



Environmental
Projects In Kirklees

For climate, for nature,
for you



2024-5 EPIKS Annual Report

Introduction

2024 was an exciting year for EPIKS, consolidating and expanding our work on promoting and improving green spaces and habitats and stepping up a gear in our work around active travel. At a time of increasing concern about climate and nature, we concentrated on doing what we can locally, to encourage walking, wheeling and cycling and boosting nature and greenspaces.

We organised “try an e-bike” activities at a range of venues and events across Kirklees. We started planning for three Active Travel Hubs within these areas, with hubs now up and running in Holme Valley, Batley and the Spen Valley and Huddersfield. The Walk Wheel Ride online hub had a refresh with new resources being added all the time, encouraging people to walk, wheel and cycle more.

Local people value our greenspaces and know that a good quality accessible natural environment is vital for health and wellbeing, and also the local economy. Our work concentrates on improving access and wildlife habitats near where people live, in particular but not exclusively along the river Colne in and around Huddersfield. With the help of our own volunteers and local companies joining us on corporate sessions, we have been able to make a real difference. Our guided walks to help people understand more about nature and find out where they can walk near the river have been very popular and a welcome opportunity for us to meet some of you, our lovely supporters!

In 2024 our work was recognised by two awards:

- Huddersfield Civic Society/Discover Huddersfield Design Award for which EPIKS has won the ‘Community Award’ for the Huddersfield Riverside Nature Park and work around Colne Bridge
- The Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce Green Business of the Year Award

Funding from key partners enabled us to build our team and plan for 2025 and beyond with confidence. West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) supported our work delivering Active Travel through our new active travel hubs, able to offer a packed programme of activity, mostly in 2025. Additional funding from Network Rail’s Transpennine Route Upgrade has enabled us to engage with people in Huddersfield about better connectivity to Huddersfield Railway Station.

Thanks to DEFRA funding, we have three members of our team working with other local partners on the CCaLL project, a long-term programme of landscape recovery across the Colne and upper Calder catchments

Cummins Turbo Technology’s commitment to our work on riverside stewardship and volunteering has continued to set a great example to local businesses about the impact of sustained support for local organisations making a difference to our habitat, our wildlife and our communities. Our long-term partnership with Yorkshire Water has supported work at Colne Bridge improving access to nature. And our programme of walks, funded by One Community and The Postcode Neighbourhood Trust has provided friendly opportunities for people to learn more about the beautiful natural spaces on their doorstep and actions they can take to help look after them.

Kirklees Council’s support has been invaluable at our many active travel events and in their support for our Green Routes Kirklees crowdfunder through their Growing Great Places programme.

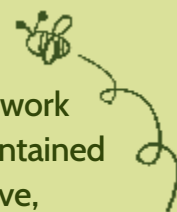
We have ambitious plans for 2025 and beyond - we couldn’t do this without the dedication of our staff and volunteers and the support of our many partners with whom we work – a heartfelt thank you to all who work with and support EPIKS.



EPIKS Volunteer Directors

Chas Ball, Ali Stopher, Jeff Keenlyside, John Munro.

Biodiversity



EPIKS vision is for a network of linked Nature Parks along the Colne and Calder Valley. Our work on the Huddersfield Riverside Nature Park has improved access, enhanced habitats and maintained routes and greenspaces. This enables people to spend time in nature close to where they live, for travel to work, school and for leisure. As part of our landscape recovery work, we proposed a Lower Valleys Nature Park between Huddersfield and Elland which will help meet our vision.

Case study – Snow Island

Snow Island is a fantastic small urban nature park, with woodland, river, meadow, marsh and scrub



It is a haven for wildlife and people alike



The wildflower meadow has been developed and managed following the clearing of invasive buddleia, now with a range of flower species including scabious and birds foot trefoil.



Achievements in 2024/5

- Became one of five partners with the Calder and Colne Landscape Links (CCaLL) Landscape Recovery Project, with responsibility for developing a Site Access Plan for the Colne and Calder River catchment above their confluence, working with our partners at Experience Community.
- Riverside Nature Park sites around Huddersfield and at Colne Bridge improved for visitors and wildlife with our weekly volunteer programme.
- Waymarkers installed on Huddersfield riverside paths
- Public engagement through Riverside nature walks
- Tree planting and meadow management at Lesjöfors Springs, Lindley

CCaLL is part of a national programme with DEFRA developing landscape recovery plans for delivery over the next 20 years

Looking ahead in 2025

- Engage with businesses and landowners around the Huddersfield Riverside Nature Park to develop an Environmental Stewardship model for the wider catchments
- Implement Kilner Bank Plan to improve footpath network, provide interpretation, and deliver a long-term plan for the enhancement of the forest for wildlife
- Audit routes for accessibility for all
- Improve on previous work by reducing steps so that Snow Island is fully accessible



Our work for nature

Everybody who lives in Kirklees has the opportunity to delight in the many species we share it with – but they're also our shared responsibility. Every one of us impacts on nature in some way. EPIKS is always looking for ways to engage all our residents, businesses, landowners and organisations in sharing stewardship for our environment.

Thank you
EPIKS
volunteers!



Two of our regular volunteers enjoying some meditative rock stacking!

Corporate environmental stewardship

In 2024 EPIKS continued to work with businesses, running the bespoke volunteering days that we know their staff teams love. We began talking about corporate environmental stewardship – developing a recognition with local companies that we are all part of a shared responsibility as stewards of our natural spaces.



Getting out together as a team is great for staff wellbeing, presenting opportunities for new shared experiences in a beautiful waterside setting.



Schofield Sweeney staff queue up to help at Colne Bridge!



“

Volunteering with EPIKS has proved a breath of fresh air for me. It's great for my physical and mental health and being in nature and helping to clean up the environment is hugely rewarding.

”

EPIKS Volunteer Director Jeff Keenlyside briefs Cummins TT staff on Snow Island's meadow habitat



Achievements in 2024/5:

- 750 hours of volunteering
- Businesses joined us for 150 hours
- 300 cups of tea drunk with 7.5kg of biscuits!
- Over 150 miles of footpath and riverside tended
- Launched corporate environmental stewardship programme in November 2024

Dalkia volunteers helped with vegetation management and litter clearance on Kilner Bank



Partnership Working

EPIKS partners with organisations big and small to increase environmental awareness and deliver practical environmental solutions together. Our many connections and partnerships enable us to get the best local knowledge, engagement and impact from our projects. We love meeting with our partners anywhere, but there is nothing like getting together out in the wild spaces we all care about for hatching new plans together!

Partnership working in 2024/5

We worked with:

- Corporate partners like Cummins Turbo Technologies and Yorkshire Water to deliver long term programmes caring for our natural spaces in Huddersfield and at Colne Bridge
- Calderdale and Kirklees Councils, the Calder and Colne River Trust, Moors for the Future and Experience Community on CCaLL, a two-year programme to plan for two decades of Landscape Recovery over the Colne and Calder valleys. This includes identifying landowners and stakeholders and designating areas for access improvement and a biodiversity hub
- Local community groups and charities looking after spaces together and, in some cases, introducing people to areas of local natural beauty they didn't know they had on their doorstep.
- We organised a popular series of Walks for Wildlife led by our ecologists and partners from Butterfly Conservation, Calder Rivers Trust, Huddersfield Canal Society and Huddersfield Ramblers – sharing knowledge and skills around wildlife and habitats to increase knowledge and inspire local people to take action



Huddersfield waterways – from Industry to Nature with Alan Stopher, Huddersfield Canal Society

“ I'd never visited the Snow Island area before the Waterways Walk. Some time after the event I revisited and found the path down to the river and sat there for a moment; it was magical ”

Paul Andrews from Butterfly Conservation



“ Great - I learnt about butterflies, dragonflies, plants, rivers and weirs and want to know more ”

Looking ahead in 2025:

- Developing a programme of learning for our regular volunteers to become Volunteer Environmental Rangers
- Extending our Corporate Environmental Stewardship programme with a growing number of local businesses
- Helping with baseline surveys of habitats across the Colne and Calder catchment on 15,512 ha of land with the wider CCaLL team
- Continue mapping a 50-mile circular route linking both the Calder and Colne valleys and shorter circular routes, working with Experience Community
- Producing a development plan for the Lower Valleys Nature Park
- Walks with local people to extend knowledge about nature and wildlife
- Continued work with partners developing Kilner Bank and Huddersfield Riverside woodland management, access and interpretation

Why Active Travel Matters

Transport accounts for 35% of all greenhouse gas emissions, with 91% coming from car journeys. Yet half of all UK car trips are under five miles – ideal for walking, wheeling, or cycling. E-bikes are making cycling more accessible, offering real potential for change.

WALK> >WHEEL RIDE>

for climate
for nature
for you



E-Bike Roadshow: Bringing Cycling to the Community

In 2024, we ran 16 e-bike trial events across Kirklees, from Dewsbury to Moldgreen, targeting areas with poorer health outcomes and lower activity levels. These events engaged 585 people in conversations about active travel, and 160 participants took part in instructor-led e-bike rides—building confidence and getting communities moving.

What participants told us they gained:

- Confidence and enjoyment from assisted cycling
- A return to cycling after years
- A healthier, low-impact travel option
- Support for commuting or social cycling
- Impartial, no-pressure advice
- Greater awareness of local greenways
- The motivation to make a lasting change

Read our e-bike trial report: >

<https://walkwheelride.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Ebikes-Report-2024.pdf>



'I took time out of work today and I'm really glad I came down. I'm pre-diabetic so I know I need to get out and get more exercise. I feel I can go out with my son now and have more family time. Thank you! Sajid, Dewsbury

'I enjoyed the e-bike roadshow. I've gone out and got a folding e-bike to commute.' Tolson Museum attendee

'I would love to cycle to work. It's a 20-minute drive through Dewsbury. Getting to see the greenway and try the bikes has made me look into my cycle to work scheme — it'd make so much sense.' Leanne, Dewsbury



Active Travel Hubs: Community-Led Spaces

In 2024, we developed plans for Active Travel Hubs in Holme Valley, Huddersfield, and Batley and the Spenn Valley. Our first, the Holme Valley hub, which opened in November 2024, was designed to be welcoming, creative, and highly visible. We have engaged the community through events like e-bike trials at Holmfirth Food Festival, family activities with Fair and Funky, guided walks to Brockholes Railway Station, volunteer days and outdoor clothing swaps.



Walk, Wheel, Ride to and from the Station

Connecting people to Huddersfield Railway Station –
without a car.

With support from Network Rail, we launched an ambitious project to help the 103,000 people living within 3km of Huddersfield Railway Station choose walking, wheeling, or cycling over driving.



Key achievements so far:

- Public launch at St George's Square (Sept 20, 2024)
- Self-guided walking and cycling route plans
- Commonplace online consultation platform launched
- Expanded Walk Wheel Ride website with local groups and routes
- Community engagement to explore travel barriers
- E-bike trials to encourage modal shift

This initiative promotes cleaner, healthier journeys and better access to public transport.



Active Travel Highlights 2024/5



- Public launch of the Walk Wheel Ride initiative
- 16 e-bike events held
- 160 people rode an e-bike
- 585 engaged in active travel conversations
- 3 Active Travel Hubs launched (Holme Valley, Batley and the Spen Valley and Huddersfield)
- 6+ community events delivered
- Walking and cycling resources in development
- Signposting to training, recycled bikes, and wellbeing walks
- Ongoing guided walks across Kirklees
- Commonplace launched



Looking Ahead in 2025



- Busy schedule of events throughout our three active travel hubs
- Continued e-bike trials and guided walks
- Support for active commuting to rail stations
- More partnerships to grow local walking, wheeling, and cycling networks
- Expanding reach via Walk Wheel Ride website and social media



We are grateful for support from the following organisations – sponsors, partners and landowners – in 2024-25:

West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Network Rail Transpennine Route Upgrade
Cummins Turbo Technologies
Yorkshire Water
DEFRA
Syngenta
Kirklees Council
One Community Foundation
(Thornton Family Fund)
Holme Valley Parish Council

Calderdale Council
Dalkia
Colne Valley Cycle Therapy
Lesjofors Springs Ltd
Dalton Together
Cycle Kirklees
Support to Recovery (S2R)
John Smith's Stadium
Postcode Neighbourhood Trust
Natural Kirklees

Butterfly Conservation
Calder Rivers Trust
Moors for the Future
Schofield Sweeney solicitors
BBest Community Hub CIC
Experience Community
Good Gym
Kim Leadbeater MP
Oakwell Cycle Workshop
Spacehive supporters

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