



# Annual Report

## 2015-16



## Foreword

2015/16 was busy for Your Back Yard, developing and delivering projects from Nelson to Newbiggin and places in between! As a result, people are enjoying better parks, play areas and more viable community spaces out there now, and we've more exciting initiatives in the pipeline.

However, finding ways to support communities in need is not getting any easier. Budget cuts have been deepest in the areas of most need. As a result, access to decent services and facilities is getting harder in many areas.

With the notable exception of the lottery funded 'Big Local', needs-based funding for regeneration has become a thing of the past. England has no specific policies, or funding, for any form of regeneration. Yet things look very different in the rest of the UK:

- Community-led regeneration is at the heart of the Scottish government's wider regeneration strategy
- the Welsh Government has committed over £100m to local authorities' Regeneration Framework
- Northern Ireland has a similar framework for 'community regeneration and community development activity'.

We think it is time for a similar strategy for the north of England, to make community regeneration a priority again.

## Our Purpose

Your Back Yard was created to help communities in need in the North of England create places to be proud of. We did this because we passionately believe that everybody – young or old, rich or poor – has the right to great community facilities. Sadly, we know that this is often not the case, particularly in poorer areas.



So, we try to help wherever we can, working with local people to find ways to improve their neighbourhood. Whether that means managing community buildings better, setting up youth clubs, cleaning up open spaces, creating play areas, supporting routes to employment or promoting healthy living, our aim is to ensure that those places that need it the most get support to make things better.

While we wait for Government to agree with us, we will continue to seek and seize opportunities to help communities make their areas even better places to live.

If you want to work with us to make this happen, or would like to know more about us and what we do, please get in touch – there are lots of ways to do so listed at the end of the report.

## Project Highlights for 2015-16

### Shieldfield, Newcastle

We secured an Awards for All grant from the BIG Lottery and managed the implantation of a volunteering project funded through this grant, to maintain and improve planted areas of Shieldfield, Newcastle.



### South East Northumberland

On behalf of Northumberland County Council, we continued to work with Northumberland CVA (formerly Wansbeck CVS) and North East Social Enterprise Partnership (NESEP) to implement aspects of the Local Development Plan for the area. One of the highlights was supporting voluntary and community engagement in the Blyth Tall Ships Regatta 2016.



### Seaton Valley, Northumberland

We consulted local people and prepared ambitious community action plans for the five villages of Seghill, New Hartley, Holywell, Seaton Delaval and Seaton Sluice. We also developed a wider plan for the development of the Seaton Valley area of Northumberland, on behalf of Seaton Valley Council.



## Rastrick Plays Better

We won a public vote to receive the Rastrick Big Local programme to develop and implement improvements to three play areas in the village of Rastrick, West Yorkshire. We consulted local people, established a group of residents and involved local schools. We secured additional funding from other sources and worked with local people to design and commission improvements to the play areas.



## Unity Hall, Nelson

We carried out a feasibility study into the potential redevelopment of Unity Hall in Nelson, East Lancashire as a multi-use community resource. This entailed consultation with the local community to establish their views on the best use of the building, and the development of an outline Business Plan for this underused resource and valuable heritage asset for the area.



## Healthy Living Parks, Halifax

With support from the Community Foundation for Calderdale, we began to design and deliver activities in the People's Park in Halifax to improve the health and wellbeing of elderly BME people living in the nearby community. We established a partnership of local organisations, and began to develop a plan of activities for local people. The aim is to test a new model of using parks more actively to improve health outcomes, and roll this model out across other areas.

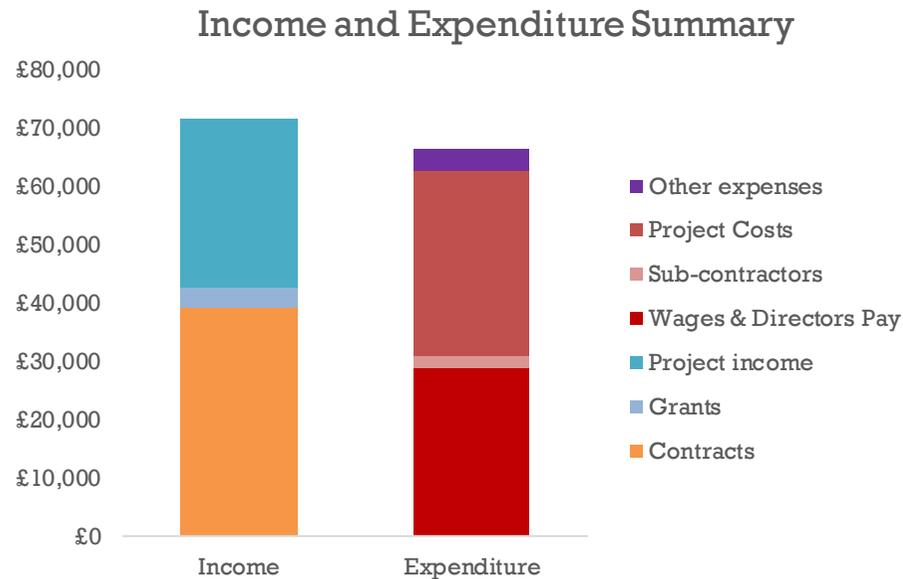


## St Ann's and Battlefield

On behalf of Newcastle City Council, we engaged people and organisations in the St Ann's and Battlefield area of Newcastle in considering activities and improvements that they would like to see in their area. This included a public open day at a local resource centre and developing funding bids to improve play areas.



## About Your Back Yard in 2015-16



### Directors for 2014/15

Robin Beveridge  
Tony Mullin  
Colin Seccombe  
Jennifer Williams  
Paul Greenhalgh

## Achievements and next steps

2015-16 has seen us take further steps, with our first Lottery grant, additions to the Board, developing a new corporate brand (with support from Northumbria University students), and new areas of work such as healthy living.

2016-17 will doubtless bring new challenges, but also new opportunities for Your Back Yard. These will include:

- Our first public conference, probably around healthy living parks
- Making the most of European funding opportunities to support communities while it is still available
- Exploring further direct grant opportunities

We are always open to new ideas and suggestions too, so contact us with any ideas, challenges or opportunities:

- visit [www.yourbackyard.org.uk](http://www.yourbackyard.org.uk)
- follow [@yourbackyardcic](https://twitter.com/yourbackyardcic) on Twitter
- Like [YourBackYardCIC](https://www.facebook.com/YourBackYardCIC) on Facebook
- email: [contact@yourbackyard.org.uk](mailto:contact@yourbackyard.org.uk)
- Tel: 0113 217 1507

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