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The Mersey Forest presents the

# NATURAL HEALTH SERVICE

the power of nature to improve health & wellbeing



## What were the OUTCOMES?

- Improved mental wellbeing ✓
- Increased social interaction ✓
- Greater resilience ✓
- Increased physical activity ✓
- Greater appreciation of nature ✓


## Where?


### KEY:

WHAT DID WE DO?

★ PROJECT LOCATIONS

 HEALTH WALKS

 HORTICULTURAL THERAPY

 MINDFUL CONTACT WITH NATURE

 FOREST SCHOOL

 HEALTHY CONSERVATION



SEE OUR  
IMPACT REPORTS  
FOR MORE

Get in touch with us...

**THE MERSEY FOREST**  
more from trees

## THE NATURAL HEALTH SERVICE ACTIVITY PRODUCTS



### HEALTHY WALKS

Walking is one of the easiest ways to get more active, lose weight and become healthier breaking down barriers to positively influencing behavioural change.



### HORTICULTURAL THERAPY

Gardening and food growing activities in a social setting, combining moderate physical activity with purposeful activity that boosts mental wellbeing.



### FOREST SCHOOL & BUSHCRAFT

Forest School is an innovative approach to outdoor play and learning, inspiring individuals of any age through active experiences in a woodland environment.



### MINDFUL CONTACT WITH NATURE

Nature based mindfulness practice. Delivered in local woodlands which support full immersion in the natural environment. Shown to increase capacity to self-manage long-term chronic conditions.



### CONSERVATION / GREEN GYM™

Improving a participant's strength and stamina through nature-based conservation projects, boosting practical skills and confidence, increasing physical activity and building social networks whilst benefiting local green spaces.

5 STANDARD  
NATURAL HEALTH  
SERVICE ACTIVITY  
PRODUCTS



EACH PRODUCT  
PROVIDED AS A 12  
WEEK COURSE FOR  
10-20 PEOPLE



TARGETING  
'HARD TO REACH'  
PARTICIPANTS FROM  
AREAS OF NEED

A group of people, including a dog, are walking in a park with large trees showing autumn foliage. The scene is slightly blurred, suggesting movement. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# Social Return on Investment

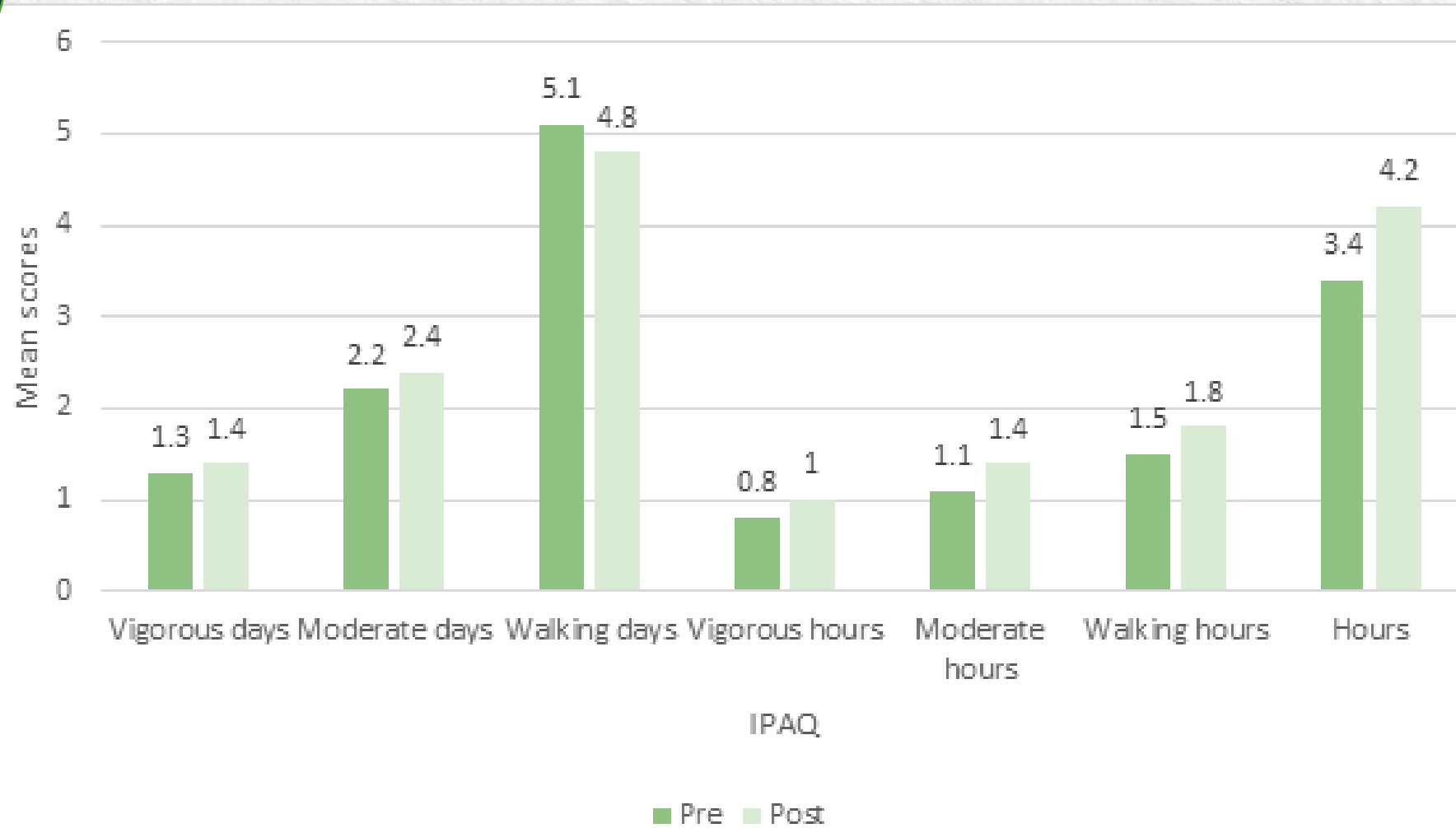
- The valuation of the NaHS programme found that the activities delivered generated a social value contribution of over £10.07 million, based on public sector cost savings and social, productivity and economic benefits. This delivered a return on investment of £12.18 for every £1 spent on the service.
- Between 2015-2020, the Natural Health Service generated a total of **£1,066,892** of healthcare cost savings across Cheshire and Merseyside

## Mental Wellbeing

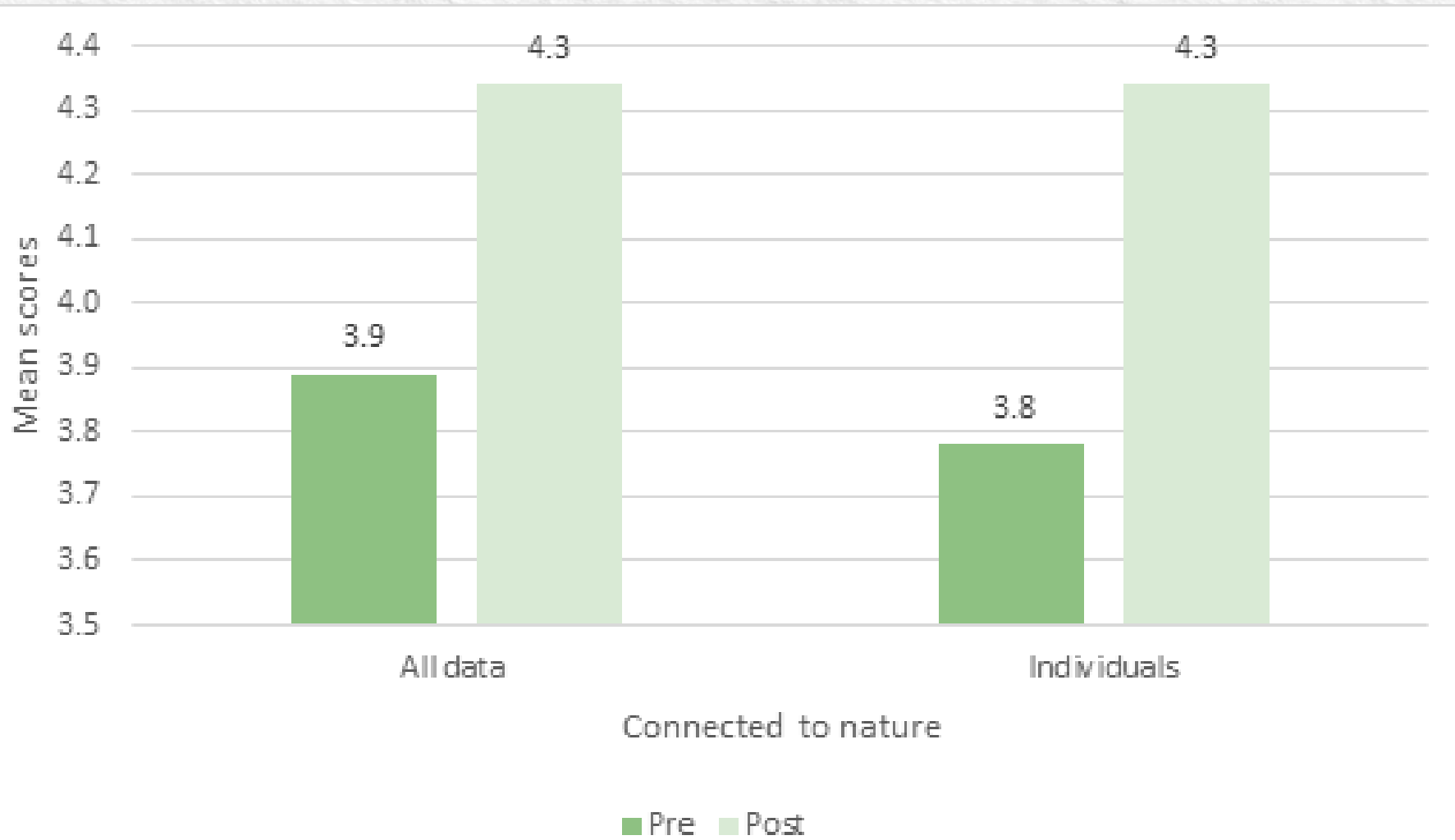
**Table 3.3: Wellbeing scores from the SWEMWBS survey (for adults and young people aged 13+)**

Product	Average score/range before intervention	Average score/range after intervention	Average Change
Forest School	21.8 (14-29)	27.2(18-35)	5.4
Horticultural Therapy	21.6 (13-33)	25.9(19-35)	4.3
Green Gym and Healthy Conservation	21.9(12-28)	27.4(19-35)	5.5
Mindful Contact with Nature	20.9(13-33)	25.6(18-35)	4.7
Healthy Walks	21.2(13-33)	25.9(19-35)	4.7

## Physical Activity



Connected to nature





"It's often good to meet new people and I have made friends because of coming here. By taking part in these walks in nature I feel less lonely, and I have a reason to go out more often."





# Nature connectedness – what have we found?

## Social Connectedness

*"This weekly walk has provided a place for me to meet new people and make new friends." (Health Walks)*

*"[I enjoyed] Feeling connected to people." (Healthy Conservation)*

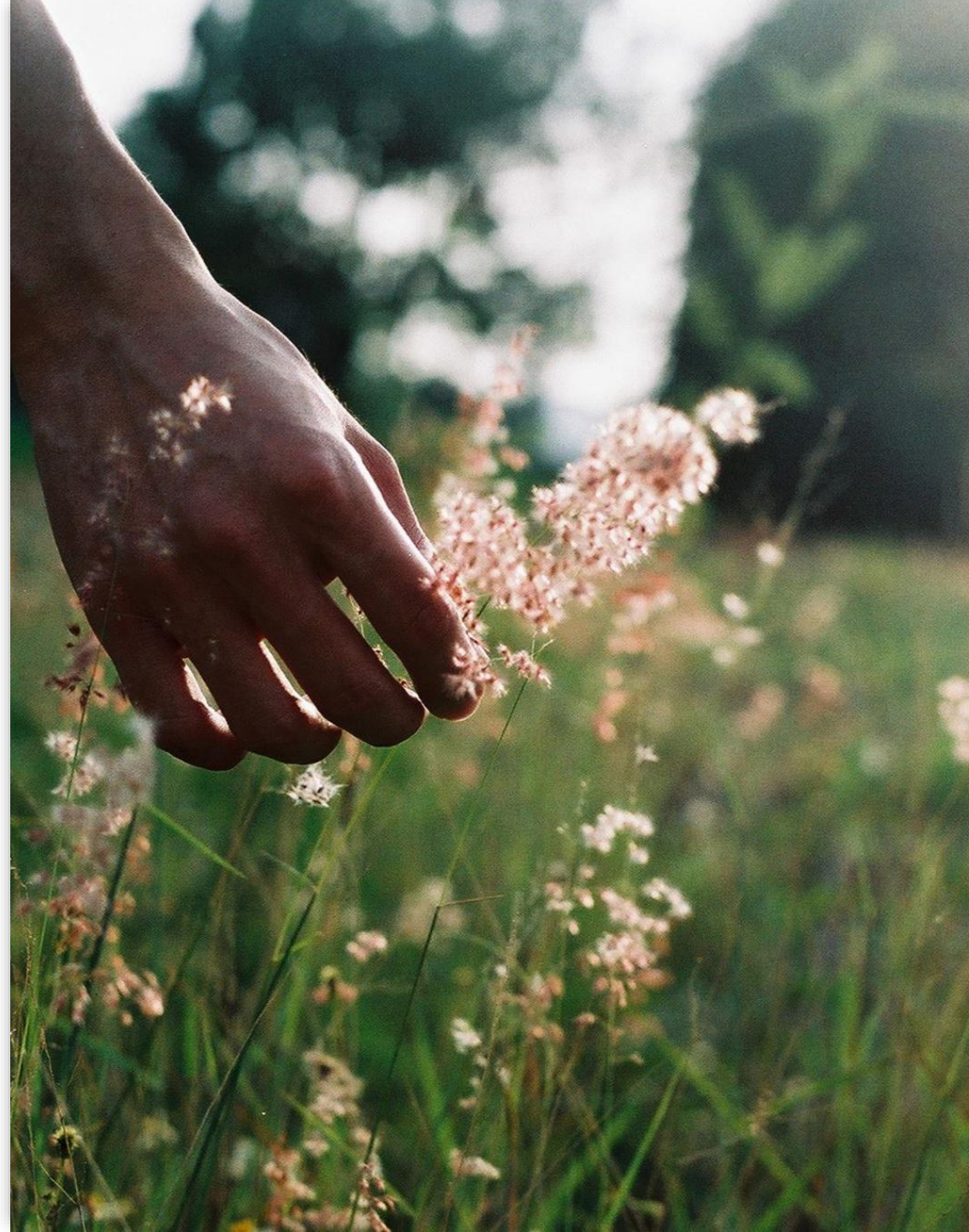
*"[I] find it helps my depression when being able to talk about my daily life to other people." (Health Walks)*

*"Meeting lots of lovely new people. Feeling part of the community and part of a team." (Horticultural Therapy)*

## Group Facilitator

*"These sessions are a lifeline socially and mentally! Thanks to the [facilitators] their kind knowledge and understanding." (Health Walks)*

*"[The facilitator] is helpful and clear with their teaching. They managed the group regardless of ability really well in a kind and respectful way. They makes the class fun." (Mindful Contact with Nature)*



# GroundsWell Consortium



With co-investigators from nine universities;



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH



And partners from Government, industry and the third sector including;



Canal & River Trust  
Making life better by water

# GroundsWell Scope

- Assessing the impact of Urban Green and Blue spaces on **health and wellbeing**.
- Establish important baseline **health and environment** factors.
- Layering **co-produced** existing data and interventions (e.g., administrative health data).



○  
2021  
Consortium  
awarded £7.1m

○  
2022  
Engaging with partners  
and communities

○  
2023/4  
Developing data tools,  
community training and  
evaluating impacts

●  
2025/6  
Influencing and  
informing policy change

# Innovation Fund



The GroundsWell Innovation Fund is intended to support local community projects focused on improving, and maximising the health benefits of, Urban Green and Blue Spaces (UGBS).

GroundsWell's four guiding principles are at the heart of the fund:



**HEALTH AND INEQUALITIES**  
ADDRESSING ISSUES  
INCLUDING SOCIAL &  
ENVIRONMENTAL



**CREATING A VIRTUOUS CYCLE**  
OF RESEARCH, POLICY,  
IMPLEMENTATION AND  
ACTIVE CITIZENS



**CO-PRODUCTION**  
CO-IMPLEMENTING, CO-  
EVALUATING AND CO-  
TRANSLATING



**ACKNOWLEDGING COMPLEXITY**  
OF URBAN ENVIRONMENT  
AND HOW COMMUNITIES  
LIVE IN IT

# Innovation Fund



16 PROJECTS FUNDED



GROUNDSWELL  
PARTNERS



PROJECTS LAST  
APPROXIMATELY 12  
MONTHS



“GROWING TOGETHER”



GROUNDSWELL  
RESEARCHER TO  
SUPPORT



EVALUATION  
COMPONENT

# Innovation Fund in Liverpool



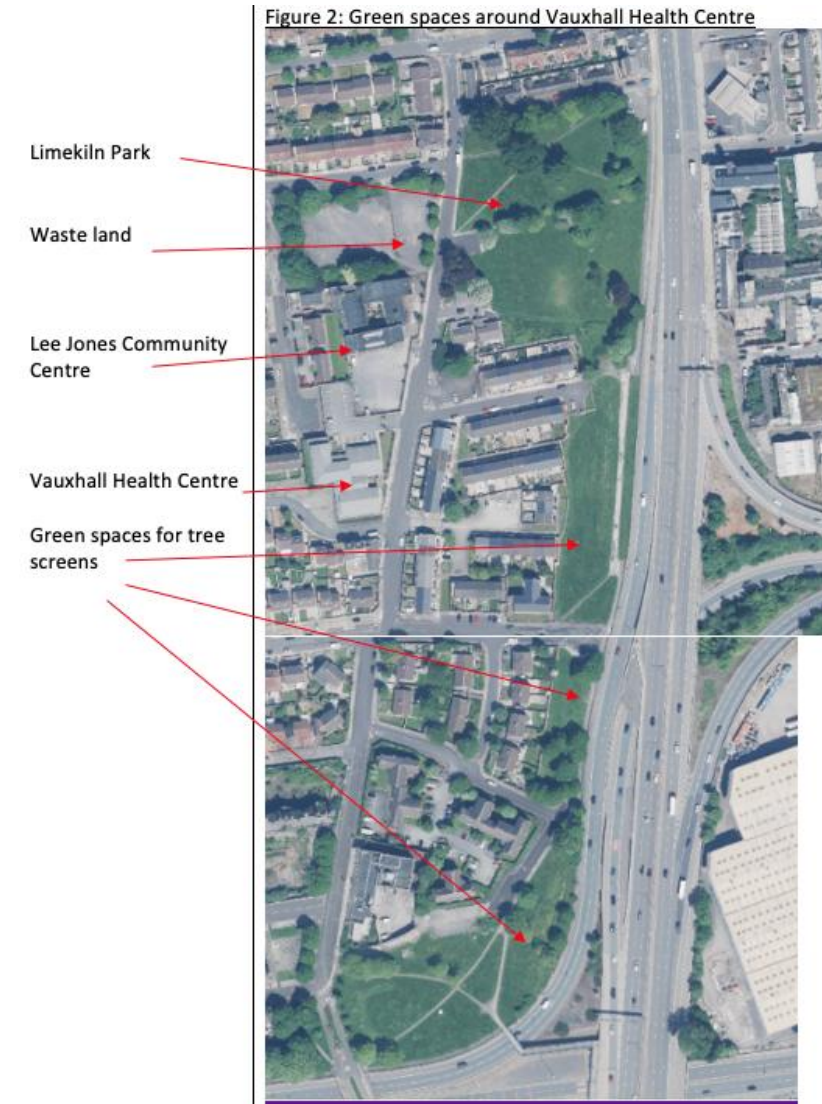
Funded projects:

- Nature in Linacre – Regenerus
- Splash the light fantastic! – Safe Regeneration
- Dock Branch Park Neighbourhood Panel – Prosocial place
- Let's paddle for positive change – Canal & River Trust
- Green spaces for health – Vauxhall Primary Healthcare
- Natural Health Service, Forest Bathing – The Mersey Forest



# Innovation Fund – Trees/woodland

- Green spaces for health – Vauxhall Primary Healthcare
- Walking workshops, edible landscapes, nature connection
- Planting trees as a pollution screen/carbon capture
- Ongoing air quality monitoring project with Geography MSc students
- Interested in “airflow modelling” – how tree screen could affect airflow





**NHS**  
Liverpool University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust



CENTRE for  
SUSTAINABLE  
HEALTHCARE  
inspire • empower • transform



**GroundsWell**  
Transforming our cities from the ground up



THE MERSEY  
FOREST  
more from trees



Natural Health  
Service



Journeys in Nature



**Everton**  
in the Community



Search Google Maps



Sid



Restaurants



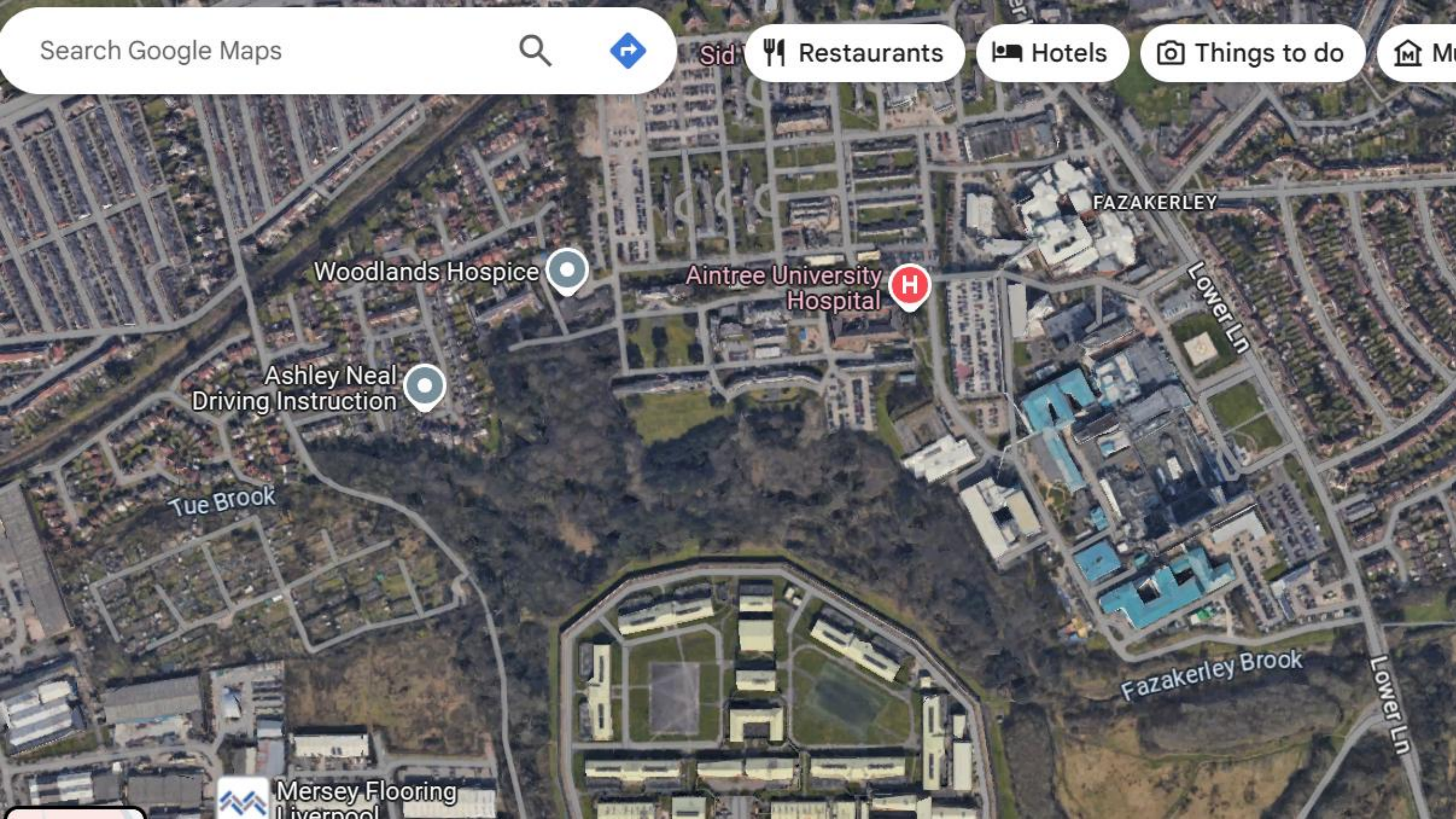
Hotels



Things to do



M



Woodlands Hospice



Aintree University Hospital



Ashley Neal Driving Instruction



Tue Brook

FAZAKERLEY

Lower Ln

Fazakerley Brook

Lower Ln



Mersey Flooring Liverpool



Ave

, England

Google Street View

See more dates



Arrivals & Drop Off Only  
No Waiting  
Please Use Smart  
Stay Car Park.

Maxillo  
Facial  
Laboratory

# Welcome to Bluebell Woods

A haven for wildlife. Ever changing across the seasons it's a great place to unwind and get closer to nature.



**ALDER**  
Grows best in damp areas. Its catkins provide nectar and pollen for bees.



**ASH**  
Once common, but at risk as ash dieback sweeps the country. Woodpeckers, owls and nuthatches nest in hollows.



Greater Spotted Woodpecker



Nuthatch



**BEECH**  
A monumental tree, which casts heavy shade. An important refuge for moths and butterflies.



Speckled Wood



**ELDER**  
Flowers provide nectar for insects; berries are eaten by birds and mammals.



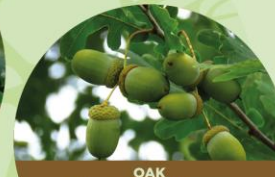
Little Egret



Robin



**HOLLY**  
Provides dense cover and good nesting sites for blackbirds and robins.



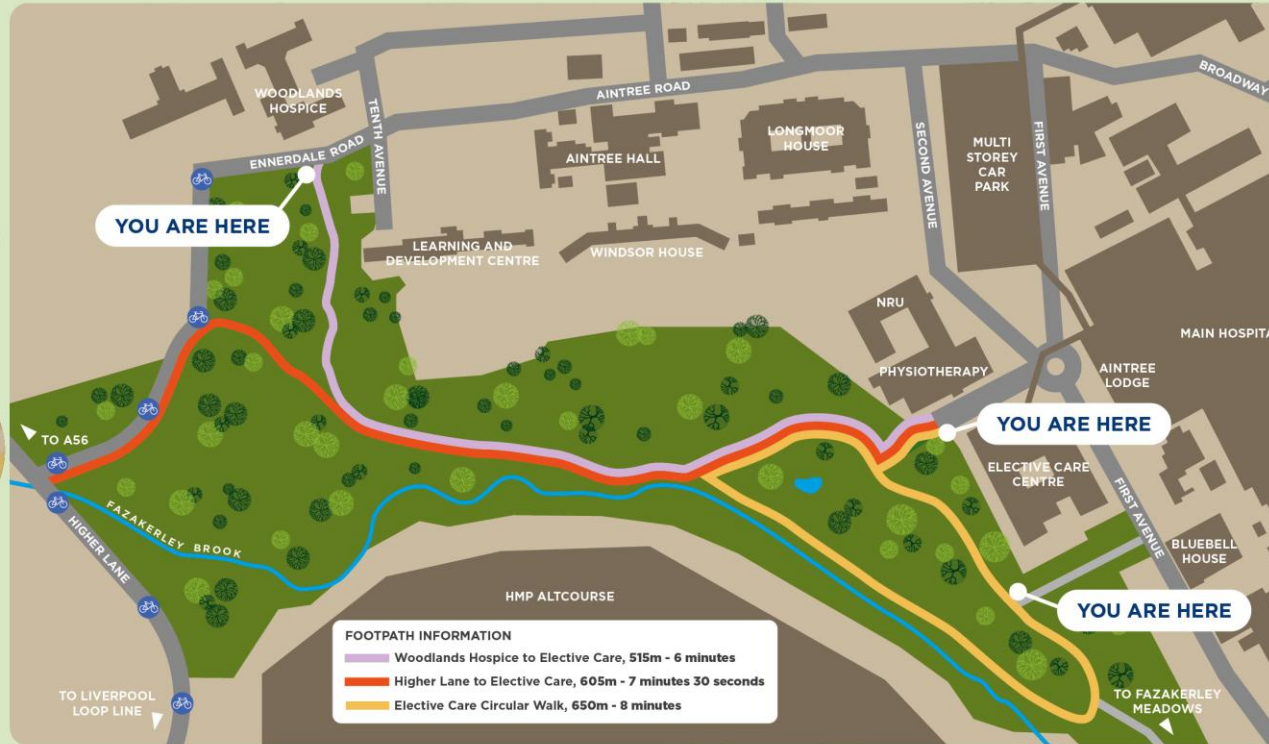
**OAK**  
Living up to 1000 years, home to a colossal 2300 species, providing vital spaces to eat, shelter and breed.



**SYCAMORE**  
Originally from southern Europe. It has colonised many woodlands, where it can out compete native trees.



**YEW**  
The longest lived of all native trees. The Fortingall Yew in Perthshire is over 2000 years.



**FOOTPATH INFORMATION**

- Woodlands Hospice to Elective Care, 515m - 6 minutes
- Higher Lane to Elective Care, 605m - 7 minutes 30 seconds
- Elective Care Circular Walk, 650m - 8 minutes



Trees improve air quality by removing harmful pollutants such as carbon dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide, whilst at the same time providing us with clean oxygen.

Spending time in nature, can help lower your resting heart rate, reduce blood pressure and relieve stress.



The Friends of Bluebell Woods are a group of dedicated volunteers who carry out regular woodland management tasks. If you would like to help care for the woods and improve your own health, get in touch sustainability@liverpoolft.nhs.uk



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