waiting for others to solve problems, or remove obstacles, and take responsibility to change things for the better themselves.

More people have also become much more interested in wider environmental issues. These include the quality of the water in the lakes and the availability of good and nesting sites for local wildlife, including

butterflies and bees. When we started, such preoccupations seemed quite alien to a community more focused on starker issues like poverty and poor housing. However, the interest, wonder and curiosity of the Wild Play children and the experience of planting, and discussing, trees have made more people motivated to create an environment which is not just for humans but is life enhancing for other creatures in our local ecology. This reinforces the work done by those in the field of eco-psychology whose practice demonstrates that by re-establishing our contact to nature we are enabled to be more in touch with ourselves²³. Being connected to the very ground we



walk on, and with the wider planet of which we are part of is something we want to, if we can, continue to build on.

We have had much less impact in the wider environment. We did some campaigning along the high street when the Giants came to town and for a moment thought, with external support, we might get a Business

Forum started and began engaging business on that basis producing a promotional flyer to promote local business to those visiting the park to see the Giants. We were able to engender some engagement from Business Owners but needed the further support which was, initially, offered to sustain it. However, like many such promises, nothing came of it.

We have taken our own modest steps to improve the high street by creating street art installations to improve the look of buildings (the Police station and the part derelict Methodist Church) and hide piles of litter and debris from sight of people on the main high street. We also campaigned successfully to get the rail company to stop pigeons roosting under the railway bridge on West Derby Road where they were defecating on the bus stop and the pavement below making them unpleasant and, in winter, treacherous. We have had also had some limited success in demonstrating that when things looked cared for they are less likely to be vandalised or tagged. The art installations remain, mainly, without graffiti in

²³ Joanna Macey & Chris Johnson: Active Hope: How to face the mess we are in without going crazy. New World Library 2012

locations where, prior to us painting, this was a regular occurrence. But without significant backing from anywhere else and very limited time and resources are efforts here have been very modest indeed given the

The cost is reflected mechanisms we use to alleviate anxiety and our tendencies to seek the comforts of food, drugs (prescribed or otherwise) and alcohol to make things feel better in the short term. This is not helped by our local environment. The local high street boasts 19 fast food outlets, 5 pubs and 5 off licenses, compared to one butcher and one greengrocer and two further chain stores selling fresh fruit and vegetables. We have 3 pharmacies and a range of other outlets for other types of drugs in our parks and our streets. No wonder we are amongst the fattest people in the city and have one of the highest rates of diabetes. Nor is our unhealthy attitude to nutrition our worst excess as our rates of drug and alcohol misuse attest.

scale of the challenge and the state of degradation and decline on our High Street. The description of our High Street above resulting from our local surveys in 2013 is, if anything, truer today than it was then.

What impact have we had on the community and its attitude to its self and its capabilities is harder to judge. We are not just doing gardening in the park but rather are attempting to demonstrate the intrinsic value of an attitude to living. One of the themes which came up over and over again in our initial conversations locally was the sense of utter powerless which people felt in the fact of what seemed to them like terminal decline. In Seligman's²⁴ terms we found ourselves in a state of learned helplessness where the only hope was for someone else to come and save us. In psychological terms we were clinically depressed. Therefore, if as such a thing was to happen (which is best improbable), there was a wide spread sense of betrayal, abandonment and cynicism that it if imposed from outside it would be likely to fail. These are commonly observed phenomena in professional cultures which demonstrate that these attitudes are not innate but are



a product of culture and context.²⁵ This was accompanied by a culture of dependency in which not only are we waiting for someone else to come and fix things but we also invest in a process of self destruction to demonstrate just how needy we are. This is because the system, at all levels, is seen as only 'rewarding' those who demonstrate themselves to be the worst off. We have been party to conversations in which the suggestion that rioting was a good way of securing investment was a serious and widely supported contribution to a conversation about potential catalysts for change. This desire for someone somewhere else to bring about a change of

fortunes was, paradoxically, accompanied by a complete distrust of authority, and a distaste of anything which smacks of organisation or control. People, who, within six weeks will be conversationally sharing their life story, will often refuse to give their real name on first encounter, never mind the kind of personal

²⁴ [Peterson, Christopher](#); Seligman, Martin E.P. (2004). [Character Strengths and Virtues](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press

²⁵ Tayfur Ekmekci, Ozge & Karapinar, Pinar & Camgoz, Selin. (2013). The Mediating Effects of Emotional Exhaustion Cynicism and Learned Helplessness on Organizational Justice-Turnover Intentions Linkage. International Journal of Stress Management

information most organisations require to gain entry. This mistrust encompasses both institutions and those who run and are employed by them but also, as BREXIT subsequently attested, the very concepts of knowledge and expertise. Our understandings of these social attitudes to self advocacy and relationships with power, authority and expertise have been very influential in the WAY we have done what we have done here. Our principle purpose was to seek to bring about a shift in the loci of control, to make the first question we ask not “what should they do about this” but rather “what could I do about this and who else could I get to help me?”

This is a challenging thing to try to do. The system we have in many ways ‘rewards’ those who have at some point justified receiving high levels of support to stay where they are. This is not to say that they didn’t merit them in the first place, or that we should remove formal mechanisms of social support. We are just making the point that as a society we are generally very good at responding to a crisis, but not very good at creating routes out of high levels of support to ‘normal’ life which are tapered. It is generally all or nothing. Nor are these processes linear or one directional so there is generally a lot of reversing and wrong turnings before people find a sustainable way of being which takes them confidently forward. So how do we seek to evaluate any evidence that the opportunities we have created have made people more confident about their own capabilities and less likely to need, or precipitate the need for, crisis interventions?

One way is the evidence of our own eyes. The physical improvements in the park, the installation of new things which haven’t, against all expectations, been wrecked, the changes of attitudes towards litter and dog fouling are all objective manifestations of thousands of small actions in which individuals have decided to change their behaviour and/or have acted to change the behaviour of someone else. We also have detailed feedback from our personal development programmes, both here and in HMP Liverpool, in which participants discovered, many much to their surprise, that their greatest asset was themselves and that what they needed to invest in was their capacity to form relationships of trust with others.

Participation also changed people’s attitudes to safety and risk. Finding themselves feeling safe outside and amongst relative strangers was a hugely transforming experience for some. These include those from the Refugee and Asylum community and those who for a range of reasons have been confined to institutions including prison and mental health hospitals. Discovering that you can establish lasting and deep connections to people who, at least on the surface of things, are completely different to you is liberating because it opens many other doors in your mind and in your life. Because we do not segregate, no one knows anyone else’s stories and therefore, everyone has to ask and tell. Because there are no established hierarchies or agendas people need to share their ideas, take on responsibilities, give feedback, encourage or dissuade others. Everyone is responsible for everyone else. So what makes it safe is that it is underpinned by clear principles of practice and a sense of joint purpose.

I used to go past things in the street and in the park – graffiti and such like - I didn't like and think 'somebody should do something about that' after getting involved with Tree House I have begun in those situations to think that somebody is me!

Verbal feedback

It is important to me because I feel safe in this company. It is fun and I can learn many things.

People also took the time to tell us in our survey how important the opportunities we had created were for them and why. These point to a wide range of changing attitudes to parenting, risk, and the confidence to engage in the world in a self directed way. It also demonstrates that people are making the connections more between what they and their children to and the wellbeing of others. There is also a sense that an area which was being slowly abandoned to prostitution, drinking, dangerous dogs and drug selling and taking can be reclaimed. The fact that this way of thinking extends to people engaged in every activity, from Wild Play to Litter Picking also demonstrates that we have been successful in creating lots of opportunities to be engaged in something which has an over reaching and consistent philosophy, or, as we put it; 'many doors to one house'.

It is critical that as a community we start coming together more to help ourselves. It is the only thing which will help make the place we live in feel safer and for us to be more connected to one another and the public space we share.

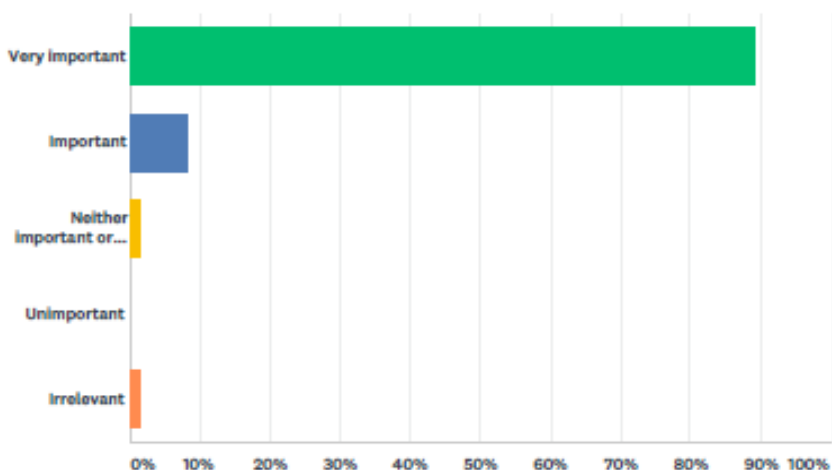
It also points to the fact that what has changed is not merely how things look but how things feel. People who felt ostracised or labelled (ethnic minorities, those with mental health problems, young people, and 'dangerous' dog owners) feel less so. People feel less likely to have to put on their hard face in public and there is more kindness and mutual acceptance. That, in turn, changes what is possible. People have started talking about things like loneliness and powerlessness because they know they are not alone and because they find themselves in the company of people trying to do something about it. People are more likely to think about what they might contribute both to the problem and to its potential solution than merely focusing on whom to blame. More of us are more interested in how we help others and the affect this has on people is tangible. The fragility of the sense of cohesion in our community was brought uncomfortably to the fore in the lead up to and aftermath of the vote for BREXIT. The necessity to find ways of building our community's resilience to a world increasingly beset by fragmentation and change seems more important today than it did 5 years ago. Finding ways to care together for our common ground is a task which requires we communicate and co-operate across difference to achieve things we all value (safety, beauty, freedom, air, sunshine, and green). This is a challenging aspiration in a world where support systems are at best under strain and at worse melting away all around us and where the tendency for us to fragment and argue amongst ourselves seems stronger. In seeking to achieve that goal we encounter all the serious obstacles which prevent us achieving that sense of connection and cohesion in other areas of our individual, family and community life. It is these conversations which take this way beyond a bunch of people doing a bit of voluntary gardening in the park. So it should come as no surprise that when we asked

Wild play has seen my little girl grow hugely in confidence and skills and as a parent given me confidence to allow her to grow in that way. We have made such good friends and that is really important. Particularly for people who may not have anywhere else to go to meet people. It is good for the area in general as people are spending more time in the park and that is a deterrent for people being antisocial and ruining things or committing crime. The park is much nicer, cleaner and a happier place to be thanks to Tree House

those who took part in our survey how important it was to them that we continue to do what we do, this is how they responded.

Q12 How important is it to you that Tree House keeps doing what we are doing locally?

Answered: 73 Skipped: 1



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----|
| Very important | 89.04% | 65 |
| Important | 8.22% | 6 |
| Neither important or unimportant | 1.37% | 1 |
| Unimportant | 0.00% | 0 |
| Irrelevant | 1.37% | 1 |
| TOTAL | | 73 |

Conclusions



Having created an opportunity for people to give us entirely anonymous feedback about what they thought of what we did, we were overwhelmed by how almost universally positive it was. One person did stop by to tell us that we were irrelevant and had made no impact but, as they did not enter any other information, it makes it a rather odd exception. Any other organisation whose work generated this feedback would be delighted. Even more so one which has no paid staff and has, whilst attracting grant funding for things, has failed to get one main stream organisation, politician, CEO, grant funder or person or persons of any significant strategic power to take us seriously for long enough to make any real difference to the question of our sustainability. It is this paradox that makes it particularly difficult for those who behind the scenes have been enabling this process, to determine what we should do next.

When we started on this journey and went to seek advice it was common for people to, largely, accept our analysis. What they questioned was our assumption of local capacity. Their knowledge and experience of the community led them to conclude that, if we created opportunities for people to get involved, they simply wouldn't turn up. This was supported by decades of evidence of low take up for almost every activity offered across the board. There was also wide spread scepticism, again informed by past experience, that there was really no point in trying to make improvements because everything we tried would be subsequently wrecked.

What wasn't questioned was the idea that, *if* we were to be in a position to offer a range of wellbeing activities to local people, there would be a market for those services. The sources of for this optimism appeared to be manifold. The prison services were looking for ways to rethink the kind of support they offered serving prisoners in seeking to maintain their links with family and friends, and better support people back into communities following release (HMP Walton at the time had a recidivism rate of 48%). There was excited talk about the Clinical Commissioning Group building capacity for social prescribing and analysis about health pointed outside institutions and hospitals as the way forward. Work was being undertaken which promised to build capacity in the third sector so that it could respond to a push towards community based interventions which could prevent disease rather than wait for expensive hospital admissions. As well as promised support to ensure that pathways from acute care through interdependent and finally independence were thought through and commissioned holistically.

The growth of finance in the social economy and the creation of new legal vehicles (Community Interest Companies) to fill the gap between state and business seemed to offer the possibility that, over time, what we were doing would link to, and assist, mainstream services. That rather than being reliant on grant funding

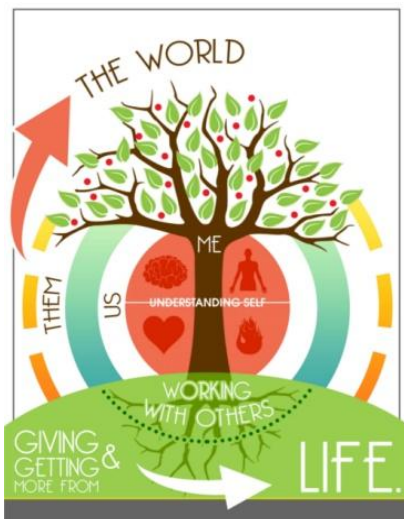


we could aspire to be commissioned to help people heal. It would also, we hoped, provide everyone in any institution within 10 minutes walk of the park a way of getting there, eventually, under their own steam, or at the very least their own violation, to enjoy it's freedom and beauty. This made sense to us and seemed to make sense for everyone else. Not only would it be good for people and the park it would save the system money by removing expensive crises and help people sustain their health and wellbeing in the communities in which they lived.

The reality has been very different. The community have surpassed any reasonable expectations we could have had of them in terms of their response. 100s of people have contributed in some way. 100s have not just given time but their money or plants, kit, expertise, skills, paint, gloves, food, music, knowledge, and much, much, more. What hasn't happened is the valuing of this activity in any real way by those in the mainstream. Links with the National Offender Management Services along with promises of funding fell away when Kenneth Clarke left the Home Office, this had a knock on effect on the discretionary power of the Governor of HMP Walton. The CCG, in the end, gave us lots of verbal praise for our vision but no

practical help or funding. No joy through Public Health either nor responses (so far) to direct approaches to local GPs. The 'Big Conversation' in health turned out, largely, to be people asking questions which they already thought they knew the answers rather than one seeking to shift the balance of responsibility away from institutions towards people and communities. Whilst we have been moderately successful in securing money for things (we have raised over £80,000 and appreciate the support of Lankelly Chase, Workers Education Association, West Derby Trust, The Lottery, Tesco Bags of Help and the City Council) we have not been able to establish any serious client focused partnerships with anyone.

Nor have our efforts to develop a partnership with the Parks Department or with Glendale been any more successful. We contributed a lot of time, effort and energy to the Green Spaces Review but apart from a reference to the notion of a Wellbeing Park this has not led to any conversations about how such a thing might be brought about. Individuals have



understood and sought to assist, but the system as a whole cannot

sustain its interest long enough to work out how to link with us and the funding packages available assume we are a very different creature from the one we are. So our partnership with Glendale, for example, has amounted in practice to them letting us get on with things and even facilities as simple as the provision of a compost bin, or the removal of green waste, cannot be reliably negotiated. The end result is that often people see the reward of their efforts is, perversely, to have support and resources withdrawn.

More recently, we have been in conversation with the Public Services Laboratory and these have clearly demonstrated that they understood, and respected what we were doing and why but, again, these have come to nothing. This is not, we don't think, due to the lack of sincerity of individuals but a struggle within the system to value the things that happen *between* people and over time rather than things we do now to, or for, them. It is the emphasis on the individual and what is wrong with and what we need to do to fix it which shifts focus on appreciating, and liberating, the capacity of communities to help. This failure to get respect, understanding and to be actively valued within the wider political and funding context places us in a very challenging place when thinking about whether what we are doing has any chance of being sustained. In terms of our original vision we have made to connections between the I and the we (see diagram) but not successfully, as yet, to the them, nor through them to the wider world. What might present an equal challenge is whilst the rates of participation remain high (nearly 100 people turned out to help plant trees this winter) without the resources or time to keep things running this is going to be hard to sustain. There is also an increased sense of nervousness following BREXIT which has served to highlight the differences between people and, as local social support services continue to dwindle people focus on the families and their survival has become, understandably, keener. But it is also because people think that it is covered. In that we are to some extent,

"its an olive branch for people who are lonely. It makes community come alive - its a rare thing and its really special. People don't feel the pressure that comes with joining things elsewhere. Its natural. You don't realise its importance until you really think about it. its nice to know people care. I think it would help to know what help looks like. in what ways could people help? and would that be enough?"

the victim of our success. We wanted to appear professional because we were trying to broker relationships with the main stream. This has given a stronger organisational brand than is either truthful or, sometimes, helpful. We are, in action, just who ever turns up on the day. As people start thinking of Tree House as a thing, an entity, it risks increasing the tendency to think that 'we' are dealing with things. This is true even though, when asked, over 80% of people knew that we have no paid staff and are entirely run by volunteers with a bit of grant funding mainly for stuff. As a society we are increasingly aware that we are becoming lonely, disconnected, isolated, and if we are ill or vulnerable for whatever reason easily set adrift and that this is costing us as individuals and as a society. Yet we are failing to find the mechanisms through which we can resource, or even properly understand the type of provision that begins to help address these issues.

In this report we have sought to set out the evidence of impact of our activities over the last five years and substantiate that with numbers of activities and attendees, anonymous quantitative evaluations and direct quotes from participants. The extent to which what others have said resonates with the original ambition leads us to conclude that in our own terms we have done well. This is in part, we believe, because our practice is based on sound principles and we have engaged in a constant process of critical self reflection to examine what we are doing and why. That practice takes into account the dynamic quality of true learning or healing and seeks to build people's understanding of their inherent worth rather than cultivate dependency whilst at the same time accepting and celebrating our interdependency.

If it all stopped who would look after everything? I think the café would lose money too

We also feel proud of the way we have achieved the levels of participation, ownership and shared responsibility we have. Proud because, to a large extent it has come at the cost of not having succeeded in



securing any mainstream funding or finding a partner. Our experience is that organisations and funders have a tendency to want to colonise and categorise, to make your practice about their client group or targets and seek to impose their institutional norms and risk aversion outside their building into the space outside. Suddenly there are multiple forms to be filled in, justifications for engagement set out and with those judgements and labelling. Support comes at a price. It also means that people's choices, preferences, personalities, and life experiences get diminished by the category to which they are forced to subscribe to get help, or be involved. Our conviction that it is our openness, our inclusion, our focus on what people can do rather than what is wrong with us, our willingness to see beneath the surface and seek to have relationships with people rather than do things for or too them which makes the difference. What

we have prioritised is to create an environment in which people feel safe and have respected and accepted what has been required to establish that rather than what might be necessary convenient with us. Without safety people cannot emotionally connect. Without connection, there is no true learning, healing or change. To do anything of any merit that in practice had to take priority.

What next?

At the beginning of this report, we set out the story of the last 5 years and made clear that, at the start, our ambition was to secure resources which would pay someone for the time which it takes to secure the

resources, project manage the opportunities, communicate and facilitate and hold into account the activities of the organisation.

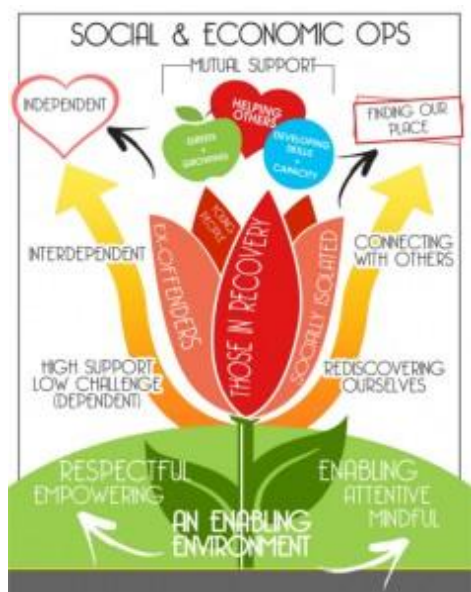
We didn't want to be dependent on grant funding but imagined we would be part of a wider society which would value and actively invest in this kind of work. This has not happened and one of the people who was principally responsible for bringing the organisation to life has run out of time, money, and to a certain extent the energy, to keep the whole thing moving. Attitudes amongst those who have been more actively involved have changed too. No longer is there an expectation of any real assistance from the mainstream. This is not because we do not think that such a relationship would be possible. We have seen enough examples of practice elsewhere²⁶ to know that this is far from the case. But because we have come to accept, that in the short term at least these opportunities will simply not be created here for us in Liverpool. Why that is the case is a wider question than can be answered in this evaluation but one

which leaves us with the question that if no one is going to help us in serious way what happens next?

We want to widen the understanding that we are only the people who turn up and that by doing so we are all, in the end, merely serving our own enlightened self interests. But why something that is this powerful and gentle, and has such potential to help and heal in a world which is getting increasingly lonely and fragmented should risk being lost or left to wither on the vine is a mystery to us. The fact that it does all of that AND helps to maintain a public space makes it seem to us clearly worth more interest, and, investment. So we hope for a better ending to this story than this risk that it dwindles to nothing

Could YOU help write the next chapter in the Tree House story?

Get in touch? mail@treehouseliverpool.co.uk



²⁶ At, just as one example, the Kings Fund Conference on Social Prescribing 2017



"I love to see all the improvements made on the Park, and often pass by when walking my dog and watch the community projects taking place. It is nice to see people getting pleasure out of the park and environment"

"I have never witnessed this level of positive impact before. Visually and energetically things are more alive and in motion - despite the many barriers being faced"

"The park is vibrant now, more people use it, more people take care of it. The space feels more loved with new flowers, trees, hedges and art. Less littering and although there is litter and damage to trees there are people that care as much as you do equally to make things right. The activities that are put on by tree house are bringing more people to the park that would otherwise not ventured out."

"The park looks amazing and people. Have seen its capability to be used in a myriad of ways
11

A consistently positive presence in the park is provided by Tree House. The green room and the beds are a credit to them and an asset to the community".

"I am sorry I can't join you. I work full time and I am carer and parent ! However I love to see the posts. I walk the dog when I can and see first hand the wonderful things you have created. Thank you. Kensington and Newsham Park is all the better for you bringing together the community. Hope to join you soon ??"

"I used to live in Tubrook 4 years ago and attended talks regarding the set up of tree house. When I visit now, the difference in the park and surrounding area is beautiful".

"Adding to the beauty of the park, engaging locals to give a sense of ownership. "Our park"²⁷

²⁷ Comments left on the on-line survey 2018

Appendix One: Just some of our Event Posters from over the years



Reclaiming the Dark

Saturday 28th Feb

FREE EVENT everyone welcome

make Crafts, lights, music & stories
from 11am in the bandstand Newsham Park

For more information please find us
on Face Book (TreeHouse CIC)
Or ring 07814696050 or
mail@treehouseliverpool.co.uk



Could you help save the World?

12 (or under) & fearless?

Your Planet Needs **YOU**

Be one of a group who will lead others in creating a place to
make and tell stories which will inspire humankind to act to
save the planet and all who live on her before it's too late.


More info? Call 078146068050 or mail@treehouseliverpool.co.uk leadership meeting 26th Feb 4.30pm
Lister Steps Tuebrook, Liverpool - Dig where you stand!

Philosophy in the Park

1st April 1pm at the Kiosk

Is not voting a sign of apathy?

Come and share your thoughts
More info? please ring 07814686050



Wanna help paint the town?

The Painting Party Weekend

25th & 26th of April

At Tuebrook Community Centre come help to paint this Canvas **absolutely everyone Welcome!**



treehouse

WILD ADVENTURES IN NEWSHAM PARK

Bring the whole family. Be inspired by see the wild side of our park.

Dates

- Sat 30th July
- Sat 13th August
- Sat 27th August

- Come at 12.45am for a day in your local park.
- Programme is Wild play and Yoga at 1pm following by an exploration of Newsham Park to discover the abundance of wild life living there.
- Community picnic (bring & share) fun, games late afternoon when the Adventurers return.

Bug Hunts and Nature trails with support from the **RSPB**. Explorer kits, nets, jars, magnifying glasses, microscope provided on the day, thanks **West Derby Waste Lands Trust**.




Silent Sign Yoga

Bridging the Gaps between us



Breathe, Reflect, Let go....

www.treehouseliverpool.co.uk

Starting March 29th 2017

Join us every Wednesday at 5.30pm at Newsham Park Kiosk for a tranquil hour of Outdoor Yoga.

Learn some basic Sign Language with us as we practice in a shared space of silence.

All very welcome.



Saturday 9th May 2015 The programme

- 9am **Spring clean Newsham Park**
Go to the kiosk for instructions litter pickers and bags or paint brushes – 2nd Litter Pick at noon
- 10am **Treasure Trails and the Teddy Bear's Picnic**
- 11am **Creative Sessions** – crafts, loom bands, life painting, pavement art, and stencilling
Chill out sessions in the green room – guided meditation, Acupressure, mindfulness and YOGA
Wild Flower seed sowing and planting parties
Fun and Games with the Green Gym
- Noon **Yoga** – in the green room
Meet the pets at the kiosk
- 1pm **Mass Picnic in Newsham Park**
Veggie grill and community bring and share
- 1.30 - 5pm **An afternoon of fun and frolics**
- ♥ Plant Sale – proceeds to buy spring bulbs for the park
 - ♥ Crafts
 - ♥ Food
 - ♥ Drumming
 - ♥ Fun and Games

♥ All day we will be asking ourselves the question – what can we do together to make ourselves and our part of the world happier and healthier?

NEWSHAM PARK GREAT GET TOGETHER

22nd JULY 2017 from 11 am

Craft Stalls offering

Dog Treats & Accessories Candles Greeting Cards

Potted Plants Tea Light Holders Papercrafts

Jewellery Fridge Magnets Key Rings Badges

Sourdough Bread Paintings Floral Displays

Hair Accessories Woven Products Children's clothes & accessories with a retro twist

ALSO FEATURING

Reflexology Petting Animals Kiddies Entertainment

Taster Sessions & Foot Balms Dog Day Event midday Live Music 2pm

The Croissant of Inequality

DogDay

in Newsham Park

Saturday
25th March

Bring your humans for an afternoon of fun in Newsham Park from 12 noon at the kiosk

Games, ask the trainer, teach an old dog new tricks, chaotic competitions, a dogstacle course, treats, prizes & more!

Happy Days!

For further info contact Tree House Liverpool or at the Park Kiosk

Dreaming of spring in a bluebell wood?

Community Bulb Planting & Litter Pick

Sunday 5th October

Newsham park from 11am meet opposite the Adult Learning Centre

More info? Tel 07814 686050

email mail@treehouseliverpool.co.uk

Appendix 2 record of voluntary gardening October 2013 – March 2018

Total of 3687 recorded hours (note many people forget or are not inclined to sign the book and lots of work is done by individuals over and above this record of Sunday and Thursday & Tree planting only)

| | |
|--------|---------------------------------------|
| 446.35 | Christina Ashworth |
| 433.75 | Vinny Deary |
| 261 | Karen Henley |
| 176 | Abdul Mustafa |
| 152.45 | Michelle Stark/Tierney |
| 146.5 | Sue Tierney |
| 114.65 | Stephen Poulson |
| 114.4 | Ray Lunt |
| 113 | Derek Blenkinsop |
| 98.7 | Stephen Withington |
| 90 | Ally Sands |
| 75 | Mike Rowe |
| 58.75 | Barbara Larkey |
| 56.85 | Don Porter |
| 54.25 | Kevin Curran |
| 47.5 | Norman Driscoll |
| 46.5 | Joan Driscoll |
| 38 | Claire Holland |
| 35.5 | Ava Mahoney |
| 34.5 | Carol Sung |
| 30 | Karen Scott |
| 28.5 | Elia Canete |
| 28 | Badreddine Al Obeid |
| 27 | Leo |
| 25.75 | Irene Raymond |
| 24 | Karen Browne |
| 22.5 | Denise Watkin |
| 22 | David Law with 4 Ccubs and 6 Beavers |
| 22 | Gemma Maudsley and 10 Beavers |
| 21.5 | Michelle Petrie |
| 21 | Anne Plantlife and 13 from St Francis |
| 18.5 | Sheila Hughes |
| 18.5 | Steve Hughes |
| 18 | Stephen Bent and 8 cubs |
| 17 | Steve Corcoran |
| 15.7 | Jan Rowlands |
| 13 | Ian Moran |
| 12.8 | Charlie Denham |
| 12 | 6 Key Stage 3 pupils from St Rrancis |
| 12 | St Francis 12 x 1 hour |
| 11 | Jonathan Brown |
| 10.5 | Jenny Gavin and 6 Beavers |
| 10.5 | Steve Sung |

10.5 Chris Middleton
 9.5 Liv Watkin
 9 Gary Smyth
 8.5 Gary Mahoney
 8.2 Bev Davies
 7.5 Alicia Rose
 7.25 Barbara McGrouther
 7.25 Katie Pegg
 7 Kish Vadgama
 7 S Taylor
 6.5 Steve Sullivan
 6.5 Ibrahim Absdelmoniem
 6 Carol King
 6 Harry Denborn
 6 Lourde Rowe
 6 Ryan
 6 Sienna
 6 Koen Bartels
 6 Ellsa
 6 Alison's (Keith's widow) x6
 5.5 Tye
 5.5 Andy Duffy
 5 Althea Giband
 5 Kevin Beary
 5 Linda
 5 Liz Roberts
 5 Marh
 5 Shane Unsworth
 5 Alex Fairbrass
 5 Fran
 5 Park View Project 10 x .5
 5 Sarah R
 4.75 Orlando Milligan Richard's son)
 4.5 Ann Jones
 4.5 Anna King
 4.5 Michael Weaver
 4.5 Nev
 4.5 Stanley
 4.5 John (from the Academy)
 4.5 Katie Harrigon
 4.5 Dina Younis
 4 Anne Faulkner
 4 David Cross
 4 Lutynski
 4 Marius
 4 Stephen Bayliss
 4 Nicola Whitehall
 4 John Diamond

- 4 Stephen Hughes
- 4 Karen Meighan
- 4 S Davies
- 4 K Wilson
- 4 Kal Mill and Family
- 4 Mary A
- 4 Siobhan
- 3.75 M Moore
- 3.5 Brian P
- 3.5 Coco
- 3.5 Gary B
- 3.5 Gary Denham
- 3.5 Joshua Taylor
- 3.5 Leon
- 3.5 Tommy
- 3.5 Tommy's wife
- 3.5 Lyn No6
- 3.5 Ola
- 3.5 Mr Singh
- 3.5 Mrs Singh
- 3.5 Jen Horton
- 3.5 Vicky Andrews
- 3.5 Chris Martin
- 3.5 Pradid Questuz
- 3.25 Jason Richards
- 3 A Franey
- 3 Annie Jones
- 3 Ashley Cernel
- 3 Babs Santel
- 3 Bev Ross
- 3 Carol McCurran
- 3 Darren YOT
- 3 Derek Kane
- 3 Eddie Cotton
- 3 Elias
- 3 Jack McCurran
- 3 Lee Daley
- 3 Linda McCurran
- 3 Mal Ferguson
- 3 Michelle Haywood
- 3 Richard Greyaly
- 3 Richard Milligan
- 3 Scott Freckletion
- 3 Will McCurran
- 3 Kurt Patterson
- 3 Mustafa Rijal
- 3 Johnny W
- 3 Anon x2

- 3 Jack McGrath
- 3 Tracy Jackson
- 3 Christine B
- 3 James
- 3 S ? Moran (Ian's partner)
- 3 Lola's Mum
- 2.75 Sarah Sand
- 2.5 Chris
- 2.5 Faye Canavan
- 2.5 Jennifer Driscoll
- 2.5 Joann Milligan
- 2.5 Kerri Whitehead
- 2.5 Lynn Duffy
- 2.5 Mo Hughes
- 2.5 Nitaya Brown
- 2.5 Ryan McGinley
- 2.5 Ryan McGinley's Grandad
- 2.5 Shirley Dixon
- 2.5 Tricia Donovan
- 2.5 Loretta and Mum
- 2.5 Linda Christy
- 2.5 Gerrie Hughes
- 2.5 Val Lunuy
- 2.5 Jamie *3)
- 2.5 Phil Moody
- 2.5 Sam Taylor
- 2.5 Rory Harding
- 2.5 Rory Field
- 2.5 Mark Boardman
- 2.5 Pamela Boardman
- 2.25 B Gaffney
- 2.25 Charlie M
- 2.25 L Edge
- 2 2 girls with no name
- 2 Chris Hayden
- 2 Christina Luthiski
- 2 Daz Jones
- 2 Diane Willand
- 2 Ellie
- 2 Hilary Howell
- 2 Jane Littlesmith
- 2 Jennifer O'Connor
- 2 Kevin Sinclair
- 2 Lara Curtis
- 2 Maurice
- 2 Natalia Turney
- 2 Peter Milnar
- 2 Philippa Home

2 Simon Dowdedds
 2 Sonny
 2 Stan Curkis
 2 V Deas
 2 Kevin Berry
 2 Nevia Dean
 2 Steve (Avan?)
 2 Wendy Booth
 2 Pat Kennedy
 2 Mick DeCat
 2 Alice DeCat
 2 Ava Grale
 2 Ewan Tinsely
 2 Natahn Tinsley
 2 Kevin (Dad of Liam)
 2 Liam Powell Berry
 2 Paul Divity
 2 Elaine Maines
 2 Chris T
 2 Sue B
 2 Jo Todd
 2 Joole LeFeiure
 2 Cillia Hill
 2 Liz Wilson
 2 Nicola
 2 Daisy
 2 Mandy D
 2 Alison (Christine's Mum)
 2 Angela
 2 Robert J
 2 Grace Goodall
 1.75 Lotte Dam
 1.75 Patrick Van Beijereh
 1.5 A Cook
 1.5 Amanda Loftus
 1.5 Ann Clegg
 1.5 Ann Maloney
 1.5 B Cook
 1.5 Bev Denham
 1.5 C Cook
 1.5 Carl Edwards and two children
 1.5 Carl Roberts
 1.5 Claire Mace
 1.5 Dawn Flowers
 1.5 Denise Harter
 1.5 Gardner N
 1.5 Gary Mohareg
 1.5 H Tang

1.5 Irene Carhill
1.5 J Tang
1.5 Jane O'Neill
1.5 Jean Mcshe
1.5 Jo Mace
1.5 Kimberley Ludlum
1.5 L Tang
1.5 Lee Harter
1.5 Lee Maloney
1.5 Leon Mck
1.5 Marie Toothill
1.5 Mark Fellows
1.5 Maureen Kayes
1.5 Michael Gregory
1.5 N Cook
1.5 Pat Black
1.5 Paula Harter
1.5 Rachel Ford
1.5 Rachel Higham
1.5 Rob at kiosk
1.5 S Tang
1.5 Steve Daylon
1.5 Sue Doragh
1.5 Xander Harter
1.5 Antonia
1.5 Matthew Malone
1.5 Chau Mnolinw
1.5 Shaun Davies
1.5 Megan Grimster
1.5 Emily Cotton
1.5 Jake Cotton
1.5 Arash Alim
1.5 Sophie
1.5 Joshua P
1.5 Joseph
1.5 Maggie
1.5 Emma
1.5 Ala
1.5 Elsie
1.5 Kiera
1.5 Shirley Bentley
1.5 Thomas
1.5 Agnieszka Minkina
1.5 Isabella Rose
1.5 Clare Glare
1.5 Anon x2
1.5 Ellen Helen and James
1.5 Jasmine

- 1.5 Delio
- 1.33 Claire McMillan
- 1.33 Joanna Wooton
- 1.33 Joshua Wooton
- 1.33 Linda Megregor
- 1.33 Luke Hayes
- 1.33 Luke Wooton
- 1.33 Paul Wooton
- 1.25 B Garken
 - 1 Alessandro R
 - 1 Adam Pratt
 - 1 Alessandro
 - 1 Anne Curran
 - 1 Berrika Barrett
 - 1 D Curran
 - 1 Irene (Belmont Drive)
 - 1 Joan Davis
 - 1 Joel Jehovah Witness
 - 1 Lee Thomas
 - 1 Lourd O'Brian
 - 1 Matt B
 - 1 Meredith Woodward
 - 1 Paisley
 - 1 Paula
 - 1 Phineas Woodward
 - 1 Richard Plain
 - 1 S Wilson
 - 1 Steve Cochrane
 - 1 Steven Whalley
 - 1 Toria Buzza
 - 1 Trish
 - 1 Zander
 - 1 Vanoldra Adeilt
 - 1 Brian Mcavoy
 - 1 Mike Butcher
 - 1 James Dean
 - 1 Joseph
 - 1 Maggie
 - 1 Hayley Trowbridge
 - 1 Tony Roberts
 - 1 Kate
 - 1 Vincet Penbe
 - 1 Hayden
 - 1 Alfie
 - 1 Ollie
 - 1 Tina
 - 1 Zoe
 - 1 Karl

| | |
|------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Michelle Lyons |
| 1 | John Stephens |
| 1 | Rach |
| 1 | John |
| 1 | Matthew |
| 1 | Pamela S |
| 1 | John T |
| 1 | Hussan |
| 1 | Issack |
| 1 | George |
| 1 | Gerrard |
| 1 | Laith |
| 1 | Fern |
| 1 | Ashton |
| 1 | Leon |
| 1 | Michael |
| 1 | Joel W |
| 1 | Liz Snedilla |
| 1 | Jane Snedilla |
| 0.75 | Peter |
| 0.5 | Alison Cragg |
| 0.5 | Christine Gaffney |
| 0.5 | Danielle Miller |
| 0.5 | Darren Jones |
| 0.5 | Hhan |
| 0.5 | Jaen |
| 0.5 | Jan O'Brien |
| 0.5 | Janet Sparrowcroft |
| 0.5 | Kelly Lacey |
| 0.5 | Laurie |
| 0.5 | Lexic |
| 0.5 | Michelle Beris |
| 0.5 | Naralia (Belmont Drive) |
| 0.5 | Neil D |
| 0.5 | Sandra Adelt |
| 0.5 | Alexandro Ruskirk |
| 0.5 | Ava Johnson |
| 0.5 | Christine P |
| 0.5 | Dom Dickie |
| 0.5 | Brian J and Carerer |
| 0.5 | Mitzie |
| 0.5 | Tillie |
| 0.5 | oliver (Baby Bear) |
| 0.5 | Nick Mitchell |
| 0.45 | Jane Woodward |
| 0.2 | Annette Jones |
| 2 | Michael McMahon |