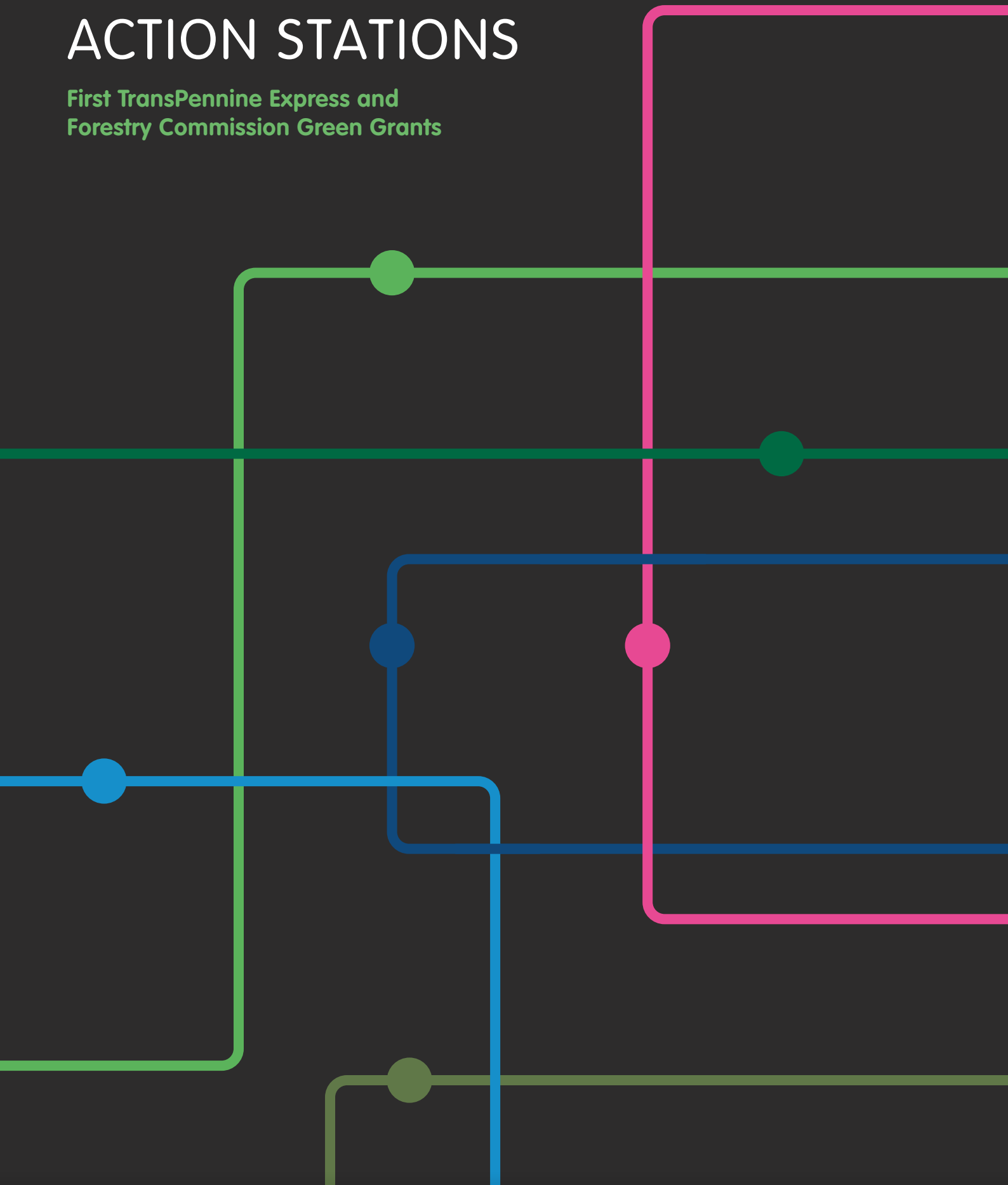


ACTION STATIONS

First TransPennine Express and
Forestry Commission Green Grants



First TransPennine Express (FTPE) has been running the Green Grants scheme in partnership with the Forestry Commission since 2008 and, so far, we have awarded 67 grants totalling over £124,000. Charities, schools and community groups are invited to apply for grants on an annual basis to fund environmental projects. Once applications have been submitted, a judging panel made up of representatives from FTPE and the Forestry Commission decide which applicants will be awarded grants for their projects. Criteria taken into consideration for the grants include environmental improvement, community involvement and proximity to FTPE stations and routes – the judging panel deliberates long and hard to ensure that the grants are awarded to the most deserving schemes. In 2013 alone, we received 71 applications and were able to award 13 grants totalling over £20,000.

As a result of the Green Grants scheme, environmental improvement projects have taken place across the network to the benefit of local communities, our passengers and our employees who live nearby. Furthermore, the grants provide an ideal opportunity to raise awareness of environmental issues, both within FTPE and with our stakeholders. FTPE see environmental and community improvement as being at the heart of our Corporate Responsibility and our Green Grants scheme is an excellent way of demonstrating our commitment in this area. Importantly for us, it is an opportunity for our employees to get involved in community projects and to increase internal engagement in this area.

Working in partnership with the Forestry Commission is paramount to the success of the scheme and, over the years, we have developed a close working relationship. Their expert environmental knowledge ensures that grants are awarded that can demonstrate genuine environmental improvements, particularly with respect to biodiversity enhancement. They also provide excellent support in promoting the grants to encourage applications. Working together we are able to advertise the scheme to many different people across the network so that we can attract the best applications.

The Green Grants scheme benefits our business, the Forestry Commission and most importantly, the environment and communities that we serve. The strong and effective partnership we have built up over the last few years has a foundation of shared interests and common goals for the betterment of the environment.

**Nick Donovan,
Managing Director,
First TransPennine Express**



Since 2008, our partnership with First TransPennine Express has gone from strength to strength, establishing, as you will discover as you read further, an enviable list of achievements delivered via an ever-widening range of community groups in the North of England and South Scotland.

FTPE's vision, commitment and annual funding have targeted and secured a unique range of social outcomes, including educational opportunities and economic and environmental improvements to the quality of place. In turn, this has helped, in meaningful and practical ways, those areas become more sustainable.

Against the wider economic backdrop, FTPE continues to invest in the partnership, which should be seen as a benchmark for others. They, and the communities who have undertaken the work, should feel rightly proud.

This is one of the very few private sector grant schemes I have been associated with. It is a scheme, which from its inception over five years ago, has continued to improve on the quality and range of activities and outcomes it has sought to and finally delivered. Originally, the intention was to celebrate and complement the new trains and rail franchises FTPE had acquired and as you will see from the following pages, that objective has, is and still will be met.

I hope this success story stimulates other companies to consider and emulate FTPE.

**Keith Jones,
Area Director,
North West and West Midlands,
Forestry Commission**



Here's just a taster of some of the successful Green Grants applicants over the years...

The Ribble Rivers Trust, Clitheroe: Tun Brook Habitat Scheme

The Ribble Rivers Trust works to improve the biodiversity and water quality of water bodies in its catchment and an unfenced stretch of water bordering agricultural land, Tun Brook, was identified as an urgent priority in need of immediate intervention.

"As livestock could access Tun Brook, bank erosion and excessive sediment, which can smother and kill fish eggs, was becoming a significant problem," Catherine Birtwistle from the Trust, said. "Livestock faecal matter was also affecting water quality of the Brook and, potentially further downstream, the bathing waters at Blackpool and the Fylde Coast, while the lack of trees lining the bank meant there was little habitat for birds and mammals such as otters.

"We were also in desperate need of shade for wildlife living in the water as scientific studies indicate that temperatures will continue to rise due to climate change."

The Trust was successful in their bid for a Green Grant and were awarded £2,000 to purchase fencing materials, 300 native saplings (willow, oak, rowan, hawthorn, holly, hazel and alder) and a drinking trough to allow round-the-clock water access for livestock. The Trust and a number of other organisations, including the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission, alongside local landowners and volunteers, joined together to plant the trees and erect the fencing and trough.

"We're delighted at the difference the Green Grant will make. In time, the trees will become established and provide habitat for riverine wildlife, binding the soil on the riverbanks and preventing erosion, as well as creating a buffer zone that will reduce pollutants from washing into the stream," Catherine said.

The Trust was also successful in securing additional match funding through their 'Keeping Rivers Cool' project with the Environment Agency, meaning the project can be extended.

"Studies have shown that water temperatures that exceed above 22°C for seven consecutive days will kill fish. In 50 years' time, we expect global temperatures to be higher than today but we're confident that our trees will be well established and serving their purpose of shading the water. It's thanks to the Green Grants programme that we're one step closer to achieving our aims of helping the Ribble reach 'Good Ecological Status'."

34

Bat boxes installed

670m

Priority riparian zone restoration

7

Woods targeted with restoration actions

100

Community groups engaged and supported between 2008-2013

£124,141

Funds committed between 2008-2013

Dutch Farm, Liverpool YMCA

Over in Liverpool, a truly inspiring project is underway that sees homeless volunteers looking after a city farm. The money from Green Grants paid for potting benches and fruit trees, but the impact goes far beyond just that...

Dutch Farm is a lifeline for many of the city's homeless. They can get involved with planting, pruning, weeding, even looking after the resident bees and chickens (including 'Lucky', so named as she survived attacks by dogs and a fox and is still going strong)! One of the homeless volunteers had problems with alcohol, but being able to help out at the farm gives him a reason to stay at the YMCA;

many of the volunteers have led chaotic lives, but the farm helps to stabilise them.

The farm has also captured the wider community's imagination. From large corporate organisations to local primary schools, the farm is used and loved by many across the city and beyond. In 2013 alone, the farm ran over 150 group work sessions and saw 1,000 visitors come through its gates.

They're also thinking beyond the everyday farming activities though, as Peter Boyle, Project Development Manager, explains:

"We were involved in the Liverpool Food & Film Festival in 2013. We used the polytunnels as a cinema, the raised beds as seating and showed films about growing and the local community. Green Grants helped with that actually, as some of the money went towards buying the steel for the polytunnels."

The crops go to local schools, old people's homes, hostels and food kitchens. In 2014, the farm is looking to double the number of raised beds to 100 and get a cockerel so they can have baby chicks.

"It's not just about work; it's hope, it's confidence, friends and a safe place to be. It's a sanctuary, a place they can go and be themselves."

4.6km

Footpath and access upgraded

321

Fruit/orchard trees planted



Butterfly Conservation at Myers Allotment, Morecambe Bay

Myers Allotment is just 150 metres from Silverdale station, along a First TransPennine Express route, and now – thanks to the Green Grants programme – an important spot for the UK’s rarest butterfly.

Once a common sight across the UK, there are now only 35 colonies of the High Brown Fritillary. This is largely due to the destruction of its habitat, as it prefers coppiced woodland with plenty of sunshine and violets, where they choose to lay their eggs.

Martin Wain, Conservation Officer at Butterfly Conservation, was involved in the successful application to the Green Grants programme.

“One of our volunteers, Joy, took regular butterfly walks in the area to count and monitor the butterfly numbers for us. Not only did she report that numbers were in decline, but she was also finding it impossible to access certain parts of the site as it was so overgrown with bramble and scrub.

“The money from our Green Grant was used to improve access to the site, putting in new gates, stiles suitable for disabled access and a place where volunteers could park their cars. We rely heavily on our enthusiastic volunteer network, and once the money was through, they were delighted to get started.”

Butterfly Conservation volunteers vary from local elderly and retired people to students on the Education To Employment initiative at Lancaster and Morecambe College, alongside forestry and coppicing students from nearby universities.

Though the site is now much more suitable for ongoing conservation work, the recent wet summers have taken its toll on the High Brown Fritillary.

“We have seen a slight improvement in numbers, but the poor weather hasn’t been easy on the High Brown Fritillary. Still, the Green Grants programme has made a real difference to the number of people being able to get out on site and improve conditions for the species, so with a bit of sunshine, we’re confident that the High Brown Fritillary will feel at home at Myers Allotment in years to come.”

Photo: Volunteer party carrying out woodland management.
Credit: Butterfly Conservation.



25,505

Woodland bulbs
and plants planted

16,095

Forest trees planted

530

Woodland
shrubs planted

Caring for Life: Restoration of Bluebell woodland, Leeds

In Leeds, the Caring for Life (CFL) charity has been helping to house and support vulnerable people since 1987. They provide residential homes and support in the community as well as therapeutic projects from their headquarters at Crag House Farm.

From agriculture and horticulture to conservation and catering, the farm is invaluable in helping people to lead more settled lifestyles. Individuals can get involved in creating and maintaining the land, as well as looking after the livestock on site. There are wildlife and sensory ponds, hedgerows, coppice, wildflowers, fruit trees... the list goes on. There's also an adult learning centre, offering courses in woodwork, drama, music and literacy.

Often, the people who come to the farm have had little opportunity to leave the city, so it's a great for them to get out into the countryside. It's all about getting people involved in a whole range of activities, giving them the chance to achieve something and feel like they can make a difference.

"In 2008, we put a plan together for an adjoining 38-acre area of beech woodland," explained Liz Brownnutt of CFL. "It wasn't in a particularly good condition and we wanted to regenerate the site and increase the biodiversity. In 2010 we applied for a Green Grant for the site, to create a bluebell woodland alongside the access road to the farm. Today, the bluebells are starting to carpet the whole area – it's a truly beautiful sight.

"We're helping to get people out of their homes and into a routine, giving them a chance to success in life. Of course, housing is important but it's not everything. People need hope, friends and support, and that's what we try to provide on a daily basis."

Fylde Memorial Arboretum and Community Woodland

Inspired by the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, Blackpool's Fylde Ex-Service Liaison Committee hoped to establish their own peaceful woodland where family, friends and colleagues could go to remember loved ones. In 2009, with assistance from the Forestry Commission and the Green Grant initiative, the Committee were able to do just that.

Don Aiken, of the Blackpool D-Day and Normandy Veterans Association, is delighted at the success of the project which he founded.

"The Green Grant in 2009 allowed us to plant the very first trees for our arboretum, as well as create the paths through the woodland so it could be accessible to all local people.

"With assistance from the local council's parks department, we applied to the Green Grants programme again in 2011 in order to help us create a picnic area for visiting families. Our application was successful so we were able to buy beautiful wooden furniture for visitors to use."

The arboretum, situated on Moor Park Avenue in Bispham, is just over two hectares in size and contains a variety of tree species, all planted by enthusiastic volunteers from the local area. There is a dedicated 'Services Glade' where two circles of 16 young trees each bear plaques from member associations within Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre. A flagpole and monument nearby make it the perfect place for reflection.

The Millennium Grove is dedicated to the memory of service personnel from the area that have died while on active service since 2000. Sadly, there has already been the need to place memorial plaques in honour of seven people. The remaining woodland is available for anyone to commemorate a loved one.

"We are thrilled by the transformation of this former blighted wasteland which has already become a beautiful and well-used woodland area, giving solace to the bereaved and peaceful recreation to the whole community."

819

Street/amenity trees planted

24

Schools engaged, Environmental learning and National Curriculum goals supported

241

Bird and owl boxes installed

Ox Close Primary School, County Durham

Ox Close Primary School has a number of different action groups in which the school's 260 pupils can get involved. One of the most popular action groups is to develop and maintain the school's community garden. Currently forty children aged between six and eleven meet with the school's Family Support Assistant, Louise Shepherd, to decide how they can improve the garden and make it more attractive to wildlife.

In 2013, after learning about the importance of creating habitats to support a diverse range of wildlife, the community garden action group decided to apply for a Green Grant.

"The children were really keen to see their garden become home to bees, birds and butterflies," Louise said, "and together we mapped out the best ideas: the trees and shrubs that would be most attractive and the specialist things, like bee logs and hedgehog houses that we could buy and implement. The children did some research and that became our shopping list for the Green Grant.

"Previously the children had raised funds for their community garden through coffee mornings and selling seeds to parents, but this was sporadic and time intensive. The Green Grant has allowed the children the freedom to choose the things they need and to learn throughout the process."

Poor weather before the Christmas holidays has so far prevented the children from getting out into the garden and planting their brand new rowan, buddleia, two different types of holly and viburnum, but the forecast for 2014 is looking good and the children are preparing to get the project underway with a launch assembly early in the new term.

"It's just been brilliant to see the pupils get so involved, and to take ownership of the garden. Our soil is heavy clay, though, so digging the holes to plant the trees and shrubs is going to be hard work!"

WHALE Arts Agency, Edinburgh

Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust works to improve the quality of life for local communities by reconnecting them with their green spaces. The team had been working in the Wester Hailes area of Edinburgh for some time when they applied for a Green Grant to fund a tree planting scheme at the local WHALE Arts Centre.

Wester Hailes has been the focus of redevelopment in recent years, yet it remains high on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). WHALE offers everyone in the local community the chance to take part in free creative activities and events. The centre, which opened in 2000, was pretty uninspiring to look at, so the Green Grant paid for six mature rowan trees to be planted. Native to Scotland, rowan trees are a symbol of welcome – perfect for the front of the arts centre.

“We held a planting day in March 2011 where the local community helped to transform the space around the centre,” explained Abby Boulton, Greenspace Projects Officer at the Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust. “We got contractors in to help with some of the heavy digging but then it was over to the local community to plant the trees! It was great to see so many people getting involved; it creates that all-important sense of ownership and involvement.”

Alongside the tree planting, there were also eco-arts activities on creative seed and herb planting with local children.

“It’s made a massive visual difference – the building now looks so much more welcoming. In terms of the local community, projects like this are great for increasing people’s awareness of their green spaces and how they can improve them. It lets them know that they can get involved and make a difference to the place where they live.”

Photo and credit: WHALE community art centre.

14

Section 41 and priority species targeted with direct conservation measures

1

Multi sensory garden established

3

Hedgehog Houses

Community Orchard and Ornamental Gardens, Grange-Over-Sands

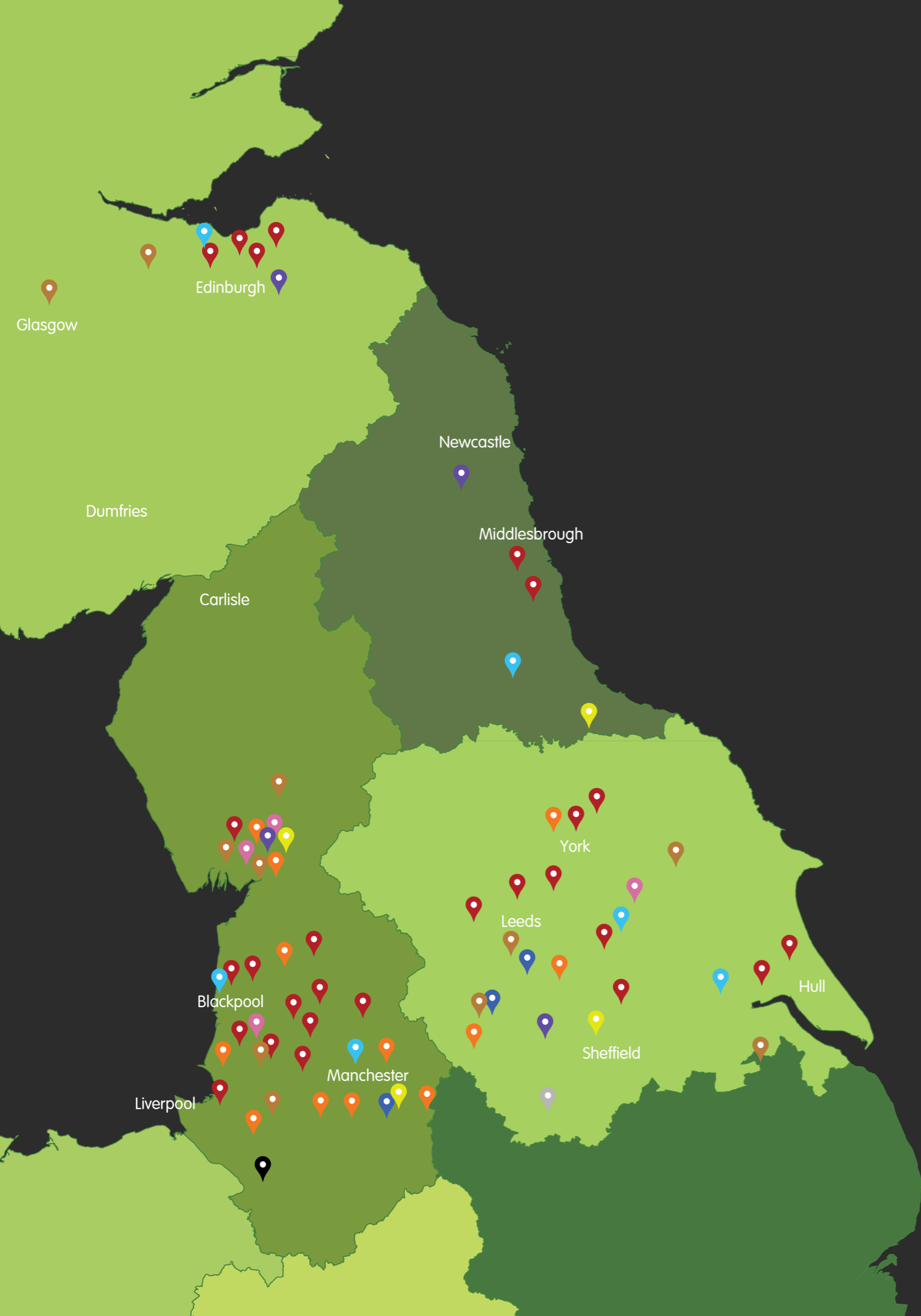
As one of the very first recipients of a Green Grant, the Community Orchard and Ornamental Gardens are now thriving thanks to the help and support of the Forestry Commission, First TransPennine Express and the team of volunteers who come and get their hands dirty.

Ron Shapland, Chairman of the Three Parks Group, has been involved in the projects to transform these two areas of green space.











“The Ornamental Gardens had been neglected for many years and were in a pretty bad state. Historically they’re very important for the area – originally the ornamental gardens, railway station and the Grange Hotel were all developed by the Furness Railway Company in the 1800s to make Grange a nice place to visit.

“We’ve been clearing area of brambles and weeds, we’ve even cleared half an acre of bamboo that was 20 feet high in places! Some of the money from the Green Grants went towards replanting trees in the gardens; they’re a real asset to Grange. The site is right next to the train station and it looks really good now. It’s a lovely place to relax and just wander around, just get away from it all really.”

In the Community Orchard some of the Green Grants funding went towards the purchase of new fruit trees. And there’s a whole host of fruit to choose from – apples, pears, damson, plums, greengages, mulberry, quince... the list is seemingly endless. The local Civic Society helps out with the orchard and makes sure the trees are pruned every year and as for the fruit, that often disappears before the official ‘harvest’ but it is a community orchard after all!



GREEN GRANT LOCATIONS IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND

	Woodland Tree Planting		S41 Species section of principal importance
	Orchard Planting		Amenity Tree Planting
	Amenity Woodland Management		Charocal Burner
	Learning and Education		Community Garden
	Biodiversity/Conservation		Footpath Management

Make your community project happen...

FTPE and FC are always looking for people who want to improve their local environment. Maybe the projects highlighted here have inspired you. Maybe you have an idea or project that will make a long term, visible improvement to your physical environment. If so, FTPE and FC Green Grants is for you.

Our Green Grants are available for physical environmental improvements that benefit the community, such as tree planting, habitat restoration, wildlife protection, environmental enhancement and so on. Grants are available up to a maximum value of £2,000, but you don't need to apply for the full amount – just apply for what you need! The scheme is open for applications from June to October, with the winning schemes awarded in November.

Visit www.tpexpress.co.uk/environment for more details and application forms.

The following are eligible to apply for a grant:

Community groups

Charities

Schools

Individuals giving open access to their land

Individuals acting on behalf any of the other options

Application forms can be obtained and returned to Peter Roberts:

@ peter.roberts@firstgroup.com

✉ Peter Roberts, First TransPennine Express, 8th Floor, Bridgewater House, 60 Whitworth Street, Manchester, M1 6LT

