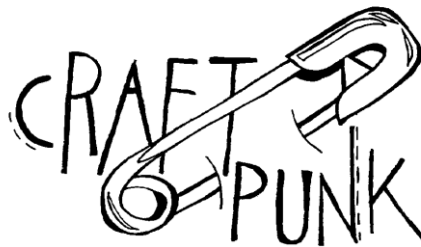




**Tweeddale Youth Action Report To The Trustees  
For The Year Ended 31 March 2019**



## **Introduction from the Chair**

It is always a pleasure to sit down and reflect on another year in the very busy life of TYA. As always it has been a year of high points and successes, as well as some (not inconsiderable) challenges.

It is our view that the 'beating heart' of TYA remains the drop in's, structured group work and one to one work. These critical elements of our work are aimed at building relationships with the young people and providing the support they need to develop the confidence and resilience required to deal with whatever life is presenting to them. It has been pleasing to note the range of both fun activities and more educational sessions that have taken place during the year and we are delighted to be part of the Stepping Stones project, funded by National Lottery's 'Improving Lives' Fund. This Borders-wide, 3-year initiative has enabled us to provide one to one support to some of the most vulnerable of our young people. The funding has also enabled us to introduce a Monday evening Young Woman's Group providing a safe and supportive space for young women within TYA to discuss issues and needs openly and honestly. We are extremely grateful to all our funders for the money and support they give us and for their belief in the work we are doing.

Food Punks, Bike Punks and Craft Punks have continued to flourish. Food Punks have increased the number of events catered for and Bike Punks have attracted SEStran and LEADER funding, enabling the development amongst other things of the E bike library. Craft Punks have had a bit of a 'green' focus this year partnering with Change Works in Peebles, Tweedgreen and Eildon Housing to produce some interesting artworks and installations.

All this activity has taken place within the usual challenging funding environment. Indeed, the beginning of the financial year presented TYA with one of the most financially challenging periods of its existence. A number of significant funding streams came to an end at around the same time and, with there being a delay until fresh funds came through, the project faced the possibility of closure. Staff hours had to be significantly reduced and activities curtailed but due to the tremendous commitment of staff and their willingness to work many hours on a voluntary basis over several months the project continued and, in time, additional funding was secured.

As a Board we are immensely grateful for the work and commitment of our staff and volunteers who give so much of themselves for the benefit of the young people of Tweeddale. As Chair I also want to acknowledge and express my thanks for the energy, commitment and dedication of Board members. With a good blend of skills and experience we work very effectively together as a team. Of course, as I say every year because it is so true, none of this would be possible without the extraordinary energy, leadership, hard work, tenacity, determination and optimism provided by Dave Hodson; we are lucky to have him at the helm.

Reading the Annual Report makes me feel extremely proud to be part of such a fantastic project. There are of course times when we can get very caught up in the trees, as it were, and so it is brilliant to be reminded of the solid wood (beautiful polished oak!) that is TYA.

## **TYA Staff Team**

Our team comprises of:

Full time Manager: David Hodson

Senior Youth Worker: Katie Hibbert

Sessional Youth Worker: Scott Wight

Sessional Youth Worker: Andy Lumb

Sessional Youth Worker: Alan Jones

Sessional Craft Punks Textiles Worker: Laura Maciver

Bike Punks Lead: Aegir Maciver

Food Punks Lead: Kyle Davis

Food Punks Trainee: Derry McBarron

Bike Punks Trainee: Ryan Allen

Social Media Co-ordinator: Hayley Crawford  
Youth Club assistant: Lauren Crawford  
Food and Bike Punk Trainee, Aaron Thomson  
Administrator: Anna Hope

During this year we have had several staff moving on and we were very sorry to bid farewell to long term youth-workers, Miya Hayes, Andy Lumb and Heather Lothian who left for teacher training, a new life in Glasgow and a full time youth work position respectively. We also said goodbye to trainee youth worker Louise Morton and our social media co-ordinator, Hayley Crawford. We wish them all the very best of luck for the future.

New members of staff included:

Kyle Davis as Food Punks Lead from October 2018 along with Food Punk Trainee, Derry McBarron. We were delighted to welcome former CJS employee, Aaron Thomson onto the team as sessional youthworker following his previous role as Food/Bike Punk trainee. We have recruited Andy's replacement Alan Jones who has a background in sports and outdoor activities. We have also recruited a Bike Punk Trainee, Ryan Allan thanks to further support from Community Job Scotland.

On the horizon we look forward to welcoming our Go e-bike mechanic Oscar Reid and administrator Leena Crichton who will help support our back office.

Our volunteer team continues to grow and we have an ever increasing pool of creative and talented volunteers who work directly with young people through our drop-in sessions and through behind the scenes support which is often unseen but hugely important.

Our Board of Trustees also give of their time and expertise freely and oversee and guide our project. We're hugely grateful for all their support and acknowledge the considerable amount of time and effort each of them contribute towards the safe governance and running of our youth club.

Our current Board of Trustees:

Chair of Trustees: Christine Clarke  
Treasurer: Jorge Kubie  
Trustee: Amanda Kubie  
Trustee: Moira Stark  
Trustee: Catherine Maxwell Stuart  
Trustee: Graham Lumb

During this year we said goodbye to Trustees Ian Jenkins and Fiona Lumb who resigned from The Board after many years of service and support for TYA. We would like to offer heartfelt thanks for their commitment and valuable contribution over the years and send them very best wishes for the future.

Thanks also go to Board advisers, Paul Dickson and Grace Mitchell for their support with funding applications and HR respectively.

### **Our Project**

TYA remains the lead youth work organisation within the Tweeddale area working with young people between the ages of 10 and 25. Offering open access opportunities for all young people with particular success in engaging those who are typically hard to reach. Our focus is on building supportive, trusting relationships, decreasing barriers to participation, increasing social skills, confidence and resilience while supporting a decrease in risky behaviour. TYA, through its drop ins, structured group work, 1:1s and via its enterprise programmes provides a safe environment for young people to access opportunities and support, gain skills, build relationships and have some fun.

We continue to work in partnership with Peebles High School, the Community Learning and Development team, as well as third sector partners including the six Locality leads for Youth Work in the Scottish Borders, Peeblesshire Youth Trust, Peebles Can and Works+ among many others.

These partnerships continue becoming stronger, optimising the opportunities we can offer to our young people and strengthening our service delivery.

The needs of young people remain at the heart of all that we do. Current concerns include social isolation and loneliness, lack of confidence, self-esteem and resilience. We have seen changes in the type and severity of risk taking behaviour with the age of young people engaging in smoking, drinking and drug use becoming ever lower, the same with risks to sexual health. Over the last couple of years we have seen an increase in need around the use of social media and the internet, both the negatives and the positives and this has been a focus of inputs this year. There has also been a focus on mental wellbeing and self-care as we are seeing huge increases in poor mental health among our cohort.

2018/2019 has been a year of two halves at TYA with many funding streams finishing in April 2018 and an uncertain and precarious start to this financial year. We lost two very experienced youth-workers and had to reduce other staffing hours which led to a much reduced service during the Spring and early Summer. This reduced service was mainly sustained by the huge commitment of existing staff, often working in a voluntary capacity. This spoke volumes about their loyalty and continued belief in and passion for TYA and for that we are so incredibly grateful.

Financial support from several funders, including SBC's Accessibility Fund, Robert Haldean Smith Foundation, Bank of Scotland Foundation, Big Lottery, Sheldon Trust, Souter Trust, Saints and Sinners, Hugh Fraser Foundation and STV's Chance to Connect among others, including donations from our local community and businesses enabled service provision to be increased considerably from the end of summer 2018 and our financial position for 2019/20 with longer term funding secured looks much stronger and more positive.

Social enterprise support from LEADER, Robertson Trust and SEStran also gives us capacity to generate our own income through our Food and Bike Punk social enterprises and we believe that this income generation will help ensure TYA's survival for many years to come.

### **Our Current Activities**

#### **Monday**

Young Women's Group 4pm-6pm (Peebles, S1+)  
Young Men's group Period 1-2 (PHS, S1+)

#### **Tuesday**

Drop-in 6pm-8pm including drug, alcohol and sexual health inputs (Innerleithen, S2+)  
Bike Punks 6pm-8pm (Innerleithen S1+)

#### **Wednesday**

Craft Punks 6pm-8pm (Peebles P7+)  
Cookery session providing food for the Craft Punks Cohort.

#### **Thursday**

Drop-in 6pm-8pm (Innerleithen, P7-S1)

#### **Friday**

Dynamic Youth Award Group (PHS P7+)  
Youth Management 5pm-6pm (Peebles, P7+)  
Drop-in 7pm – 9pm (Peebles, P7+)

### **Drop-ins**

Drop-ins continue to be fundamental to our work with young people, particularly for those who are slightly more chaotic and who might typically be disengaged and not access any other services. Drop-ins offer a gateway to more structured work and support and are crucial to begin to build those essential, trusting relationships. For some of our young people these may be the only positive relationships that they experience. Drop-ins give young people a safe space where they can come and go as they please,

attendance and engagement is always voluntary and there is never any judgement or pressure. The relaxed nature of drop-ins allows young people to become more confident and secure enough to go on to access more structured activities within our drop-ins and within the wider TYA community and to take advantage of other support and signposting. Drop-ins provide an environment where young people can make friends, socialise, take part in activities and learning and begin to get a sense of 'fit' and belonging that is often not available to them in other areas of their life

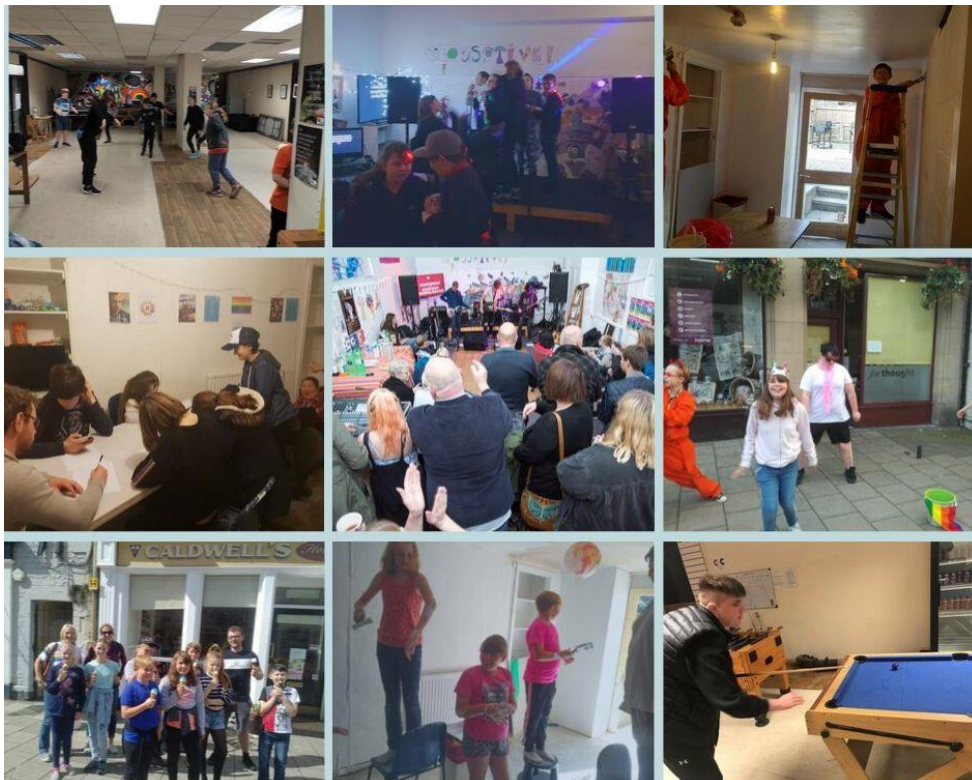
## Drop in Activities

Our young people continue to enjoy conversations over pool, air hockey, cooking/baking, table tennis, drumming and guitar playing and access to computers and consoles. We get outside as often as is possible with the Scottish weather and have played rounders, cricket and football, paddled in the Tweed and enjoyed many a BBQ. Young people have had great fun organising band nights and karaoke evenings.

We also offer more structured work within our drop in environment which is again voluntary, a key principle for all our youth work activities. We run inputs to both meet identified needs of our young people as highlighted earlier and also on topical and relevant items in the news. Structured inputs this year have included work on relationships, mental health including self-harm and suicide, physical health including healthy eating, risk taking behaviour, sexuality and LGBT, inclusivity and bullying.

There has been a concerted effort again this year to address young people's use of social media and their need to be connected. While this connectivity can be positive there are many negative associations and it is clear that it often has a hugely negative impact on mental wellbeing, in some cases reducing young people's social contact with the world and facilitating unhealthy and damaging relationships. We have run specific sessions on internet safety and appropriate contact as well as focusing on body image and self-esteem, self harm and suicide, eating disorders, blackmail and coercion and what positive relationships look like.

In the current climate of constant connectivity and online presence, TYA gives young people a physical space to build positive, healthy relationships with peers. Living in the moment, removed from constant pressure of how to look, how to behave and feel allows young people to enjoy themselves in the real world, and build relationships that start with where they really are. In their words, TYA is a place where they can be themselves.



## Structured Sessions

Continued funding from Corra has enabled us to continue work on reducing risk taking behaviour at our Tuesday drop-ins in Innerleithen. Engagement has been very positive and evaluation shows that our young people are showing positive changes. We have also had access to a younger cohort and have worked with them in an age appropriate way around prevention rather than early intervention.

Thanks to funding from The Bank of Scotland Mental Health fund and Big Lottery 'Improving Lives' fund (Stepping Stones) we have been able to continue 1:1 work and more structured group work outwith the drop-in environment. This has allowed us to use more focused interventions to meet individual needs. We have facilitated group work in partnership with the High School and the CLD team. The aim of both these funds was to support the most vulnerable, isolated and disengaged young people within our community to access provision, activities and opportunities to help them feel good about themselves, to feel heard and valued and to feel like they belong.

Project delivery has enabled numerous outcomes to be reached, including re-engagement in school; reduction in risky behaviour; increased connection with our local community through volunteering at both TYA and with community partners and reduced isolation and loneliness through inclusion in TYA activities.

Stepping Stones also enabled the conception of our Monday evening Young Women's group which was set up to specifically address the increasing needs of the young women within the TYA cohort and to give them a voice in a safe space where they could openly and honestly discuss and describe their issues and needs and learn how to keep themselves safe and advocate for themselves.



Although we were unsuccessful in securing funding to run our intended six month transitions programme, we were able to run a successful 4 week programme for nine young people in conjunction with our partners at Peeblesshire Youth Trust. This was a very successful project and partnership which we hope to continue delivering with PYT for years to come and we are heartened to see the majority of participants regularly accessing generic youth work provision at TYA.

It is important to note the pivotal role our youth management team play in informing the structured work we deliver and the input they have on trips and activities within the youth club, they advocate for all members and are involved in pivotal decision making processes including recruitment.

As part of our ambitious targets to upgrade and improve both our youth clubs the YM team worked incredibly hard to transform a relatively unused room at the rear of our youth club into the 'Dillon Scott Memorial Craic Den to commemorate former service user and volunteer Dillon Scott who tragically died in April 2016. The opening of this structured group work and conversation space was celebrated with a big event including Food Punk catering, a plaque created in the Bike Punks workshop and a band night made up of acts involved with TYA.

Work on this space allowed us previously unavailable access to our outside space at the back of the youth club and young people have worked with Peebles Can to decide how this outside space should look with a herb garden, seating and "zen table" part of the plan of work later in 2019.

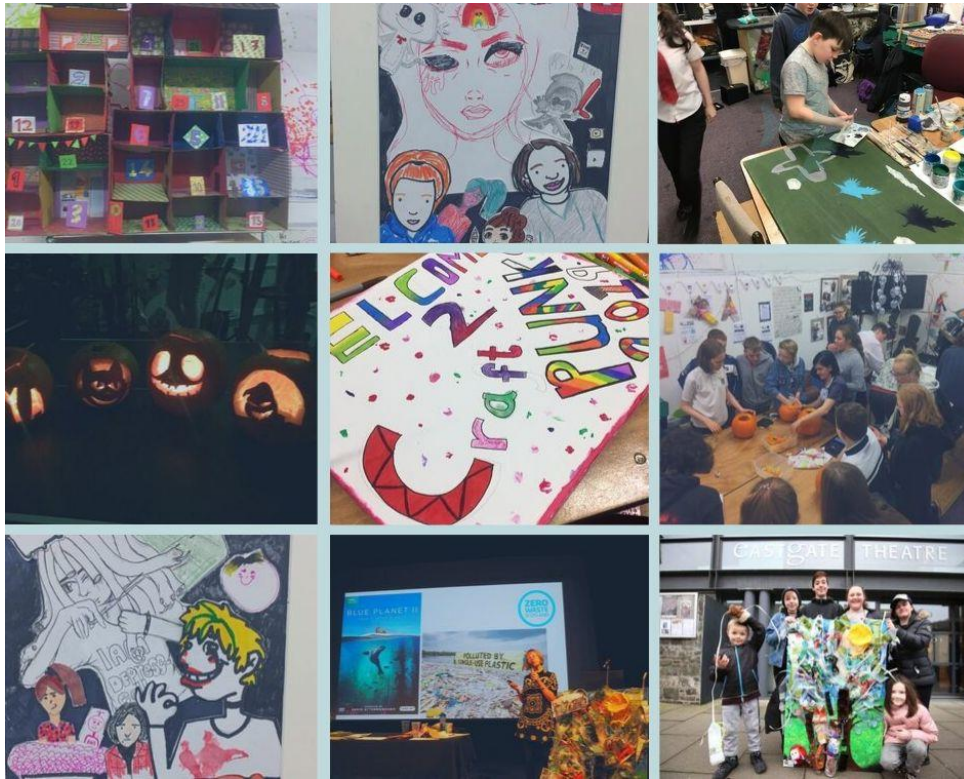
Our youth management team freely give of their time to help make decisions for the benefit of all our members and we couldn't achieve our outcomes without their input and commitment.

## **Craft Punks**

Through funding issues we unfortunately had to close our Craft Punk sessions between May and October 2018 but we're delighted to report that Craft Punks reopened in October stronger and better than ever. It remains one of our most popular sessions engaging upwards of 25 people per session and most importantly engaging with young people who would not usually attend other provision available at TYA. We have had a very busy five months, engaging in some exciting community opportunities that came our way, including:

- Partnership work with Changeworks in Peebles who delivered inputs on reducing energy use which saw Craft Punks creating an advent calendar containing an energy saving tip in each of it's windows which was displayed in Change Works High Street window.
- Project work with Tweedgreen plastics group where we gathered plastic waste from our community and spent a cold and windy Saturday morning creating a sculpture outside the Eastgate. This sculpture was then shown at an environmental talk in the Eastgate.

- Designing and learning how to use stencils in conjunction with two local artists Michael Jessings and Ross MacRae who are working in partnership with Eildon Housing to create a huge mural at their Tweed Bridge Court site in Peebles. The planning sessions have been great fun and the young people can't wait to get out with their spray cans in April so a huge thanks to all involved!



## **Social Enterprise**

Thanks to a large investment from LEADER matched by Robertson trust, SEStran and RH Smith Foundation we have the potential to begin to generate meaningful income to reinvest in TYA through our social enterprise projects.

## **Food Punks**

Our outside and event catering social enterprise has grown beyond all recognition from its early roots in our Peebles Drop-ins. This year we have finally been able to employ a chef and also welcomed a CJS Food Punk trainee to the team in October.

We have had an incredibly busy year supporting events within our own community including: Tweedlove and Traquair House events, Christmas light switch-ons in both Peebles and Innerleithen and catering for community groups including Peebles Can, Innerleithen Church and Peebles High School. We have also provided cookery sessions and demos at Langlee and in Eyemouth as well as cookery sessions closer to home at our youth clubs and within Peebles High School.

A great example of our work with young people was our participation at Tweedvalley Forest Festival in October, demonstrating how to smoke trout. Our Food Punk's team caught the fish, killed them, gutted them and smoked them all under the guidance of chef Kyle.



Food Punks works brilliantly as a model of engagement, not only for those with an interest in food. We often work with some of the most disengaged disenfranchised young people. The Food Punk's environment not only provides opportunities to build tangible skills in food prep and cooking but also softer skills with increases in confidence and self-esteem and continued challenge to build resilience. Young people also begin to understand the importance of commitment and reliability, the value of teamwork and the ability to self-direct and take pride in their hard work.

Throughout the year, Food Punks crew of 9 y/p have catered 11 events and generated £5,000 turnover with a total profit of £2,000 to feed back into the Food Punk/TYA coffers.

Future developments for Food Punks include the development of a stand-alone Food Punks website, purchase of a van which we intend to have wrapped with the Food Punk logo and some eye catching graphics. We also intend to upgrade our kitchen space in Innerleithen to the standard of a commercial kitchen. Meaning that we can really get ourselves out there and generate some much needed income to support the sustainability of TYA.



## **Bike Punks**

This year, thanks to funding from SEStran and LEADER there has been a huge investment of both time and resources in our Bike Punks workshop in Innerleithen. We have created a fully functioning workshop that provides an excellent teaching space for our young people which enables them to gain metalwork skills, use their immense creativity and achieve meaningful accreditation in the form of Dynamic Youth/Youth Achievement awards.

The workshop is a genuine art fabrication space and has been used for many creative projects to date. Throughout this year, Bike Punks have created 5 metalwork signs that have now been placed in railway stations throughout Scotland including Falkirk and Tweedbank. Thanks to further funding from SEStran we now have a library of 10 e-bikes and 2 cargo e-bikes which will be available for hire to the general public from mid April 2019. These ventures have provided part time employment to two young people from the Tweeddale area.

Bike Punks has proved a very successful place for young people who have struggled to engage with formal education and we have supported young people's blended learning as part of their school timetable in some cases. This is a new aspect to our youth work delivery but it's important to note that young people's engagement and attendance at Bike Punks remains voluntary. Through Bike Punks we have offered a positive model for y/p to engage and gain accreditation and Bike Punks have hosted two groups from the High School's employability class this year which they continued to attend on Tuesday evenings when their day time sessions finished.

While all on the Bike Punks team have learnt valuable metal work, design and creative skills, they've also benefited considerably from working as part of a team, problem solving, making a commitment and being allowed to input creatively to the beautiful and sometimes wacky things they've worked on.

Moving forward there are plans afoot for Bike Punks to create public art/sculptures throughout the Tweeddale area, including an ambitious project to construct an archway from redundant bike parts to welcome visitors to the Tweed Valley. We hope to continue growing Bike Punks and the Go e-bike project to become self sustaining and to continue engaging young people as well as generating much needed income for Tweeddale Youth Action.



## Out and about

Our summer programme last year was sadly curtailed by lack of funding, but we still managed to take young people on trips to the Youth Beatz festival, M&D's and tree climbing at Traquair. As the funding landscape became less gloomy we were able to offer our young people other opportunities and experiences including ice-skating at Murrayfield, a trip to the Edinburgh Christmas Markets, Go-karting and a visit to Laser Quest.

We have made a concerted effort to ensure that young people on our periphery have been included, particularly those who we have supported through 1:1 work. This has been a great way to involve those young people who are socially isolated and socially anxious in fun activities that have strengthened peer relationships and networks and solidified trusting relationships with adults within the youth work team. In addition to our trips we have been involved in other activities in the Tweeddale area, including taking a group of young people to a 'See Me' mental health event, which was highly relevant to their needs as well as being great fun. We've also been involved in drumming workshops and dance classes which gave our young people the opportunity to express their creative sides.



Across all activities Tweeddale Youth Action has created 3,836 youth work opportunities from 160 active members throughout the year.

### Our Funders

We are extremely grateful to the continued financial support and investment from:

The Robertson Trust; Scottish Borders Council; Souter Trust; Corra Foundation; Bank of Scotland Foundation, Big Lottery and Souter Trust.

We are also extremely grateful for new financial support from the Sheldon Trust; Robert Haldean Smith Foundation; LEADER; Saints and Sinners Club; STV Children's Appeal, Hugh Fraser Foundation; Erskine Cunningham Hill Trust; STV Chance to Connect and SEStran.

Their collective support has meant that, despite difficulties at the beginning of the year we are ending with service provision being maintained as well as the continued growth of our social enterprise initiatives..

Outside of these funding awards we are also incredibly grateful for the donations and financial support from local businesses and the wider community.

Currently we are in a relatively stable position with respect to funding, but we are ever mindful of the funding environment and we continue to face the challenge of securing essential funding so that we can continue to provide a relevant and meaningful youth service during 2019-2020.

### **Outlook**

We still remain vulnerable to the short termist nature and lack of sustainability of third sector funding but we continue to deliver high quality, innovative and relevant youth work and our funders and supporters recognise the value and impact of our work with young people.

We consistently meet our funded outcomes and remain hopeful that the value of this work will continue to be recognised and continue to attract further financial support.

We have excellent community links and support from statutory and community partners, stakeholders and parents who understand the benefits that TYA bring to our community and the positive difference we make to young people's lives in the Tweeddale area.

Food and Bike Punk's income generation capacity also continues to grow and, although it would be fair to say we are at early stages, we remain confident that these strands will reduce our reliance on grant funding, contribute to TYA's sustainability and help us retain key staff in the future.

We are looking forward to a Youth Management residential in May and a full Summer Programme this year including a transitions residential, there are numerous Food Punk events on the calendar so 2019-2020 looks like it will be a busy and full on year for our young people and our staff and volunteer team and we wouldn't have it any other way!

We are looking to 2019-2020 with optimism and the hope for further growth and development of TYA