

**STRAWBERRY
FIELD**

2025 Impact Report





Opening the gates to opportunity

In 2025, The Salvation Army's Strawberry Field centre made a difference to young people in Liverpool, supported local communities and provided a place of welcome and sanctuary to visitors.

Our unique model turns visitor spend into lifechanging employability and inclusion outcomes. Through our Steps at Strawberry Field programmes, we supported local people with learning differences, neurodivergence, or other barriers to work to secure paid, sustainable employment. At the same time, we strengthened our position as one of the UK's most accessible and sustainable visitor attractions, reinvesting earned income from our exhibition, café and shop directly back into community impact.

In 2025, Strawberry Field transformed visitor spend into 71 jobs, 10,705 volunteer hours and a more inclusive Liverpool economy.

2025 Highlights

30%

financial growth year on year

82

trainees enrolled across Steps at Strawberry Field programmes

71

secured paid roles on graduation

10,705

volunteer hours delivered

60%

reduction in carbon emissions

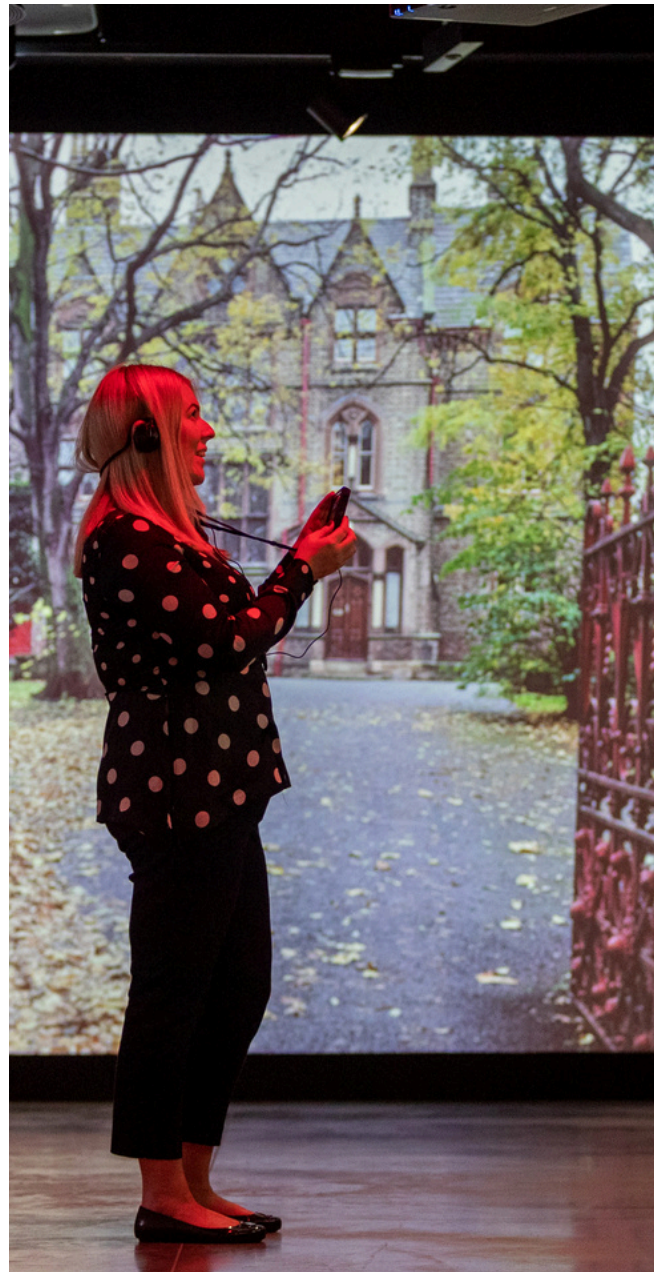
Accolades

Liverpool Small Visitor Attraction of the Year 2025 & Regenerative Tourism Award 2025

VisitEngland Quality Assurance

Green Tourism 'Gold' maintained

Recruiter Awards Charity of the Year 2025



A message from our Mission Director

It is my privilege to present this year's Strawberry Field Impact Report. For over 90 years, Strawberry Field has stood as a beacon of hope under the mission of The Salvation Army, and this year has been no different. As part of The Salvation Army's long tradition of practical Christianity and social justice, we have continued to strengthen Strawberry Field's mission and extend its impact, supported by strong financial growth of 30% year on year. This sustained performance enables us to steward this historic and sacred site responsibly, ensuring it continues to serve both its community and The Salvation Army's wider mission.

Our commitment to accessible, inclusive, sustainable and ethical tourism reflects The Salvation Army's unwavering belief in the dignity and worth of every person. We strive to ensure that every visitor – from Beatles enthusiasts to those seeking quiet and solace – encounters a space grounded in warmth, welcome and respect, offering a truly barrier-free experience that embodies our faith-based values. Alongside this, the Steps at Strawberry Field programmes continue to flourish, offering life-changing opportunities for young people facing barriers to employment. Through strengthened employer partnerships and holistic support, we continue to open pathways into meaningful work, confidence and independence.

The impact highlighted throughout this report has only been possible through the dedication of our staff team and volunteers, the collaboration of both our internal and external partners, patrons and supporters, and the generosity of all those who walk alongside us in faith and action.

As we look forward, we remain committed to keeping the 'gates open for good' – a clear expression of The Salvation Army's calling to serve with compassion, courage and hope. We will continue to create new opportunities, nurture community and ensure Strawberry Field remains a place where lives are strengthened, transformed, and life is found in all its fullness (John 10:10). We warmly invite partners who share our vision to stand with us and help extend the impact of Strawberry Field even further.



**Major Michelle
Lovegrove-Huggins**

Mission Director, Strawberry Field



Who we are & why we matter

Strawberry Field is a visitor attraction and training centre owned and operated by The Salvation Army. The site blends cultural heritage with a mission-first model where visitor income funds employability and inclusion programmes.

Our impact model



Meeting UN Sustainable Development Goals

- * Decent Work & Economic Growth
- * Reduced Inequalities
- * Responsible Consumption & Production

Opening the gates to employability

Steps to Work

The Steps to Work programme supports and empowers young adults facing barriers to employment, including those with learning difficulties and neurodivergent conditions, to gain paid work.

What makes it different:

Steps to Work adopts 'person-first' approach which has the trainee at the heart of everything we do. Each trainee is supported by a dedicated Work Coach for the duration of the programme

**Work
Readiness
course**

8 weeks
classroom
based
learning

**Up to three
12 week
placements**

at Strawberry
Field, then
employment
partners

**Supported
job search**

**Paid
employment**

with post
placement
work coach
support

Steps at Strawberry Field outcomes

2025 Outcomes for graduates



69%

trainees entered paid employment

15%

trainees progressed into education or training

11%

trainees are actively job searching

4%

trainees engaged in meaningful volunteering

In 2025, over 75% of trainees identified as having a disability. Others had barriers to work such as social isolation, mental health and social discrimination.

*For context 5.1% of adults with a learning disability known to their local authority in England are in paid employment [Source: Mencap - Learning Disability Employment Statistics.

We recorded 344 milestones across more than 15 categories of support including:

- Above and Beyond
- Confidence
- Employability Skills
- First-Time Achievement
- Job Search & Support
- Resilience
- Social Skills
- Teamwork

Steps to Work: Sarah's Story

Sarah joined the Steps to Work programme because she felt she was being left behind. Despite her strong qualifications and spending a full year applying for roles, she struggled to secure paid employment, which took a toll on her confidence.

Sarah felt her autism also made traditional recruitment processes harder to navigate, adding another barrier to finding the right opportunity. She had started to lose hope.



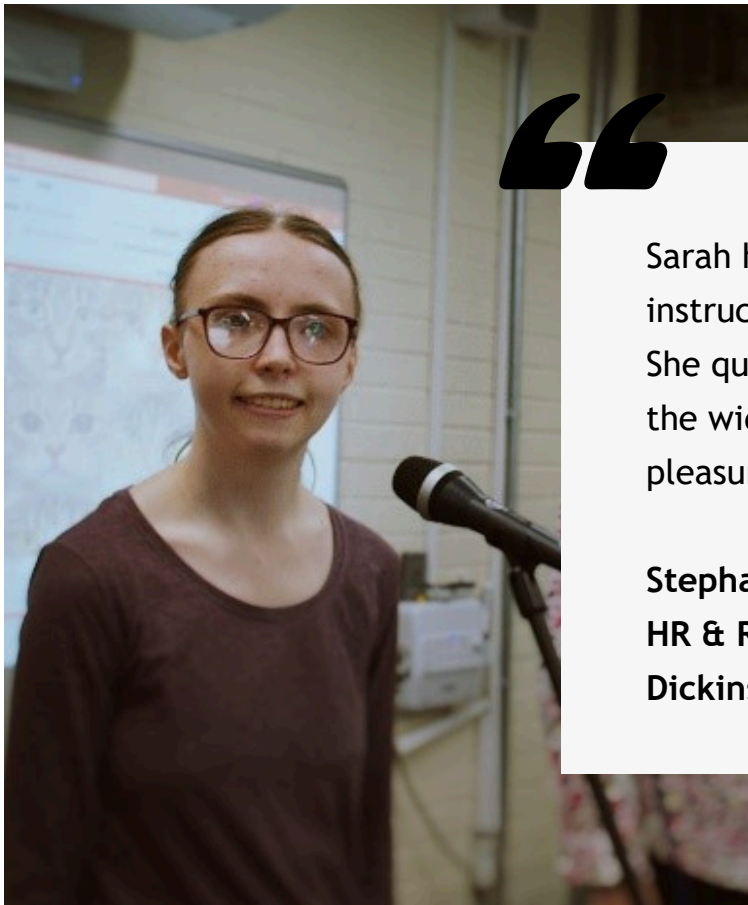
“

Steps to Work has definitely helped boost the confidence and job skills I was lacking in previously. Most employers and people in general see autism as something negative, when it actually has loads of benefits to a company, such as the ability to hyperfocus and to see details that are often missed by others. I'm definitely a lot more confident in myself. I'm onto the next stage in life.

Sarah, Steps to Work graduate

Throughout the programme, Sarah worked incredibly hard and demonstrated outstanding abilities. She used her language degree to communicate fluently with French and Spanish visitors on her work placement in the Strawberry Field shop, and volunteered to read at our Christmas Concert, where she confidently read a Bible verse in front of 500 people.

Sarah is now employed by law firm Hill Dickinson, where she has been praised for her excellent organisational ability and high level of accuracy. She went on to work in a number of departments, broadening her skill set and is now the Central Services Administrator in the HR & Development team.



Sarah has a unique ability to listen to instruction and then complete work. She quickly forged relationships with the wider team and is an absolute pleasure to work with.

Stephanie Bean,
HR & Recruitment Manager at Hill Dickinson

Take the next step with us.
Find out more at strawberryfieldliverpool.com/steps



Employment Partners

We work with employer hosts to open doors for trainees and graduates. Employee partners support our work by providing work placements and work trials to trainees on our Steps to Work programme. In 2025, Strawberry Field partnered with Momentum Housing, John Lennon Airport, ACC Liverpool, Hill Dickinson and many more.

Partnering with Strawberry Field helps employers improve diversity and inclusion by giving them the opportunity to work closely with individuals who are neurodivergent or have learning difficulties, helping them better understand diverse needs and break down unconscious biases.

Employer Benefits

- * Work experience placements over 12 weeks with no long-term obligation
- * Practical on-the-ground support to ensure successful experience
- * Access to 'Neurodiversity in the Workplace' foundational training
- * Inclusive workplace improvements leading to more positive work culture
- * Cost-effective recruitment
- * Positive brand exposure



Giving the trainees, who are often unfairly overlooked, valuable experience and seeing them grow toward future employment has been hugely rewarding. They've been such valuable additions to the team. We look forward to continuing with the Steps to Work scheme!

Skaus Liverpool

Employer impact: Hill Dickinson

Since partnering with Strawberry Field in 2024, Hill Dickinson have continued to champion inclusive employment. The firm is continually expanding its commitment by creating opportunities across new departments within the firm. They fully invest in our trainees from the very beginning, offering paid internships with the potential for further development and progression. Inclusion is at the forefront of everything they do. Steph, Jen and Charlotte have been true trailblazers within the firm, driving this commitment forward.

Hill Dickinson also won “Excellence in Recruitment” at the 2025 People in Law Awards for creating inclusive and accessible hiring processes, particularly for neurodivergent candidates. Before partnering with Strawberry Field, only 42.5% of candidates disclosed whether they were neurodivergent, and 67% disclosed a disability.

By January 2025, those figures had risen significantly, with 92.5% of applicants disclosing neurodivergence and 75% disclosing disabilities.

“Our partnership with Strawberry Field has extended beyond recruitment,” says Jen Price, Senior HR Business Partner at Hill Dickinson, “We co-created a line manager training video focused on inclusive recruitment. The training received excellent feedback and helped raise awareness of the benefits of hiring neurodivergent individuals and those with learning difficulties. It has also educated managers on removing barriers in the interview process. We’re proud of our ongoing collaboration with the Steps programme which has helped us grow as an inclusive employer and discover exceptional talent. We look forward to continuing this partnership and are deeply grateful for the positive impact it has had on our organisation.”

Host a trainee placement or hire a graduate.
Find out more at strawberryfieldliverpool.com/employment-partners



Steps for Students

Students, particularly for those who are neurodiverse or face other barriers, experience uncertainty, lack of direction and repeated rejection from mainstream recruitment processes. The Steps for Students programme connects students directly with employers, providing paid work opportunities that ease financial pressure and align with their qualifications.



32

students were onboarded

90%

achieved paid employment



Back home in Sri Lanka, I had a full-time job, but here I faced barriers - being new to the country, with no local experience, constant rejections were real. At one point I stopped applying for jobs.

That's when Strawberry Field made the difference. I was able to secure an office-based role in many ways connected to my field of study.

Sabethan, Steps for Student graduate



Learning Hub

The Learning Hub provides students with the opportunity to experience working-life within Strawberry Field and the wider Salvation Army. In partnership with local education providers the Learning Hub provides meaningful and flexible work experiences, tailored to meet the learners' aims and objectives.

- * Students have provided valuable resources to Strawberry Field increasing overall productivity and reducing the need for additional staffing costs.
- * Students contribute specialised knowledge that Strawberry Field would not normally have access to, guided by professors and lecturers who offer expert advice to help ensure the success of each project.

£38,149.00

financial contribution to
Strawberry Field equivalent



What the Learning Hub has given me goes far beyond experience or skills. It has restored my confidence in myself and my place in this industry. I've gained more from this than I ever imagined.

**Abbie, Learning Hub
Architecture Student**



Learning Hub: Eilis' story

Eilis, a Geography BSc student at LJMU, joined Strawberry Field through the Learning Hub as an intern. From day one, Eilis demonstrated a deep understanding of environmental responsibility.

Collaborating closely with key team members, she helped develop Strawberry Field's very first Sustainability Policy, laying the foundation for a clearer, stronger commitment to environmental stewardship. Her attention to detail and research expertise were instrumental in compiling the extensive documentation required for our Green Tourism accreditation application.



Thanks to the collective efforts of the team and Eilis's integral contribution, Strawberry Field proudly launched its Sustainability Policy online and achieved a Silver Green Tourism Award. It was a significant milestone in our sustainability journey.

But Eilis's story did not end there. When the opportunity arose to pursue the prestigious Gold Green Tourism Award, Eilis offered to come back to Strawberry Field on a voluntary basis to support the process again, demonstrating dedication far beyond expectation. Today, we are proud to celebrate that Strawberry Field has recently been awarded the Gold Green Tourism Award, the first visitor attraction in Liverpool to receive this.

Eilis's journey shows how giving back and committing to sustainability can transform academic learning into real-world impact. She leaves a lasting legacy at Strawberry Field, inspiring future graduates and students to create meaningful change.



Gain meaningful experience to support your studies.
Find out more at strawberryfieldliverpool.com/learning-hub



Opening the gates through volunteering

Volunteers provide invaluable support across Strawberry Field from meet and greet and reception to fundraising and gardening. Volunteering helps to improve health, ease feelings of loneliness and broaden social networks by supporting the community and staying connected.

Steps to Volunteer

Steps to Volunteer is a free 8-week course leads to increased confidence and Level 2 qualification, with the offer of a volunteer role on completion.



The rainbow has seven colours. Volunteering at Strawberry Field gave me the opportunity to experience all the colours in my life.

Akhil, Strawberry Field volunteer

61

active volunteers

10,705

hours of volunteer support

£156,850

financial contribution equivalent

Volunteering: David's Story

David first came to Strawberry Field interested in the Steps to Work programme, but he ultimately began volunteering in our café. Before joining us, he had been going through a very difficult period in his life, and the café role offered him much-needed structure and a positive focus. Although he initially struggled with concentration and negative emotions, the support of his colleagues helped him regain confidence and grow into a valued member of the team.

David has truly flourished in his role. He regularly receives glowing praise from Strawberry Field visitors, who often comment on his friendliness, care and attention to detail. He has become a much-loved part of the Strawberry Field family. David has also shared how beneficial volunteering has been for him personally, noting improvements in his mental health and a renewed ability to overcome challenges in his life.



His success in the café has led to further opportunities. David has recently taken on an additional role at the centre and can now also be found at the entrance, carrying out satisfaction surveys with our many visitors.

Join our amazing team of volunteers.
Find out more at strawberryfieldliverpool.com/volunteer





John Lennon Photomosaic

Lennon found solace and joy here as a child, and now we all have this opportunity. Do not hesitate to visit - they are doing amazing work.

TripAdvisor Review

In October 2024, Strawberry Field launched a fundraising campaign inviting supporters to contribute their image to a giant John Lennon photomosaic, which would become part of the visitor exhibition.

The finished mosaic was unveiled in October 2025, on what would have been John Lennon's 85th birthday, alongside a Quarrymen banjo. Together, these new additions aim to draw visitors to the Strawberry Field exhibition and support its ongoing charity work.

1,300

people added their image to the photomosaic

£17,252

fundraised throughout the campaign

Opening the gates for all

A unique model of regenerative tourism

Strawberry Field operates a responsible tourism model: visitor income is reinvested to fund the Steps at Strawberry Field programmes and community initiatives.

The exhibition shares interweaving stories of The Salvation Army, the children's home and John Lennon's inspiration through an interactive exhibition and garden tour, including a mindfulness garden tour to support visitor wellbeing.

A warm welcome to Strawberry Field

1.

The Imagine More cafe provided a welcoming space for people to come together to socialise and for community events.

2.

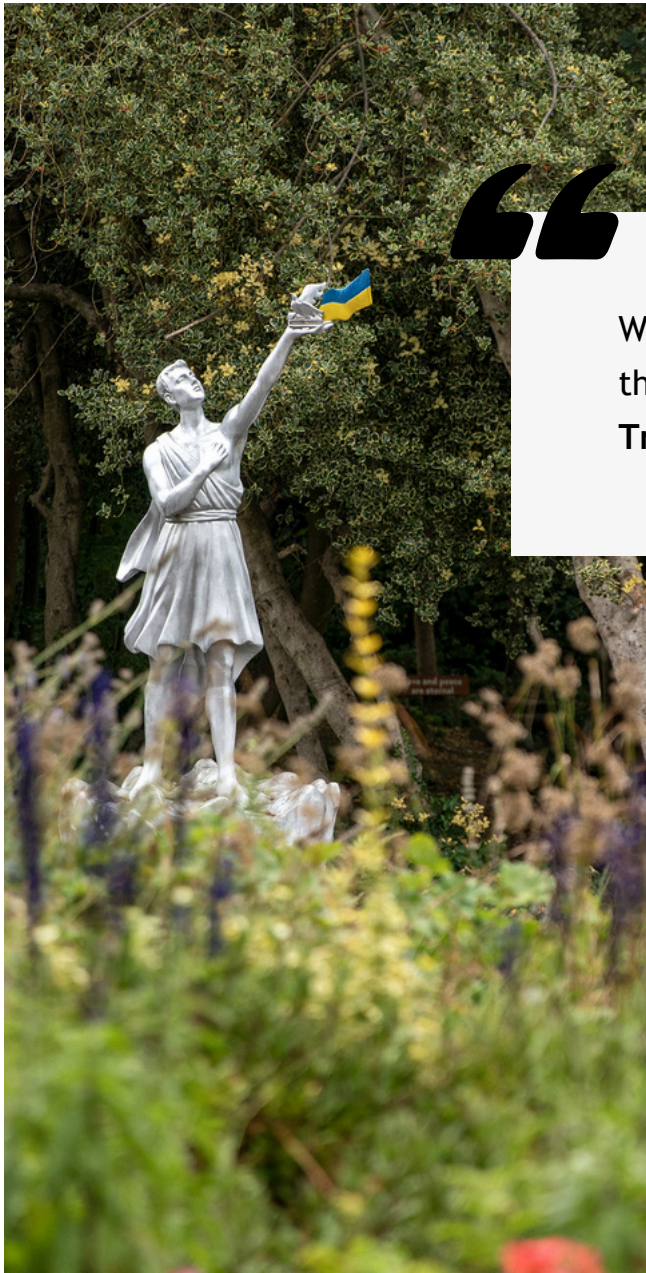
A banjo once owned by Quarrymen member Rod Davis and played by John Lennon and his mother Julia was put on display in the visitor exhibition.

3.

Visitors enjoyed year-round free performances on the Strawberry Field Bandstand including The Quarrymen on John Lennon's 85th birthday.



Increasing Sustainability



At Strawberry Field, sustainability is high on our agenda as we keep our iconic ‘gates open for good’.



We came for the famous gates but stayed for the kindness, compassion, and tranquillity."

TripAdvisor Review

2025 achievements

- * We are proud to have achieved a Gold certification from Green Tourism.
- * Installed signage across the site to communicate the work we have done on sustainability and to encourage visitors to ‘go green’.
- * Created a garden explorer map and introduced eco-friendly crafts in our ‘Get Back to Play’ sessions.

38%

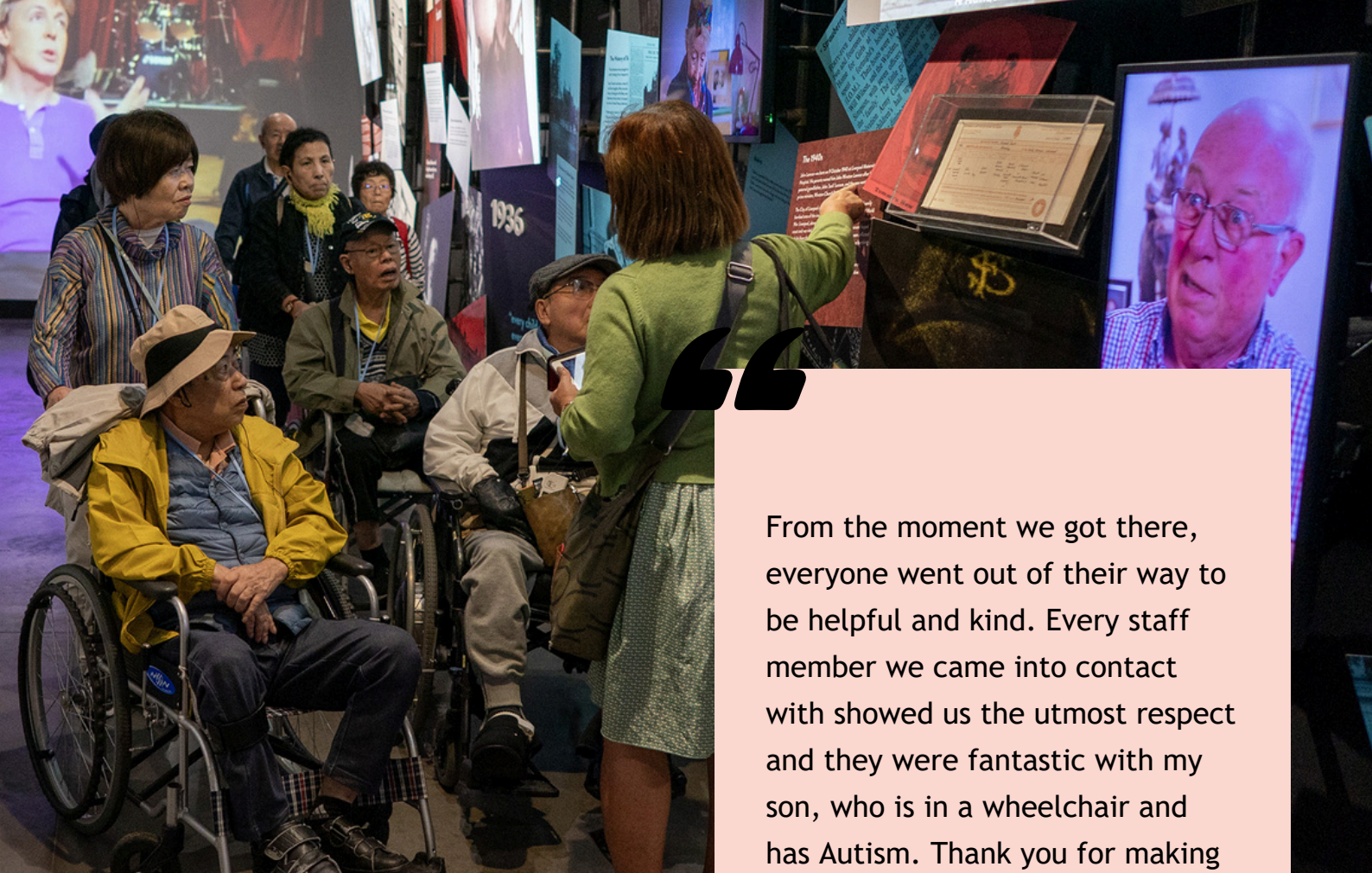
reduction in electricity energy usage year-on-year

92%

of our goods and materials budget supports local suppliers

60%

reduction in CO2 emissions year-on-year



From the moment we got there, everyone went out of their way to be helpful and kind. Every staff member we came into contact with showed us the utmost respect and they were fantastic with my son, who is in a wheelchair and has Autism. Thank you for making our time with you so special and stress-free.

[Get Your Guide Review](#)

Promoting Accessibility

Inclusive Visitor Attraction

Strawberry Field is designed for inclusion, featuring Changing Places facility, stoma friendly toilet, captioned media guides, BSL tours by appointment, sensory items, tactile elements, wheelchair access throughout, accessible parking and lift. External sources recognise the site's accessibility and inclusive tours.

- * Installed stoma-friendly facilities
- * Set up an Accessibility Champions group which aims to push for better and more inclusive features across the site.
- * Provided sensory items, fidget toys and ear defenders in the visitor exhibition
- * Provided BSL exhibition and garden tours



Significant external recognition

- * Small Visitor Attraction of the Year, Liverpool City Region Tourism Awards 2023, 2024 & 2025
- * Regenerative Tourism Award, Liverpool City Region Tourism Awards 2024
- * VisitEngland Quality Assured with 90% score “Highly commendable... strong foundation of operational excellence and visitor satisfaction.”
- * Green Tourism ‘Gold’
- * TripAdvisor Traveller’s Choice
- * Highly Commended, Ethical, Responsible, Sustainable Tourism, BETA Awards 2025

4.5 

Google Reviews

4.6 

TripAdvisor Reviews

Opening the gates to community

The Strawberry Field Community is developed and encouraged by what is known as the 'Fresh Expression' Team. They create opportunities for those around them to find out more about what it means to explore spirituality and faith.

- * Love to Move chair-based exercise programme for people with dementia
- * Get Back to Play for families through the summer
- * Hopefulness sessions
- * Community Gathering
- * Prayer groups
- * Ukulele group
- * Steps Social Group

262

people attended the Strawberry Field community gathering across 10 events

407

people attended Love to Move, across 26 sessions

50

people attended six-week Hopefulness course



Fresh Expression testimonials



I knew about Jesus, but I was losing hope and faith. Connecting with Strawberry Field has helped restore the willingness to keep on hoping and believing.



I have suffered immense loss over the last 10 years which caused me to falter in my faith and question "where is God in my life". Finding Strawberry Field, attending various things there, finding the love and support of the amazing people there has helped me to find my faith again and the strength to move forward with my life, I cannot thank them enough.



It's for all ages and I can speak - The others don't judge me... I enjoy meeting new people, I'm not judged, I can be myself here.

G is a 34 year old man diagnosed with Learning Difficulties and Autism who lives in supported Accommodation who regularly attends Love to Move with his support worker.

Hopefulness



In 2025, Hopefulness was attended by a total of 50 people.

Hopefulness was developed following a marked growth in anxiety, and lack of hope, post-pandemic. The sessions aim to nurture and encourage hopefulness in a variety of ways.

‘Sister of Hopefulness’ Emma Jackson attended Hopefulness and found the experience so fulfilling she came back again and is now an assistant facilitator, regularly leading sessions.

When I first reached out to Strawberry Field, I was unaware of the Hopefulness opportunity and simply grateful to find someone with an ear to listen. Attending each week represents a commitment to seek out Hopefulness - not only through navigating the sessions but by holding the hands of others on the shared journey. This can be through times of grief, uncertainty, life changes, loneliness, illness and for those questioning, or exploring, faith.

Experiencing Hopefulness first hand, as well as being privileged to witness the importance of what this means to others, has confirmed its profound emotional and spiritual impact.





Love to Move



In 2025, Love to Move was attended by a total of 407 people.

Love to Move's chair-based exercise sessions take place on alternate Fridays at Strawberry Field.

Fresh Expression volunteer Sue Owen leads the movement to music group, providing physical, cognitive and emotional benefits for older people - and especially those living with dementia and their carers. However, Love to Move is open to all.

It's like an extended family that we don't have and desperately need. Cedric and his movement had been getting less and less. When they started movement to music, Cedric needed something like that.

Maureen is regular attendee of Love to Move. She would attend with her late husband, Cedric.

Get involved

If you want to help us support young people experiencing barriers to employment, or just be a part of our community, there are a range of ways to get involved at Strawberry Field.

Donations are always gratefully received, and we are happy to support those who want to fundraise on our behalf.

If you are able to offer your time and skills, we would love for you to join us as a volunteer!



Find out how you can get involved

Find out more about how you can support us at strawberryfieldliverpool.com/get-involved


You can also support us by simply paying us a visit!

Every pound spent at Strawberry Field, whether it's in the visitor exhibition, cafe or gift shop, helps keep the Strawberry Field 'gates open for good'. Book your visit today at strawberryfieldliverpool.com.





For more information visit
strawberryfieldliverpool.com
[#GatesOpenForGood](https://twitter.com/strawberryfield)

 /StrawberryFieldLiverpool
 @strawberryfield
 @strawberryfieldliverpooluk
 Strawberry Field

