9a Project Space CIC (16762193). Director Kelly Loughlin. 30th June 2026.

9a is a community interest company based at 9a Robinwood Mill, Lydgate, Todmorden OL14 8JA. https://9aprojectspace.org

Our gallery space overlooks Lydgate Viaduct. The mill and the Viaduct were once the centre of an industrial landscape. Bulit in the late 1830s and owned by the Feilden Family, Robinwood Mill shaped this part of the valley; the Fielden's built Robinwood School, Robinwood Terrace and less substantial workers housing.

Lydgate Viaduct is an incredible structure and for people travelling from Burnley it marks the entrance to Todmorden.

For some months I have been in conversation with Network Rail about an arrangement where 'we' take a 'lease' on the land beneath the viaduct and develop it as a community green space. This part of the valley is very steep and there is little amenity space along the busy A646. Becca Toop's work at Vale Community Garden is the notable and very welcome exception. For the viaduct, tentative plans would be clearing the overgrown sections and developing a pollination garden with involvement from local school and community groups. I am also approaching the Heritage Railway Trust about signage, documenting the history of the viaduct.

Background to Robinwood Mill.

With the decline in cotton spinning (1950s-60s) property development became a threat to mills like Robinwood. In 1987 Todmorden and Calderdale councils agreed to demolish the mill and use the land for property development. This was successfully challenged by conservation groups and local historians, with support from The Council for British Archaeology, West Yorkshire Archaeology Service, Save Britains Heritage, The Antique Monuments Society etc.
A key factor was the fact that Robinwood was designed by leading engineer/architect Sir William Fairbairn (1789-1874) and this was his only wooden floored, 6 story high horseshoe shaped mill. Saved and 'listed' by the Department of the Environment the mill was bought by a furniture making company 'Index Isle'. The company was implicated in arson when the mill was burned down in February 1992. The current building sits on one half of the original footprint. Owned by a local family the mill currently houses a mix of artist studios, light industrial tenants and 9a gallery.

Lydgate Viaduct was opened in 1849, designed by Civil Engineer Sir John Hawshaw (1811-1891). It was Grade II listed in 1984 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1228243

I am in conversation with Andre Alilionwu, Regeneration and Placemaking, Network Rail. Our next Teams meeting is on July 16th.

I am hoping to involve other parties who may have an interest in the viaduct, Todmorden Town Councillors, Railway Heritage Trust, Pennine Heritage and local history groups. Ideally, I'd like any help that's on offer, whether that's participating on a board or committee, sharing skills, advice and resources: the archive at Birchcliffe has some excellent images of Robinwood Mill and the viaduct. It would be great to develop a display at 9a to encourage local community discussion about this potential green space.

Thank you
Kelly