

Stoneyfield Park Project

Residents in Rochdale Borough have benefitted in the Milkstone & Deepdish area over the past few years through Place Partnership (formerly called Local Pilot), Sport England funding.



Your Trust have worked in partnership with many organisations such as Rochdale Borough Council (Public Health, Environmental Management and Highways teams), Groundworks, Get Up & Grow, Elected Members, community centres and local residents to develop a park, after many years of requests from local residents.

The project has seen £19,000 of funding be obtained through the Place Partnership budget and the Place Partnership team have obtained £354,000 through Match Funding from partners e.g. Public Health, Township, TfGM funding.

The funding has been spent on infrastructure in the park. First, a new drainage system was put in as the park had often been known to residents to be a 'bog' for the winter months. Next, a new playground surface was put in as tarmac instead of sand as children were throwing sand at each other which prevented usage. Then, a new sign and noticeboard was installed and residents were asked to choose an official name as people had different names for it and it helped people to know where the park was. Kissing gates were put in to prevent motorbikes from cutting across the park. A figure of eight path to engage inactive residents in gentle exercise, benches, picnic tables, hopscotch markings, fruit trees, an extension path and some planters were put in which residents engaged with planting activities. These were all direct asks from the community.



One way streets and bollards were put in through Active Neighbourhood project which raised negative concerns at first but after time and engagement from Place Partnership leads and Elected Members, there has been buy-in from local residents to now see the benefits and some procedures have stayed in.

There has been system change within the community. At first, residents were frustrated saying they had been over-consulted and been asking for the park to be developed for many years and they felt that their voices had not been heard. It took a long time to gain trust. The work took a while due to covid, resources not being available and a backlog of work. Even when the first few installations went in, people just asked for more.

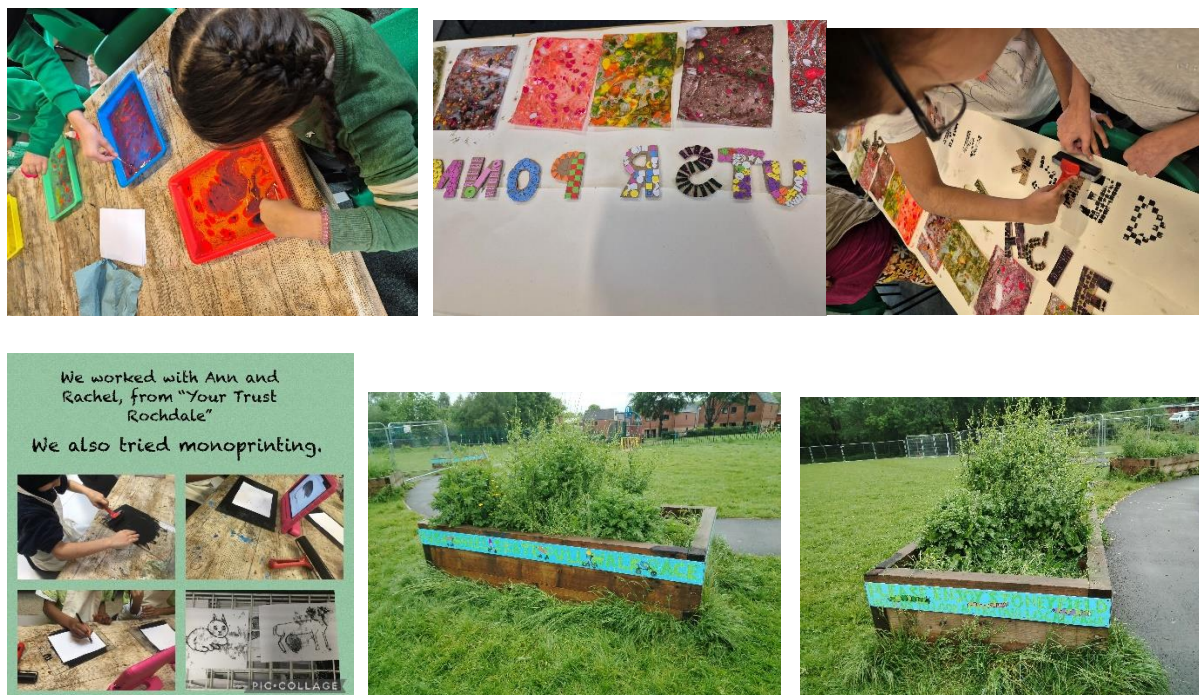
By having Place Partnership Lead's on the ground in touch with residents on a regular basis, they have built trust, rapport and relationships and had buy-in after a long time. As a result from this, residents, elected members and community champions have now taken responsibilities for themselves.

Due to anti-social behaviour, the fruit trees planted with local residents were stolen but one community champion sourced some more fruit trees and planted them as he and the residents were upset and had started to take pride in their local community and felt hurt that they had been stolen. Residents now check on the trees on a daily basis and look after them. This has also resulted in the community champion developing his own community garden project and maintaining another small playground area nearby.

Elected members have also recently taken ownership and instead of asking Place Partnership for more funding, they have recently obtained £28,500 for an extension to the path and £35,000 towards CCTV through committing these funds from local township.

Due to anti-social behaviour, we tested a new approach and instead of it being seen that Place Partnership had been delivering interventions, we engaged with a local organisation and we built relationships with the 4 local school co-ordinators and organised for the pupils to co-design and co-produce the designs of some planters, using the Active Travel themes. These have been a huge success as the community now sees these as belonging to local

people. Designs include 'Please look after **our** park'. There has recently been a lot of local residents speaking to Place Partnership staff, Elected Members, community leaders, the staff building the path and planter designs, thanking them for making their community to be a safe and nice place to visit.



Another success is the newly established Friends of the Park group. Place Partnership staff have spent 2 years building and developing this group. The group have recently set up a bank account, have new committee members and have been linked into Action Together Neighbourhood Lead, working in partnership with Place Partnership staff to submit their first funding bid. They have also been signposted into the council to help co-ordinate a litterpick.

A celebration event was recently held at the park to show local residents the new planters and path. Despite bad weather, 200 residents still turned up. Stalls from Your Trust, Groundworks, Get Up & Grow, Rochdale BC, TfGM, Friends of the Park and England Boxing joined us. There were multisports including cricket and tennis, children were cycling around the figure of eight path, using scooters, engaged in gardening workshops and had health checks. The Friends of the Park also recruited new volunteers.

The transformation of Stoneyfield Park from an unusable space to a community asset has taken a number of years with the Place Partnership playing a key role in driving change in the area.

Sarah Shard, Rochdale's Place Partnership Lead, said:

"Stoneyfield Park is a fantastic example of how Place Partnership investment can unlock previously under-used community assets to support more people to enjoy the benefits of being physically active."

"It's been a huge effort from a number of partners and it's fantastic to see residents taking more and more ownership of the space as that'll ensure its long-term success."

We've received feedback from local residents and ward councillors that since the developments have been made, the park has been used more by families and local people have come to visit the park for the first time which is fantastic.

The activities have been really popular linking in with local schools and families. General feedback has been that the local people are looking forward to the park developing and excited by the idea.

As a result of the planters being decorated by the pupils, one school has signed up to the organisation to deliver more workshops for them. Another one of the schools is arranging a school trip with the pupils through a teacher to visit the park and look at the planters the children have designed and show them the new community assets."

One school lead said, "It has been an absolute pleasure to be part of the Active Neighbourhood Project. The children enjoyed taking part in the art workshop and playing an active part in improving their local park. It would be great to take part in more eco projects in the future".

Another school lead said, "The project was a wonderful opportunity for our children to have active participation in a project that promotes citizenship and stewardship for our local area. The artists allowed children to experience art processes they had never had a go at trying before and the children were so engaged throughout. As a result, we are also partnering with the artists to create a piece of artwork involving all stakeholders for our school building. Thank you so much for this opportunity and we are willing to collaborate on any future projects".