

# Connecting People with Nature at Cannock Chase

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# Content

- What is Nature Connectedness?
- What are Sociocultural barriers to nature
- Examples of National landscapes engaging diverse communities



Think about a moment in nature  
that resonated with you

# Nature Connection



Our sense of relationship with the natural world

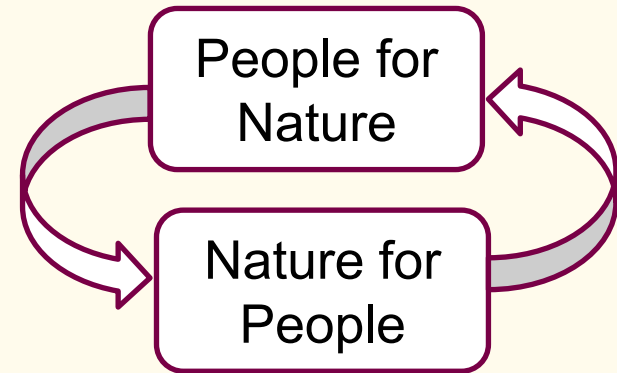
Internationally recognised psychological construct

Importance: benefits to people and to nature

## The five pathways to nature connection



# What is Doorstep to Landscape?



- Diverse communities
- High deprivation
- Limited access to nature
- Holistic approach
- Reducing barriers to nature

A stylized background illustration of a park scene. It includes a large tree with a thick brown trunk and a full, rounded green canopy. To the left, a grey lamppost stands on a green grassy area. In the foreground, a wooden bench is partially visible. A grey car is parked to the right of the bench. A bright yellow sun is partially visible behind the tree on the left, casting a long, soft yellow glow across the scene.

# **Findings and Recommendations**



# Past Experiences

Unfamiliarity = Uncertainty

More likely to access nature

Less likely to access nature

Perceptions and relationships

## Recommendations

- Relationships with nature and levels of confidence can be improved through positive experiences
- A **steppingstone** approach: encourage involvement in activities built around increasing confidence levels in nature



# Purpose

Many participants felt they needed a specific reason to visit green spaces.

## Recommendations

- Increase frequency of event by working
- Design regular activities for different ages, with inclusion and varying confidence levels in mind
- Work with community groups that respect and encourage diversity





# Wider feelings of Inclusion in local communities



Feeling safe and welcomed in the community is crucial for confidence in using public spaces, including green areas

## Recommendations

- Strategic work with inclusion-focused organisations to build safe, welcoming green space culture
- Initial focus of inside nature (e.g. windowsill growing) as a stepping stone to the outdoors



# Being a good partner

Working with under-represented communities to make our landscapes more inclusive and welcoming places





# Putting Down Routes

## Kent Downs National Landscape

- Encourage new audiences from under-represented communities
- Upgrading and enhancing the trail so it is more accessible to more people



# In practice

- Working with partners Black Girls Hike CIC and Wild with Wheels
- Organised walks, ambassadors, free training for local businesses on EDI, strong communications



# Solidarity in bad times...



## Kent Downs National Landscape

668 followers

3w •



Standing together for inclusive outdoor spaces

We stand in support of our partners, [Black Girls Hike UK C.I.C](#) (BGH), who recently experienced intimidation and abuse while attending one of our Putting Down Routes Project events. This behaviour is unacceptable. Everyone should feel safe, welcome, and free to enjoy the outdoors without fear.

The outdoors belongs to us all, no matter who we are. At Kent Downs National Landscape, we are committed to creating thriving, inclusive landscapes where everyone feels welcome, and they belong. Our mission is to conserve and enhance the beauty of these landscapes while making sure they are accessible to all. The experience of BGH does not reflect the values we uphold, and we are determined to play our part in making change happen.



**Kent Downs**  
National  
Landscape



# Coast Path Connectors

## South West Coast Path National Trail

- To recruit and train new volunteers
- Get new working relationships with partner organisations
- Reduce the barriers in walking and connection with nature and heritage
- And Improvements in wellbeing and confidence



# In practice

- 810 walks
- 30 partner organisations
- Over 5950 participants
- 965 Participants referred by Health Care professionals
- 50 Volunteer Community Rangers
- 4100 Hours volunteer time





# Coast Path Connectors' Hub Areas



## Haroon Mota – Muslim Hikers

“This weekend, we hiked the stunning Mumbles and Gower coastline [...] a route we were first introduced to through a meaningful partnership with the Wales Coast Path back in 2023.

That initial collaboration opened a door.

It didn't just show us a new landscape, it gave us the **confidence, knowledge, and access to return on our own terms**. Two years later, we came back independently [...] That's the legacy of thoughtful, inclusive partnerships.

Because it's not just about bringing people into these spaces, **it's about empowering communities to feel like they belong there. To feel visible, welcomed, and equipped to return"**



# What makes it work?

## Lessons learnt from delivery

1. Work **with** your partners be an active listener
2. Staff and volunteers are essential points of connection. Value skills in community engagement, communication and 'people' people
3. Aim is to build confidence and independence which requires letting go!
4. Group walks and activities will **always** be important - use this to send your message to love Cannock Chase
5. Have big ambitions and the courage to stand by your values "everyone to enjoy"

Manager of Walsall Healthy Spaces Team at Walsall Council	Jaki Brunton-Douglas
Walsall Together	Helen Billings
Aaina Community Hub (Asian women's group)	Aisha Khan
Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust	Various contacts
MindKind (mental health support charity)	Nike Morris
Reach For a Star CIC (wellbeing support charity)	Sylwia Juranek
Caldmore Community Garden	Anna Webster
Mettaminds CIC (wellbeing support charity)	Amrit Singh
Supported Learning Team at Walsall College	Tanya Lewis
Manor Farm Community Association	Gayle Johnston
Taste 4 Life (healthy food charity)	Giovanni Ranallo
OneWalsall (partnership and VCFSE support)	Sharon Martin
WorkWell programme	Liz Whitehouse
BeWell Walsall	Melissa Hutchinson
Dorothy Pattison Hospital (Occ Therapist team)	Natalie Pickering
Armed Forces community building – Walsall Council	Irene Ramdehal
Loneliness Vocational Specialist – Lets Talk – Walsall NHS	Ruby-Jane Jarvis
Bloxwich Community Partnership	Georgia Cooksey
Groundwork West Mids	Jo Elward
Together Active (active environments)	Jackie Brennan
Together Active (Development lead – health & wellbeing) <a href="http://www.gov.uk/natural-england">www.gov.uk/natural-england</a>	Katy Warren
Refugee & Migrant Centre	Kelly Leung

The logo for Natural England, featuring a solid green square. The words "NATURAL" and "ENGLAND" are written in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, stacked vertically in the bottom right corner of the square.

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