



# **Greener Communities**

## ***Wednesday 4 December 2024***



National Trust

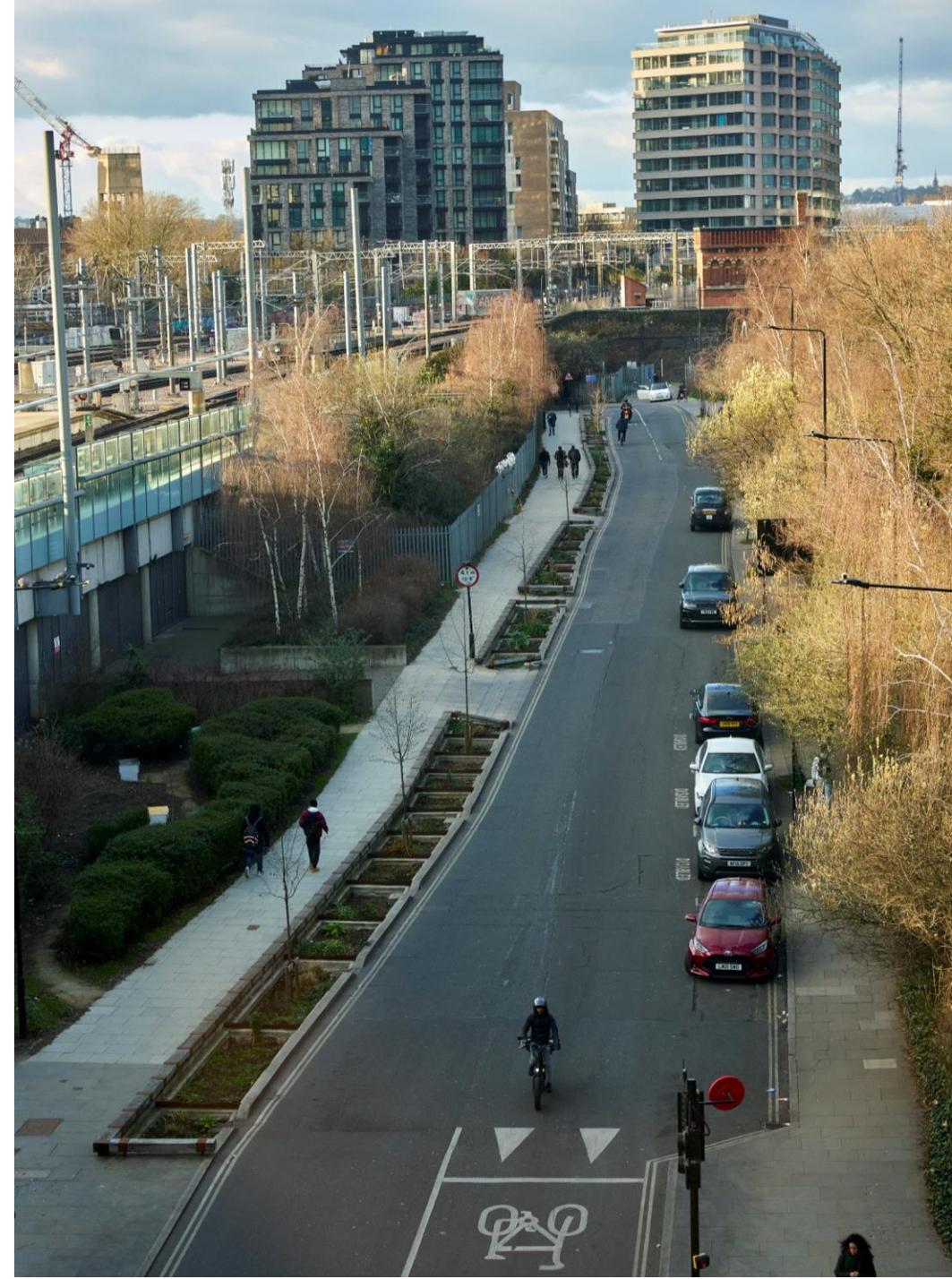


Heritage  
Fund



# Agenda

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 14:00-14:05 | Welcome and Housekeeping                                     |
| 14:05-14:15 | Introduction to working in partnership within urban greening |
| 14:15-14:35 | <b>Octopus Communities:</b> Julie Parish and Rosie Apperley  |
| 14:35-14:55 | <b>Your Park Bristol &amp; Bath:</b> Charlee Bennett         |
| 14:55-15:00 | <i>Break and whiteboard activity</i>                         |
| 15:00-15:25 | Panel Discussion   |
| 15:25-15:30 | Close and Next Steps   |



## Helpful Information

- Please submit **questions** for the panel using the Q&A feature throughout the presentations.
- **Automatic captioning** is turned on, you can adjust this in the settings at the bottom of your screen.
- If you have any **technical questions** or issues, please let us know the details in the chat and we can help you.
- This session is being **recorded** and will be available via our website in the coming days.



# MiroBoard Introduction

Throughout the webinar series we will be using an interactive whiteboard to capture your ideas and thoughts.

The questions to work on together are:

What challenges have you experienced working in partnership?

How might you overcome this challenge and how would you recommend building trust within a partnership?

Do you have examples of places that are running partnerships really well?

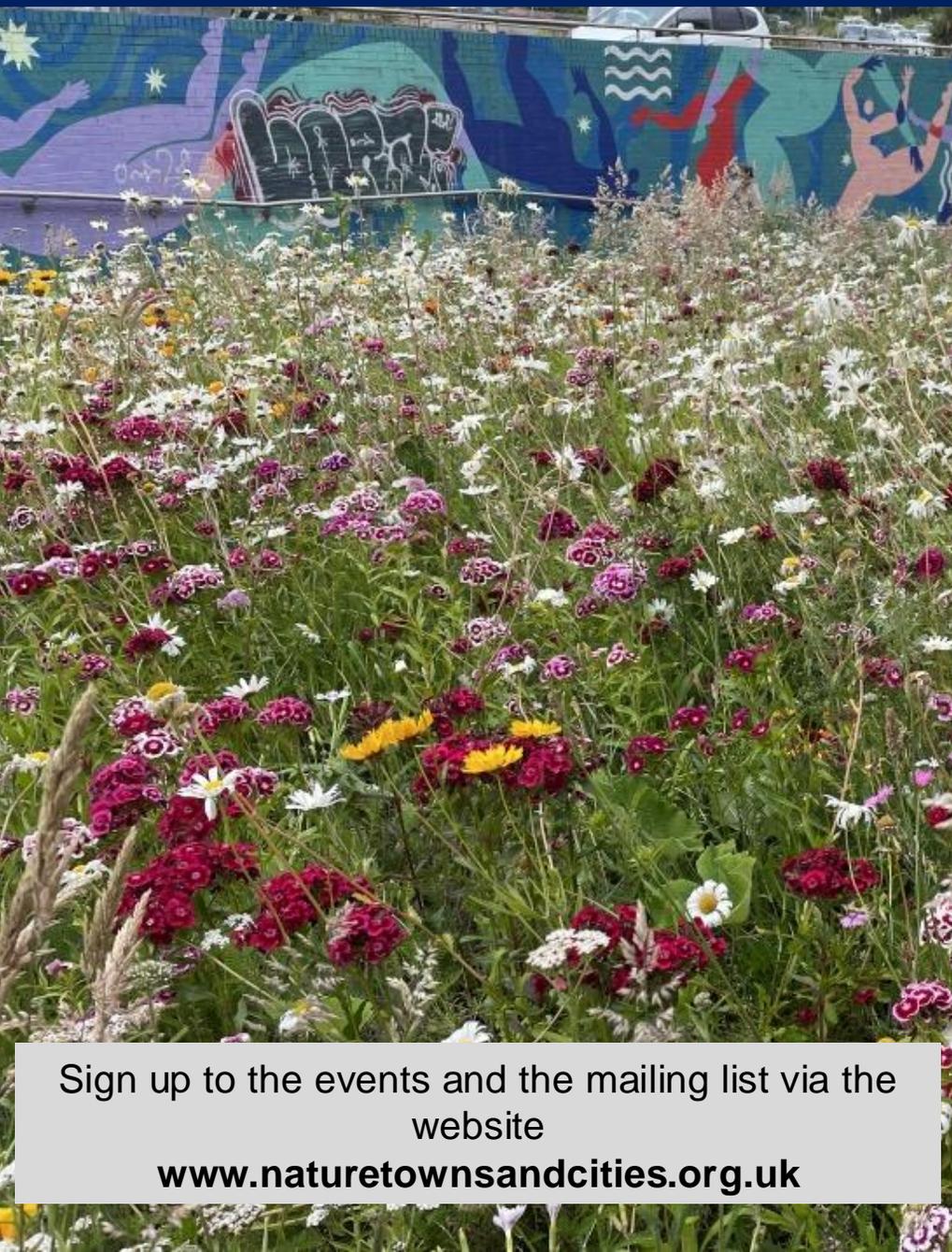
The screenshot shows a MiroBoard interface for a webinar titled "Greener Communities" on 4 December 2024. The board features a central image of a family walking in a park, with a dashed line connecting it to a large green graphic of a tree made of small squares. This graphic is divided into three sections with questions: "What challenges have you experienced working in partnership?", "How might you overcome this challenge and how would you recommend building trust within a partnership?", and "Do you have any examples of places that are running partnerships really well?". To the right, there are images of a tree, a bench, and a hedgehog, with callout boxes providing instructions on how to interact with the board, such as "You can open the links by clicking on the tree" and "These are resources related to the webinar, that will help you dive into the material."

# What is Nature Towns & Cities



- A programme to help 100 towns and cities across the UK transform access to green space
- Overall goal is for millions more people to be able to enjoy time outdoors in nature close to home
- Help address the challenges facing towns and cities in C21<sup>st</sup>
- Create greener, fairer, healthier and more connected towns, cities and neighbourhoods
- Access support to put green infrastructure at the heart of future plans, priorities and investment
- Unlock further investment to help councils and communities achieve their ambitions
- Founded by National Lottery Heritage Fund, Natural England & National Trust
- Working closely with NatureScot, Natural Resources Wales & Northern Ireland Environment Agency.
- This is an invitation to join in, shape it, lead for change

# Inclusive Network



Sign up to the events and the mailing list via the website

[www.naturetownsandcities.org.uk](http://www.naturetownsandcities.org.uk)

Designed to build confidence, capability and connection

Open to all, and free to be a member.

- Provide access to knowledge and successful solutions
- Connect with experienced professionals
- Enable collaboration and partnership
- Access to specialist support and advice to solve problems and unlock opportunities
- Help to lead for change, tap into collective wisdom
- Part of something bigger

For local government, community organisations, charities and professionals across the UK.

You'll be helped by your peers, sharing what works and able to take part in varied programme of events, cohort activities and training, a library of resources, as well as tailored support.

This is an open invitation to join the Nature Towns and Cities Network.

# Community-led greening

Leaving egos at the door and meeting the unusual suspects



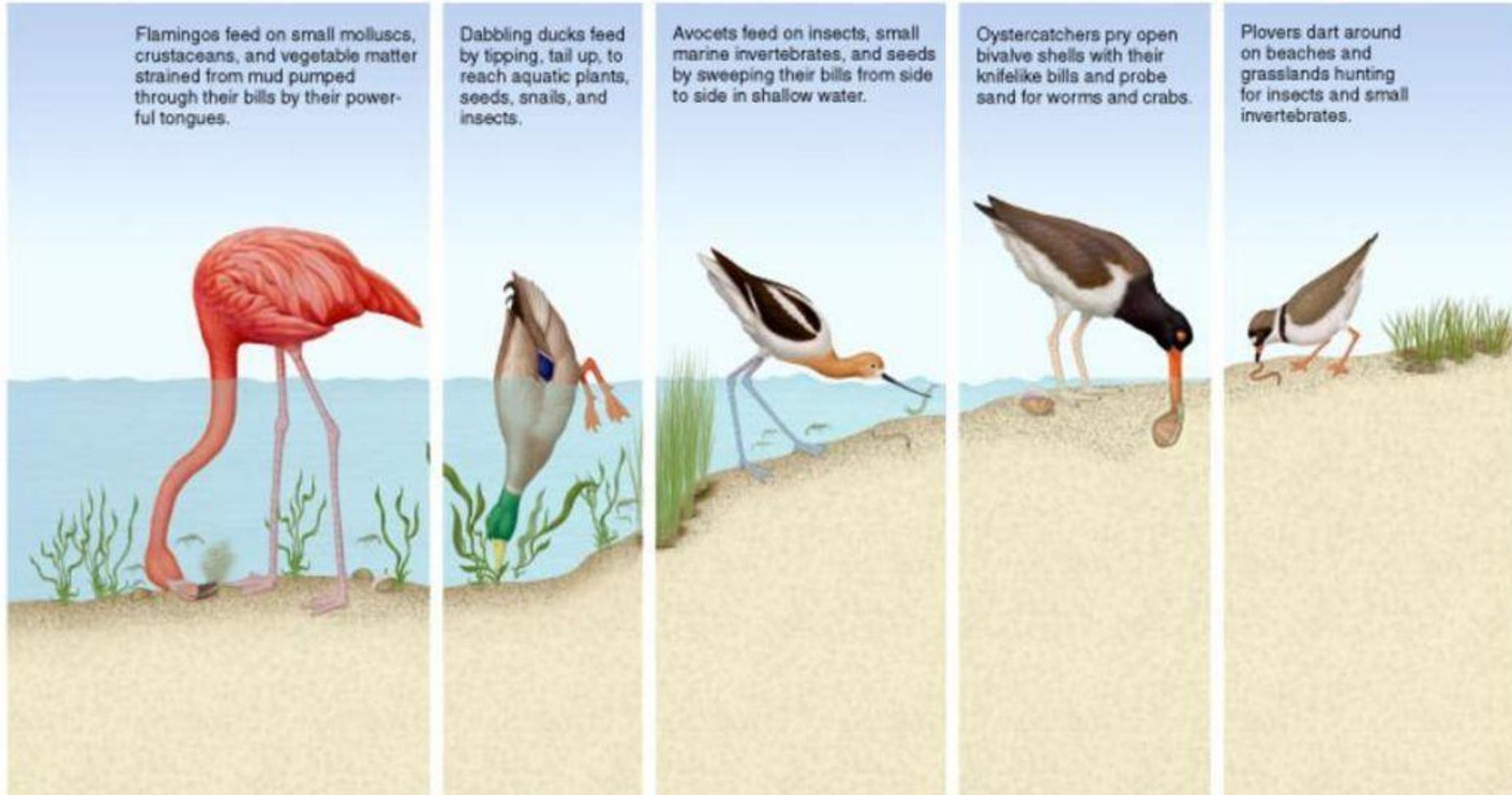
Nature Neighbourhoods  
Cymdogaethau Natur



Supported by



# Understanding our – and others' - niche



# Baggage

Really important to be aware of the good, the bad and the ugly that your organisation's name carries!

- Expectations
- Limitations





# Organisational ego and finding your purpose

Everyone is susceptible to thinking that their organisation is the *most* important.

While it's key to know what your organisation wants (i.e. the strategy, and however that breaks down to your level), **it's not anyone else's job to care!**

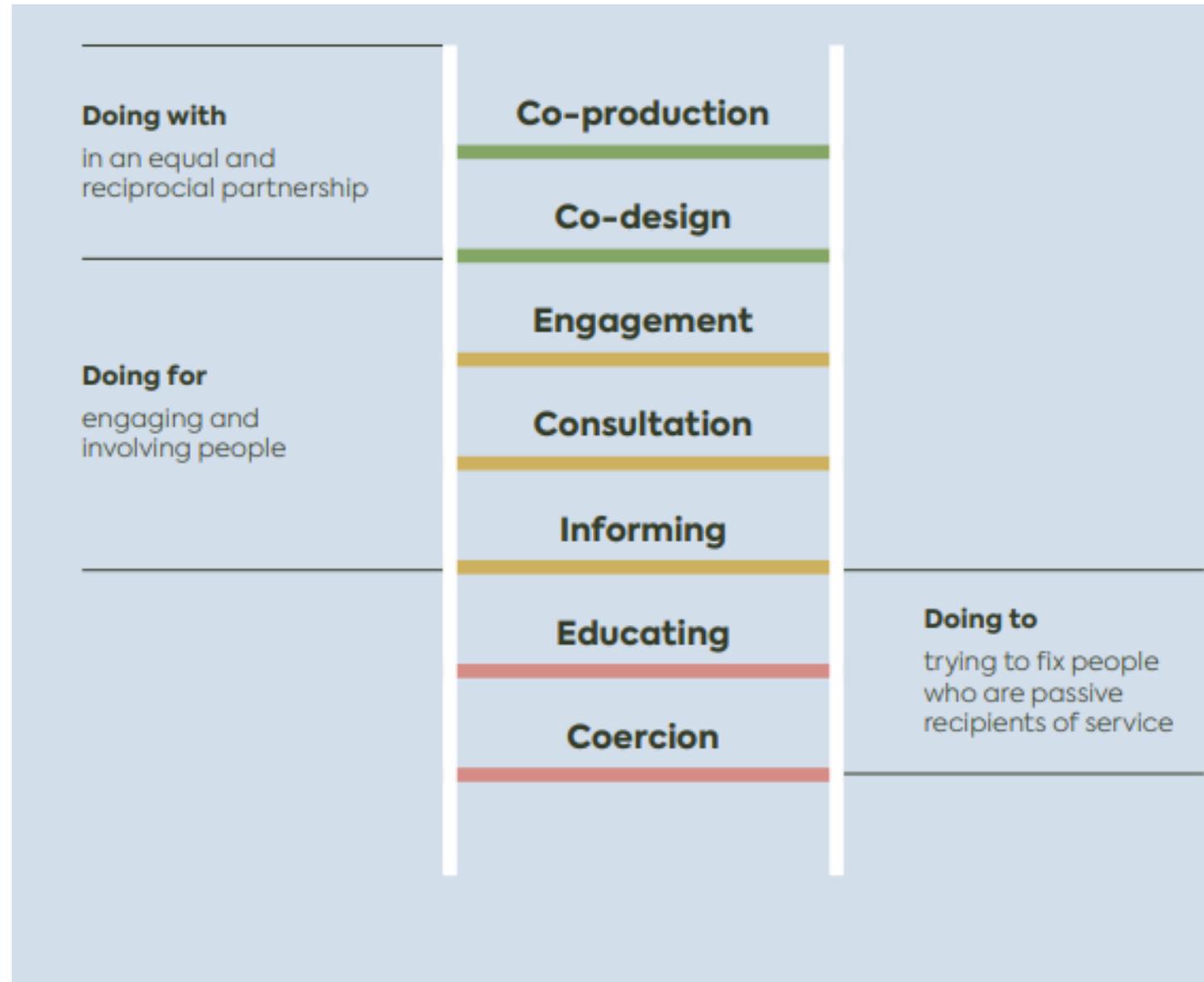
# Power dynamics

*: the degree of influence or control one person or group can exercise over another person or group in society, relationships, or work.*

- 1. Dominance in Communication:** When one party frequently interrupts or dismisses the ideas of the other, it indicates a power imbalance.
- 2. Control Over Resources:** If one party controls the access to resources such as budget or information, they inherently wield more power.
- 3. Decision-making Authority:** If decisions are consistently made by one party without consulting the other, it's a clear sign of power dynamics at play



# Nothing for us without us



# Co-design

Co-design brings people who are affected by a problem together with organisations, experts and decision makers to come up with shared solutions.

The ingredients:

Lived experience

Bringing people together

Ideas and innovation



# Finding partners

- Who has been excluded from the conversation to date in your work?
- What are the demographics of the community of place/interest? Are there representative organisations that can connect you to particular demographics?
- Local voluntary sector partnerships and networks (e.g. GMCVO, LVSC, a local CVS, Up for Yorkshire)
- Locality (for England)





# ***How* we partner is just as important as *who* we partner with**

- Community orgs are often under-resourced and over-worked
- What scope is there for a relationship less based on paperwork and more on trust and seeing the change we're looking for?
- Can we put our knowledge/capacity in service of community priorities? Perhaps building capability and capacity within the community itself?
- Is every KPI necessary?





# Urban Growing Programme

Connecting communities through Community Hubs

Empowering people to reclaim public land for the purpose of achieving  
community transformation

## Spread of deprivation among Islington by Local Super Output Area, 2015

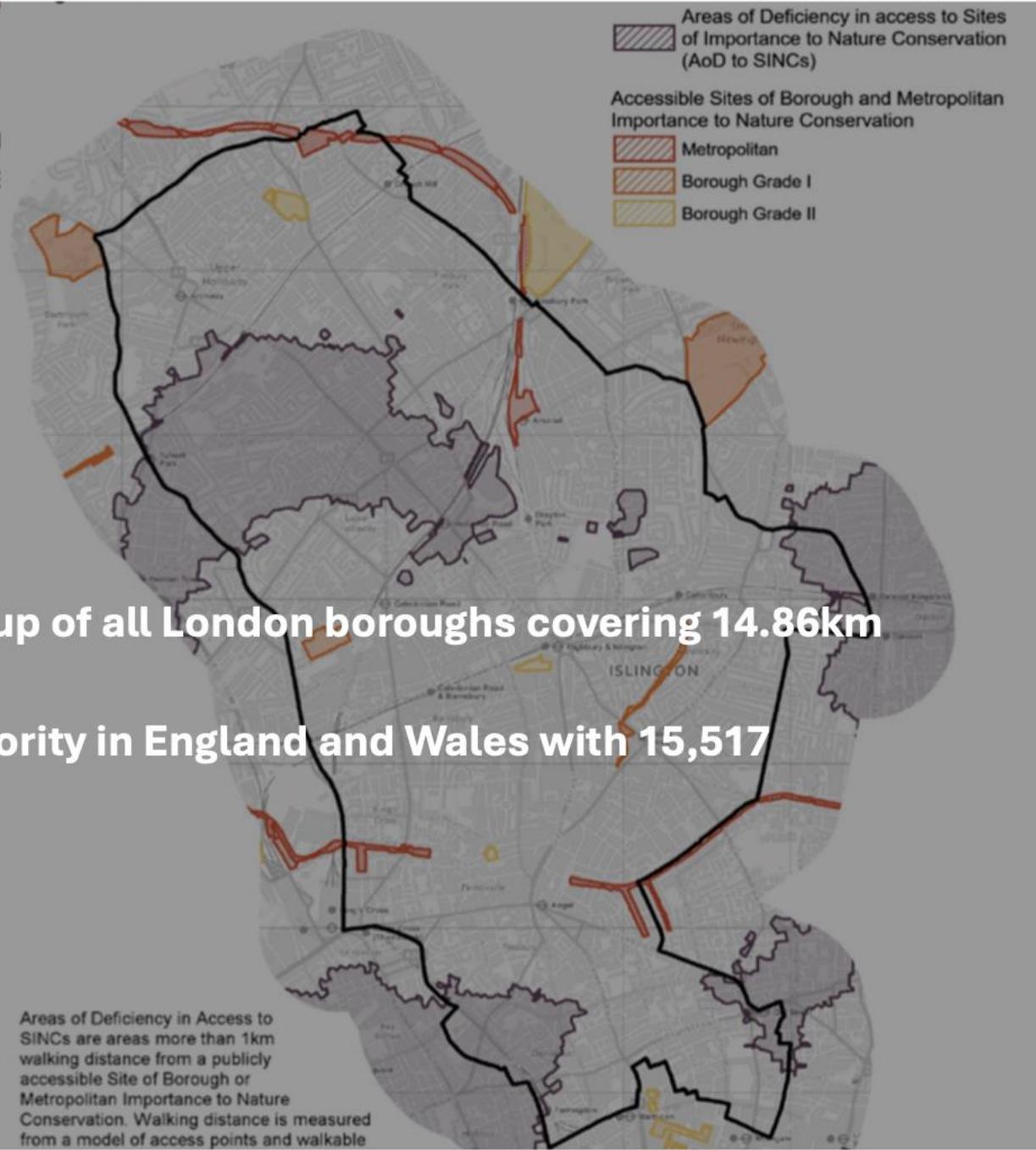


### Index of Multiple Deprivation Islington LSOAs by local deprivation quintile (123)



## About Islington

- Islington is the 3<sup>rd</sup> smallest and most built up of all London boroughs covering 14.86km squared.
- It is the most densely populated local authority in England and Wales with 15,517 people per square KM
- 57.3 hectares of land is on housing estates



Areas of Deficiency in Access to SINC are areas more than 1km walking distance from a publicly accessible Site of Borough or Metropolitan Importance to Nature Conservation. Walking distance is measured from a model of access points and walkable

# Building cross-sector collaborations based upon proven practice





# DRAFT ACTION PL



03 March 2022

Greener, healthier Islington

**ouncil's vision for re-imagining public spaces continues with launch of Islington Greener Together programme**

## Islington Greener Together

Cross-sector collaborations: conditions for success

- Relational work with proven practice organisations.
- Council, be brave – be prepared to relinquish power.
- People, be brave – take on more responsibility in their neighbourhood.
- VCS, be challenging, creative and solution-driven and act as a bridge.



## Bloomin' Gardeners

The Bloomin' Gardeners have been growing in Caledonian Park since 2014. They now work on two plots, and the gardeners meet weekly to grow and socialise. The next plan is to grow salads for the new community cafe!



## Highbury Quadrant

Since 2020 we've worked in partnership with Elizabeth House Community Centre to transform three unloved green spaces on the Highbury Quadrant Estate. These spaces are now thriving community gardens, where residents connect and grow together.



## Community Plant Nursery

In August 2018 we took over an unused space on the Hollins and McCall Estate in Tufnell Park. The site is now a successful growing space where food is grown and distributed to Food Hubs across the borough and local residents get involved in growing workshops.



## Islington Me Time

Working with Islington Mencap's Me Time programme, we run two weekly sessions with Mencap, who come and help out at our Community Plant Nursery, and at Market Road Gardens.



## Andover Garden Squares

Part of the Finsbury Park Ward Improvement Plan, and in collaboration with the Community Hub, the project aims to increase resident engagement through community-led gardening activities, to promote the health and wellbeing benefits along with environmental improvement, ensuring local people have the knowledge and confidence to maintain the



## Packington Square

Packington Square provides a perfectly sunny spot for veg growing. Working with The Arc Community Centre and lots of volunteers, veg is being grown for the food bank - and there's even more growing space to come.

# Key stakeholders

- Building resident power, agency and autonomy
- Working with local Councillors and Council Officers to unlock potential for the land, people and nature
- Collaborating with place-based anchor organisations to facilitate and enable sustainability





social benefits and can lessen supply shocks, supporters say



# Urban Eats

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# Calculated risks

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Islington Greener Together and Green Champions

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Thriving Neighbourhoods

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Community Infrastructure Levy and Developer Contributions (Section 106) to help support local infrastructure



# Taking calculated risks

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Co-design a cross-sector partnership agreement with trusted organisations with proven practice.

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Develop and maintain equitable relationships recognizing the need for involvement at a strategic level.

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Exchange lessons learned to generate solutions.

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Professionals should be on tap, not on top.



**YOUR  
PARK**

The logo features the word 'YOUR' in a smaller, red, sans-serif font positioned above the word 'PARK'. 'PARK' is rendered in a large, bold, yellow, sans-serif font. The letter 'K' in 'PARK' is stylized to include a small branch with three leaves extending from its top right.

**REIMAGINING PARKS**



## 2018

- Discussions with Bournemouth Parks Foundation
- Agree joint bid Bristol & Bath
- Public announcement of 8 successful bids
- Rethinking Parks Replicating Grant - £193k – to fund a two year programme to establish charity.

## 2019-2020

- Your Park Brand launched at Festival of Nature
- Board of Trustees appointed
- Charlee Bennett appointed as Foundation Director
- Develop policies, strategies, business planning
- Bring Trustees together as a team
- Deliver first strategy





# Our model

- We are an added value charity (CIO)
- Ownership, maintenance and management stays with the Councils
- We have a Memorandum of Understanding between the three parties that established a Steering Group
- We are independent of the Councils with no Councillors or Council Officers sitting on our board of Trustees.





# Vision & mission

**Our vision:** Everyone can access parks and their transformative health and wellbeing benefits.

**Our mission:** Empowering communities and cultivating inclusive, nature-rich and engaging park activities.

## Priority areas:

- **Health** – improving physical and mental wellbeing of communities through initiatives that support and provide outdoor activities;
- **Access** – championing, enabling and consulting under-served communities to improve access to parks, so that everyone can feel safe, enjoy and benefit from parks and green spaces;
- **Nature** – creating, enhancing and sustaining natural habitats through community gardening sessions, enabling our diverse communities to respond to the Ecological Emergency Action Plans and enjoy nature-rich community spaces.



# Our communities...

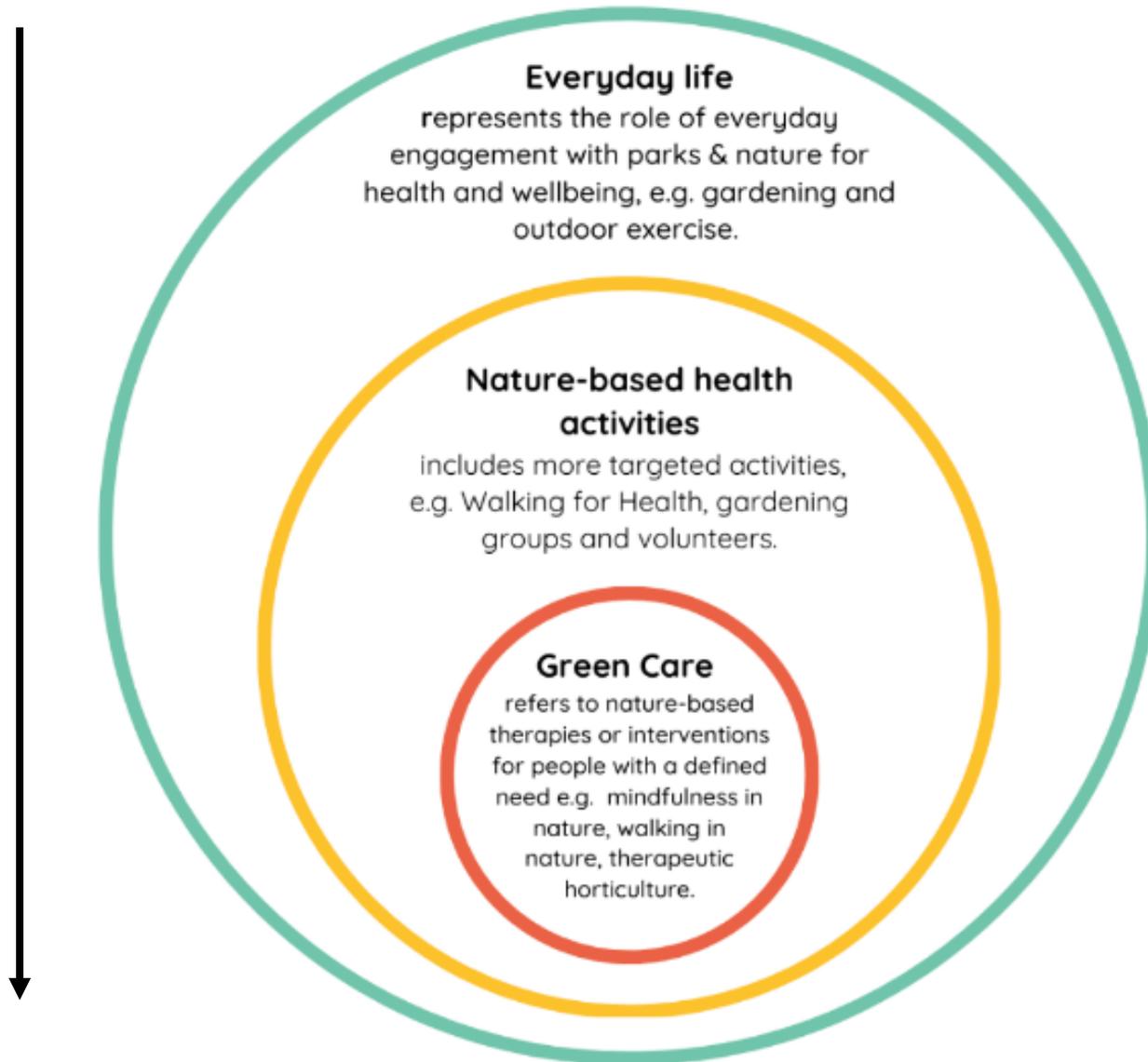
Under-served communities:

- People living in areas of highest deprivation
- Communities least likely to use parks:  
Disabled people, carers, Global Ethnic Majorities

Friends Groups and park volunteers



Increasing health needs



## Enabling factors...

### Everyday life

- People are aware of the parks available
- Parks feel safe and inclusive
- Parks are accessible
- Parks are nature rich
- Under-served communities are represented
- Range of reasons to visit and/or activities available

### Nature-based health activities

- Diverse range of opportunities and activities available locally, including weekend and family friendly options
- People representing under-served communities leading activities designed for them
- Easy to get approval and support for new activities and events in parks

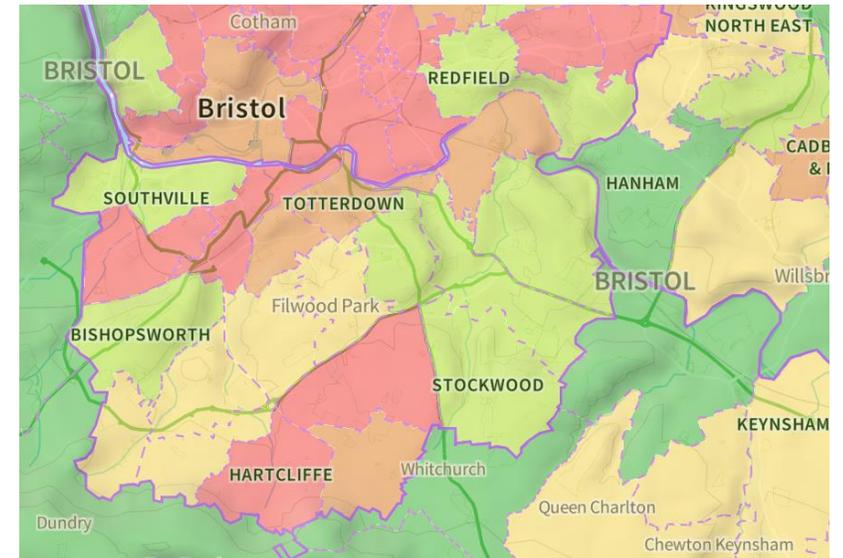
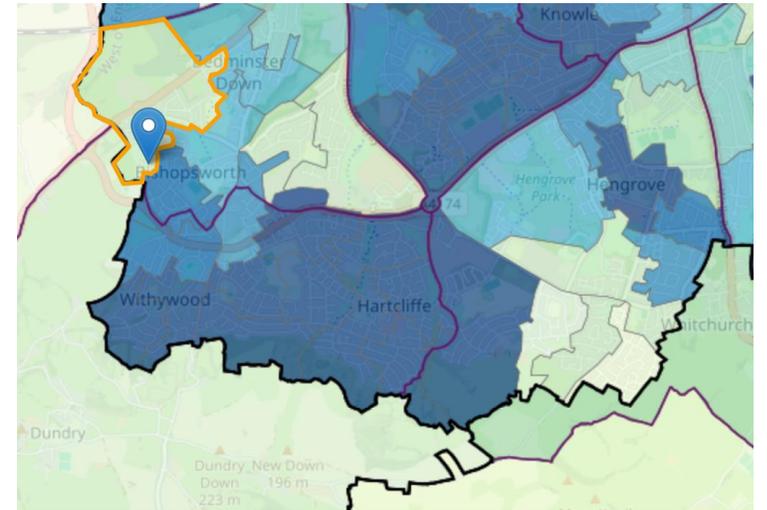
### Green care

- GSP activities available for a range of people in areas of health deprivation
- Local health services actively refer to activities in local parks
- Volunteers are skilled and equipped to support people with a range of health needs

# Bringing this to life in South Bristol

## Hartcliffe & Withywood

- Highest 10% of deprivation nationwide
- Hotspot for Green Space Deprivation
- Hotspot for Disabled residents
- Sites of strategic importance for Green Recovery
- Limited community capacity & deep-seated feelings of mis-trust of the Council & others





# Wild & Well

- Community development & network approach
- Bringing together community members, organisations & health professionals
- Recruiting and supporting Community Champions & Friends Groups
- Identifying needs, opportunities and supporting action



# Roots to Wellbeing

- Green Social Prescribing programme for people struggling with loneliness or poor mental health
- Referrals from local health providers
- Focused on inclusivity and supporting the widest range of participants





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## Not just a check box

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Equitable access to parks  
for disabled people and  
unpaid carers

An overview of evidence and  
recommendations  
November 2022  
Your Park Bristol and Bath

**YOUR  
PARK**

# Parks 4 All

- Understanding intersectional issues facing communities in areas of highest deprivation
- Demonstrate challenges and opportunities faced by local people – action focused
- Producing local evidence bases to influence and secure funding



Quartet  
Community  
Foundation

NATURAL  
ENGLAND

# Taking action...

- Community Led Park Access Assessments
- Inclusive programme of volunteers and nature connection opportunities
- Campaigning for better awareness, action and funding
- Influenced Bristol's new Parks and Green Spaces Strategy
- BCC announced £900k for park accessibility





# Nature & Community

- Volunteer programme through shared 'Ranger' role
- Supporting park volunteers and Friends of Groups to create nature rich, welcoming & accessible spaces
- Taking forward community ideas practically
- Supporting Roots participants out of programme

# Supporting communities to lead the way

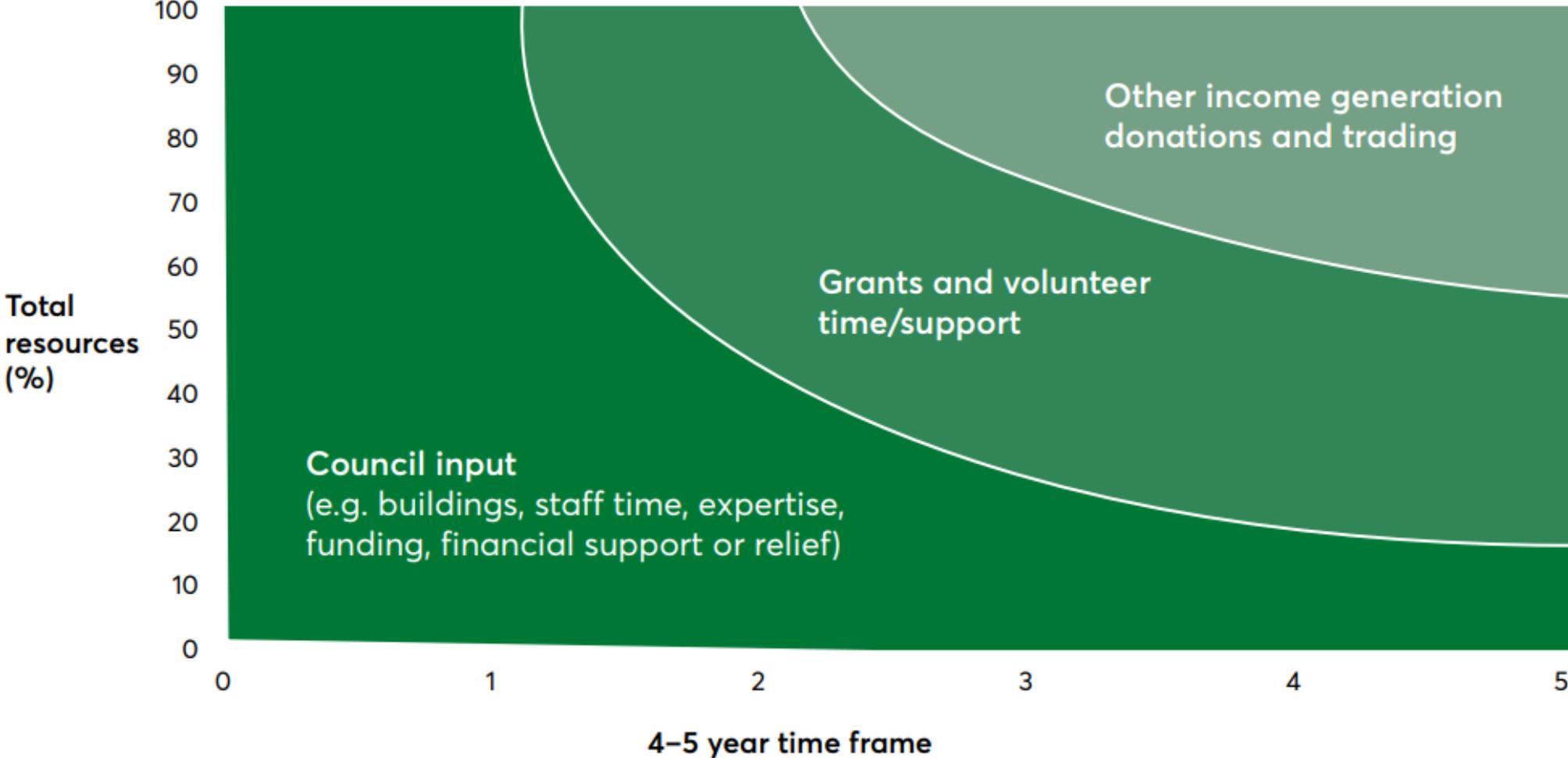
## Conditions for success...

- Working at a neighbourhood level
- Being in it for the long haul & allowing the time needed
- Knowing who is best to what, when
- Council actively looking for opportunities and enabling joint applications
- Shared ambitions and open communication
- Charity partner enables more partnership opportunities

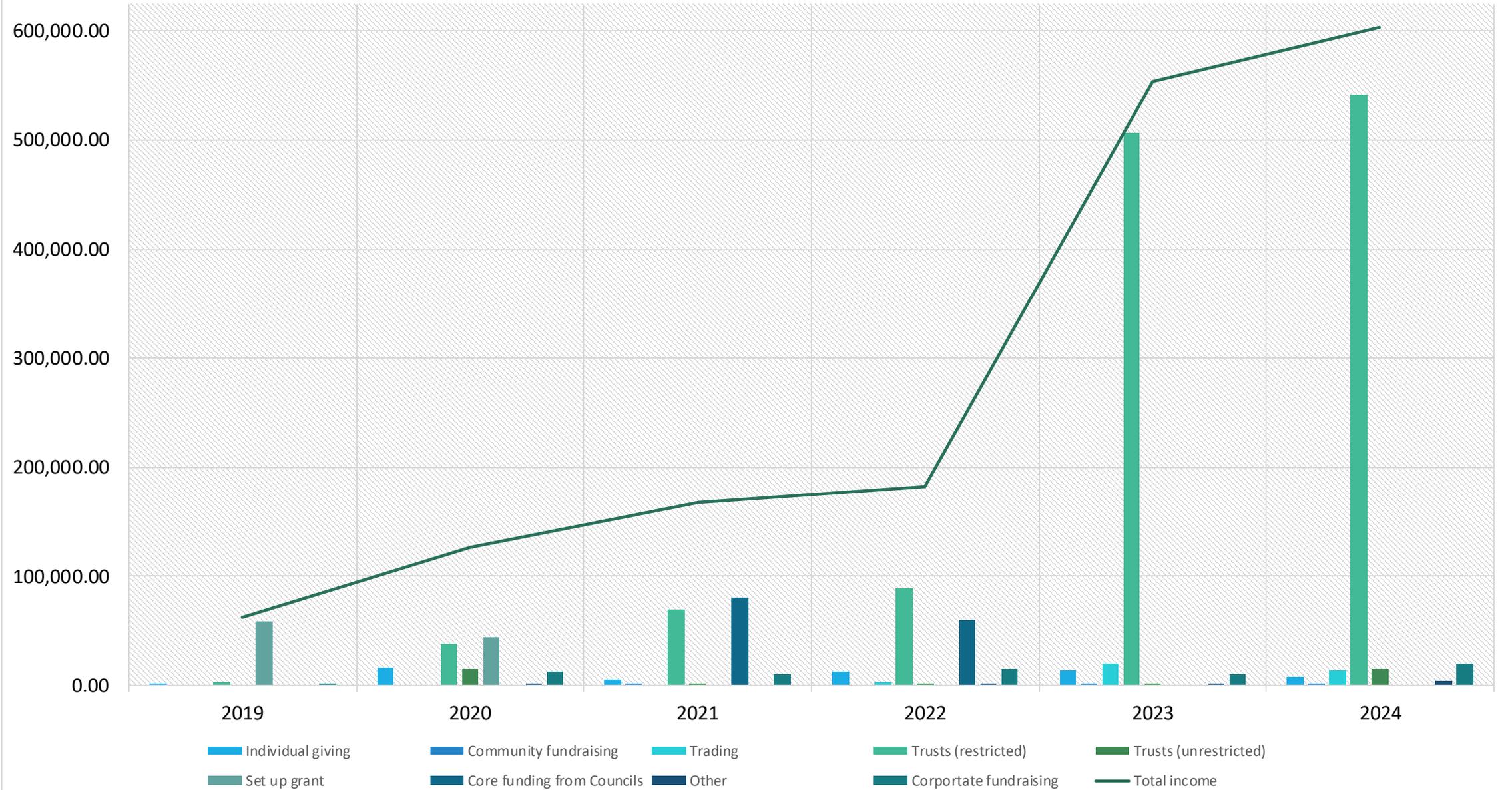
# Challenges

- Disconnect between strategic and operational
- Sometimes being competitors in a crowded market
- Charity's ambition and Council's restraints
- Working across two Local Authorities – two approaches needed
- Financial sustainability

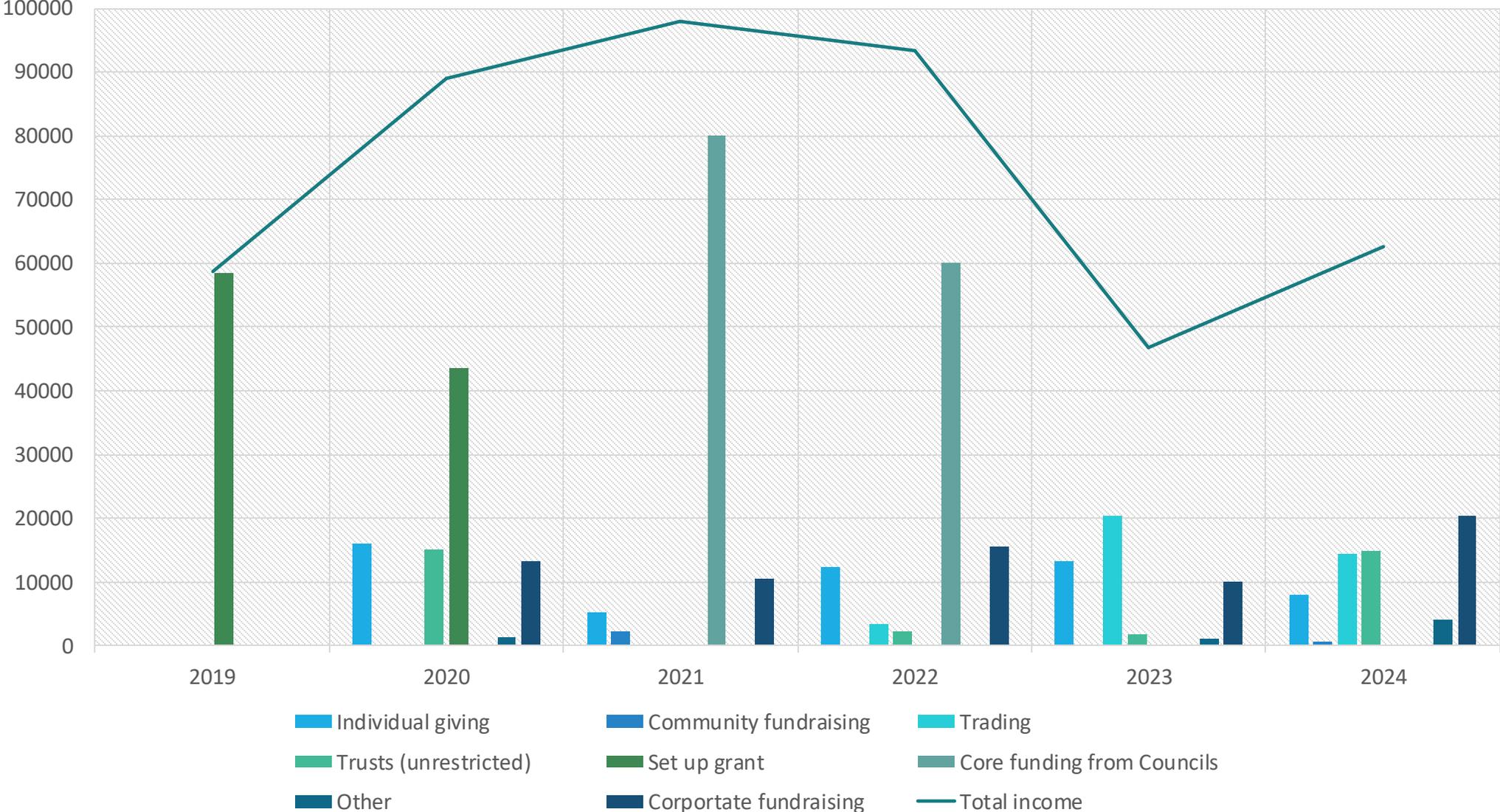
# Diversify resourcing steadily over time



# YPBB Income



# Income without restricted grants





**Stay in touch...**

**@YourParkBB**

**[www.yourpark.org.uk](http://www.yourpark.org.uk)**

# We're having a break

During the break we will be using an interactive whiteboard to capture your ideas and thoughts.

Please access the whiteboard now using the link in the chat

How to use the board:

--> use sticking notes to write your thoughts and responses to the questions on the board

--> copy and paste links directly into the board to share existing resources and projects

We will be pulling some of these responses into our panel discussion after the break

**Greener Communities**  
2pm-3.30pm, 4 December 2024

**What challenges have you experienced working in partnership?**

**How might you overcome this challenge and how would you recommend building trust within a partnership?**

**Do you have any examples of places that are running greenways really well?**

You can open the links by clicking on the embedded image and press the link to view the square and file name.

These are resources related to the webinar, that will help you dive into the material.

A woman with long, curly hair, wearing a denim jacket over a red and white patterned dress, stands on a decorative, ornate metal bridge in a lush green park. The bridge has intricate scrollwork railings. In the background, other people are visible walking on a path, and the scene is filled with dense green foliage and trees. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

# Thank you!

**Sign up to the mailing list** to be the first to hear more information about the programme including resources and events via the website: [naturetownsandcities.org.uk](https://naturetownsandcities.org.uk)

If you want to get in touch, please email [info@naturetownsandcities.org.uk](mailto:info@naturetownsandcities.org.uk)