



Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust Green Futures Programme



Interim Evaluation Report February 2019



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Executive Summary

Project summary

In 2016, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT) were awarded funding by the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) for Green Futures, a five-year programme, as part of a wider programme, 'Our Bright Future.' 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 Field Studies Council (Malham Tarn). The programme began in February 2016 and will end in December 2020.

The overall aim of Green Futures is **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 is being delivered by four separate projects.

Green Guardians – This project targets young people, aged 11 - 24 years, experiencing disadvantage / deprivation who are not traditionally engaged with the environment and aims to connect them with the natural environment by providing inspiring, thought provoking experiences and practical skills through a range of different activity days.

Eco-Schools – Schools involved in this project set up a pupil-led Eco-Committee within school, undertake an environmental review, develop an action plan and deliver environmental activities within their school and / or local community.

Dales and Fells Trainees – An apprenticeship project aimed at employing young people, aged 16 - 24 years, in environmental conservation and management within the local area.

Young Rangers – Regular Task Days are organised throughout the year for groups of young people aged 11 -16 years, 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.

In addition to the four projects, the young people involved are encouraged to attend a **Youth Environment Forum**, and an annual two-day residential **Youth Environment Summit**. Young people are also able to access a **Youth Environmental Action Fund (YEAFF)**, which provides grants of up to £1000 to plan, organise and deliver environmental projects in their local area.

Project Evaluation

The evaluation of Green Futures utilises a supported self-evaluation model. Limited external support has been provided by Icarus to design the evaluation approach and draft summary reports. 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 is the responsibility of Green Futures and the individual projects to collect and collate their own data.

The Evaluation Findings

The Green Futures Programme is making good progress towards achieving its intended outputs and outcomes. There are a number of notable highlights from the Programme so far:

- Engaging more than 3000 young people in the different activities offered by Green Futures.
- Successfully completing 194 environmental enhancement projects, exceeding the output target, with two years remaining for the project.
- Young Rangers groups being oversubscribed for Task Days.
- Achievement of Silver Awards by two Eco-Schools.
- Success of five apprentices from the first intake securing employment in the rural sector.
- Development of relationships with local community groups / organisations and land owners enabling Green Futures to provide a wide range of different activities in different locations.
- Attracting applications to the Youth Environmental Action Fund from young people not directly associated with Green Futures.
- Successful and ongoing engagement of young people in the Youth Environment Forum and annual Youth Environment Summit.
- Many young people going on to initiate their own projects and making personal environmental behaviour changes.
- Some young people taking a leadership role in planning / running events and getting involved in the strategic management of YDMT, Green Futures and the overarching Our Bright Future Programme.

The following summarises the key findings from the evaluation across the four outputs and three outcome areas (young people, environment, communities).

Outputs

Output (OP)	Progress to date (January 2019)
OP1: Up to 4000 young people inspired through educational / skill-based activities which discover, explore and enhance the environment.	Target on track – 3131 young people taken part in activities so far.
OP2: 16 young people from rural backgrounds trained, employed and qualified in environmental conservation / management.	Target on track, but at risk - 6 young people completed their apprenticeship in July 2018. 10 new apprentices started their two-year apprenticeship in September 2018.
OP3: 15 community groups formed, and 40 environmental enhancement / awareness projects delivered.	Target likely to be exceeded – 13 community groups have been formed; 194 environmental enhancement projects and 13 awareness raising projects delivered.
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 on track, but at risk – 0 schools have achieved Green Flag Eco-Schools Status; 2 schools have achieved a Silver Award; 2 schools have achieved a Bronze Award.

Outcomes

Young People

Good progress has been made towards achieving the outcomes for young people. Connecting young people to the natural environment and developing their skills and knowledge is at the heart of Green Futures. The Green Guardians activity days, Young Rangers Task Days and the practical conservation work of the apprentices are all based on being outdoors in the local environment, while the Eco-Schools project, Youth Forum and Youth Environment Summit provide the space to explore global environmental issues as well as helping to improve the local environment. Young people have undertaken a wide range of different activities, developing skills as they undertake practical activities including: footpath construction, maintenance and repair; Himalayan Balsam bashing; woodland planting and maintenance; habitat creation and dry-stone walling. In addition to this, some young people, particularly the apprentices have successfully gained qualifications as a result of training completed on the Green Futures Programme.

The Youth Environment Forum and Youth Environment Summits have been particularly successful, with young people largely taking the lead for planning, organising and delivering the Youth Environment Summits in 2017 and 2018, evidence of the growing confidence of those young people and their willingness to take on more active leadership roles within the Green Futures Programme.

Environment

Significant progress has been made towards delivering practical environmental projects and some progress has been made on delivering activities which encourage sustainable living. A total of 194 environmental enhancement projects have been undertaken so far, including the creation of five new sites, and 13 awareness projects have also been completed or are ongoing. This is a significant achievement and already exceeds the target set at the start of Green Futures. Examples of work undertaken range in both scale and type of activity. Key to achieving this outcome is the significant commitment from the project team to develop and build relationships with local organisations and community groups, both to develop ideas for potential activities and to find suitable areas of land to use.

There is some evidence of young people making sustained changes to the way that they live. At the 2018 Youth Environment Summit, 89% (n = 28) of young people attending the event were able to provide examples of changes they had made in the last year. These included:

- Making their own deodorant
- Reducing plastics (reusable coffee cups / water bottles, avoiding plastic straws)
- Turning off lights
- Buying more second-hand clothing
- Composting and recycling
- Walking or taking public transport more often.

Young people also identified additional changes that they planned to make as a result of attending the 2018 Youth Environment Summit. Although it is too soon to establish whether these changes will be maintained in the longer term, it provides evidence that young people are being inspired to change their behaviours as a result of attending the summit and their involvement in Green Futures.

Communities

Some progress has been made towards achieving the outcomes for communities in terms of increasing social cohesion and improved wellbeing of young people. From the evidence provided, it is not possible to say how many young people overall have experienced an increase in social cohesion directly as a result of taking part in Green Futures, but there are examples that illustrate progress is being made. Many young people have commented on the fact that they have got to know people better and have enjoyed being with other young people who share similar interests. There is also evidence that that within Green Guardians, the activity days have provided opportunities for young people to build relationships within their group and with the support staff who attend with them in a more relaxed setting.

Relationships with local organisations and community groups have also been established and / or developed and positive feedback has been received from those adults working with young people on environmental projects within the local community. Funding from the Youth Environmental Action Fund (YEAF) has also helped to create 13 new community groups. It is an achievement that many of these groups were created solely for the purpose of applying for funding to undertake an environmental enhancement project and / or brought people from different local groups together for the first time to work on a project.

Assessing wellbeing has been, and remains, a challenge for the programme. This is mainly due to the lack of tracking information for individuals involved in Green Futures and some participants (particularly on Green Guardians) may only take part in a one-off activity, rather than regularly attending events. A wellbeing wheel survey was introduced in autumn 2018 and is being completed by apprentices and the Young Rangers groups. If used consistently and regularly, this will provide some data on any future changes in wellbeing, on an individual basis, for some of the young people involved in Green Futures. There is however strong anecdotal evidence from observations of project staff and feedback from young people and their group leaders, teachers or parents / carers that taking part in activities out in the natural environment and through wider Green Futures activities does have a positive impact on wellbeing.

There are some areas where further consideration is needed to enable the Green Futures Programme to fully demonstrate the impact that the different projects have had on young people, the environment and communities. These mainly relate to gathering robust evaluation data, particularly in relation to the Eco-Schools project and the tracking of individual young people in terms of changes in wellbeing, social cohesion and environmental attitudes and behaviours.

1. Introduction

1.1 About this report

This report summarises the findings of the interim 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 provides a summary of the programme's progress towards delivering its intended outputs and outcomes and is based on the period of February 2016 to December 2018.

The purpose of the 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 any areas for future development and / or opportunities.

1.2 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 Field Studies Council (FSC) at Malham Tarn. The programme began in February 2016 and will end in December 2020.

The overall aim of the Green Futures programme is **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 has 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 4000 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 consists of four individual projects.

Green Guardians – This project, delivered by YDMT, targets young people, aged 11 - 24 years), experiencing disadvantage / deprivation who are not traditionally engaged with the environment, and aims 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 and Lancashire.

Eco-Schools – The Eco-Schools project is being delivered by Craven Development Education Centre. The project seeks to replicate and adapt similar work that has taken place in primary schools to suit secondary schools in working towards Eco-Schools Green Flag¹ status. Schools involved in the project set up a pupil-led Eco-Committee within school, undertake an environmental review, develop an action plan and deliver environmental activities within their school and / or local community.

Dales and Fells Trainees – YDMT are delivering this apprenticeship project aimed at employing young people, aged 16 – 24 years, in environmental conservation and management. The apprenticeships last for two years and each apprentice is based with a local rural or environmental sector employer, receiving a range of different training, some of which is certificated and taking part in practical conservation work as part of their work placement.

Young Rangers – YDNPA are the lead delivery partner for this project. It extends 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 are 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 are often supported by apprentices who are part of the Dales and Fells Trainees project.

In addition to the four projects, the young people involved are also encouraged to attend a **Youth Environment Forum**, which meets at regular intervals and an annual **Youth Environment Summit**. The Youth Environment Summit is run by members of the Youth Environment Forum and is a two-day residential event. It is 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 are also able to access a **Youth Environmental Action Fund (YEAFF)**. This allows young people to apply for a grant of up to £1000 in order to plan, organise and deliver environmental projects in their local area.

1.3 The structure of this report

A summary of the evaluation methodology is outlined in Section Two of this report. Section Three reviews the progress of Green Futures across its four outputs and three outcome areas (young people, environment, communities), highlighting challenges, enabling factors and key achievements towards delivering the overall aim of the programme. The report ends with a section on conclusions.

¹ 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/howitworks/>

2. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation of Green Futures utilises a supported self-evaluation model. Limited external support has been provided by Icarus to design the evaluation approach and draft summary reports. 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 is the responsibility of Green Futures and the individual projects to collect and collate their own data.

This report is based on information from the following sources:

- Three Annual Reports provided to the Our Bright Futures Programme in January 2017, 2018 and 2019
- 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 February 2016 to December 2018
- A survey of the four Project Officers, undertaken in January 2019.

With the exception of the Project Officers' survey, no additional primary research was undertaken by Icarus for this report.

What is clear is that there are limitations to an evaluation approach of this type. 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. This impacts on this report in several ways: incomplete data collection or data coverage across some work areas; gaps in data where evaluation methods have proved difficult to implement and insufficient evidence to track the progress of individual participants.

3. Evaluation findings

This section summarises the progress that has been 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’ 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 as a whole.

3.1 Programme Outputs

3.1.1 Inspiring young people

Output 1: Up to 4000 young people inspired through educational / skill-based activities which discover, explore and enhance the environment.

Summary: Good progress has been made towards this target.

Output (OP)	Progress to date (December 2018)
OP1: Up to 4000 young people inspired through educational / skill-based activities which discover, explore and enhance the environment.	Target on track – 3131 young people taken part in activities so far.
Enabling Factors	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility of staff to work outside normal hours during evenings and weekends. Flexibility in the ‘offer’ made to groups for potential activities. 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 in 2018. Provision of 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 existing Young Ranger group run by YDNPA enabling more young people to be involved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial delay in starting the Green Guardians and Young Rangers projects delayed the involvement of some young people in Green Futures. Lack of capacity 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 affects attendance, leading to lower numbers at some Green Guardians events than planned for. Difficulty involving care leavers in activities due to lack of capacity of some care support staff to organise groups. Takes a significant amount of time 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 can prevent a young person from participating, if a chaperone cannot be provided, or limit the number of other participants able to take part in an activity.

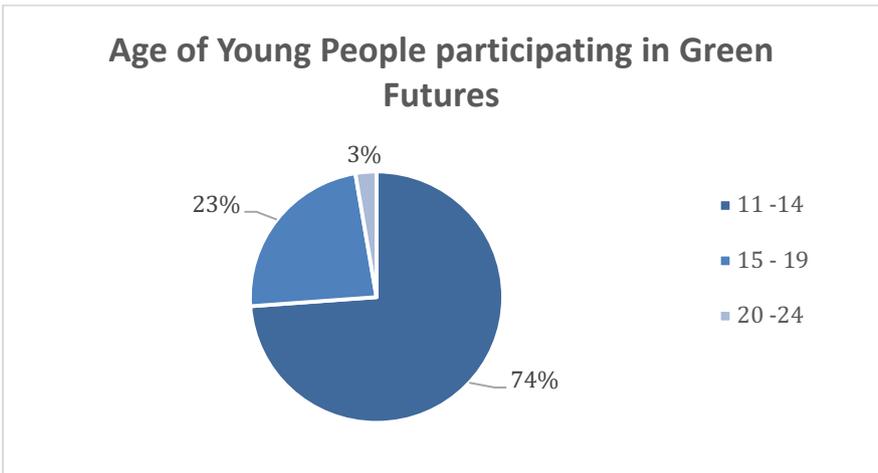
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse cold weather and snow in spring 2018 led to the cancellation of events or low attendance. • Large staff:young person ratios needed for at risk groups, limiting the number of young people that can be accommodated on mini buses to travel to / from activity days.
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A cumulative total of 3131 young people are recorded as having participated in activities by the end of December 2018, of which 421 young people are recorded as living within the 20% most deprived areas in England². Across Green Futures 1446 young people are considered to be disadvantaged – some, but not all of these individuals may experience more than one form of disadvantage or social deprivation. Examples of the types of disadvantage experienced by young people taking part in Green Futures are:

- Young carers
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- At risk of homelessness
- Roma
- Mental Health issues
- Not in Education, Employment or Training
- In alternative education provision (pupil referral units)
- Additional educational needs e.g. autistic spectrum or learning disabilities.

An additional 470 young people have also been provided with environmental activities / opportunities as a direct result of Green Futures. These activities were not delivered directly by the programme, but they would not have taken place without initial introductions being made at Green Futures events, such as the Eco-Schools Conference in 2018.

The majority of young people (74%) involved in Green Futures so far are aged 11 - 14.



² Index of Multiple Deprivation, last updated in 2015 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

Low numbers attending some Green Guardians events continues to be a challenge, as many of the young people the project is aimed at are vulnerable and lead chaotic lives, with the result that some may not turn up on the day of an event, thereby reducing the overall potential number of participants. Over 2017 and 2018, 19 Green Guardians events were cancelled either by the groups attending, or as a result of adverse weather. The project team report that if these events had taken place as planned, it would have brought an additional 216 vulnerable or disadvantaged young people into Green Futures.

The range of activities undertaken are discussed in more detail below (Section 3.2.2) but have included tree planting, Himalayan Balsam bashing, footpath construction, maintenance and restoration, tomb cleaning, walking activities, cleaning dormice boxes, river fly monitoring, willow bundling / spilling, archaeological investigations, litter picking, making natural cosmetics and bushcraft.

3.1.2 Training young people

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

Summary: Some progress has been made towards achieving this target.

Output (OP)	Progress to date (December 2018)
OP2: 16 young people from rural backgrounds trained, employed and qualified in environmental conservation / management.	Target on track, but at risk - 6 young people completed their apprenticeship in July 2018. 10 new apprentices started their two-year apprenticeship in September 2018.
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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial number of applications in 2017 was lower than planned – application deadline had to be extended. • 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.

The project is on track to achieve the target, subject to the full intake of 10 apprentices in the 2018/19 intake remaining for the full two-year apprenticeship, as part of the Dales and Fells Trainee Scheme. The project was 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 total, nine apprentices joined in September 2016, with an additional young person joining towards the end of the two-year period to complete his work placement as part of Green Futures. 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 of this, the project has provided additional training to the ten new apprentices who joined the project in 2018, as part of their initial induction week. Training included sessions on mental health and wellbeing (awareness raising, discussion and recognition, signposting to additional support and / or resources), financial management and behaviour in the workplace. The project reports that apprentices will be monitored more closely for early signs of potential mental health issues and more regular updates have been put in place to help minimise the impact of other issues. The new intake also includes a young person who had previously been involved in Green Futures via the Eco-Schools project. She went on to join the Youth Environment Forum, and the skills and confidence gained through her participation directly led to her successful application to become an apprentice in September 2018.

In addition to their college course, apprentices undertake a wide range of training, most of which is certificated. Further detail on skills development is provided in Section 3.2.1 – Outcomes for Young People and a list of employers who have offered a work placement to apprentices is in Appendix Three.

It is very positive that, of the initial intake, five of the apprentices (including the one who joined later in the scheme) have secured employment within the rural sector, whilst another has gone on to further study in a related subject.

Case Study – Isaac, 20

Isaac joined Green Futures as an apprentice with Cumbria Wildlife Trust (CWT) in 2016, having just taken his A Levels. His predicted grades were not good, and he had no interest in going to university, but had a passion for conservation and wildlife. Isaac really made the most of his apprenticeship. He took every opportunity offered to him: reserve maintenance; animal surveys; education work; drone filming, manning the Osprey viewing point and event management. He took courses in species identification, achieved his Intermediate Apprenticeship in Environmental Conservation and gained certificates in Chainsaw, All Terrain Vehicles, Pesticides and much more. In the later stages of his apprenticeship, he ran guided walks, gave wildlife talks and managed Waderfest, a weekend wading bird festival as well as writing newspaper and magazine articles.



Isaac was also a regular member of the Green Futures Youth Environment Forum and helped to organise the Youth Environment Summits for two years running, including delivering sessions. Towards the end of his apprenticeship Isaac successfully applied to the John Muir Trust for a job as Glenridding Common Ranger. His new role includes all the work that Isaac enjoys, from practical management of the area to developing education projects. He has also been asked to join the CWT volunteer management and policy review group, as he has experience both as a volunteer and managing volunteers, gained during his apprenticeship.

“I am sad to be leaving, but so grateful for everything CWT and YDMT have given me. The past two years have meant so much more than I can write in a little box. I will now always be an advocate for getting young people involved in the environment.”

3.1.3 Establishing community groups and delivering environmental projects

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

The target for the number of community groups is on track; the target has already been significantly exceeded in terms of the number of environmental enhancement / awareness projects delivered.

Output (OP)	Progress to date (December 2018)
OP3: 15 community groups formed, and 40 environmental enhancement / awareness projects delivered.	<i>Target likely to be exceeded</i> – 13 community groups have been formed; 194 environmental enhancement projects and 13 awareness raising projects delivered.
Enabling Factors	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of community groups to apply for funding from YEAF. • 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 some activity days in 2017 and 2018 due to low turnout or challenging weather conditions 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.

Since the project began, 13 community groups have been formed. The main contributor to the number of community groups formed is the availability of funding from the Youth Environmental Action Fund (YEAF). The groups established are a combination of Eco-School Committees that have been set up and groups that involve a number of young people / groups coming together for the first time.

In addition to this, there is also evidence of other groups being established to undertake environmental activity, following an initial activity with Green Futures. Examples include:

- Foundation UK: following attendance at an activity day, it created a walking group in 2017, enabling hostel residents to get out engaging with nature on a more regular basis.
- Willow Young Carers: following a Green Guardians activity day in 2016, Willow Young Carers set up their own local Green Guardians Group in 2017, enabling other young carers in the Leeds area to take part in environmental activities close to their home.

194 environmental enhancement projects have been delivered so far and are the key mechanism through which young people involved in Green Futures learn new skills and are encouraged to connect with, and learn about the environment, both locally and globally. A wide range of projects have been undertaken and are discussed in more detail in Section 3.2.2 – Outcomes for the Environment.

3.1.4 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: The Eco-Schools project has made good progress towards this target.

Output (OP)	Progress to date (December 2018)
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 on track, but at risk – 0 schools have achieved Green Flag Eco-Schools Status; 2 schools have achieved a Silver Award; 2 schools have 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 group in school. • Availability of YEAF 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. • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting and maintaining school involvement. • 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. • 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). • Lack of uptake on offer of ‘intensive’ support. • Keeping track of the number of young people involved in individual Eco-Committees.

One school (The Skipton Academy) has achieved a Bronze and Silver Award and Skipton Girls High School has achieved a Silver Award, having achieved its Bronze Award before getting involved with Green Futures. Five schools are currently being supported by the Eco-Schools Project Officer and, following the 2018 Eco-Schools Conference, organised by Settle College, a further seven schools have expressed an interest in joining the scheme. It is not known how many of these have now formally registered to become an Eco-School.

No schools have been awarded the Green Flag so far. Schools need to apply for a Green Flag within two years of achieving their Bronze and Silver Awards. There is a risk that changes in staff / workloads at the schools eligible to apply for their Green Flag will mean that they are unable to apply before their Silver / Bronze Awards 'expire'. This output will therefore need close monitoring over the next 12 months if it is to be achieved.



Tree planting at Settle College

3.2 Programme Outcomes

3.2.1 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: Good progress has been made towards achieving the outcomes for young people.

Awareness and connection to the local and global environment

“I didn’t care that much before [about the environment] – now if someone drops litter, I tell them to pick it up, or if someone is damaging a tree, I tell them to stop. I wouldn’t have done that before.”
(Participant, Youth Environment Forum)

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

Green Guardians: Of the young people attending one-off Green Guardians activities in 2017, 58% (n=115) of participants said in their end of event feedback forms that they thought they knew more about the environment than before attending the activity day. In 2018, this figure increased to 83% (n=132).

“Extremely enjoyable, worthwhile, extremely peaceful, learnt a lot. It felt good to save trees.”
(Participant, Tree Maintenance Activity Day)



Group from Foundation UK on the summit of Ingleborough, Yorkshire Dales



Local Scouts Group rating their experience out of 5, of looking after trees, after carrying out some woodland maintenance

Young Rangers: It is significant that in 2018 the Young Rangers Task Days were routinely oversubscribed. This is an excellent result and demonstrates both a connection to the local environment and a willingness to take practical action. 87% (n= 97) of young people attending Young Rangers events on a regular basis in 2018 said that they felt the Task Day had been worthwhile.

Eco-schools: Teachers from the two schools that returned surveys in 2017 both ‘strongly agreed’ that children involved in their school’s Eco-Committee are taking more of an interest in their local environment (recycling, gardening, tree planting, air quality, plastics, water use) and in global issues (plastics, pollution, palm oil). It is unfortunate that more schools have not completed evaluation forms to provide a better picture of progress overall.

Youth Environment Forum and Youth Environment Summit: Across the Youth Environment Forum and annual Youth Environment Summits, there is some evidence that, in both 2017 and 2018, certain **global environmental issues have resonated with young people** attending the events. These are: litter (plastics in particular); the impact of palm oil production on the environment; food waste and recycling.

“I don’t care if people think I’m sad. If one last bit of plastic [doesn’t] make it into the rivers and sea, that’s a good thing.”

(Participant, Youth Environment Summit)

Prior to the Youth Environment Summit in 2017, 38% (n = 21) of participants stated that they cared ‘a lot’ about environmental issues and 29% stated that they felt able to improve / look after the environment ‘a lot.’ These figures changed to 90% and 67% respectively after the event.

In 2017 and 2018, it is a significant achievement that the Youth Environment Summits were planned, developed and largely led entirely by young people from the Youth Environment Forum. In 2018, the Summit included a range of different activities, many of which were highlighted by participants as one of their ‘best bits’ of the summit weekend. In evaluation forms completed at the end of the summit, 46% (n = 28) of young people said that they cared ‘a lot’ about environmental issues before

attending the summit. This figure increased to 68% as a result of attending the summit. It is not known whether those who provided feedback in 2017 and 2018 had attended both events, but the evidence does suggest an overall increase in the importance of environmental issues to young people attending these events.



Participants at the 2018 Youth Environment Summit

Empowered through skills and knowledge

“It’s been an incredible year! I wouldn’t have thought that at my age (20) I’d be running events that were attended by hundreds of people, but I did that at Beached Art in St. Bees back in July. I’ve also been interviewed on the radio about the dangers of beach litter and done a TV feature about natural flood management and am really enjoying engaging with MPs about the EU Withdrawal Bill.”

(Dales and Fell Trainee)

Skills development is a key component of most of the outdoor activities that young people experience through their involvement with Green Futures. During the course of the project so far, young people have had the opportunity to learn a wide range of different skills including:

- Footpath construction, maintenance and restoration
- Tackling invasive plant species
- Drystone walling
- Tree and wildflower planting
- Tomb cleaning
- Dormice box cleaning
- Woodland maintenance and management.

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**. The table below shows the cumulative number of certificated training achieved by young people as a result of their involvement with Green Futures.

Name of qualification / award	Cumulative number of young people gaining the qualification
Environmental Conservation Level 2	5
John Muir Award - Discover	65
John Muir Award - Conserver	1
Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award	4
A-Level Environmental Studies	2
Trailer Licence	1
Pesticides PA1	5
Pesticides PA2	2

Pesticides PA6	5
Brushcutter	3
Chainsaw	3
All-Terrain Vehicles	4
Driving	1
Risk Assessment	2
Fixed Based Machinery	1
Marketing	1
Hedgerow Training	1
Outdoor First Aid	19
Botanical Drawing	1
Rolo H&S	2
Fire Awareness	2

There is also evidence that young people participating in the project have been given opportunities to develop **softer skills** including project planning, communications, leadership, time /self-management and presentation skills.

“[They have gained skills in] teamwork, organisation, presentation of ideas (written and spoken), working to deadlines, working on something meaningful, leadership.”

(Teacher, Skipton Girls High School)

“Our Youth Forum continue to astound us with their commitment and dedication to helping other young people learn about the environment and really making a difference to the environment. They continue to increase in confidence, building new networks and friendships along the way.”

(Green Futures Project Team)

There are many examples across Green Futures of young people taking the knowledge they have acquired from their involvement in Green Futures and **feeling empowered** to apply it elsewhere.

- Following work with their local Rivers Trust, members of Young Rangers have carried out litter picks within their school grounds and / or around their local villages. Some members have also organised their own Himalayan Balsam bashing events.
- After litter picking in their school’s wildlife garden, a young person wrote to the Parish Council explaining the issue of dog poo bags being thrown into the school grounds by members of the public and asking if posters could be displayed in the local area, which the Parish Council supported and provided the posters for display.
- One Eco-Committee member asked their local Friends of the Earth group to install a Clean Air Monitor in the road outside their school and, following receipt of the first set of data in March 2018, has developed an advocacy campaign on improving air quality.
- Three Young Rangers have asked to set up their own Young Rangers Task Days in 2019.
- One Young Ranger who also attends the Youth Environment Forum has taken the lead on setting up a new Eco-Committee in her school.
- Following attendance at a dry-stone walling Task Day, one young person went on to do some further dry-stone walling in his local area.
- Settle College Eco-Committee planned, organised and delivered an Eco-Schools Conference in 2018 for local schools – Plastic Pollution: Join the resistance.



Eco-Schools Conference 2018: Examples of changes young people said they would make after attending the conference: not using plastic straws or other single use plastics, buying reusable water bottles, using a compost bin, avoiding cling film, recycling more and growing their own vegetables.

In addition to creating positive environmental change, there is evidence that some young people have also developed the confidence to use their knowledge and skills to take on leadership roles and act as mentors / role models within their community:

- Young people are members of the Green Futures Steering Group, taking on an active role in the management and guidance of the Green Futures Programme (See Case Studies below).
- Three members of a Young Carers Group taking part in Green Guardians in 2017 returned as Young Leaders for four events in 2018, choosing the activities and providing support on the day.
- Apprentices have taken the lead on organising and running events (Beached Art, Waderfest) as well as campaigning and liaising with local MPs and politicians.
- Students involved in the Eco-Schools project have taken the lead on designing and running a Schools' Eco-Conference in 2017 (Skipton Girls High School) and 2018 (Settle College).
- Three apprentices are developing sessions for delivery to schools and youth groups in 2019, as part of the wider programme delivery for Green Futures.
- One apprentice is involved with training and providing support as a mentor to a new apprentice who has started with the same employer.
- YDMT's Outreach Trainee is taking the lead on organising the Youth Environment Forum meetings for 2019.
- Three Young Rangers are planning Task Days for their groups in spring 2019.
- Young people have taken the lead in planning, organising and delivering the Youth Environment Summits in both 2017 and 2018.



Young people running activities at a community event



Inspired to take action: After doing some dry-stone walling on a Young Ranger Task Day, one young person repaired a wall in his local area.

Case Study – Ellie, 25

Ellie has been involved in Green Futures right from the start. Having graduated from University with a MSc in Biodiversity and Conservation, she attended a youth consultation evening, as part of the project's development phase. Through getting to know YDMT, she became a part-time graduate trainee with the Trust's fundraising team, while also working for a local conservation charity, and became a youth representative on the Green Futures Steering Group.



Nine months into her traineeship, she was offered a full-time role with her other employer, but has remained involved with Green Futures taking part in the interview panel for the Green Guardians Project Officer, helping to plan and run the first Youth Environment Summit in 2016 and working with members of the Youth Environment Forum in 2017 to help them plan and run the 2017 Summit, including running their own workshops. As part of this she developed her own sessions on making natural cosmetics and thoughtful consumerism, both of which impacted on young people attending the sessions (See Rosemary's case study below). Ellie also reviews and comments on applications to the Youth Environmental Action Fund and has agreed to mentor young people who have recently joined the Steering Group.

As a 25-year old, Ellie has had to 'retire' from Green Futures, but her commitment remains. After contacting YDMT's Chair of Trustees to see if she could have any involvement in the strategic direction of the Trust, Ellie is now the first young person to become a Trustee of YDMT and is also the Trust's representative on the Green Futures Steering Group.

"The opportunities she has had have not only improved her experience, knowledge and skill set, but they have greatly improved her confidence, have given her a greater understanding of how she can make a positive difference to the environment, both locally and globally, and have given her belief that she can make a difference." Programme Manager.

Case Study – Rosemary, 16

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. She went on to organise and steer the Youth Environment Summit in 2017, talking to other young people about the Young Rangers and running a workshop with another Youth Environment Forum member about being a thoughtful consumer. 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.

Rosemary has become part of Our Bright Future's National Youth Forum and is hoping to speak to MPs in 2019 at a parliamentary event, organised by the Our Bright Future Programme. Her skills, knowledge and confidence gained through Green Futures has helped her develop additional personal skills, influencing and inspiring others, and her journey demonstrates that the aims and objectives of Green Futures are working.

Enablers	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of certificated training as part of the Dales and Fells Trainees Project. • College training for apprentices is focussed on providing skills and knowledge in environment management / conservation and raising awareness of environmental issues. • Availability of suitable experts to help teach skills to young people at events. • Tasks give young people a sense that they can make a difference. • Delivery model for Eco-Schools encouraging peer to peer influence to make positive environmental changes. • Youth Environment Forum and Youth Environment Summits introducing young people to wider issues linked to sustainable living. • Availability of the Youth Environmental Action Fund to support practical action. • 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). • Willingness of staff to provide off-curriculum days to non-participating schools has helped to raise 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. 	<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 can be offered. • Changes in staff or staff responsibilities slowing or stopping Eco-Committees. Inputs / support from the project team are not always followed up on. • Majority of projects are 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 as a result of time constraints or dealing with challenging behaviour in an individual group. • Can be difficult to integrate sustainability / environmental issues into the wider teaching within schools, to include the whole school cohort rather than just the Eco-Committee members.

3.2.2 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 has been made towards delivering practical environmental projects and some progress has been made on delivering activities which encourage sustainable living.

More practical environmental action projects

“It was great to work in a friendly team to achieve repairing a path and steps for others to use and enjoy in the woods for years to come.”

(Participant, Footpath Repair Activity)

A total of 194 environmental enhancement projects have been undertaken so far, including the creation of five new sites and 13 awareness projects have also been completed or are ongoing. This is a significant achievement and already exceeds the target set at the start of Green Futures. Examples of work undertaken range in both scale and type of activity.

Year	Project examples
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Woodland management work in established and newly planted woodlands - Coppicing woodlands - Repairing and resurfacing footpaths / Rights of Way - Creating insect houses and bug hotels - Removal of invasive species - Planting wildflowers in existing hay meadows and other habitats - Panting of trees to create new native woodlands - Planting of native woodland plants to create a woodland floor in an existing tree planting.
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 150 dormice boxes cleaned as part of the YDNPA dormice monitoring project - 300 metres of footpath repaired in Freeholders wood, Aysgarth - 20 metres of drystone wall repaired with Friends of the Lake District - Maintaining newly planted woodland (beating up, pruning and straightening saplings) - Improvement of more than 23,000m² of local farmland - Make fat seed cakes for birds to eat - Himalayan Balsam bashing adjacent to the River Lune - Opening of lost paths and removal of Cherry Laurel (an invasive species) on National Trust land in Upper Wharfedale - Planting of 100 trees with Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust as part of a natural flood management scheme - Planting 100 trees to help restore ancient woodland in West Burton - Litter picking in schools and villages.



Dry-stone walling Task Day, Young Rangers



Tree planting activity, Green Guardians



Building an otter holt

Key to delivering the intended 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, 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.

“In order for young people to learn you need enthusiastic experts and land to use. Finding these people who are willing to work with groups can be difficult and time consuming, but very much worth it in the end.”

(Green Futures Project team)

Encouraging Sustainable Living

“I really enjoyed the feeling of optimism that the whole [Summit] weekend had. Since the summit, I’ve changed my toothpaste brand to a more environmentally friendly one and have done further research into consumer products. The summits always give me more drive and encouragement that there is a point in all that we do for the environment.”

(Participant, Youth Environment Summit)

During 2018, there has been **continued interest from young people in submitting applications to the Youth Environmental Action Fund** to run their own projects, demonstrating the willingness and enthusiasm of young people to take environmental action within their school or local community. Many of these projects involve practical activities intended to encourage living in a more sustainable manner e.g. By reducing waste, avoiding plastics, reducing water / electricity consumption. In both 2017 and 2018, applications were also received from young people who are not directly involved in Green Futures or the Our Bright Future Programme, demonstrating a **wider positive impact of Green Futures and increased awareness of the Youth Environmental Action Fund** as a potential source of project funding that young people can access.

Appendix Four includes a summary of the 13 projects funded via the YEAF. As an example, one application was submitted by a school taking part in the Eco-Schools project and has led to an estimated reduction in waste of 1000 litres per week. The Eco-Committee is now looking at ways to reduce water and the use of plastics within school and applying for other funding to enable this to happen.

“I put the general waste bins out for collection earlier this morning and only two of them were full. There are usually at least three, or sometimes four of them full. I would estimate we have recycled 1000 litres more than we previously have – not a bad start!”

(Site staff, Skipton Academy)

Another example of young people taking action is evidenced by a young person who left the 2018 Youth Environment Summit so enthused that she has applied to YDMT for grant funding to run a festival for the general public to educate them on a range of environmental issues including palm oil and how to make natural cosmetics.

There is **some evidence of young people making sustained changes to the way that they live**. At the 2018 Youth Environment Summit, 89% (n = 28) of young people attending the event were able to provide examples of changes they had made in the last year. These included:

- Making their own deodorant
- Reducing plastics (reusable coffee cups / water bottles, avoiding plastic straws)
- Turning off lights
- Buying more second-hand clothing
- Composting and recycling
- Walking or taking public transport more often.

When asked about what they would do differently after the 2018 Youth Environment Summit, 46% (n=28) provided examples. Although it is too soon to establish whether these changes will be maintained in the longer term, it provides evidence that young people are being inspired to change their behaviours as a result of attending the summit. Examples included:

- Reducing or avoiding palm oil
- Avoiding plastics
- Reducing water consumption by taking shorter showers and / or only washing when there were enough clothes for a full load
- Having a vegan meal once a week
- Recycling more
- Cycling more.

Enablers	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the Green Futures activities take place outside and are 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 to help identify land and potential activities. • Youth Environment Forum and Youth Environment Summits introducing young people to wider issues linked to sustainable living. • Availability of the Youth Environmental Action Fund to support practical action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time available on activity days (Green Guardians) for practical conservation work is often limited, restricting the amount of work that can be done. • Availability of partners / community groups willing to work weekends or evenings can make it harder to develop some 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 can prevent work happening. 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. • 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, alongside other activities such as walking, farm visits or bushcraft.

3.2.3 Outcomes for Communities

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

Summary: Some progress has been made towards achieving this outcome.

“I feel it has helped me find people with the same interests as me and has helped me to follow my dreams and engaged me more in the things I love.”

(Eco-Committee member)

From the evidence provided, it is not possible to say how many young people overall have experienced an increase in social cohesion as a result of taking part in Green Futures however the following examples illustrate some measure of the progress being made.

Within **Young Rangers**, 64% (n=97) said they felt that they had **got to know people better** during the Task Days they had taken part in.

“This is a great opportunity to learn new skills and meet new people. It is fun and helps you understand the natural world. I would definitely recommend coming.”

“It helps the environment, whilst having fun and meeting new people. New skills are learnt, whilst others are developed.”

(Participants, Young Rangers)

Within **Green Guardians**, the 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.

“The events I run offer young people [the chance] to socialise and interact with each other in a different way and also with their staff. I find that young people’s attitudes to socialising and communicating can be very different once they’re outside. They get to know each other better and build relations and trust with the staff that come with them – they see a different side through having these shared experiences than they might do at home or school.”

(Green Futures Project team)

The **Youth Environment Forum and annual Youth Environment Summit** both provide the potential for building social cohesion, as many young people attend both events. 29 young people attended the Youth Environment Summit in October 2018 and, in feedback collected at the end of the summit, 71% of those that gave feedback (n = 28) said that they had **made new friends and would be keeping in touch** with the young people they had met. This is similar to the 2017 Summit, in which 65% (n=23) gave the same response. Young people have reported that they have set up their own social media groups to enable them to keep in touch with one after following Green Futures events and activities.

Some young people have also commented on the enjoyment of spending time with other people who also share an interest in the environment.

“I have made friends and connections.”

“I enjoyed meeting new people and being around other people with [the] same interests.”

“It’s a really good feeling that you’re not on your own caring about this stuff.”

(Participants, Youth Environment Forum)

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. In some cases, these relationships have continued to build. Following an initial Task Day on which West Young Rangers helped Sedbergh Community Orchard tidy up a bug hotel, they were invited to attend the annual Apple Day in 2018 and run a children’s craft corner. This was successful, resulting in a larger number of young people attending the event. The Community Orchard have invited them back in 2019 and have also been working with a local primary school to rebuild the Orchard’s bug hotel, widening and strengthening links within the local community.

Building links with local community groups takes a significant amount of project staff time, which should not be under-estimated, but developing these relationships is essential to being able to provide the range of activities that young people can experience through Green Futures and also provides wider community benefit as a result of the work that is done on a particular Activity or Task Day.

“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)

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 helps to build links and brings wider community benefits. • Some apprentices work with voluntary groups, schools and the Young Rangers, helping to increase connections. • Opportunities for increased cohesion are provided by young people working with peers who share an interest in the environment (Eco-Schools, Young Rangers, Youth Environment Forum, Youth Environment Summit). • Local residents appreciating and thanking young people for the work they have done. • Two-day annual Youth Environment Summit, regular Youth Environment Forum meetings and Young Rangers Task Days provide opportunities for young people to connect and develop networks / friendships over a longer period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been difficult to get the wider school involved in some of work led by schools’ Eco-Committees. • Some participants only take part in Green Futures on a one-off basis (Green Guardians) limiting the potential for increased cohesion.

Outcome 3.2: Improved health and well-being through participation

Summary: Some progress has been made towards achieving this outcome.

*“The Youth Forum has impacted my happiness and wellbeing because I have made more friends.”
(Youth Environment Forum Participant)*

Assessing wellbeing has been, and remains, a challenge for the project. This is mainly due to the lack of tracking information for individuals involved in Green Futures and some participants (particularly on Green Guardians) may only take part in a one-off activity, rather than regularly attending events. A wellbeing wheel survey was introduced in autumn 2018 and is being completed by apprentices and the Young Rangers Groups. If used consistently and regularly, this will provide some data on any future changes in wellbeing on an individual basis, for some of the young people involved in Green Futures.

There is anecdotal evidence from observations of project staff and feedback from young people and their group leaders, teachers or parents / carers that **taking part in activities out in the natural environment does have a positive impact on wellbeing.**

“It’s so good to get them out and doing stuff like this [tree maintenance]. M suffers really badly with social anxiety so hasn’t left his room to go anywhere since the last trip. This is really good for his confidence.”

(Group leader of Green Guardians participant)

“I learnt some new species of animals. I met new people which was good as I don’t get to make many real-life friends.”

(Participant, Green Guardians)

*“Therapeutic benefit to young people – just from being here and interacting with the animals.”
(Staff member, Farm visit / dry stone walling activity)*

In 2018, baseline and follow up surveys were completed with three **Green Guardians** groups who met regularly throughout the year. All three groups recorded an **increase in happiness** from before getting involved in the project and after taking part. This is illustrated by one group (SELFA) in which 61.5% (n=13) scored 4 or 5 out of 5 (1 = not a lot; 5 = a lot) for how happy they were before they got involved and 83.3% (n = 6) scored 4 or 5 for happiness at a follow-on event. While it is not known if all six participants at the follow-on event had attended the earlier event, this is still a positive response.

Special Autism Services, Leeds and Bradford Young Carers have both attended multiple sessions of Green Guardians activity days. When asked about how being outdoors made them feel, participants mentioned that that it made them feel good, more relaxed, liberated, refreshed.

*“I liked being out in nature all day. It felt really good to be out in the woods.”
(Bushcraft participant)*

*“More relaxed and calm places feel like they help my mood.”
(Activity participant)*

There is no direct evidence from the limited amount of Eco-Schools evaluation data that this particular project has impacted participant wellbeing. However, for some participants, confidence and knowledge of environmental issues has increased through their involvement with a school’s Eco-Committee. This, together with working on environmental projects, including working with local community groups, is likely to support positive wellbeing and a sense of belonging for those participants.

Feedback from the young people involved in the Youth Environment Forum and annual Youth Environment Summit also provides **some evidence of improved wellbeing**. Participants refer to making friends and the sense of happiness that has provided or commented on **feeling better as a result of being around friends, or outside**.

“Being in the environment makes me feel happier.”

“If anyone had told me the first time I came here that I’d be standing up in front of you all talking, I would have run out of the room and cried (in fact I did cry the first time I came here!) Being here really helps with your confidence as everyone’s just so nice and friendly and they listen.”

(Youth Environment Forum Participants)

“It’s changed his life coming here, it really has. Yes, I think it is [the acceptance], it’s not authoritarian at all – he really struggles with that at school.”

(Service Manager, Willow Young Carers)

There are also **some examples illustrating improvements in wellbeing beyond the immediate group of young people involved in Green Futures**. One employer of a Dales and Fells Trainee in the first intake (2016 – 2018) has since taken on an intern and plans to employ and involve many more young people in their organisation, commenting:

“Since having trainees, several of the long term, older staff who had become quite negative and obstructive have become cheerful, happy, smiling employees. I myself now enjoy work again more.”

Enablers	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction course for 2018 apprentices includes sessions on mental health and wellbeing as well as closer monitoring of wellbeing over the two-year placement. • Activities offer the chance for young people to work / meet other young people with the same shared interest in the environment, supporting wellbeing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of evaluation data to monitor individual changes in 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 the majority of contact is with staff rather than pupils.

4. Conclusions

Overall the project is making good progress towards delivering its intended outputs and outcomes at this interim stage.

Key highlights:

- Engaging more than 3000 young people in the different activities offered by Green Futures.
- Successfully completing 194 environmental enhancement projects, exceeding the output target, with two years remaining for the project.
- Young Rangers groups being oversubscribed for Task Days.
- Achievement of Silver Awards by two Eco-Schools.
- Success of five apprentices from the first intake securing employment in the rural sector and a further one entering higher education.
- Development of relationships with local community groups / organisations and land owners enabling Green Futures to provide a wide range of different activities in different locations.
- Attracting applications to the Youth Environmental Action Fund from young people not directly associated with Green Futures.
- Successful and ongoing engagement of young people in the Youth Environment Forum and annual Youth Environment Summit.
- Many young people going on to initiate their own projects and making personal environmental behaviour changes.
- Some young people taking a leadership role in planning / running events and getting involved in the strategic management of YDMT, Green Futures and the overarching Our Bright Future Programme.

There are some areas that need further consideration for Green Futures to fully demonstrate the impact it has had on young people, the environment and local communities by the end of the programme, in 2020.

Evaluation Evidence

There are still challenges and gaps in the ability of some projects to track progress. This primarily relates to obtaining survey data from schools involved in the Eco-Schools project. Projects are asked to sign a contract, which includes a requirement to do an annual survey, but despite this, and efforts of the Project Officer, the response is very poor. It would be worth considering asking senior staff for their views on the best way of doing the surveys in their particular school, as part of initial discussions on joining the project. Alternative approaches could include: using form time for staff to survey pupils or pupils undertaking surveys of peers while waiting for lunch.

Tracking individual changes in wellbeing and being able to evidence that any improvements are due to a young person's involvement in Green Futures has been, and remains, a challenge. The introduction, in autumn 2018, of the wellbeing wheel to assess the wellbeing of young people who are involved with Green Futures on a regular basis will help provide some evidence, particularly for apprentices and some Young Rangers who can be tracked on an individual basis. It would also be

beneficial to consider interviewing some young people towards the end of the project who have been involved with Green Futures for the majority of the project's delivery stage to explore this area in more detail.

Profile of beneficiaries

About half of the young people involved in Green Futures are not classed as being disadvantaged. The targeting of young people experiencing disadvantage is primarily relevant to the Green Guardians project. It is worth considering if this proportion matches expectations for the profile of young people involved in Green Futures as a whole, or whether additional work is needed to encourage more young people experiencing disadvantage to take part.

"The special thing about Green Futures, you get to know people and grow in confidence and it's a really lovely environment."

(Participant, Young Rangers)

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	Yong 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 - 2020)
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

Appendix Four – Youth Environmental Action Fund Projects

Name of project / group	Date awarded	Nature of project
Our Eco School	20/04/2017	Installation of four hoop bike rack to help the school to deliver a sustainable transport campaign.
Settlebeck Wildlife Gardening Club	24/05/2017	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.
Wildlife Regeneration and Restoration	13/07/2017	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.
Plastics Recycling	13/07/2017	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	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.
16 + Waste Committee	08/03/2018	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.
QKS Biodiversity Project	03/05/2018	To cover the costs of plant seeds and materials to create a wetland, scythe and a bench in order to develop an area of the school grounds for biodiversity.
Peggy's Garden and Grown Project	12/07/2018	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 KC Green Spaces	12/07/2018	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.
Canalside Garden	12/07/2018	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.
Fish Steps	03/10/2018	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.
Polluted People	03/10/2018	To support development and delivery of "Polluted People" dance piece and associated educational materials.
Eco Event	19/12/2018	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.