



# Arts project is looking to connect communities to river bank activities



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A local river charity has completed a project which aims to get more people out on the river bank.

Tyne Rivers Trust has worked with community groups and local artists to run a series of free activities for residents including guided walks along the River Don, climate resilience workshops, litter-picks and art projects.

## FUND

The 'Total River Therapy' project was paid for with £96,000 from the Government's Shared Prosperity Fund.

Maddy Fowler, urban catchments project manager at Tyne Rivers Trust said, "Rivers play such an important part in all our lives and our aim has been to connect people in South Tyneside to the River Don even though they may not feel physically close to it.

## SUPPORT

"Not only do rivers provide drinking water, they're also home to countless plant and animal species and can support people's personal wellbeing with something as simple as a nice stroll on the

riverbank.

"In South Tyneside, the Don also has a great deal of industrial and cultural significance and all of these factors can provide inspiration for art, music and literature."

## ARTISTS

The Trust joined forces with two local artists, Petra Ondrova and Simone Rudolphi, to create river-themed art installations with Bilton Hall Community Trust, the NECA Community Garden and Women's Health in South Tyneside (WHiST).

Projects included willow weaving installations, drawings, paintings, and murals.

## CONNECTION

Ms Fowler added: "The community centres and people we have worked with are not particularly near to the river, but these workshops and activities have built a connection that we hope will have a lasting effect."

## PERFECT

Stella Rose Carmichael, community connector at WHiST said, "We have been keen to engage more women into the garden and this was the perfect opportunity where women who had previously been involved in other activities, like arts and crafts, were able to get directly involved in



Creating the mural at NECA Community Garden, a collaboration with Arts 4 Wellbeing.

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the garden.

"The artists were really wonderful with the women and the whole experience has been very rewarding for everyone."

Total River Therapy has been supported by South Tyneside Council.

## TRANSFORMED

Council leader, Cllr Tracey Dixon, said: "This project has not only benefited the wellbeing of residents, connecting them to our natural local environment, but has improved and transformed areas along the River Don."



The 'Spirit of the Tyne' willow sculpture at the River Don.



The completed mural at the NECA Community Garden.



A willow woven fish art installation on the River Don.