



Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust Green Futures Programme



Final Evaluation Report November 2021



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1. Executive Summary

Programme summary

The Green Futures Programme was a five-year project, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) as part of a wider nationwide programme, 'Our Bright Future' (OBF). The programme was led by Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT), working in partnership with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YNDPA), Craven Development Education Centre, the Field Studies Council (FSC) at Malham Tarn, Barnardo's and Bradford Environmental Education Service. The programme started in 2016 and ended in July 2021 with an overall aim of **supporting and developing environmental opportunities for young people (aged 11 - 24) in the Yorkshire Dales and surrounding area** through:

- Creating and developing young people's interest in and connection to the environment
- Promoting and supporting practical action
- Developing environmental skills and leadership
- Creating green mentors and role models in the community.

The programme consisted of four projects: Green Guardians, Eco-Schools, Dales and Fells Trainees and Young Rangers. In addition to these projects, the young people involved were also encouraged to attend a **Youth Environment Forum**, which met at regular intervals and an annual **Youth Environment Summit**. The Youth Environment Summit was run by members of the Youth Environment Forum and was a two-day residential event. It was used to help young people celebrate and share their experiences, undertake practical work, discuss environmental issues, develop new project ideas, and influence the development of Green Futures.

Young people were also able to access a **Youth Environmental Action Fund (YEOF)**. This allowed young people to apply for a grant of up to £1000 to plan, organise and deliver environmental projects in their local area. A panel of young people assessed all grant applications and made the decision on which grants to award.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Green Futures was unable to deliver much of its planned project activities, all of which were originally designed to take place face to face and mainly outdoors. With the support of NLCF, the programme was extended by a period of six months until July 2021.

Programme evaluation

The evaluation of Green Futures used a supported self-evaluation model. Icarus was appointed in May 2016 to provide limited external support to design the evaluation approach and draft annual summary reports, for inclusion in Green Future's evaluation reporting to the Our Bright Future Programme. It was the responsibility of Green Futures and the individual projects to collect and collate their own evaluation data.

In 2018, Icarus was asked to produce an interim evaluation report for the programme. This was produced in February 2019 and in February 2021 Icarus were commissioned to complete a final evaluation. This report is therefore the second and final review of activity and impact. Both

quantitative and qualitative evidence has been utilised, but only limited additional primary research was undertaken to support the final evaluation in the form of an online survey and semi-structured interviews with Steering Group members and Project Officers.

YDMT also issued an online survey to young people who had participated in Green Futures as well as their parents, carers or guardians. Only a few responses were received, so YDMT therefore interviewed some young people attending the final Annual Environment Summit in July 2021 and the young people who took part in the Dales and Fells Trainees project. Given the low number of project beneficiaries involved in this final evaluation, it is not therefore possible to do a robust triangulation of data across several different sources, but there are individual insights into the impact of Green Futures on young people from these interviews and conversations which have informed the evaluation findings set out in this report.

The evaluation findings

The NLCF funded Green Futures programme was successful overall. It has met, or exceeded, all its output targets and made good progress against its outcomes. Most notably, the Programme has led to a strong legacy, with all areas of Green Futures continuing beyond the end of the original funded programme of work. Other highlights from the programme include:

- ☆ **Engaging 8051 young people in the different activities offered by Green Futures.**
- ☆ **Successfully completing 851 environmental enhancement projects to enhance green / blue and built spaces.**
- ☆ **Fourteen Dales and Fells Trainees secured permanent employment at the end of their apprenticeships, with eight staying on as permanent employees with their work placement employers.**
- ☆ **Awarding funding from the Youth Environmental Action Fund to help deliver 33 community environmental action projects, all designed and led by young people.**
- ☆ **Young Rangers groups being over-subscribed for Task Days.**
- ☆ **The Social Media Takeover of YDMT's website by members of the Youth Environment Forum.**
- ☆ **Development of strong relationships with some partner organisations, with the commitment to explore joint working on potential future projects.**
- ☆ **The recognition by partners of the value and importance of having young people represented at a strategic level within their organisations. YDMT, YDNPA and Cumbria Wildlife Trust have all appointed at least one young person to join their Boards.**
- ☆ **Attracting applications to the Youth Environmental Action Fund from young people not directly associated with Green Futures.**
- ☆ **Successful engagement of young people in the Youth Environment Forum and annual Youth Environment Summit.**
- ☆ **Inspiring young people to make lifestyle changes to support more sustainable living and inspiring them to take action through campaigning, organising their own events and / or taking on leadership roles both within and outside the Green Futures and Our Bright Future Programme.**

The following summarises the key findings from the evaluation across the four programme outputs, three outcomes (young people, environment, communities) and programme/project management.

Programme Outputs

Output 1: Up to 5000 young people inspired through educational / skill-based activities which discover, explore and enhance the environment

The original target of 4000 was exceeded in 2019 and the target was increased in January 2020, with the agreement of OBF and NLCF. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic preventing face to face activities for much of 2020, the revised target was also exceeded, with all four Green Futures projects contributing to the successful achievement of this output. In total, 8051 young people took part in Green Futures activities over the five-year programme. Of these, 880 were recorded as living within the 20% most deprived areas in England and 2590 young people were identified as experiencing one or more different forms of disadvantage.

Output 2: 16 young people from rural backgrounds trained, employed and qualified in environmental conservation / management

This target was achieved. In total, 20 young people joined the programme as apprentices with the Dales and Fells Trainees Project. It is very positive that 16 young people subsequently secured permanent employment on completion of their apprenticeship and in their end of project interviews 72% (n=18) said that their next step was as a direct result of the experience, certificates and qualifications gained with the project. Three apprentices in the initial intake left the scheme before the end of their two-year placement. This was for a variety of issues, but included mental health, work discipline issues and struggling to budget. As a result the project designed and delivered an induction week for the second intake of young people, which included sessions on money management and mental health. This is an excellent example of how the programme successfully adapted its project delivery methods, learning from experience as the programme progressed and underlies its principle of keeping young people at the heart of the design and delivery of the programme.

It is also evident that involvement in the Dales and Fells Trainees Project had an impact on organisations providing work placements to young people. Some organisations recruited more than one apprentice, but other examples included changing the attitude of other staff members to young people, reinvigorating staff and taking the decision to appoint young people as trustees.

Output 3: 15 community groups formed, and 40 environmental enhancement / awareness projects delivered.

The targets for the number of community groups and the number of environmental enhancement / awareness projects delivered were both exceeded. Over the five-year programme, a total of 31 community groups were established. These are primarily a result of the 33 small-scale projects funded by the Youth Environmental Action Fund. Since its launch in 2017, £26,500 was distributed via this route, funding a range of projects designed and managed by young people.

Environmental activities were delivered across all parts of Green Futures – the four core projects, the Youth Environmental Action Fund, Youth Environment Forum and Annual Youth Summit. A total of 846 environmental enhancements and the creation of five new environmental areas were recorded, making a total of 851 recorded environmental enhancement projects.

Output 4: One School / College will achieve Green Flag Eco-Schools Status across the five-year project, with others working towards Green Flag and achieving at least two Bronze and one Silver.

This target was exceeded with one school achieving Green Flag Eco-Schools Status, three schools achieving a Silver Award and two schools achieving a Bronze Award. There were many challenges associated with delivering the Eco-Schools project, particularly as it relied on staff within schools having the time, interest and ability to support their individual Eco-School Committee, so it is a significant achievement that the project was able to meet the overall target.

After achieving its target in 2019, the Eco-Schools project changed its approach to focus on providing ongoing support to schools in their environmental work, and prior to the first period of lockdown in March 2020, three new schools had registered interest in joining the project. However with a move to online learning for schools during lockdown and the ongoing challenges encountered by schools on their return to face-to-face teaching in September 2020, no further progress was made on the Eco-Schools project in 2020.

Outcomes for Young People

Outcome 1.1: Increased awareness and connection to local and global environment.

Outcome 1.2: More empowered through new skills and knowledge to create positive environmental change.

The programme has made good progress towards achieving the outcomes for young people. Connecting young people to the natural environment was at the heart of Green Futures. The Green Guardians activity days, Young Rangers Task Days and the practical conservation work of the apprentices were all based on being outdoors in the local environment, while the Eco-Schools project, Youth Environment Forum and Youth Environment Summit provided the space to explore global environmental issues as well as helping to improve the local environment. Over the five years of the programme, young people were directly involved in the planning and delivery of both sets of events, choosing which subjects to explore and covering a wide range of environmental issues that have resonated with young people at both a local and global level. These included: the impact of palm oil and meat production; plastics pollution; food waste and food miles; litter, recycling, carbon emissions; climate change, sustainable fishing and water consumption.

Skills development was a key component of most of the activities that young people were able to experience over the five years of the programme. Activities supported the development of both practical conservation skills through informal and formal, certificated, learning, as well as personal skills such as teamwork, leadership, communications and project planning. Inspired by their involvement in Green Futures, there are several examples of where individual young people have gone on to develop their own projects, take on leadership roles and or become campaigners for environmental issues at a local and national level.

Outcomes for the Environment

Outcome 2.1: More practical environmental action projects enhancing green / blue / built spaces.

Outcome 2.2: More practical activities encouraging sustainable living.

Significant progress was made towards delivering practical environmental projects and good progress was made on delivering activities which encourage sustainable living. A total of 851 environmental enhancement projects were undertaken, including the creation of five new sites and 33 awareness projects were also completed. This is a significant achievement and demonstrates the excellent progress the Green Futures programme made in delivering this outcome.

Key to delivering the outcomes for both young people and the environment is the need to be able to provide a wide range of different opportunities to help young people develop their knowledge and skills through doing practical environmental tasks. Project staff have worked closely with other organisations and private landowners on project delivery to identify suitable locations for undertaking activities.

Another contributor to the achievement of this outcome was the availability of funding from the Youth Environmental Action Fund (YEAF). Since its launch in 2017, 33 projects, led, designed and delivered by young people have been awarded funding to undertake practical environmental action projects within their school or local community. Applications were also received from young people who have not been directly involved in Green Futures or the Our Bright Future Programme. This demonstrates the wider positive impact of Green Futures and the increased awareness of the Youth Environment Action Fund as a potential source of project funding that young people can access. Projects funded by grants from the Youth Environmental Action Fund have included both projects aimed at creating or improving the local environment as well as projects intended to encourage living in a more sustainable manner e.g. By reducing waste, avoiding plastics, reducing water / electricity consumption

Alongside organising practical conservation tasks, Green Futures also planned and delivered practical activities aimed at encouraging more sustainable living. Activities were delivered primarily through the Youth Environment Forum and Youth Environment Summit but were also part of some Green Guardians Activity Days. In addition to this, the Eco-Schools project supported schools to run sessions on broader environmental topics to raise awareness of environmental issues within the wider school population. A wide range of activities were delivered over the five years – the majority of which were based on suggestions from young people themselves as they took the lead on planning the Youth Environment Forum meetings and the Annual Youth Environment Summits. This is a key success of the programme as it allowed young people to pick topics that were of interest to them, exploring issues around single use plastics, recycling, food waste, food miles, water consumption, meat production, palm oil production, sustainable fisheries.

Outcomes for Communities

Outcome 3.1: Increased social cohesion through connecting, co-operating and taking action to enhance the local environment

Outcome 3.2: Improved health and well-being through participation

Progress overall has been good in terms of delivering the outcomes for communities. From end of project interviews with staff and young people, there are some clear themes emerging that illustrate different ways in which an increase in social cohesion has been supported. These included making new friends and getting to know people better and developing a sense of belonging through working with other young people with similar interests.

Collecting evaluation data to evidence progress towards these outcomes was an ongoing challenge throughout the programme and as a result the overall evidence to support changes in health and wellbeing over the lifetime of the programme is weak overall. However there are many individual examples that provide some evidence of improvements in health and wellbeing among some of the young people taking part in Green Futures. For some young people, these improvements were significant and a direct result of their involvement in the Green Futures Programme.

Programme and Project Management

Overall, the Programme management and individual project management has been effective. The Steering Group has been effective in providing guidance and direction where needed and Steering Group members have demonstrated an interest in the delivery of individual projects and often attended events, in particular the Youth Environment Forum meetings and the Annual Youth Environment Summits. The benefit of having young people on the Group was also highlighted during the end of programme interviews with Steering Group members and Project Officers and YDMT along with other partners have all appointed at least one young person to join their leadership boards.

There is also evidence that over the course of the Green Futures Programme, strong partnerships have been developed and that the overall programme management was effective in bringing together the different strands of the programme, enabling young people to move between projects and delivering on the programme's intentional design of putting young people at the heart of the programme.

There have been challenges in relation to staff capacity and resources allocated to projects over the course of the programme. This has been a result of the combination of staff illness and turnover, along with initial underestimation of the resource needed for the Programme Manager role and within some of the individual projects.

2. Introduction

2.1 About this report

This report summarises the findings of the final evaluation of Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust's (YDMT) Green Futures Programme, funded by the Big Lottery Fund – renamed National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) in January 2019. It builds on the interim evaluation report, produced by Icarus in February 2019.

The purpose of this final evaluation is to:

- Reflect on the progress of the programme against its outputs and outcomes
- Highlight key successes, enabling factors and challenges encountered in delivering the programme
- Highlight the learning to inform future Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust projects of this type and scale.

2.2 About Green Futures

Green Futures was created to respond to the under-representation of young people taking part in outdoor activities. The 2005 Diversity Review (completed by the Countryside Agency in response to the Rural White Paper 2000) highlighted that certain groups, including young people, people from black and minority ethnic groups (BAME), people from inner cities, people with low incomes, women and disabled people were under-represented in outdoor recreation. This under-representation is seen in the Yorkshire Dales and its catchment area (including Bradford, Keighley, Leeds, Craven District and North Lancashire), where despite having a high-quality natural environment on the doorstep, engagement and take up of activities within the area by young people aged 11 -24 is relatively low. Significant areas within the programme catchment fall into the 20% most economically deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) with many in the lowest 10% and are areas with significant populations of people from BAME backgrounds. Certain groups have also been identified that suffer a particularly high incidence of exclusion. These include:

- Young people in low income (often inner city) households, with family conflict or growing up in care
- People who do not work, attend school, or otherwise engage in work-related learning
- People from black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Disabled people.

In 2016, YDMT were awarded funding by NLCF for Green Futures, a five-year programme, as part of a wider programme, 'Our Bright Future' (OBF). YDMT are the lead organisation for Green Futures, working in partnership with other local organisations, including the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YNDPA), Craven Development Education Centre and the Field Studies Council (FSC) at Malham Tarn as well as Barnardo's and Bradford Environmental Education Service, both of whom work directly with young people.

The programme began in February 2016 and was planned to end in December 2020. However, with the agreement and support of NLCF it was extended for six months, until July 2021, to help mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on programme delivery. A Steering Group was established to oversee the Green Futures programme. This included representation from the different partners and over the course of the programme three young people have been appointed as members of the Steering Group.

The overall aim of the Green Futures programme was **supporting and developing environmental opportunities for young people (aged 11 - 24) in the Yorkshire Dales and surrounding area** through:

- Creating and developing young people's interest in and connection to the environment
- Promoting and supporting practical action
- Developing environmental skills and leadership
- Creating green mentors and role models in the community.



Figure 1 Green Futures Delivery Model

To deliver this overarching aim, Green Futures identified a range of outcomes and outputs over the five years.

Outcomes for young people

- 1.1 Increased awareness and connection to local and global environment.
- 1.2 More empowered through new skills and knowledge to create positive environmental change.

Outcomes for environment

- 2.1 More practical environmental action projects enhancing green / blue / built spaces.
- 2.2 More practical activities encouraging sustainable living.

Outcomes for communities

- 3.1 Increased social cohesion through connecting, co-operating and taking action to enhance the local environment.
- 3.2 Improved health and wellbeing through participation.

Programme Outputs

- Up to 5000¹ young people inspired through educational/ skill-based activities which discover, explore, and enhance the environment.
- 16 young people from rural backgrounds trained, employed and qualified in environmental conservation / management.
- 15 community groups formed, and 40 environmental enhancement /awareness projects delivered.
- 1 school /college will achieve Green Flag Eco-School Status across the five-year project, with others working towards Green Flag and achieving at least 2 Bronze and 1 Silver.

Green Futures consisted of four individual projects.

Green Guardians – This project, delivered by YDMT, targeted young people, aged 11 - 24 years, experiencing disadvantage / deprivation who were not traditionally engaged with the environment, and aimed to connect them with the natural environment by providing inspiring, thought-provoking experiences and practical skills through a range of different activity days. The project initially targeted young people in Craven, North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, before extending into the Forest of Bowland, Lancashire and East Cumbria.

Eco-Schools – The Eco-Schools project was initially delivered by Craven Development Education Centre, before being brought within YDMT. The project aimed to replicate and adapt similar work that had taken place in primary schools to suit secondary schools in working towards Eco-Schools Green Flag² status, recognising that there was a gap in engagement with young people at secondary level. Schools involved in the project set up a pupil-led Eco-Committee within school, completed an environmental review, developed an action plan and delivered environmental activities within their school and / or local community.

Dales and Fells Trainees – YDMT delivered this apprenticeship project aimed at employing young people, aged 16 – 24 years, in environmental conservation and management. The apprenticeships lasted for two years, and each apprentice was based with a local rural or environmental sector employer, receiving a range of different training, some of which was certificated, and took part in practical conservation work as part of their work placement. Alongside their employment, apprentices also studied at Craven College to gain a Level 2 qualification as a Countryside Worker.³

Young Rangers – YDNPA were the lead delivery partner for this project. It extended a previous pilot in the southern Yorkshire Dales by creating two additional groups for young people aged 11 - 16 years in the west and north of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Regular Task Days were organised throughout the year, with the aim of connecting young people to the landscape on their doorstep, helping them to develop new skills and to help combat rural isolation by undertaking tasks in a friendly and sociable group. Sessions were often supported by apprentices who were part of the Dales and Fells Trainees project.

¹ This target was originally 4000 young people – it was increased, in agreement with NLCF, to 5000 in January 2020.

² Eco-Schools Green Flag. Schools self-assess for a Bronze and Silver Award before applying for a Green Flag, the highest award. <https://www.eco-schools.org.uk/about/how-it-works/>

³ The Level 2 Countryside Worker apprenticeship was originally the Environmental Conservation apprenticeship.

In addition to the four projects, the young people involved were also encouraged to attend a **Youth Environment Forum**, which met at regular intervals and an annual **Youth Environment Summit**. The Youth Environment Summit was run by members of the Youth Environment Forum and was a two-day residential event. It was used to help young people celebrate and share their experiences, undertake practical work, discuss environmental issues, develop new project ideas, and influence the development of Green Futures.

Young people were also able to access a **Youth Environmental Action Fund (YEAF)**. This allowed young people to apply for a grant of up to £1000 to plan, organise and deliver environmental projects in their local area. A panel of young people assessed all grant applications and made the decision on which grants to award.

2.3 The structure of this report

A summary of the evaluation process is outlined in Section Three of this report, and the findings of that work are outlined in Section Four. Section Four reviews the progress of Green Futures across its four outputs and three outcome areas (young people, environment, communities), highlighting challenges, enabling factors, key achievements, and learning. The report ends with a section on conclusions.

3. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation of Green Futures used a supported self-evaluation model. Icarus was appointed in May 2016 to provide limited external support to design the evaluation approach and draft annual summary reports, for inclusion in Green Future's evaluation reporting to the Our Bright Future Programme. Icarus' specific tasks have included: identifying evaluation questions and indicators; outlining potential evaluation methods for the projects to use; and contributing to annual reporting. Due to resource constraints however, it was the responsibility of Green Futures and the individual projects to collect and collate their own data.

In 2018, Icarus was asked to produce an interim evaluation report for the programme. This was produced in February 2019 and in February 2021 Icarus were commissioned to complete a final evaluation. This report is therefore the second and final review of activity and impact.

Only limited additional **primary research** was undertaken to support the final evaluation. Project Officers and members of the Steering Group were invited to complete an online survey and semi-structured interview.

Table 1: Summary of primary research methods for the final evaluation

Research audience	Method	Distribution	Completed
Project Officers	Online survey	5	5
Project Officers	Semi structured telephone interview	NA	4
Steering Group Members	Online survey	4	3
Steering Group Members	Semi structured telephone interview	NA	3

In addition to this, YDMT issued an online survey to young people who had participated in Green Futures as well as the parents, carers or guardians of young people. However, very few responses were received. YDMT therefore conducted subsequent interviews with young people attending the final Annual Environment Summit in July 2021 and with the young people who took part in the Dales and Fells Trainees project, asking them to reflect on the impact that their participation in Green Futures had on them as individuals. Given the low number of project beneficiaries involved in this final evaluation, it is not therefore possible to do a robust triangulation of data across several different sources, but there are individual insights into the impact of Green Futures on young people from these interviews and conversations.

In addition to the above, **secondary research activities** included the review and analysis of the following materials:

- Annual Reports provided to the Our Bright Futures Programme in January 2020 and 2021
- Case studies, produced by YDMT, illustrating the 'Green Futures Journey' of a selection of individual young people, groups working with the programme and programme/project events
- Quarterly reports produced by YDMT, and submitted to the OBF Programme, for the period January 2019 to July 2021.

There are limitations to using a self-evaluation model. When responsibility for data collection and collation lies wholly with individual projects there can be both capacity and expertise gaps – there may not be adequate attention paid to data collection, some project participants may fail to provide evaluation data and there are challenges in tracking the individual progress of participants.

These following specific challenges have been experienced within the Green Futures programme and have an impact on this report:

- incomplete data collection or data coverage across some work areas
- gaps in evaluation data for 2020, particularly for online activities for which it was harder to get end of event feedback and as a result of staff changes during the five-year programme
- gaps in wellbeing data where evaluation methods have proved difficult to implement
- insufficient evidence to track the progress of individual participants.

4. Evaluation findings

This section summarises the progress made in delivering the planned outputs and outcomes agreed by the programme, with the OBF Programme. The quarterly and annual reports provided by YDMT together with the Project Officers and Steering Group survey identify several factors as enablers or challenges for Green Futures. Within the resources available for this report, it is not possible to provide a detailed narrative of these points, but they are included in a summary table for each output / outcome as a reference point for the projects and the programme. Key learning points to inform the design of future projects of this type are included at the end.

4.1 Impact of Covid-19

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Green Futures was unable to deliver much of its planned project activities, all of which were originally designed to take place face to face and outdoors. With the support of NLCF, the project was extended by a period of six months until July 2021. This helped to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, but Covid-19 restrictions still had a significant impact on the project, which was entering its final year of activity at the start of the pandemic.

During the first lockdown in March 2020, most project staff were furloughed affecting the ability of the project to continue planning the delivery of future activities. In between lockdowns, some limited face to face activity was able to take place and during lockdown periods, the individual projects worked hard to transfer some engagement with young people online to help maintain relationships and provide support to young people until face-to-face meetings were possible again, but this had mixed results.

The move of activities online and continued restrictions on both face-to-face activities and the use of shared transport inevitably created challenges for the programme. The programme has exceeded all its output targets for the number of young people participating in Green Futures, but without the pandemic, it is likely that the final numbers would have been even higher. Several events planned for the last year also had to be cancelled. These included:

- A trip by young people involved in Green Futures to visit another Our Bright Futures project about oceans
- A plan to plant a woodland to form part of the legacy of Green Futures and to mark 10 years of partnership working with Willow Young Carers, had to be abandoned, in part because of the Covid-19 pandemic but also because of flooding in the winter of 2019/2020.

A summary of the main impacts that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the individual Green Futures projects is provided below.

Green Guardians – With Covid-19 restrictions preventing face to face gatherings for much of 2020 and some young people living in Tier 3 areas, which prevented mixing with other households, 19 events that had been planned for March to May 2020 were all cancelled and no further Green Guardians events were held in 2020. Some face-to-face events were held in 2021, but restrictions on the use of shared transport to bring young people to Activity Days continued to have an impact leading to lower levels of participation in events than they were planned for. To mitigate this, when group activities were able to resume, the Project Officer travelled to youth centres to offer

activities more locally for young people to avoid the need for transport. The Project Officer also produced over 500 remote learning packs including Christmas packs, sunflower seed packs and beeswax wrap making kits for young people to work on at home. These kits were provided to partners for them to share with service users, some of whom had not previously been involved in Green Futures activities.

Young Rangers – The Young Rangers groups were unable to meet during the first lockdown and as a result, the number of planned Task Days in 2020 was less than in comparison to previous years. When lockdown restrictions eased over the summer in 2020, an exemption for youth work allowed the Young Rangers to meet again, which they did on a weekly basis over the summer holidays.

Dales and Fells Trainees – The Covid-19 pandemic affected the second intake of apprentices who started their apprenticeships in 2018. Eight of the ten apprentices were furloughed for periods ranging from a few weeks to six months in the case of one young person, but they were all back at work by the end of September 2020. The extension to the overall programme allowed apprentices to complete training courses that were cancelled in 2020.

Eco-Schools – Having achieved its targets for Eco-School Awards in 2019, the Eco-Schools project changed its focus away from the awards to providing broader support to schools as they pursued their own environmental work. With the closure of schools in March 2020, the move to online home learning, and during the subsequent reopening of schools, staff needed to prioritise the delivery of the core curriculum and therefore engagement with secondary schools stopped.

Youth Environment Forum and Annual Youth Environment Summit – During lockdown, the Project Officer was furloughed, but members of the wider team emailed Youth Environment Forum members on a weekly basis and organised a combination of online meetings and face to face sessions, when Covid-19 restrictions allowed. There was no Youth Environment Summit in 2020. Instead, members of the Youth Environment Forum worked with YDMT's Media team to deliver a 'Youth Social Media Takeover' of YDMT's website and social media pages in November 2020.

Youth Environmental Action Fund – The main impact on the Youth Environmental Action Fund was to delay delivery of all grants awarded in 2020. Delays to community projects were caused by Covid-19 restrictions preventing groups meeting face to face. In addition to this delivery of other projects was delayed where they related to initiatives young people were planning to implement in their schools, as schools were closed from March 2020 until September 2020 and then again in January 2021 until Easter.

4.2 Programme Outputs

4.2.1 Inspiring young people

Output 1: Up to 5000 young people inspired through educational / skill-based activities which discover, explore and enhance the environment.

Summary: This target was exceeded.

Output (OP)	Progress
OP1: Up to 5000 young people inspired through educational / skill-based activities which discover, explore and enhance the environment.	Target exceeded – 8051 young people took part in Green Futures activities.
Enabling Factors	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sufficient funding, particularly for transport, to enable the programme to be free for young people to attend / be involved with.• Flexibility of staff to work outside normal hours during evenings and weekends and adapt to changing circumstances.• Experience of project staff in working with young people.• Flexibility in the 'offer' made to groups for potential activities to provide opportunities to suit different interests (group and individual interests).• Taking activities to where young people already meet e.g. Youth groups, schools.• Availability of local groups and / or landowners offering land / ideas for activities.• Peer to peer influencing and support of young people involved in planning and leading activities encouraging more young people to get involved.• Majority of Young Rangers Task Days full / oversubscribed.• Provision of free transport to pick up / drop off young people living in rurally isolated areas.• Working with group leaders involved in Green Guardians to identify and overcome potential barriers to participation for disadvantaged and /or hard to reach young people.• Reduction in minimum age of Young Rangers from 12 to 11 to bring it in line with the existing Young Ranger group run by YDNPA enabling more young people to be involved.• Provision of access to land and facilities at the Malham Field Studies Centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turnover of staff within the Field Studies Council at Malham Tarn meant new staff were unfamiliar with what had been agreed with the Green Futures Programme.• Lack of capacity/staff skilled in working with young people within FSC at Malham Tarn to deliver agreed activities.• Lack of public transport in rurally isolated areas making it difficult for some young people to attend events outside of school hours.• Chaotic lives of some young people affected attendance, leading to lower attendance at Green Guardian events than planned for.• Difficulty involving care leavers in activities due to lack of capacity of some care support staff to organise groups.• Significant amount of time involved to build relationships with community groups or landowners to get agreement on being involved in, or providing land for, activities.• Requirement of some refugee families to have a chaperone attending activities with their own young person sometimes prevented a young person from participating if a chaperone could not be provided or limited the number of other participants able to take part in an activity.• Adverse weather (e.g. snow in spring 2018 and flooding in winter 2019/2020) led to the cancellation of events or low attendance.• High staff:young person ratios needed for at risk groups, limiting the number of young people that could be accommodated on mini buses to travel to / from activity days.• Reduction in central funding for youth work made it harder to arrange activities through existing youth groups / organisations.

The original target of 4000 was exceeded in 2019 and was increased to 5000 in January 2020, with the agreement of OBF and NLCF. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic preventing face to face activities for much of 2020, the revised target was also exceeded by the end of the Green Futures Programme.

All four core Green Futures projects (Green Guardians, Young Rangers, Dales and Fells Trainees, and Eco-Schools) contributed to the successful achievement of this output. Young people who took part in projects via the Youth Environmental Action Fund are also included within this figure. An additional 1090 young people have also been provided with environmental activities / opportunities as a direct result of Green Futures. These include:

- Activities delivered by third parties, but which would not have taken place without initial introductions being made at Green Futures events, such as the Eco-Schools Conference in 2018
- Remote learning packs provided to partner organisations for their service users during periods when face to face activities were not allowed due to Covid-19 restrictions.

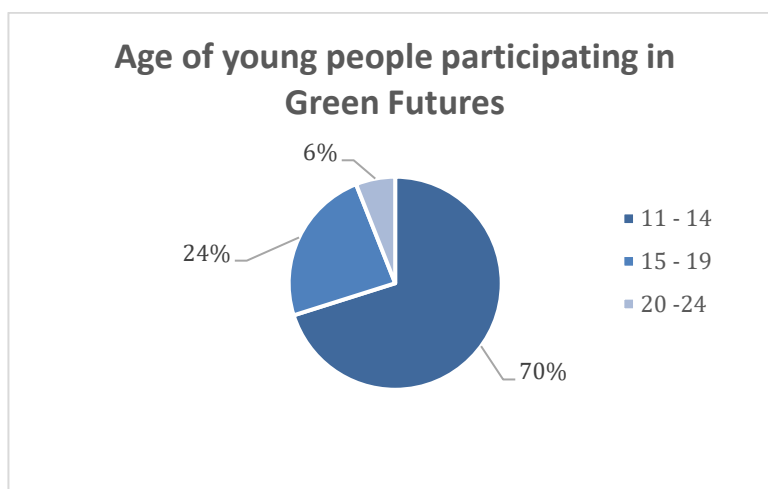
In total 8051 young people are recorded as having participated in activities by the end of July 2021, of which 880 young people are recorded as living within the 20% most deprived areas in England⁴. Across Green Futures 2590 young people were identified as experiencing one or more different forms of disadvantage. This number may not directly correlate to the number of young people as some, but not all these individuals may experience more than one form of disadvantage or social deprivation. A break down showing the types of disadvantage experienced by young people taking part in Green Futures is provided below.

Table 2: Green Futures participants experiencing one or more forms of disadvantage

Type of disadvantage	Number of young people
Asylum seekers and refugees	144
Disability	578
Mental health issues	95
Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	59
Roma and travellers	22
Rurally isolated	1537
Young carers	155

⁴ Index of Multiple Deprivation, last updated in 2019 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

Age data was recorded for 6794 young people involved in Green Futures. Of these, the majority (70%) were aged 11 - 14.



A key target audience for Green Futures was young people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds – a group traditionally under-represented in the outdoors. Green Guardians in particular, was designed to increase participation from BAME young people and bring them into the countryside of the Yorkshire Dales. A summary of the different ethnic backgrounds of young people participating in Green Futures is shown below – it relates to a total of 6524 young people who provided this information.

Table 3: Ethnic Background of Green Futures participants

Ethnic Background	Number of Young People
White - Irish	4371
White - Gypsy or Traveller	15
White - Other	13
Asian/Asian UK - Indian	259
Asian/Asian UK - Pakistani	203
Asian/Asian UK - Bangladeshi	5
Asian/Asian UK - Chinese	1
Asian/Asian UK - Other	29
Black / Black UK - African	68
Black / Black UK - Caribbean	0
Black / Black UK - Other	18
Arab	18
Other Ethnic Group	56
Prefer not to say	1494

The impact of Covid-19 did affect the profile of young people participating in Green Futures. This was particularly evident for the Young Rangers Project for the period when practical activities were allowed to resume, but the Programme was unable to resume its offer of free transport on a minibus to take Young People to Task Days. Feedback from Project staff reported a shift in profile

of Young Rangers over this period to young people from less disadvantaged backgrounds whose parents or guardians were able to drive them to Task Days. This observation supports the crucial role that the provision of free transport played in enabling young people to take part in Green Futures – a key learning point for future projects of this type.

The Green Guardians project also reported a reduction in the diversity of the backgrounds of young people because of the pandemic. Young people living in areas with Level 3 restrictions, which included parts of West Yorkshire, where some Green Guardians participants lived, were unable to travel outside their local area. As most task days took place in Craven, this resulted in less diversity in the background of participants, particularly in relation to young people from BAME backgrounds.

The range of activities undertaken are discussed in more detail below (Section 4.2.2) but have included tree planting, woodland maintenance, Himalayan Balsam clearance, footpath construction, maintenance and restoration, walking activities, cleaning dormice boxes, construction of hedgehog, bird and bat boxes, river fly monitoring and other flora and fauna survey work, willow bundling / spilling, archaeological investigations, litter picking, fence construction, reedbed maintenance, farm visits, making natural cosmetics and bushcraft.

It is not possible to assess the number of young people who were inspired because of their participation in Green Futures, but there is evidence from end of project interviews with young people and case study interviews that the impact on some young people has been significant.

“I was doing a wildlife garden lunch club at school....I agreed to go to the Green Futures summit, then I knew I should go to Young Rangers and that has led me to a career in conservation.”

“Last week we were doing drystone walling, so I’ve learned new skills. I’d like to work outside eventually, maybe get an apprenticeship. I’ve really enjoyed the stuff I’ve been doing at Young Rangers.”

(Young Rangers participants, End of Project Interviews)

“Coming here has shown me a lot of people care about stuff like climate change and if we all do something we can make things better.”

(Youth Summit participant, End of Project Interview)

4.2.2 Training young people

Output 2: 16 young people from rural backgrounds trained, employed and qualified in environmental conservation / management.

Summary: This target was achieved.

Output (OP)	Progress
OP2: 16 young people from rural backgrounds trained, employed and qualified in environmental conservation / management.	Target achieved – 16 young people completed apprenticeships with local employers.
Enabling Factors	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of general and certificated training as part of the apprenticeships. • Provision of a specific, tailored course for apprentices by the local college. • Local employers willing to provide work placements, with financial support towards salary costs. • Project staff attending careers fairs and events in schools to raise awareness and promote the scheme. • Apprenticeship scheme over-subscribed for 2018 intake. • Apprentices promoting the scheme via their leadership role supporting Green Guardians / Young Rangers activities and acting as advocates / role models to other young people. • Induction week developed for second intake of apprentices – included session on money management and mental health and wellbeing. • Induction week for second intake of apprentices helped build relationships and a basis for peer-to-peer support. • Involving employers / college staff in the recruitment process – they had a good understanding of the qualities needed for a good apprentice. • The training budget was adequately resourced enabling apprentices to undertake more training than other apprenticeships could offer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some apprentices in the first intake dropped out due to issues with mental health, work discipline or budgeting. • Lack of skills in programme team and local employers to support apprentices with mental health and wellbeing / personal issues. • Some work placements harder to fill in isolated rural locations. • Covid-19 restrictions meant some apprentices in the second intake were furloughed and / or training courses were delayed.

The project has achieved its target for this output, with 16 young people successfully completing their apprenticeships by the end of the Dales and Fells Trainee Project. The project was originally planned on the basis that there would be two intakes of eight apprentices with eight starting their two-year apprenticeship in September 2016 and a further eight young people starting in September 2018. In the end, nine young people joined the project as part of the first intake and a further ten young people joined in the second intake in September 2018.

Three apprentices in the initial intake left the scheme before the end of their two-year placement. This was for a variety of issues, but included mental health, work discipline issues and struggling to budget. As a result the project designed and delivered an induction week for the second intake of young people joining the Dales and Fells Trainee Project. The induction week also included sessions on money management and mental health. These were run by project partners and external organisations, with the aim of reducing the potential for similar issues arising for young people in the second cohort. Once apprentices started their work placement, they were less likely to see the other young people in their intake, which at times could create a sense of ‘being on your own.’ The induction week therefore had the additional benefit by helping the new apprentices get to know each other better, providing a basis to develop a peer-to-peer network for the duration of their two-year apprenticeship.

The table below shows the next steps for the 19 young people that took part in the Dales and Fells Trainees project, as part of Green Futures. It is very positive that of these, 14 have secured permanent employment on completion of their apprenticeship and in their end of project interviews 72% (n=18) said that their next step was as a direct result of the experience, certificates and qualifications gained with the project.

Table 4: Summary of next steps for Dales and Fells Trainees

Next Step	Number of young people
Retained as permanent employees by their work placement providers	6
Secured employment because of the skills / experience gained during the apprenticeship	8 ⁵
Undertaking further study (e.g. Level 3 apprenticeship; Environmental Science degree)	2
Further education – non related degree	1
Lost contact	1
One not in employment because of injury (unrelated to work)	1

“Having the opportunity to complete my Environmental Conservation Apprenticeship through YDMT has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I felt quite lost personally and directionless in terms of my career before enrolling on the scheme, and it has given me a real opportunity to retrain and make sure I can go on to have a really fulfilling career.”

“Without my apprenticeship, there’s a very good chance I would still be stuck in a job I didn’t want to be in, working all hours under the sun and not feeling fulfilled. But now I am exceeding my own expectations and enjoying work for the first time. I have just been offered a job working for one of the UK’s biggest conservation charities.... an opportunity I am so unbelievably excited for and would probably never have gotten if it weren’t for my previous experience in conservation.”

(Case Study Interview, Dales and Fells Trainee)

⁵ This figure includes two trainees who did not complete their apprenticeship, but secured a job based on their experience in Green Futures.

Interviews were also held with some of the employers who had provided work placements for individual apprentices. One employer referred to the positive impact employing young people has had on their organisation and they are now in the process of recruiting a third apprentice, in addition to the two they had already employed in the latest intake.

“They transformed [our organisation] – we had people that couldn’t see the need or value in young trainees until we took on apprentices. We might have offered a week’s work experience before, but this allowed us to put them actually into our work – and it showed us what they were capable of. It changed the doubtful people’s attitude and has changed the way we do things – until recently we had a young trustee on the board and hope to do so again.”

(Dales and Fell Trainee work placement provider, End of Project Interview)

In addition to their college course, apprentices undertook a wide range of training, most of which was certificated. Further detail on skills development is provided in Section 4.2.1 – Outcomes for Young People and a list of employers who offered a work placement to apprentices is in [Appendix Three](#).

Case Study – Chris, 21

Chris joined Green Futures in 2018, as an apprentice with a local contracting firm, The DTMS Group. He had struggled at school, obtaining very few GCSEs and was introduced to the DTMS Group via a heritage course he was doing at school while he worked to retake his Maths and English GCSEs to secure the minimum grades. He was very nervous at his initial interview for the apprenticeship, shy around strangers and worried about having to attend college.

However, from the start of his work placement, it was clear that the job suited him, and he worked well as a team member, quickly becoming confident in himself, once he realised his work was valued.

Attending college was a challenge for Chris, but despite his dislike of the college work, he passed his Intermediate Apprenticeship in Environmental Conservation in early 2020. Conversely, he found the practical courses much more interesting, gaining certification and skills in a range of different areas, including tractor driving, All Terrain Vehicle driving, safe use of pesticides, brush cutter and trailer use. The work Chris undertook during his apprenticeship was very varied and, on completion of his work and college placements, he was retained by his employer and now helps to train the new employees having gained in confidence and the skills to support a career path that he really enjoys.

“Chris is a really valued team member. He is very reliable and takes on responsibility. He puts himself forward for the jobs away from home and will always step up when there is no supervisor available. He is also very good at customer relations and will often be the one to deal with members of the public when necessary. He has a real future career with the company and is progressing through the ranks.”



4.2.3 Establishing community groups and delivering environmental projects

Output 3: 15 community groups formed, and 40 environmental enhancement / awareness projects delivered.

Summary: The targets for the number of community groups and the number of environmental enhancement / awareness projects delivered were both exceeded.

Output (OP)	Progress
OP3: 15 community groups formed, and 40 environmental enhancement / awareness projects delivered.	<i>Target exceeded – 31 community groups were formed; 851 environmental enhancement projects and 33 awareness raising projects delivered.</i>
Enabling Factors	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision of funding via YEAF to support project delivery.• Landowners / organisations willing to provide land to undertake environmental enhancement projects.• Project ideas inspired by sessions at the Youth Environment Forum and / or Youth Environment Summit.• Impact of peer to peer influencing to encourage participation of other young people in newly formed groups.• Young people inspired to set up their own groups, following involvement in Green Futures.• Links with local organisations and established community groups to help identify potential environmental enhancement projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time taken to develop relationships with land owners and / or community groups to identify potential project opportunities.• Cancellation of activity days each year due to low turnout, challenging weather conditions or Covid-19, reducing the number of environmental enhancement tasks / projects that could be completed.• Time taken for young people to develop the confidence and leadership skills to take the lead on suggesting projects or establishing groups to develop and deliver projects.

Over the five-year programme, a total of 31 community groups were established. These are primarily a result of the 33 small-scale projects funded by the Youth Environmental Action Fund. Since its launch in 2017, £26,500 was distributed via this route, funding a range of projects designed and managed by young people. Most applications were from existing schools, clubs and community groups. However, to apply, and deliver the project, a small number of individuals came together as a new group to work on the project and were therefore recorded by the Green Futures Programme as the formation of a community group.

Delivering environmental improvements was one of the core outcomes for the Green Futures Programme and were the key mechanism through which young people involved in Green Futures learnt new skills and were encouraged to connect with, and learn about the environment, both locally and globally. Over the five years, a wide range of projects have been undertaken and are discussed in more detail in Section 4.3.2 – Outcomes for the Environment.

Environmental activities were delivered across all parts of Green Futures – the four core projects, the Youth Environmental Action Fund, Youth Environment Forum and Annual Youth Summit. A total of 846 environmental enhancements and the creation of five new environmental areas were recorded. It is possible that the number of enhancement activities delivered is higher than the

recorded figure provided: some different environmental improvement activities done on the same day being counted as one activity; under-reporting of activities delivered by apprentices while on work placement; lack of available data from Eco-Schools committees on activities completed as part of their work on the Eco-Schools Awards Scheme.

Only one project, funded by the Youth Environmental Action Fund was classified as an awareness-raising project, but it is evident from project reporting and case studies that many other YEAF projects and Green Futures activities included awareness raising elements. Relevant examples include:

- Members of the Youth Environment Forum created a whale, as part of the 2019 Flower Pot Festival in Settle to raise awareness of the impact of plastic pollution.
- Settle College Eco-Committee planned, organised and delivered an Eco-Schools Conference in 2018 for local schools – Plastic Pollution: Join the resistance.
- Lancashire based Ludus Youth Dance Company choreographed a dance performance which they delivered during the Morecambe Carnival Festival and Preston flag market to highlight the importance of reducing plastic waste.

4.2.4 Supporting Eco-Schools

Output 4: One School / College will achieve Green Flag Eco-Schools Status across the five-year project, with others working towards Green Flag and achieving at least two Bronze and one Silver.

Summary: This target was exceeded.

Output (OP)	Progress
OP4: 1 School / College will achieve Green Flag Eco-Schools Status across the five-year project, with others working towards Green Flag and achieving at least 2 Bronze and 1 Silver.	Target exceeded – 1 school achieved Green Flag Eco-Schools Status; 3 schools have achieved a Silver Award; 2 schools achieved a Bronze Award.
Enabling Factors	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of individual young people in other Green Futures projects establishing their own Eco-group in school. • Availability of YEAF grants to support project delivery by Eco-Committees. • Availability of project staff to support schools and Eco-Committees. • Flexibility of level of support provided, focussing on issues of interest to individual schools. • Commitment of staff in school to work with its school's Eco-Committee. • Interest from schools generated by attendance at Eco-Schools Conferences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties in recruiting / maintaining staff involvement within schools. • Changes in project staff meant that it took additional time to re-establish relationships with schools. • In school resources - Lack of money to buy equipment and /or space to run Eco-School activities. • Changes in staff at schools resulting in lack of internal support for Eco-Committees. • Lack of school staff time to fully support and lead school Eco-Committees and/or insufficient skilled staff.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using other Green Futures projects (Green Guardians, Young Rangers) as a 'way in' to schools that don't have an Eco-Committee. • Offer of enrichment days to non-participating schools as an introduction to Eco-Schools and wider environmental sustainability issues. • On-line resources provided via the Eco-School website. • Achieving the target in 2019 allowed the project to provide a more flexible offer to schools to promote environmental activities / awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High number of demands on teacher's time / lack of buy-in and support from school Senior Leadership teams. • Loss of interest of Eco-Committee, for example, if a key pupil leaves the Committee or school. • Obtaining evaluation data from schools (Eco-Committee members, staff and whole school survey responses). • Keeping track of the number of young people involved in individual Eco-Committees. • School closures in 2020 because of Covid-19 prevented face to face activities and engagement with secondary schools. • Eco-School activities were a lower priority for schools on re-opening after lockdowns – focus was on making up for lost learning. • Initially the Project Officer was not based in the same team / office as other Green Futures staff, resulting in a perception of being 'on the margins' of the overall Programme.
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The overall Green Futures target of one School / College achieving Green Flag Eco-Schools Status across the five-year project, with others working towards Green Flag and achieving at least two Bronze and one Silver was achieved in 2019. To be awarded a Green Flag, the relevant school/college must first complete their Bronze and Silver Eco-Schools awards. A breakdown is provided below.

Table 5: Summary of Eco-Schools Awards achieved

Award Level	School
Green Flag Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Skipton Academy
Silver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Skipton Academy • Skipton Girls High School • Cedar House School
Bronze	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Skipton Academy • Cedar House School

After achieving its target, the Eco-Schools project changed its approach to focus on providing ongoing support to schools in their environmental work, rather than focussing on achieving the awards. This change in focus was, in part, also linked to other factors including:

- i) **Staff changes** - In early 2019, the original Project Officer left to take up a new role and was not replaced until September 2019. Relationships therefore had to be re-established, which took time to develop.
- ii) **Awards process** - the Eco-Schools awards system changed. Awards are now time-limited and need to be reviewed within set timescales. Reporting from the project suggests that several schools would have been able to successfully apply for awards, but did not submit paperwork in time, despite offers of help from the Project Officer.

In 2020, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic had a further impact on the project with all engagement in secondary schools stopping. Prior to the first period of lockdown in March 2020, three new schools had registered interest in joining the project. However with a move to online learning for schools during lockdown and the ongoing challenges encountered by schools on their return to face-to-face teaching in September 2020, no further progress was made on the Eco-Schools project in 2020.

The collection of evaluation data has been an ongoing challenge for the Eco-Schools project. A survey of pupils involved in Eco-School Committees, school staff and a whole-school survey were issued on an annual basis, but responses were consistently low, and in some years, no responses were received at all. As a result, there is insufficient data to assess the longer-term impact on individual young people of being involved in the project or the longer-term changes in behaviours.

4.3 Programme Outcomes

4.3.1 Outcomes for Young People

Outcome 1.1: Increased awareness and connection to local and global environment.

Outcome 1.2: More empowered through new skills and knowledge to create positive environmental change.

Summary: The programme has made good progress towards achieving the outcomes for young people.

Enabling Factors	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of certificated training as part of the Dales and Fells Trainees Project. • Daily work activities for Dales and Fells Trainees gave young people experience of caring for their local environment. • College training for apprentices was focussed on providing skills and knowledge in environmental management / conservation and raising awareness of wider environmental issues. • Wider experience days for Dales and Fells Trainees developed knowledge and skills beyond the core requirement of their work placement jobs. • A strong network of internal and external contacts and experts supporting the provision of inspiring, relatable topics and content. • Practical tasks gave young people a sense that they can make a difference. • Delivery model for Eco-Schools encouraged peer to peer influence to make positive environmental changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes difficult to recruit volunteers with the required skills, knowledge and enthusiasm to lead groups of young people, limiting the number of events that could be offered. • Changes in staff or staff responsibilities slowed or stopped Eco-Committees. Inputs / support from the project team are not always followed up on. • Reduced focus on environmental issues in the education system meaning that Eco-Clubs; YEAF project work was sometimes restricted to after core school hours, limiting the number of young people who could get involved. • Majority of projects were focussed on the local environment rather than global issues (Young Rangers, Green Guardians, Dales and Fells Trainees). • Limited opportunities on some activity days (Green Guardians) to talk about global environmental issues – either because of time constraints or dealing with challenging behaviour in an individual group. • Could be difficult to integrate sustainability / environmental issues into wider teaching

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Environment Forum and Youth Environment Summits introduced young people to wider issues linked to sustainable living and developed a deeper understanding of different topics. • Availability of the Youth Environmental Action Fund to support practical action and explore local and global issues. • Opportunities for young people to get involved in other forums (Green Futures Steering Group, Our Bright Future Steering Group, Our Bright Future National Youth Forum). • Young people involved in project planning and choosing topics to explore that interested them. • Willingness of staff to provide off-curriculum days to non-participating schools helped raise wider awareness / interest in Green Futures. • Flexibility and willingness of staff to run activities on weekends and / or evenings increasing the number of opportunities for young people to get involved. • Staff tailored sessions to make content accessible to the level of understanding / knowledge at which young people joined Green Futures. 	<p>within schools, to include the whole school cohort rather than just the Eco-Committee members, as required to achieve a Green Flag award.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancellation of events during the final year, including the 2020 Annual Youth Summit, because of the Covid-19 pandemic affected planned activities for Green Futures to consolidate and reflect on their individual journeys and on the environmental issues explored via Green Futures • Difficult to assess impact of one-off engagement activities on individual young people. • Relatively short project timescales make it difficult to assess and demonstrate a longer-term sustained awareness of local and global issues among participants. • Reluctance of some Dales and Fell Trainees to get involved in wider activities if they could not see a direct relationship to their work.
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Awareness and connection to the local and global environment

“If you know you are doing something useful, it gives you more of a purpose. You feel better knowing you’ve done something that is going to have a positive impact. I knew about climate change and the state of the world. With Young Rangers, I could at least try to do something [in response].”

(Participant, Young Rangers)

Connecting young people to the natural environment was at the heart of Green Futures. The Green Guardians activity days, Young Rangers Task Days and the practical conservation work of the apprentices were all based on being outdoors in the local environment, while the Eco-Schools project, Youth Environment Forum and Youth Environment Summit provided the space to explore global environmental issues as well as helping to improve the local environment. Funding provided by the Youth Environmental Action Fund also enabled young people to explore local and global environmental issues.

Throughout the programme, there was a mixture of one-off engagement activities, delivered primarily by Green Guardians events and more regular engagement, such as Young Rangers and the Youth Environment Forum. The Green Guardians project also tried to identify groups with whom it could work with over a longer period, but this relied on partner organisations having the capacity and willingness to come out more than once with their group of young people and was often not possible. Towards the end of Green Futures, an increased emphasis was placed on identify groups that could get involved in Green Guardians on a longer-term basis, but the

programme recognised that one-off opportunities although less likely to support a longer-term awareness and connection with the local and global environment, could still provide a boost in well-being for young people and /or spark an interest in the outdoor environment and/or environmental issues. Overall, 1073 young people took part in one-off engagement activities, 418 young people took part in short-term engagement (up to three months) and 130 young people are recorded as taking part in longer-term engagement of more than three months. In the end of project surveys and interviews with Steering Group members and Project staff, a few commented on the value of and balance between one-off and longer-term engagement with young people.

“As valuable as short-term engagement trips are for the groups, a longer-term engagement could allow opportunities for a deeper, more impactful awareness and connection.”

(Project Officer, End of Programme Interview)

“There is value in the one-off engagements. There are always some that are really interested, and you know they go home and talk to their parents and try and influence them to change their behaviours / not buy a particular project etc...”

(Steering Group Member, End of Programme Interview)

Green Guardians: A review of end of event feedback forms from young people taking part in one-off Green Guardian activities over the period 2017 – 2019 demonstrates that the majority of young people taking part thought they knew more about the environment at the end of the activity day than they did before attending. No evidence was available for 2020 as planned events were cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic. A few sessions were held in 2016 and 2021, but there is insufficient end of event evaluation data to include in this analysis.

Table 6: Number of Green Guardians one-off participants who thought they knew more about the environment at the end of their activity day

Year	Percentage
2017	58% (n= 115)
2018	83% (n=132)
2019	85% (n=127)

“I see the environment differently and know it is more important and special. There are many beautiful things to do in the countryside. If I hadn’t come out with [my friend] I wouldn’t think about the countryside the way I do now.”

“We’ve noticed over the last few years the reduction of domestic birds in our area so to combat this, we have placed bird boxes in our garden to provide them with shelter and food.”

(Participants, Green Guardians)

Young Rangers: Following a slow start in 2017 to the new Young Rangers Groups, from 2018 onwards the Young Rangers Task Days were routinely oversubscribed, with many young people returning monthly to take part and a waiting list of others who wanted to take part. This is an excellent result and demonstrates both a sustained connection to the local environment and a willingness to take practical action. In 2018, 87% (n= 97) of young people attending Young Rangers events on a regular basis and 92% (n=59) in 2019 said that they felt the Task Day had been worthwhile.

"I'll look at my local environment differently and do more things to help wherever I can, like litter picking and planting flowers."

(Young Ranger, End of Task Day feedback form)

"Last Sunday, eleven young rangers met on a cold, windy and drizzly day in Garsdale to do some woodland maintenance – it was proof to me that young people really do care about the environment."

(Young Ranger, Blog written about a woodland maintenance Task Day)

As a result of Covid-19 restrictions the number of practical conservation Task Days in 2020 and 2021 was reduced in comparison to previous years. During lockdown periods, the Project Officer posted suggestions for activities on the Young Rangers Facebook page and organised some online sessions. While a good way of supporting young people during those periods, it is clear from feedback provided by Young Rangers that they particularly missed the face-to-face interactions and practical conservation tasks.

"During lockdown, I really missed every aspect of Young Rangers and being out in the Dales....However, it has been great being able to get back out with everyone again, doing the things I love in places that I love."

"The suggestions and links to the Facebook page showed me I could still enjoy the outdoors and make a difference whilst stuck indoors."

(Young Rangers, End of Project Interviews)

Eco-schools: There is insufficient evidence from the Eco-Schools project to determine whether there has been an increase in the connection of young people to their local and global environment because of their Eco-Schools activities. The focus of the Eco-Schools project changed in 2019, following achievement of OP4 to providing broader support to schools, but no evaluation data was available from that point onwards and prior to that, obtaining feedback and evaluation data from schools was an ongoing challenge. Project staff tried several different ways of improving feedback rates, but with little success and it is unfortunate that more schools did not complete evaluation forms to provide a better overall picture of the impact of the Eco-Schools project.

Despite the lack of formal evaluation data, a number of Eco clubs in schools, some of which were part of the Eco-Schools project did apply for funding from the Youth Environmental Action Fund to deliver a range of different projects, which sought to address both local environmental issues (recycling, gardening, tree planting, air quality, plastics, water use) and / or global issues (plastics, pollution, palm oil, food miles, climate change, carbon reduction).

Case Study: Skipton Academy Eco Club

The Skipton Academy Eco Club, who went on to achieve their Green Flag Award as part of the Eco-Schools project were awarded £1000 which they used to purchase 60 recycling bins to encourage young people to recycle waste materials and prevent such materials going to landfill.



“People in school now understand the importance of recycling due to the bins and all the issues with not recycling that we have been able to tell them about.” (Eco-Club member).

“The bins have had a massive effect on the school and the students as there are now more cautions taken by students when putting things in the bin and littering has been reduced dramatically meaning our school is a cleaner place to learn.” (Member of staff).

Youth Environment Forum and Youth Environment Summit: The Youth Environment Forum and Annual Summits together provided an excellent space for young people to explore wider environmental issues, at both a local and a global scale. Over the five years of the programme, young people were directly involved in the planning and delivery of both sets of events, choosing which subjects to explore and covering a wide range of **environmental issues that have resonated with young people at both a local and global level**. These included: the impact of palm oil and meat production; plastics pollution; food waste and food miles; litter, recycling, carbon emissions; climate change, sustainable fishing and water consumption.

“I pay attention to what I’m buying. I reduce things I can’t use more than once and I’m aware of things that need to happen to make change.”

(Participant, Youth Environment Summit)

Empowered through skills and knowledge

“Working with YDMT has given me motivation and purpose and has made me feel like I am making a difference. I have learned so many different skills and had the opportunity to do some really amazing and varied things. I’ve been involved with campaigning, events organisation, as well as going into schools to help educate young people about the importance of our environment.”

(Dales and Fell Trainee)

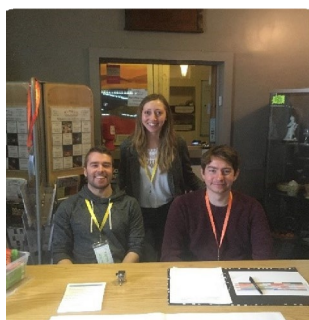
Skills development was a key component of many of the activities that young people were able to experience over the five years of the programme. Skills developed included **practical conservation skills** such as wildlife and wildflower identification; tree and wildflower planting; drystone walling; construction of nesting boxes, footpath creation, maintenance and restoration; and tackling invasive species. Practical conservation activities also gave young people the **chance to develop softer skills** of teamwork, leadership, problem solving and communications while those involved in the planning and delivery of activities such as the Youth Environment Forum, the Youth

Environment Summit, some Young Rangers days and delivering projects funded by the Youth Environmental Action Fund developed skills in project planning, budgeting and communications.

In addition to this, many young people, particularly the apprentices on the Dales and Fells Trainees project have undertaken a wide range of **certificated courses**. A table showing the cumulative number of certificated training achieved by young people during their involvement with Green Futures over the five years is included in [Appendix Four](#).



***New skills:** Learning to make bird boxes on a Young Rangers Task Day.*



***Inspired to take action:** A Dales and Fells Trainee used a grant from YEAF to organise a festival style event to promote living an eco-friendly lifestyle, including workshops on natural cosmetics and household products, plastics and wildlife spotting.*

Since the production of the interim evaluation report, there are many new examples of young people taking the knowledge and skills they have developed as part of Green Futures and **feeling empowered** to apply it elsewhere. A particular success was the takeover of YDMT's website in November 2020, following the cancellation of the 2020 Youth Environment Summit. Members of the Youth Environment Forum worked with YDMT's Media Team taking the lead to plan and deliver a Youth Social Media Takeover. The young people **demonstrated their new skills, confidence and knowledge** by writing blogs, posting eco-friendly lifestyle tips, creating young persons' guides to saving the planet as well as content on environmental issues such as home composting and eco-conscious mountain biking. YDMT staff report that the takeover was so successful that its Media Team plan to make young people's voices a key element of their promotion and publicity material. Other examples include:

- One Young Ranger successfully applied to become a member of the Ernest Cook Trust's Youth Advisory Board for its Green Influencer Scheme.
- One Young Ranger, who was also a member of the Youth Environment Forum was part of the interview panel to recruit a new Project Officer for the Young Rangers Project.
- A Dales and Fells Trainee was a member of the interview panel for the new Green Guardians Officer.
- Four Young Rangers took part in an online session with other young people and staff from Defra to help develop a toolkit to be used by National Parks and other partners to engage visitors about litter.

- One young person originally joined Green Futures as a trainee, working for YDMT and part-funded by the OBF programme. She is now leading her own project at YDMT – Green Influencers, working in partnership with the Ernest Cook Trust and #iWillfund to create green social action in communities.
- Two members of the Youth Environment Forum became Young Ambassadors for YDMT, one of whom has given a speech in front of YDMT Corporate supporters about his experience of Green Futures.

“These positions were as a direct result of participation in the Youth Forum. Both showed passion, excitement and dedication at events attended by wider YDMT staff. These qualities persuaded our management teams that we needed even more youth representation at the highest levels of our organisation.”
(Project Officer, Annual Report 2020)

- One Young Ranger who went on to join the Youth Environment Forum became a member of the National Our Bright Future Youth Forum and was also invited by her headteacher to take part in the outreach and consultancy work of the Eden Project North.
- One Young Ranger organised and led his own Young Ranger Task Day with a visit to his family’s farm, inspiring young people who attended to plan / lead their own Young Rangers Task Day.
- One Dales and Fells Trainee organised and hosted an Environmental Networking Event for young people to meet professionals working in the environmental sector to find out about potential career paths.
- A Dales and Fells Trainee applied for funding from the Youth Environmental Action Fund to organise a Sustainable Christmas Market, with a view to inspiring others to shop more sustainably along with a festival style Eco Event to encourage people to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle and connect with nature.
- A Dales and Fells Trainee, who was also part of the Eco-Schools Project and Environment Youth Forum became a member of the OBF National Youth Forum, was part of the OBF evaluation panel, chairing a couple of meetings and became a member of the Steering Group for a new young Friends of the Earth group.
- YDNPA, a partner organisation delivering the Young Rangers Project has appointed a young person to join the National Park’s Board. While this is part of a wider initiative across all the National Parks, the Steering Group representative commented that the seeds were sewn from YDNPA’s involvement in Green Futures.

Case Study – Benji, 14

Benji's involvement with Green Futures began with attending Green Guardians to complete his John Muir award as part of a home education group before joining Young Rangers. As a result of his enthusiasm, he was invited to attend an Environment Youth Summit and then the Environment Youth Forum. Since then, he has also been invited to become a Young Ambassador for YDMT. Benji has been part of Green Futures for just over two years now and over that time, he has grown in confidence through designing and delivering activities at the Youth Environment Forum meetings and coming up with plans for its future.



Benji has taken full advantage of the links Green Futures has with wider communities and other professional networks. He asks questions of those professional networks and in 2020 worked independently with YDMT's Publicity and Media team to write blogs and create content as a Young Ambassador as well as leading on suggestions for the Youth Social Media Takeover in November 2020. Since then, Benji successfully applied to become a Dales and Fells Trainee with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's Rangers team as part of their latest intake of apprentices in 2021.

"It is amazing to watch young people's confidence grow from their first visit to their last. This was the case with Benji. Right from the start, he was passionate about the environment, but over the years, watching his passion grow has been incredible. His journey is an example of how the different Green Futures projects really work together to benefit our young people." Green Futures Programme Staff.

Case Study – Rosemary, 18

Rosemary first became involved with Green Futures via the Young Rangers project, joining the first Young Rangers Task Day in October 2016. She attended 11 Young Rangers Task Days in total during the first year of the project, also achieving her first John Muir Award. In January 2017, she joined the Youth Environment Forum. Despite feeling outside her comfort zone and overwhelmed at her first meeting, she has remained a member of the Youth Environment Forum to the present day, taking a leading role in organising the Green Futures Annual Environment Summit and Youth Forums. In 2018, inspired by a workshop she had attended at the 2017 Youth Environment Summit, on natural cosmetics, led by another young person, she ran her own workshop on the same topic. In addition, Rosemary took a lead introducing the weekend and running other activities across the weekend alongside other Youth Environment Forum members.



Her new confidence and passion for the environment has affected her life outside of Green Futures. She has made her own natural cosmetics and bird fat seed balls to raise funds for her school and charities, and volunteered to lead her school's Wildlife Conservation Club, as well as establishing and managing a new Eco-Club aiming to reduce plastics in her school. Her enthusiasm has engaged both her peers and staff at school and, as a result, the school signed up to become part of the Eco-Schools project. During her sixth form, her headteacher asked her to take part in the outreach and consultancy for the Eden Project North – something Rosemary says would not have happened without her existing involvement in Green Futures.

Rosemary also became part of Our Bright Future's National Youth Forum spoke to MPs in 2019 at a parliamentary event, organised by the Our Bright Future Programme. In 2020, she moved to California to live, work and study, taking up a full scholarship at Deep Springs College, a small farm university. Rosemary says that it wasn't just being able to put her involvement with Green Futures on her CV that helped her gain the scholarship; it was also the self-confidence, opportunities, and the connections that she made with Green Futures that got her there.

"If we are to successfully protect our planet from climate change, we need to start by listening to its voice. The desert isn't the only place with a 'deep personality'. All environments, be it urban or rural, have their own voice – just sometimes you need to listen a little harder." Rosemary's reflections, on moving to California.

Learning identified in relation to outcomes for young people:

- The **provision of funding to provide free transport** to participants was crucial for enabling young people and community organisations living or working in the poorest / most marginalised areas to access the different Green Futures projects. Covid-19 restrictions showed that without the ability to provide transport, the profile of participants taking part in Young Rangers changed to those whose parents or carers had access to transport to be able to take them to Task Days.
- **Providing a more flexible, broader offer to schools** improves 'take-up' by schools and reduces pressure on schools to meet targets within set timescales, associated with the Eco-Schools Awards system.
- **Building different entry points and pathways** into the overall programme from the start was key to supporting young people to decide their own journey through the programme. Some project staff noted that although this was very successful, links and pathways between the different projects could potentially have been made even clearer to young people so that they could identify options for progression more easily for themselves, rather than relying on being told about the different options available.
- **Strong links between the different Green Futures projects** enabled young people to take on leadership roles or teach skills to their peers as part of other Green Futures projects e.g. Young Rangers leading Green Guardians or Youth Environment Forum events.
- **Planning projects with a progressive approach** allowed project staff to start working with individual young people at the level of knowledge / skill they had when they got involved in Green Futures and build their confidence and skills at a pace to suit the individual, travelling *'alongside them during their Green Futures journey.'*
- Including **systems to support tracking of individual young people's pathways** through the different elements of the programme helps to demonstrate the impact of the programme and its flexibility in how young people access the different projects.

4.3.2 Outcomes for the Environment

Outcome 2.1: More practical environmental action projects enhancing green / blue / built spaces.

Outcome 2.2: More practical activities encouraging sustainable living.

Summary: Significant progress was made towards delivering practical environmental projects and good progress was made on delivering activities which encourage sustainable living.

Enablers	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most of the Green Futures activities were focussed on enhancing the environment.• Sharing information on the Eco-Schools project helped to create links with local groups leading to practical activities.• Use of networking to build relationships with local landowners and other organisations helped identify land and potential activities.• Youth Environment Forum and Youth Environment Summits introduced young people to wider issues linked to sustainable living. Regular meetings gave them a chance to explore links between the natural environment and lifestyle in more depth.• Young people attending the Youth Summit made pledges on changes in behaviour they planned to implement.• The content of issues explored at the Youth Summit and Youth Environment Forum meetings was chosen by young people, reflecting individual young people's interests, and inspiring other young people to do something different• Availability of funding from the Youth Environmental Action Fund to support practical action.• Staff sensitive to the fact that the issue of sustainability can be overwhelming, so broke topics down into achievable actions and focussed on fact that all actions are part of a bigger picture.• The work done by Dales and Fells Trainees was all about delivering practical environmental improvement work.• Two new Young Rangers groups were established, enabling more young people to get involved and more environmental action projects to be delivered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time available on activity days (Green Guardians) for practical conservation work was often limited, restricting the amount of work that could be done on a single day.• Lack of partners / community groups willing to work weekends or evenings made it harder to run some activities.• Finding suitable locations to run practical action projects that did not create unacceptable risks for young people taking part.• Changes in staff at schools involved in YEAF and / or Eco-Schools impacted on delivery of projects if replacement staff had different interests.• Finding sufficient volunteers to provide support to young people with additional needs taking part in activities.• It takes a significant amount of time to build and maintain the relationships needed to find land or experts to run practical environmental enhancement activities.• Delays or lack of approvals prevented work happening as planned E.g. planning permission was received too late for some trees to be planted in a school and in another school, part of an Academy, the management team refused to grant the school permission to make environmental enhancements on the school grounds.• Keeping track of all the individual activities delivered was difficult, in part linked to the structure of the OBF data collection needs which captured different information.• Majority of Green Futures projects are focussed on local, practical environmental enhancements rather than the broader issues of sustainable living.• If a group signs up for multiple events (Green Guardians), they may only choose to do a couple of practical conservation tasks,

	<p>alongside other activities such as walking, farm visits or bushcraft, reducing the number of practical environmental action projects that could be delivered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to record the longer-term impact on young people, particularly for young people who had moved on from Green Futures. • Final year focus was planned to be on consolidation, reinforcing changes etc but Covid-19 restrictions meant planned events were cancelled. • Family / financial barriers made it difficult for some young people to make changes at home – may not have been able to afford it or didn't feel they had a say in what was purchased. • Some young people working on their apprenticeships just wanted to focus on their jobs and weren't as engaged on wider issues of sustainable living, which they considered 'external' to their work placements jobs.
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More practical environmental action projects

A total of 851 environmental enhancement projects were undertaken, including the creation of five new sites and 33 awareness projects have also been completed. This is a significant achievement and demonstrates the excellent progress the Green Futures programme made in delivering this outcome.

A key enabler in achieving this outcome is the fact that delivering practical environmental and conservation activities was at the heart of how the programme and its constituent projects were delivered, with most activities taking place outside and seeking to create or improve the natural environment. Examples of work undertaken across Green Guardians activity days, Young Rangers' Task Days and the Environment Youth Forum and Summit meetings range in both scale and the type of activity undertaken.

- **Woodland management** – tree planting to create new woodland; woodland management (beating up, pruning and straightening saplings; woodland coppicing; planting of native woodland plants to create a woodland floor.
- **Infrastructure improvements** – creating, maintaining and restoring footpaths in the Yorkshire Dales National Park; mending the road at the Malham Field Studies Council; dry-stone walling to repair walls damaged in the 2019/2020 winter flooding; repairing and constructing fences.
- **Habitat creation and management** – removal of invasive species; planting wildflowers; construction of bug hotels, insect houses, bat boxes and bird nesting boxes; cleaning dormice boxes, making fat seed cakes for buds; litter picking; hedge laying
- **Landscape management** – work on a natural flood management project.

Activities have resulted in visible improvements, which may not have happened otherwise. Young people have also commented on the sense of accomplishment and pride they feel on seeing the work they have done and knowing that it makes a difference.

“From the YDNPA perspective, we’ve been able to run Young Ranger activities for many more young people than would have been possible without the funding from the project. Each Young Rangers day delivers real, tangible benefit to the National Park.”

(Steering Group Member, End of Programme Survey)

“On a family walk, I was able to say, ‘I’ve planted a bunch of trees over there.’ That was quite fun – not everyone gets say that.”

“After the floods, we rebuilt wall in Swaledale. I live there and I could see the difference and it was nice to be part of.”

(Young Rangers, End of Project Interview)

Key to delivering the outcomes for both young people and the environment is the need to be able to provide a wide range of different opportunities to help young people develop their knowledge and skills through doing practical environmental tasks. **Project staff have worked closely with other organisations on project delivery** e.g. Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, Lune Rivers Trust, River Ribble Trust, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Upper Aire Catchment Partnership, Natural England (Ingleborough NNR), Keep Britain Tidy (Eco-Schools), North Yorkshire Youth and a large number of local community-based organisations within the project area.

Project Officers commented on the time it takes to establish and build these relationships, as well as the time it takes to assess individual locations to ensure they will be accessible to the young people taking part and are acceptable in terms of managing risk. Comments indicate that it was sometimes challenging to explicitly recognise this time investment as the key output was confirmation that an activity could go ahead and the site was suitable – this may have taken less than a day to achieve, or equally could have taken several days. The challenge to find suitable sites proved harder during the Covid-19 pandemic. Restrictions on shared transport meant that for Young Rangers, as an example, venues needed to be able to accommodate additional parking to accommodate everyone attending (staff, volunteers and the individual young people).



Tree planting activity, Green Guardians



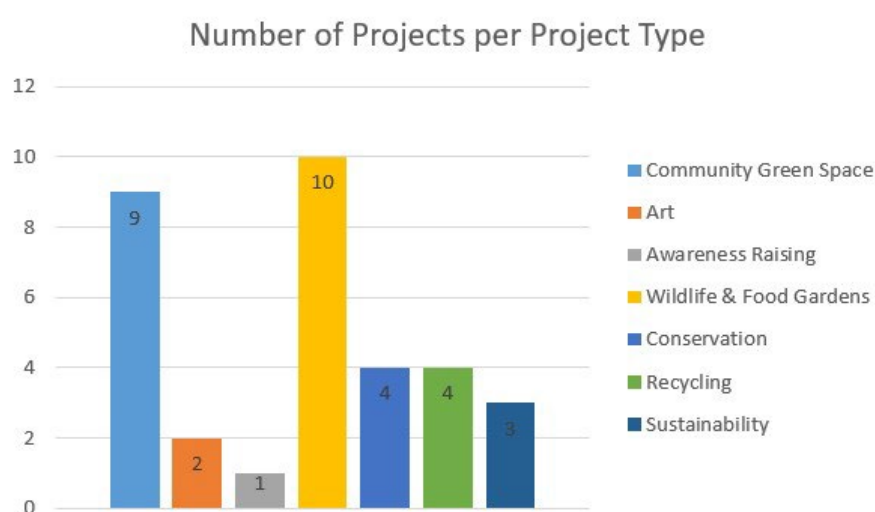
Litter picking by the 16+ Waste Committee at West Oaks Special Educational Needs Specialist School - part of their YEAF Project to enhance their school and community environment



Clearing vegetation from historic viaducts and railway huts at Merrygill and Podgill to protect the structures from invasive plants and help visitors access the huts and information boards, Young Rangers Task Day

Another contributor to the achievement of this outcome was the availability of funding from the Youth Environmental Action Fund (YEOF). Since its launch in 2017, 33 projects, led, designed and delivered by young people have been awarded funding to undertake practical environmental action projects within their school or local community. A summary of the projects awarded funding is included in [Appendix Five](#) and an End of Project report provides more detailed information on each of the different projects.

Applications were also received from young people who have not been directly involved in Green Futures or the Our Bright Future Programme. This demonstrates the wider positive impact of Green Futures and the increased awareness of the Youth Environment Action Fund as a potential source of project funding that young people can access. Projects funded by grants from the Youth Environmental Action Fund have included both projects aimed at creating or improving the local environment as well as projects intended to encourage living in a more sustainable manner e.g. By reducing waste, avoiding plastics, reducing water / electricity consumption.



Delivering the projects funded by YEOF was not without challenge. With the closure of schools in March 2020, the practical delivery of many projects was delayed. Project staff also reported that in some cases, the full potential of projects may not have been realised because of changes in staff, supporting projects in schools.

“Many of the YEOF projects were started in good faith and with enthusiasm but a change of school staff with differing interests and other pressures meant that they were not always completed to their highest potential.”

(Project Officer, End of Programme Survey)

Encouraging Sustainable Living

“There’s A LOT of stuff that I do differently, stuff that I buy – there’s a lot of stuff that contains palm oil that I try not to buy anymore – it’s been drilled into my brain!

(Participant, Youth Environment Summit)

Alongside organising practical conservation tasks, Green Futures also planned and delivered practical activities aimed at encouraging more sustainable living. Activities were delivered primarily through the Youth Environment Forum and Youth Environment Summit but were also part of some Green Guardians Activity Days. In addition to this, the Eco-Schools project supported schools to run sessions on broader environmental topics to raise awareness of environmental issues within the wider school population. A wide range of activities were delivered over the five years – the majority of which were based on suggestions from young people themselves as they took the lead on planning the Youth Environment Forum meetings and the Annual Youth Environment Summits. This is a key success of the programme as it allowed young people to pick topics that were of interest to them, exploring issues around single use plastics, recycling, food waste, food miles, water consumption, meat production, palm oil production, sustainable fisheries.

Assessing the long-term impact of these activities on young people is challenging. For Green Guardians activities, there is no evaluation data and many young people attended for a one-off activity day. Evaluation data from the Annual Youth Summit initially asked young people about changes they had made to their lifestyle over the last year and changes they planned to make the following year, but this approach was not repeated consistently, and the 2020 Youth Summit was cancelled during the Covid-19 pandemic. During the 2021 Youth Summit, young people were asked about what they were doing differently as a result of their involvement in Green Futures. While the feedback only relates to a very small sample (26 young people attended) and cannot therefore be taken as representative of the overall programme, it does highlight the significant impact involvement in Green Futures has had on some young people. Examples of changes that young people have made include:

- Making their own deodorant
- Reducing plastics (reusable coffee cups / water bottles, avoiding plastic straws, getting milk delivered in glass bottles, making beeswax wraps)
- Turning off lights
- Buying more second-hand clothing
- Composting and recycling
- Walking or taking public transport more often
- Becoming vegetarian.

“I pay attention to what I’m buying. I reduce things I can’t use more than once. I’m aware of things that need to happen to make change.”

“I became a veggie after becoming more aware about meat and how polluting it can be.”

“When I find stuff out here I go home and tell my mum we should do this – like glass bottles for milk that we have delivered now instead of plastic ones from the shop.”

"I did a lot before, but now I use soap and shampoo bars instead of plastic bottles."

(Participants, Youth Environment Summit)

Interviews with project staff and Steering Group members also highlighted that young people influenced them to adopt more eco-friendly habits, such as reducing their own food waste, or increasing recycling. While there are some very strong examples of actions young people have taken that encourage more sustainable living, it was also reported that making changes was more challenging for some young people involved in Green Futures.

"For some young people, there is a reluctance to change their habits, particularly if it would involve giving up unsustainable habits, or food that they enjoy. Or they don't feel they have a say within their households over what products and foods are bought."

(Steering Group Member, End of Programme Survey)

The awards granted via the **Youth Environmental Action Fund** also included activities aimed at encouraging more sustainable living. Examples include:

- Settle College's Eco-Group used funding to buy plastic recycling bins to place in school corridors and reduce the amount of plastic going to landfill each year – an estimated 128kg a year was diverted from landfill
- West Oaks SEN School purchased recycling and composting bins along with litter picking equipment, estimating that 1209kg of litter is now being recycled each year, having expanded their project beyond school out into the local community
- A Green Futures apprentice, inspired by learning about the things she could do to lead a more eco-friendly lifestyle was awarded funding to organise a festival style event to promote an eco-friendly lifestyle to others. It included workshops on natural cosmetics and household products, plastics and wildlife spotting.
- Ludus Dance Company used funding to create a call to action to reduce plastic pollution, organising litter picks and creating a dance performance to highlight the issue of single use plastics and the need to reduce plastic waste.

"I am more aware of the major crisis we have with plastic. We need to all play our part in making choices that reduce our wasteful use of single use disposable plastic. We must all act now."

(Litter pick participant, Ludus Dance Company)

Learning identified in relation to outcomes for the environment:

- The **Youth Environment Forum and Youth Environment Summits** were important for providing regular sessions in which young people could explore environmental issues in more detail, particularly in relation to actions that support sustainable living.
- Having a **source of funding available to young people** via The Youth Environmental Action Fund was a positive way of enabling young people to design and deliver their own environmental action projects.
- Building in sufficient **time for staff to build relationships with potential land owners / communities, identify potential sites and complete appropriate risk assessments** is important to ensure that sites are suitable both for environmental enhancement works and for young people to work there.

- Providing a **broader offer of environmental activities / support to schools** e.g. lunch sessions could increase involvement by schools and inspire more young people to get involved in environmental action work.

4.3.3 Outcomes for Communities

Outcome 3.1: Increased social cohesion through connecting, co-operating and taking action to enhance the local environment

Summary: Although there is insufficient quantitative data to demonstrate the achievement of this outcome, feedback from Steering Group members, Project Officers and individual young people suggests that good progress had been made towards achieving this outcome.

“It’s been lovely to see how new friendships have been formed between like-minded individuals who would otherwise never have met, and how they’ve learned from each other and grown so much in confidence.”

(Steering Group Member, End of Programme Interview)

Enablers	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being outside allows support staff and young people to see a different side of each other helping to develop / build relationships in a relaxed ‘neutral’ setting. • Working on projects with local organisations and community groups helped build links and bring wider community benefits. • Some apprentices worked with voluntary groups, schools and the Young Rangers, helping to increase connections. • Opportunities for increased cohesion were provided by young people working with peers who share an interest in the environment (Eco-Schools, Young Rangers, Youth Environment Forum, Youth Environment Summit). • Two-day annual Youth Environment Summit, regular Youth Environment Forum meetings and Young Rangers Task Days provided opportunities for young people to connect and develop networks / friendships over a longer period. • Holding the Youth Environment Forum meetings and Youth Environment Summit in the same location each time – Settle and Malham respectively allowed relationships to develop between young people and local communities. • Youth Environment Forum and Youth Environment Summit brought young people together from a range of backgrounds but with similar interests, promoting peer support and learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some participants only took part in Green Futures on a one-off basis (Green Guardians) limiting the potential for increased cohesion. • It was difficult to get the wider school community involved in work led by schools’ Eco-Committees. • Distances between where individual young people lived made it challenging for many to meet in person, outside of project activities. • Some apprentices’ employers were unable to allow time out for apprentices to come together as a group to help maintain / build cohesion as a peer network. • Although the Youth Environment Forum was accessible by public transport, the ability of some young people to attend sessions, and build relationships with peers, was affected by a lack of public transport where they lived and /or parents and carers being unable or unwilling to travel long distances for meetings. • Difficult to further increase social cohesion by bringing young people from different Green Futures projects (e.g. Green Guardians and Young Rangers) and from across a wide geographical area to work together on conservation tasks

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction week for the second intake of Dales and Fells Trainees helped build relationships among young people who then had the benefit of a peer support network. • The Youth Environmental Action Fund was based on groups coming together to work on a project - many involved young people working with members of the wider community, encouraging collaboration and cross-generation working. 	
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From end of project interviews with staff and young people, there are some clear themes emerging that illustrate different ways in which an increase in social cohesion has been supported.

- **Making new friends and getting to know people better:** Many young people have commented on how much they have enjoyed meeting new people and getting to know people better. Within **Young Rangers**, end of event feedback forms show that most young people felt that they had got to know people better during the Task Days they had taken part in.

Table 7: Percentage of Young Rangers who thought they had got to know people better

Year	Percentage
2017	68% (n=57)
2018	64% (n=97)
2019	63% (n=62)
2020	No data available
2021	57% (n=29) ⁶

"I've made friends at Young Rangers which hopefully I'm going to keep in contact with for many years to come. I definitely met like-minded people."

(Young Ranger, End of Project Interview)

The **Youth Environment Forum** and annual **Youth Environment Summit** both provided the potential for building social cohesion, as many young people attended both events. Feedback collected at the Youth Environment Summits demonstrates that the majority of young people said that they **had made new friends and would be keeping in touch** with the young people they had met, scoring a 3 or 4 (out of a maximum positive score of 4).

Table 8: Percentage of young people who said they had made new friends and would keep in touch

Year	Percentage
2017	65% (n=23)
2018	71% (n=28)

⁶ Data only available for three Task Days between January and June 2021, so cannot be taken as representative of a whole year's events.

2019	96% (n=27)
2020	N/A – No summit held
2021	85% (n=20)

Within **Green Guardians**, activity days have also provided opportunities for young people to build relationships with other members of their group and the support staff who attend with them in a more relaxed setting.

“We do kind of know each other, but it has been great to get to know everybody better today and to share this experience.”

(Participant, Green Guardians)

“Working on the Green Guardians project, I saw how people who didn’t know each other very well or didn’t often get out of the house, like some of the young carers, got to get out and mix with each other in completely different circumstances to meeting indoors, say at a youth centre. The opportunity to meet other people from different walks of life to them has been a really positive outcome.”

(Programme Manager, Green Futures, End of Project Survey)

- **Developing a sense of belonging:** For some young people, feedback demonstrates that a key benefit of getting involved with Green Futures was that it enabled them to meet other young people who shared a similar interest in environmental issues. Some individuals commented that they had felt a sense of isolation or feeling that they were the only one interested in helping to improve the environment. Green Futures gave them a **safe space in which to explore environmental issues with other interested young people**. Of all the projects, Young Rangers, the Youth Environment Forum and the Annual Environmental Summit have most directly helped develop this sense of belonging as young people met on a regular basis, enabling relationships to develop more deeply over time.

“Coming here has shown me a lot of people care about stuff like climate change and if we all do something we can make things better.”

(Youth Environment Forum Member, End of Project Interview)

“The weekends are an amazing experience for all involved, not only because we learn so much but because we meet other young people who care, and I genuinely believe this is so important for young people to know they are not alone when they want to address these environmental issues.”

(Participant, Youth Environment Summit)

“It’s really nice to meet people with the same interests and look after the environment with others – a group effort can make a big difference.”

(Youth Environment Forum Member, End of Project Interview)

“Some of the more vulnerable students found a club where they could belong and enjoyed going on weekends away doing eco-activities thanks to the help and support of Green Futures.”

(Staff Member, Eco-Schools participating school)

- **Working with different community groups:** Many of the activity days within Green Futures involve young people working with different community groups, providing opportunities to work with adults and / or other young people, which in turn provides the potential to develop

their social networks and be part of a local group helping to enhance the environment. Building relationships with local communities and the different community groups that came out to the Yorkshire Dales takes time and effort and as one Project Officer noted, is often hard to ‘make visible’, in terms of the commitment required, to people not directly involved in the projects. However, another Project Officer commented that it would be good to allow even more time to develop relationships with the community groups that Green Futures brings out to the Dales, believing that it was the strength of those relationships that would facilitate successful projects.

“Taking time to meet people and work with them has always been well received, as a result we get diverse young people and ages working with a diverse range of the general public.”

(Green Futures Project team)

With the exception of 2021 the Annual Youth Environment Summit took place in Malham, and the Youth Environment Forum met on a regular basis in Settle. Project Officers and Steering Group members commented on the sense of ownership and belonging that developed in some young people, as they got to know people in local shops and cafes etc because of their repeat visits to the same place.

“What has been great to see is that sense of ownership and sense of belonging to a natural space that some of our young people have developed. We’ve seen that at Malham and Settle.”

(Project Officer, End of Programme Interview)

Learning identified in relation to this outcome:

- **Developing relationships with local communities** – Part of finding locations suitable for undertaking practical conservation activities is establishing positive relationships with local communities, so that young people are welcomed and made to feel that their efforts are appreciated. This takes a significant amount of project staff time and effort, requiring staff skilled in developing relationships and should not be under-estimated when planning projects.
- **Induction for Dales and Fells Trainees** – The induction week introduced in 2018 for the second intake of apprentices helped develop relationships among new apprentices, creating a peer support network of people doing similar jobs with whom apprentices could keep in touch with. The inclusion of money management and mental health awareness sessions also helped to prepare young people for their apprenticeships.
- **Regular engagement** – The provision of opportunities for young people to meet on a longer-term basis e.g. Young Rangers and the Youth Environment Forum supports the development of deeper relationships.
- **Partnership working** – The partnership between YDMT, an environmental organisation, and Barnardo’s, a Third Sector Children’s Charity was effective and a model that could be replicated on future projects.

Outcome 3.2: Improved health and well-being through participation

Summary: Progress overall has been good in delivering this outcome. There is good evidence to support this for young people involved in Green Futures projects such as Young Rangers, Dales and Fells Trainees and the Youth Environment Summit. However, there is little evidence to support this in relation to most of the young people taking part in Green Guardians activities, particularly those involved in one-off activities, as it was not possible to track changes in wellbeing over the course of the five-year programme.

“Before I joined Green Futures, I had nothing to do on the weekends. Now it’s packed... the Youth Forum has really helped my mental health. It comes back to talking to people really. It’s made me genuinely happy, just having fun and stuff. I was talking to my dad, and he was like, what are you part of this time - Youth Forum, Young Rangers? And I was just like I’m part of all of it.”

(Case Study, Youth Environment Forum Member)

Enablers	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction of an induction week for the second intake of apprentices which included a session on mental health awareness and sign-posted additional help and support to young people.• Closer monitoring of wellbeing over the two-year apprenticeships allowed concerns and issues to be addressed early.• Activities offer the chance for young people to work / meet other young people with the same shared interest in the environment, supporting wellbeing.• Understanding, care and support from project staff helped develop strong relationships between young people and staff.• Providing opportunities for young people to plan and deliver activities helped improve confidence.• Residents and landowners appreciating and thanking young people for the work they had done.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of evaluation data to monitor individual changes in wellbeing.• Lack of agreement on the best approach to use to track wellbeing.• High cost of external tools to track wellbeing.• Hard to determine extent to which changes in wellbeing are directly attributable to participation in Green Futures.• Hard to assess for some projects (Eco-Schools) as most contact was with staff and not pupils.• Issues with the regular survey of Dales and Fell Trainees meant the project didn’t always realise when problems were happening.• Removal of contact data for some Young Rangers from YDNPA database meant many could not be contacted for follow up surveys, interviews.• Young people who may have benefitted most from close monitoring of wellbeing, e.g. taking part in Green Guardians had the highest cancellation rate / were challenging to contact.

Evaluation data to evidence progress towards achieving this outcome of the overall programme is weak overall and it is not possible to assess changes in wellbeing among young people over the course of their involvement in Green Futures, due to the lack of a robust wellbeing tracker system.

However there are examples from individual project survey responses that provide some evidence of improvements in health and wellbeing:

- In 2019 92% (n=127) of young people taking part in one-off events with Green Guardians said they had enjoyed the day and 96% said they felt that the activity that had done was worthwhile. This cannot be taken as evidence of any long-term change but feeling that something is worthwhile can contribute to improved wellbeing.

- In end of event feedback forms for Young Rangers in 2019, 98% (n=60) gave a score of 4 or 5 (out of a maximum positive score of 5) for how happy they felt at the end of the event. Feelings of happiness can contribute to a positive impact on wellbeing.
- In the 2020 end of year survey of Youth Environment Forum Members 100% (n=9) said that the Youth Environment Forum had helped with their mental health and wellbeing.

"I enjoyed it – it feels like I've given something back and we are saving the world while we are doing it."

(Participant, Green Guardians, tree planting activity)

"Being out in the environment helps me feel relaxed and gives me a better mindset. I feel happier in general and can reduce my stress levels.... This helped especially over my GCSEs. When I was stressed, Young Rangers gave me a chance to chill out and de-stress."

(Young Ranger, Case Study Interview)

"The experience has really helped me in terms of my personal wellbeing; being able to be outside and connect with nature is so beneficial for mental and physical health. It has been such an amazing experience that I wouldn't change for the world, and I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to be part of such an amazing scheme."

(Dales and Fells Trainee, Case Study Interview)

Feedback from project partners, staff, parents and guardians also provide individual examples of changes in health and wellbeing:

"The young people from my service that got involved were the most vulnerable children you could imagine – with horrific childhood experiences and I saw them utterly transform in confidence and I've just heard that two of them are going to university. I can't evidence it, but it's definitely down to their involvement in Green Futures."

(Steering Group Member, End of Programme Interview)

"She basically said that it [Green Futures] had saved her granddaughter – it had been the one thing that had been consistent in her life over the years of the project and had been a really grounding experience for her – she had seen a huge increase in confidence."

(Steering Group Member, End of Programme Interview)

"It's been very good for his development.... It has really helped his confidence and social skills as well as developed his love of the countryside."

(Parent of Young Ranger)

"I was surprised at just how important the youth forum became to some young people who had felt really isolated in their interests – being part of a group really helped them develop and helped their mental health. This was not exactly unplanned, but I just had not expected it to have such an impact."

(Project Officer, End of Programme Interview)

Learning identified in relation to this outcome:

- For future projects seeking to improve wellbeing, more emphasis needs to be given to having a **robust system in place to track changes in wellbeing**. This is inevitably a challenge when dealing with a large number of individuals but is important to be able to track individual impacts. One project officer noted that the ladder of engagement used in the early stages of the project could potentially be used as a 'light touch' way of monitoring wellbeing and YDMT are already researching different tools for improving this area of data collection. For future projects, particularly where there is ongoing engagement with individual young people, there may also be benefit in identifying specific individuals early on to focus on and track over the lifetime of the project. This could encompass tracking more factors than only wellbeing and could be used to develop project case studies.
- Feedback from staff and partners suggests **that longer-term, regular engagement with young people** would go further towards achieving this outcome.
- Although project staff had valuable experience of working with young people, it was suggested in the end of project staff survey that some additional **staff training in the complexities of mental health in young people** would be worth considering to further improve working with young people on future projects.
- The introduction of an **induction week for the second round of apprentices** was significant in helping to develop a peer-to-peer support network among apprentices and sessions included on money management and mental health awareness helped prepare young people for their apprenticeships.

4.4 Managing Green Futures and its projects

The Green Futures programme appointed a Steering Group to oversee and provide direction to the Green Futures Scheme Manager and its individual projects. The Steering Group included representatives from partner organisations as well as a young person. As part of the final evaluation Steering Group members and Project Officers were invited to complete an online survey and follow up interviews were held to explore individual responses in more detail. The findings of the survey and interviews are presented in the sections below.

Enablers	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear planning, budgeting and reporting across the programme.• Ability of the new programme manager to pick up the role quickly / effectively.• Steering Group included a good range of skills, knowledge and perspectives.• OBF opportunities enhanced the overall offer of the programme (e.g. Parliamentary event, National Youth Forum, Annual OBF Seminar).• Responded and adapted well to the challenge and impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff changes for one project occurred during lockdown, making it difficult for handover to new Project Officer.• Majority of the project team put on furlough during the first lockdown in March 2020.• No clear budget for individual projects made it more difficult for Project Officers to get a clear financial picture for their project.• Remote working during lockdown made it harder to keep in touch.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good links and communications between different projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of feedback from OBF in response to questions / comments submitted in OBF reports. • The resource commitment for some project roles was too low for some staff requiring the equivalent of full-time roles making it hard to retain staff.
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4.4.1 Programme Management

Overall, the **Steering Group has been effective in providing guidance and direction** where needed. Steering Group members have demonstrated an interest in the delivery of individual projects and often attended events, in particular the Youth Environment Forum meetings and the Annual Youth Environment Summits. Including a range of members with relevant skills, knowledge and perspectives has been effective but some respondents noted that the turnover of Steering Group members did affect the continuity of relationships to some degree and in some cases led to a loss of knowledge and local contacts. This was particularly a challenge towards the end of the programme – a couple of Steering Group members who left just before the original planned end date of December 2020 were not replaced, but then when the programme was extended until July 2021, this left a gap for a longer period within the Steering Group.

The benefit of having young people on the Group was also highlighted. Two Steering Group members reported that the young people held the Group to account, asked challenging questions and there was a particular benefit that one young person brought to discussions as a result of not being linked to any one Green Futures project – asking questions that cut across more than one project, whereas other members were more directly linked to individual projects and didn't always bring that wider perspective.

“The young people on the Steering Group had a much clearer view of the project overall and often came up with ideas or asked questions across the whole set of projects.”

(Steering Group member, End of Programme Interview)

There is evidence that over the course of the Green Futures Programme, **strong partnerships have been developed**. Examples are provided of potential future working as well as the impact that being part of Green Futures has had on individual organisations:

- Two partners refer to actively working with YDMT to look for future potential projects to work on together, linking young people with the outdoors.

“As a manager of a team that does something very similar to YDMT, it's massively improved our relationship because there is always an element of competition for funds, but when you start working in partnership, that goes.”

(Steering Group member, End of Programme Interview)

- YDNPA have recruited two young people to join its Management Plan Steering Group. In part, this is down to a wider initiative across all national parks, but the YDNPA representative reports that the seeds for the idea are also, in part because of its involvement in the extension of their Young Rangers programme as part of Green Futures,

as it helped raise the profile of the internal team working with young people and the voice of young people within YDNPA.

- YDMT has signed up to the #iWillfund Power of Youth Charter which gives young people a stronger voice within organisations and has appointed a second young person to join its Board of Trustees.

The overall **programme management was effective in bringing together the different strands** of the programme, enabling young people to move between them and putting young people at the heart of the project.

“I think the main thing has been that all project activity has been planned with a progressive approach – young people have engaged at the level that is appropriate for them at the time and they’ve been well supported to travel through the different elements of the programme in their own time. This support together with the experiences of taking part in positive action has worked well.”

(Steering Group member, End of Programme survey)

Several respondents commented on the **effectiveness of the two Programme Managers** in managing the overall programme, highlighting their passion for, and experience of working with young people as well as the support they provided to individual team members and the young people themselves.

“This aspect has been outstanding and is due mainly I believe to the absolute passion, commitment, interest and determination of both programme managers.”

“My view is that the whole programme, from its initial visioning through all the considered planning and delivery has been wonderful. Throughout, there has been a sense of care and commitment which has benefited partners, participants and all associated staff and beneficiaries. I believe there has been a great deal of informal but life-changing learning for all of us which is so difficult to quantify. It has been an enormous pleasure to have been a partner and am genuinely grateful for the benefits and additional value that Green Futures has brought to our organisation.”

(Steering Group members, End of Programme Interviews)

4.4.2 Project Management

Management of the individual projects has been effective. In assessing the effectiveness of the management of individual projects, several themes have emerged.

- **Capacity** – this has proved challenging at both the Programme Manager level and within some individual projects.
 - The Programme Manager role was originally planned as three days per week. This was recognised as an underestimate of the time needed and when the second Programme Manager was appointed, the role was increased to a full-time role.
 - There was insufficient resource for administrative support to the Programme Manager, meaning this role had to oversee the strategic management of the programme, but was also involved in the detailed administration.

- The Eco-Schools project was initially only allocated one day per week. This proved challenging to balance work commitments of planning and managing individual projects while also being involved in the delivery of activities with young people.
- Capacity within some partner organisations was also under pressure at times. Staff turnover at the Malham Tarn Field Studies Council early in the programme meant that they were not able to deliver as many activities for Green Futures as originally planned but remained supportive of the programme for example by allowing the Green Guardians project to use the site and equipment to run activities themselves.
- **Budget** – the budget was considered sufficient for the Programme and was managed effectively, with regular discussions at the Steering Group to discuss and agree suggested amendments, when needed. A challenge raised by some Project Officers was that there was no specific budget allocated to individual projects, making it difficult to obtain a clear financial picture for each project.
- **Communications** – communications between projects were effective and meant that Project Officers were able to share the different pathways with young people and promote relevant events from other projects enabling young people to move between projects. Despite the challenges of working remotely during periods of lockdown due to Covid-19 restrictions, the team used a combination of email, phone and meetings (face to face or online) to help monitor progress across the different projects. At the start of Green Futures, it is noted that Project Officers attended Steering Group meetings, but this practice was not maintained for the duration of the programme. A couple of Project Officers commented that they had found the meetings a valuable opportunity to bring the Steering Group members and Project Officers together on a regular basis. This is something that could be reviewed for future projects, potentially inviting Officers to attend at regular intervals e.g. quarterly or six-monthly depending on the frequency of Steering Group meetings.

5. Conclusions

The NLCF funded Green Futures programme was successful overall. It has met, or exceeded, all its output targets and made good progress against its outcomes. It has also successfully overcome several challenges, learnt important lessons along the way and has created a strong legacy for the future with all elements of Green Futures continuing beyond the end of the programme.

Involvement in Green Futures has had a significant and lasting impact on many young people who have taken part in the programme. This is in part due to the initial design of the programme, embedding young people at the heart of both the design and delivery of the individual projects, but it is also due to strong working relationships with partner organisations and a dedicated team of staff passionate about working with young people and inspiring them to explore, connect and help to protect their natural environment.

As a result of delivering the Green Futures programme, YDMT has been chosen as a host organisation for the Ernest Cook Trust's Green Influencers Project⁷ to continue working with young people and supporting them to take environmental action. It is a significant achievement that the Youth Environment Forum, Youth Environment Summit and Youth Environmental Action Fund will all continue as part of this new funded programme of work.

The Green Guardians and Young Rangers Projects are also continuing with funding from YDMT and YDNPA respectively. YDMT's Board have also agreed to fund a new round of Dales and Fells Trainees – four young people were recruited earlier in 2021 and a second round of recruitment started in September 2021.

"Thank you all for the time and effort you've put into Green Futures over these last few years. I've enjoyed every minute. I know I am far more confident, know so much more about the environment and most importantly have a deep love for the outdoors which I'm sure would not have been the case without all of you."

(Participant, Young Rangers)

Being alongside people as they discover a love and excitement in nature and helping facilitated that first experience becoming a lifelong commitment to protecting and fighting for nature – that has been a huge privilege."

(Project Officer, End of Programme survey)

Key highlights:

- Engaging 8051 young people in the different activities offered by Green Futures.
- Successfully completing 851 environmental enhancement projects to enhance green / blue and built spaces.
- Fourteen Dales and Fells Trainees secured permanent employment at the end of their apprenticeships, with eight staying on as permanent employees with their work placement employers.
- Awarding funding from the Youth Environmental Action Fund to help deliver 33 community environmental action projects, all designed and led by young people.
- Young Rangers groups being over-subscribed for Task Days.

⁷ Ernest Cook Trust Green Influencers Project: <https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/green-influencers-scheme/>

- The Social Media Takeover of YDMT's website by members of the Youth Environment Forum.
- Development of strong relationships with some partner organisations, with the commitment to explore joint working on potential future projects.
- The recognition by partners of the value and importance of having young people represented at a strategic level within their organisations. YDMT, YDNPA and Cumbria Wildlife Trust have all appointed at least one young person to join their Boards.
- Attracting applications to the Youth Environmental Action Fund from young people not directly associated with Green Futures.
- Successful engagement of young people in the Youth Environment Forum and annual Youth Environment Summit.
- Inspiring young people to make lifestyle changes to support more sustainable living and inspiring them to take action through campaigning, organising their own events and / or taking on leadership roles both within and outside the Green Futures and Our Bright Future Programme.

Appendix One – Summary of chosen project evaluation methods

Method	Young Rangers	Green Guardians	Dales and Fells Trainees	Eco-Schools	Young people: connection and awareness	Young people: new skills and knowledge	Practical activities: enhancing spaces	Practical activities: sustainable living	Social cohesion	Health and Wellbeing
Interviews/Questions with Young people	✓		✓		YR; DAFT	YR; DAFT	DAFT	DAFT	YR; DAFT	YR; DAFT
Record of no. of young people gaining awards/ apprenticeships/ employment ES - (and no. of pupils in each school)	✓		✓	✓	YR; DAFT; ES	YR; DAFT; ES	YR; DAFT; ES	YR; DAFT; ES		
Sessional feedback on cards/forms + baseline and follow up with young people that have more prolonged involvement		✓			GG	GG	GG			GG
Practical evaluation exercises (Sessional)		✓			GG	GG	GG			GG
Record of amount of time young people spend outdoors	✓	✓	✓		YR; GG; DAFT					
Number of young people involved in projects and no. of projects	✓	✓	✓			YR; GG; DAFT	YR; GG; DAFT	YR; GG; DSAFT	YR; GG; DAFT	
Interviews/ questionnaires with staff/group leaders/ teachers	✓	✓		✓	YR; GG; ES	YR; GG; ES	GG	GG	GG; ES	GG; ES
Interviews/ conversations with employers			✓		DAFT	DAFT	DAFT	DAFT	DAFT	DAFT
Record of no. of trees planted/metres of land improved	✓	✓	✓				YR; GG; DAFT			
Record of no. of awareness raising campaigns/ independent action undertaken by young people	✓	✓	✓	✓		ES	YR; GG; DAFT	YR; GG; DAFT	YR; GG; DAFT	
Evidence to support Eco-School status				✓	ES	ES	ES	ES	ES	

Project Codes: YR – Young Rangers; DAFT – Dales and Fells Trainees; GG – Green Guardians; ES – Eco-Schools.

Appendix Two – Detailed Project Evaluation Methods

Green Futures Evaluation Plan – GREEN GUARDIANS

Outcome	Indicators	Collection method	Frequency	Collected by
Young people				
Have increased awareness and connection to the local and global environment	Evidence from Group leaders Observations by GF staff Changes in attitude from young people	Sessional feedback forms for group leaders Practical exercises for young people Anecdotal evidence from group leaders and young people ('trip home' comments)	Session by session	GG lead
Are more empowered through new skills and knowledge to create positive environmental change	Evidence from Group leaders Observations by GF staff Feedback from young people	Sessional feedback forms for group leaders Practical exercises for young people Anecdotal evidence from group leaders and young people ('trip home' comments)	Session by session	GG lead
Environment				
More practical action projects enhancing green/ blue/ built spaces	Evidence from Group leaders Observations by GF staff Feedback from young people Photos re work done	Sessional feedback forms for group leaders Practical exercises for young people Anecdotal evidence from group leaders and young people ('trip home' comments) Photos	Session by session	GG lead
More practical activities encouraging sustainable living	Pledges Young people reporting intent to undertake sustainable living actions	Anecdotal evidence from group leaders and young people ('trip home' comments)	Session by session	GG lead
Communities				
Increased social cohesion through connecting, co-operating and taking action to enhance the local environment	Referral data (how groups found out about GG) Young people taking independent action / activity Young people getting involved in other GF strands	Monitoring re referral sources Anecdotal evidence from group leaders and young people ('trip home' comments)	Session by session	GG lead
Improved health and wellbeing through participation	Young people reporting interest in outdoor activities Young people reporting feeling better about themselves	Practical exercises for young people Anecdotal evidence from group leaders and young people ('trip home' comments)	Session by session	GG lead

Green Futures Evaluation Plan – **YOUNG RANGERS**

Outcome	Indicators	Collection method	Frequency	Collected by
Young people				
Have increased awareness and connection to the local and global environment	Observations by GF staff Changes in attitude from young people Time spent outdoors independently by young people Frequency of attendance, levels of volunteering Evidence of awareness through work completed for JMA or DoFE	Sessional feedback forms Practical exercises for young people Monitoring re attendance levels, volunteering activity JMA/ DoFE records	Session by session Periodic review of sessional evidence Periodic review of JMA/DoFE records Annual Summit	YR lead
Are more empowered through new skills and knowledge to create positive environmental change	Observations by GF staff Conversations with / feedback from young people Young people demonstrate practical skills Physical records / photos of actions taken by young people	Sessional feedback forms Practical exercises for young people Physical evidence of skills being delivered / photos Review conversations with young people	Session by session Periodic review of sessional evidence Periodic group conversations with young people Annual summit	GG lead
Environment				
More practical action projects enhancing green/ blue/ built spaces	Physical evidence re practical actions / projects taken Photos re work done Young people report taking independent action / activity Action Fund used to initiate young people led projects Evidence of campaigns or peer education by young people	Good record keeping systems Physical evidence of project delivery/outcomes Photos Review conversations with young people Monitoring re Action Fund records	Aligned with physical / practical projects Periodic review of sessional evidence Periodic group conversations with young people Annual summit	GG lead
More practical activities encouraging sustainable living	Pledges Young people reporting undertaking sustainable living actions Evidence of campaigns or peer education by young people	Good record keeping systems Review conversations with young people Case studies of campaigning activity JMA/ DoFE records	Aligned with physical / practical projects Periodic review of sessional evidence	GG lead

	Evidence through work completed for JMA or DofE		Periodic group conversations with young people Periodic review of JMA/DofE records Periodic review of monitoring records Annual Summit	
Communities				
Increased social cohesion through connecting, co-operating and taking action to enhance the local environment	Referral data (how young people found out about YR) Young people taking independent action / activity Young people getting involved in other GF strands Young people undertaking projects that involve other young people (Action Fund)	Monitoring re referral sources / Action Fund / young people taking up other GF strands Review conversations with young people	Periodic review of sessional evidence Periodic group conversations with young people Periodic review of monitoring records Annual summit	GG lead
Improved health and wellbeing through participation	Young people reporting spending more time outdoors / engaged in healthy activities Young people reporting feeling better about themselves Observations by GF staff	Review conversations with young people	Periodic group conversations with young people Annual summit	GG lead

Green Futures Evaluation Plan – ECO SCHOOLS

Outcome	Indicators	Collection method	Frequency	Collected by
Young people				
Have increased awareness and connection to the local and global environment	Evidence from teachers Changes in attitude from young people	Survey (online?) for teachers Review of ES records	Termly / annually / in line with project delivery	ES lead
Are more empowered through new skills and knowledge to create positive environmental change	Evidence from teachers Feedback from young people Skills demonstrated through practical projects within ES activity	Survey (online?) for teachers Review of ES records	Termly / annually / in line with project delivery	ES lead
Environment				
More practical action projects enhancing green/ blue/ built spaces	Evidence from teachers Physical evidence re practical actions / projects taken within ES activity Photos re work done Young people report taking independent action / activity Action Fund used to initiate young people led projects Evidence of campaigns or peer education by young people	Survey (online?) for teachers Review of ES records Good record keeping systems Physical evidence of project delivery/outcomes Photos Monitoring re Action Fund records	Termly / annually / in line with project delivery	ES lead
More practical activities encouraging sustainable living	Young people reporting intent to undertake healthy living actions Evidence from ES records related to sustainable living	Survey (online?) for teachers Review of ES records Good record keeping systems	Termly / annually / in line with project delivery	ES lead
Communities				
Increased social cohesion through connecting, co-operating and taking action to enhance the local environment	Young people taking independent action / activity Young people getting involved in other GF strands Increased numbers of school / young people led community projects	Survey (online?) for teachers Review of ES records Dialogue with schools Good record keeping systems	Termly / annually / in line with project delivery	ES lead
Improved health and wellbeing through participation	Young people reporting interest in outdoor activities Young people reporting feeling better about themselves Evidence from ES records related to healthy living	Survey (online?) for teachers Review of ES records Dialogue with schools Good record keeping systems	Termly / annually / in line with project delivery	ES lead

Green Futures Evaluation Plan – DALES & FELS TRAINEES

Outcome	Indicators	Collection method	Frequency	Collected by
Young people				
Have increased awareness and connection to the local and global environment	Evidence from employers Changes in attitude from trainees Trainees report spending time outdoors independently Evidence from coursework/ assignments / qualifications	Interviews / review conversations with young people Dialogue with employers Trainee diaries, learning records	Quarterly Annual summit	DFT lead
Are more empowered through new skills and knowledge to create positive environmental change	Evidence from employers Feedback from young people Skills demonstrated through practical projects within apprenticeships	Interviews / review conversations with young people Dialogue with employers Physical evidence / photos re practical work undertaken	Quarterly Annual summit	DFT lead
Environment				
More practical action projects enhancing green/ blue/ built spaces	Evidence from employers Physical evidence re practical actions / projects taken within apprenticeships Photos re work done Young people report taking independent action / activity	Interviews / review conversations with young people Dialogue with employers Physical evidence / photos re practical work undertaken	Quarterly Annual summit	DFT lead
More practical activities encouraging sustainable living	Young people reporting sustainable living actions Evidence from apprenticeship records related to sustainable living	Interviews / review conversations with young people Dialogue with employers Trainee diaries, learning records	Quarterly Annual summit	DFT lead
Communities				
Increased social cohesion through connecting, co-operating and taking action to enhance the local environment	Evidence from employers Trainees taking independent action / activity Trainees getting involved in other GF strands	Interviews / review conversations with young people Dialogue with employers Trainee diaries, learning records	Quarterly Annual summit	DFT lead
Improved health and wellbeing through participation	Trainees report increased participation in outdoor activities Trainees report feeling better about themselves	Interviews / review conversations with young people Dialogue with employers Trainee diaries, learning records	Quarterly Annual summit	DFT lead

Appendix Three – Employers providing apprentice work placements

Employer	Number of apprentices (2016 – 2018)	Number of apprentices (2018 - 2021) ⁸
Chris Myers Garden Design	0	1
Conservefor	1	0
Cumbria Wildlife Trust	2	2
DTMS	0	2
Gardenmakers	1	0
Horton Landscaping	1	0
Marsden AES	1	1
Ribble Rivers Trust	0	2
Sedbergh School	1	0
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority	2	2
Total	9	10

⁸ Some apprenticeships were extended to allow young people time to complete training that had been cancelled in 2020 as a result of Covid-19.

Appendix Four – Summary of certificated courses / training completed

Name of qualification / award	Cumulative number of young people gaining the qualification
Level 2 Countryside Worker (previously Level 2 Environmental Conservation)	16
John Muir Award - Discover	137
John Muir Award – Explorer	39
John Muir Award - Conserver	13
Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award	4
B&E Trailer licence	4
'A' Level Environmental Studies	2
Hedgerow Training	1
Outdoor First Aid	28
Botanical drawing	1
Rolo H&S	4
Fire Awareness	2
Navigation Training	Final number not available
Marine Biology distance learning Newcastle University	1
Marine Camp Residential - FSC	2
Video Course (Kendal College)	2
Lantra Safe use of Skidsteer	1
City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 safe use of brushcutters and trimmers	11
City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 safe application of pesticides using hand held equipment, including near to water (PA6 and PA6AW)	12
City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 safe handling and application of Pesticides (PA1)	12
City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 safe application of pesticides using self-propelled, mounted, trailed horizontal boom sprayers (PA2)	2
City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 Sit astride ATV	9
City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 Sit in ATV	2
City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 Chainsaw Maintenance and Crosscutting	10
City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 Felling and Processing trees up to 380 mm	10
RB209 and understanding Grassland training	1
NPTC Tractor and related operations	2
City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 Safe Use of handheld hedge cutters	2
City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 Safe Use of handheld leaf blowers and vacuums	2
Intensive Driving Course	1
Fixed-base machinery	1
Digital marketing	1

Name of qualification / award	Cumulative number of young people gaining the qualification
Walling	2
Wellbeing with Nature Facilitator training	1
Botanical ID - Various	14
Community engagement	1
Carbon / Climate change	1
Ash Dieback	1
Risk Assessment	4

Appendix Five – Youth Environmental Action Fund Projects

Name of project / group	Date awarded	Amount awarded	Nature of project
Skipton Girls High School: Our Eco School	20/04/2017	£320	Installation of four hoop bike rack to help the school to deliver a sustainable transport campaign.
Settlebeck School Wildlife Gardening Club	24/05/2017	£432.82	To enable the purchase of tools, seeds, plants and storage to help the school enhance wildlife spaces in its grounds and enable students to learn how to grow food to promote healthy living.
Settle College Permaculture Group: Wildlife Regeneration and Restoration	13/07/2017	£541.67	To enable the purchase of materials to create raised beds, rabbit fencing and an irrigation system for their greenhouse to help enhance wildlife spaces in the school grounds and enable students to learn how to grow food to promote healthy living.
Settle College Eco Group: Plastics Recycling	13/07/2017	£519.40	To enable the provision of four plastic recycling bins to help the school reduce its plastic waste going to landfill and educate Year 7 students.
The Skipton Academy Eco School Club	20/12/2017	£1000	To enable the provision of classroom and canteen recycling bins to encourage young people to recycle waste materials and prevent such materials going to landfill.
West Oaks School: 16 + Waste Committee	08/03/2018	£748.73	To provide litter picking equipment and appropriate PPE, recycling and compost bins to enable the school to reduce its landfill waste and enable litter picking in the local community.
Queen Katherine School Biodiversity Project	03/05/2018	£838.75	To cover the costs of plant seeds and materials to create a pond, orchard and wildlife meadow within their local community to help increase biodiversity.
Kildwick CE Primary School: Peggy's Garden and Grown Project	12/07/2018	£1000	To provide materials to create raised beds an area of the Peggy Wilson Play Area into a growing and nature-based space for use by the school and community, with wildflowers along with bird and bug areas.
People First Keighley and Craven: People First KC Green Spaces	12/07/2018	£683.74	To provide gardening tools to provide members of the group with the opportunity to learn gardening skills and transform a community space at Airedale Hospital to be used by the community.
Skipton Guides: Canalside Garden	12/07/2018	£1000	To provide materials to create raised beds with peat free compost, herbs, fruit bushes, bird boxes and a picnic bench, turning an unloved community space into an area for wildlife and the young and old to enjoy.
Higher Coach Road Residents Group: Fish Steps	03/10/2018	£1000	To provide materials and an artist's group facilitation time to transform some rather bleak looking steps into an aquatic themed mural for the community to enjoy.
Ludus Dance Company: Polluted People	03/10/2018	£1000	To support development and delivery of "Polluted People" dance piece and associated educational materials.
Melanie Shears: Eco Event	19/12/2018	£839.30	To provide room hire for a festival style event to promote an eco-friendly way of life - including workshops on natural cosmetics and household products, plastics and wildlife spotting, a market area for local produce and dance and music to celebrate. Other costs included materials for workshops, volunteer expenses and printing.

Name of project / group	Date awarded	Amount awarded	Nature of project
Queen Elizabeth Studio School: Wildflower Meadow and Polytunnel	27/02/19	£1000	To provide a polytunnel and a variety of plug plants to create a wildflower meadow.
Orin Thomas: Bioblitz	07/05/19	£999.12	To provide equipment and materials to promote run activities for children and young people at a Bioblitz event.
Sedbergh Primary School: Eels in the Classroom	07/05/19	£756.68	To raise awareness of issues to do with eels within school
Leyburn Arts Centre Youth Café: Green Teens	07/05/19	£635	To allow young people to grow their own food and produce a sculpture about insects to educate others.
Beckfoot School: Recycling for School	07/05/19	£754.34	To enable the provision of recycling bins and material to promote their use
The Holy Family Catholic High School: Indoor and Outdoor Garden	07/05/19	£833.33	To create a wildlife garden area and an area for growing food.
Youth Action: The Oasis	12/07/19	£833	To create a green space to be used by the community to grow things and enjoy nature
Queen Elizabeth School: Reduce, Reuse, Rehydrate	12/07/2019	£800	To install two water coolers to enable the school to reduce its use of single use plastics
Personalised Learning College: The Plastics Project	11/03/2020	£759.67	To raise awareness of plastic waste in the community through litter picking and processing plastic waste
Addingham Primary School: The Green Heart of Addingham	16/04/2020	£833.33	To provide equipment for wildlife hides in the school grounds
Cartmel Priory C of E School: Fight for Future	16/04/2021	£530	To improve biodiversity in the school grounds
Saltaire Primary School: Community Garden	16/04/2021	£998	To improve biodiversity in the school grounds
Bradford Moor PASS: Attock Park Community Garden	16/04/2021	£998.80	To improve an area of waste ground
BUD Project Nature Club: Litter Art Project	16/04/2021	£520	To raise awareness of littering in the local area
Harold Park Youth Project	16/04/2021	£500	To improve biodiversity in community park

Name of project / group	Date awarded	Amount awarded	Nature of project
Bradleys Both Community Primary School: Project 'Wonderful Wildlife'	16/04/2021	£615.95	To improve biodiversity in the school grounds
The Youth Association: Community Ambassadors Environmental Project	16/04/2021	£964.40	To improve a local green space for the benefit of the community
Parkside School: The Parklands	16/04/2021	£1000	To develop the school grounds for biodiversity, wellbeing and growing veg
QES Studio School: The Conservation Hub Outdoor Classroom	16/04/2021	£832.92	To develop an outdoor classroom for learning bushcraft and green woodworking
Boyle & Petyt Primary School: The Green Scheme	16/04/2021	£748.20	To develop the school grounds for biodiversity, wellbeing and growing veg