# Community-Led Regeneration

# Revival of the Redbrook Trail, a forgotten green corridor in Greater Manchester, along with major investment in community, enterprise and environment



# Project Overview

Partington, a semi-rural area in Greater Manchester, faced longstanding challenges including underused public space, antisocial behaviour, limited economic opportunity, and low civic engagement.

A holistic regeneration approach led by Andrew Edwards (formerly Regeneration Manager at Your Housing Group, Senior Consultant at V4 Services since 2022) has transformed the area into a safer, greener, and more connected place.

This initiative exemplifies ambitious project success around green space activation, community resilience and inclusive growth.

# Community-Led Regeneration and Environmental Engagement Project

At the centre of the regeneration programme was the revival of the Redbrook Trail, a forgotten green corridor, along with major investments in community facilities, enterprise, and environmental action.

A proven community-first model for activating green and public spaces, fostering local pride and supporting underserved communities through collaborative delivery and measurable impact.

# **Project Goals**



To use environmental and economic regeneration as a driver of community pride, youth engagement, and long-term neighbourhood sustainability through:

- Engaging residents through creative consultation and local action
- Restoring a neglected green trail into a civic asset
- Supporting economic resilience and start-up culture
- Activating events and activities for wellbeing and cohesion
- Increasing visibility, safety, and community ownership

This project was delivered by V4 senior consultant, Andrew Edwards, while in a previous role at Your Housing Group (YHG).

It demonstrates the kind of work our team brings into current projects and forms part of the experience and capability now embedded within the V4 team.

# **Project Scope**

## **Community Visioning - Engagement Through Creativity**

The regeneration programme began with a strong emphasis on co-production. To understand priorities and re-establish trust, Andrew led a creative engagement programme including:

- Mapping sessions, photovoice, and walking audits
- Forest school-style workshops and pop-up consultation
- Collaborative mural and signage design with schools
- Doorstep dialogue and social media reach-outs

These activities identified the Redbrook Trail - overgrown and feared - as the key space to transform.

#### Environmental Restoration - Redbrook Trail

Originally developed with ERDF funding in 2007, the trail had fallen into disuse. Its transformation included:

- Vegetation clearance, invasive species removal, improved lighting
- Tree planting: 100 English Oaks + hundreds of native species (funded by Our Bright Future)
- Accessible pathway resurfacing and safer junctions
- Art-based interpretation boards, litter campaigns, and trail events

The trail is now central to community recreation, active travel, and wellbeing.

## Partnerships and Volunteering - Unlocking Local Ownership

Success was driven by multi-agency collaboration and growing volunteer networks. Partners included:

- Woodland Trust, National Trust, and Keep Britain Tidy
- Local schools, Trafford Council, housing and social prescribing teams
- Over 50 community volunteers, youth groups, and older residents

This collaboration shaped decisions, built ownership, and sustained improvements

# **Education, Youth Engagement and Wellbeing**

Children and young people played a critical role in co-design and delivery:

- Created signage, trail guides, and ecology boards
- Led guided walks and supported seasonal trail clean-ups
- Received environmental education linked to school curricula
- Connected with health professionals through outdoor wellbeing activities

Youth engagement helped reduce low-level ASB and fostered long-term community stewards.

# **Activation, Economy and Evaluation**

## **Community Events & Celebration**

A programme of seasonal and annual events brought people together:

- Redbrook Trail events (Easter, summer walks, winter lights)
- Community days at The Fuse, the community hub, and Oak Road Park
- Annual Neighbourhood Awards and celebration days to honour local changemakers

These gatherings became signature events, reinforcing civic pride and strengthening relationships.

# **Enterprise and Economic Growth**

Andrew also led the letting of commercial units to local businesses:

- Increased footfall and local spend
- Boosted employment opportunities
- Encouraged community-driven commerce and reduced vacancy rates

YHG also partnered with Pop-Up Business School, Trafford Housing Trust and Beautiful Ideas Company to:

- Deliver enterprise training to 85+ participants
- Establish a business support and micro-funding programme
- Foster a self-employment culture in Partington and surrounding areas.

#### **Broader Environmental and Youth Initiatives**

The regeneration included workstreams that supported:

- M31 Employment Partnership jobs fairs, school outreach, Connected Club
- M31 Project Group environmental action with YHG, Trafford Council, Amey, Friends of Oak Road
- Love Where You Live clean-ups, litter tracking, school workshops
- Community Skip Days with upcyclers and recycling ambassadors
- Support for youth sports, Trafford Moving Project, and Connect Club (10 laptops donated for digital access)

These cross-sector initiatives helped address local ASB, disconnection, and waste while boosting pride and skills.

## **Outcomes and Impact**

#### Social and Community:

- Increased pride, ownership, and visibility
- New and strengthened community groups
- Improved perceptions of safety and inclusion

#### **Environmental and Educational:**

- Restored green infrastructure and biodiversity
- School engagement embedded in project delivery
- Environmental stewardship and learning

#### **Health and Economic:**

- Social prescribing referrals to the trail and events
- More active lifestyles and intergenerational play
- Local spending and enterprise supported
- Strong local partnership culture sustained