



Tweeddale Youth Action Report To The Trustees For The Year Ended 31 March 2020



Introduction from the Chair

As ever it is a pleasure to reflect on another year in the very busy life of TYA, although among the high points and successes, we have faced some (not inconsiderable) challenges and sadness at the tragic death and devastating loss of TYA's Senior Youth Worker, Katie Hibbert.

Katie worked tirelessly to make the world a better place for children and young people and it is a much sadder place now she is no longer with us. Our thoughts are with her family and everybody who knew and loved her.

Drop In's, structured group work and one to one work remain at the heart of TYA provision. 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 our most vulnerable young people and evaluation has demonstrated the positive impact that comes of the right support at the right time.

We remain grateful to all our funders, supporters and donors for the money and support they give us and for their belief in the work we are doing.

All this activity has taken place within the challenging environment of considerable change within our staff team, largely due to the rapid growth of our organisation.

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 Chair- Christine Clarke

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, Aaron Thomson

Sessional Youth Worker: Alan Jones

Sessional Youth Worker Chloe Lacey

Sessional Craft Punks Textiles Worker: Laura Maciver

Food Punks Lead: Kyle Davis

Food Punks lead Mary Shields

Food Punks Trainee: Derry McBarron

Food Punks Trainee Jack Turnbull

Bike Punks Lead: Aegir Maciver

Bike Punks Trainee: Ryan Allen

Bike Punks Trainee Matthew Rogan

Bike Punks e-bike co-ordinator Austin Reid

Bike Punks cargo bike rider Hamish Brown

Bike Punks cargo bike rider Evan Maciver
Youth Club Assistant: Lauren Crawford
Administrator Leena Crichton
Book keeper: Anna Hope

There have been considerable changes within the staff team but most notably we are devastated to report the tragic and untimely death of Senior Youth Worker Katie Hibbert. Katie was a TYA stalwart who has been with us for several years and her death has impacted us all on almost every conceivable level. Our thoughts are with Katie's family and friends and young people and colleagues who all meant so much to Katie and who she meant so much to.

Other changes within the team have included Community Jobs Scotland Trainees leaving and moving on to paid work and new trainees starting with Food and Bike Punks.

Bike Punks e-bikes and cargo e-bikes also saw 3 new positions created for e-bike rentals and cargo bike deliveries.

Food Punks lead Kyle Davis moved on to return to hotel catering and we welcomed new Food Punks lead, Mary Shields to the team.

Youth worker Alan Jones moved on in May and we welcomed former service user Chloe Lacey to our youth work team as well as new administrator Leena Crichton.

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

Trustee Grace Mitchell

Our Project

TYA remains the lead youth work organisation within the Tweeddale area working with young people between the ages of 10 and 25. We offer 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. Through drop ins, structured group work, 1:1s and via our enterprise programmes TYA provides a safe environment for young people to access opportunities and support, gain skills, build relationships, feel a sense of belonging and have some fun.

2019/20 has been a very difficult and challenging year with huge opportunities and excitement countered by grief and sadness and change and upheaval within our staff team. A timely reminder once again that it is the talented and committed staff and volunteers that build these incredible and positive relationships that make such a huge difference to young people's lives.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all staff and volunteers that are so passionate about making that difference and who have worked and pushed so hard during these difficult times!

Our Current Activities

Monday

Bike Punks workshop 9-3 (Innerleithen 1:1 and group work support)

Girls group 4-6pm (Peebles S2+)

Tuesday

Drop-in 6pm-8pm (Innerleithen, S2+)

Bike Punks 12-8 (Innerleithen 1:1 and group work support)

Wednesday

Craft Punks 6pm-8pm (Peebles P7+)

Food Punks cookery session providing food for the Craft Punks Cohort.

Bike Punks 9-5 (Innerleithen 1:1 and group work support)

Thursday

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

Bike Punks 9-4 (Innerleithen)

Friday

Youth Management 5pm-6pm (Peebles, P7+)

Drop-in 6pm – 9pm (Peebles, P7+)

Bike Punks 9-4 (Innerleithen)

Saturday

Drop in 7-10pm (Peebles P7+ targeted risk taking behaviour group)

Drop-ins

Drop-ins continue to be fundamental to our work with young people and casual, commitment free access encourages attendance and participation by those young people who would not typically access uniformed, sports or music groups or other extra-curricular activity.

We have a wide range of service users and attendees, many with different needs and accessing for different reasons but there is an agreed need and demand for this environment where young people can make friends, socialise, take part in activities and learning and feel a sense of belonging that is often not available to them in other areas of their life.

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 some of the only positive adult relationships that they experience and TYA youth work staff and volunteers are well placed to signpost services, support and opportunities in a non judgemental way.

Activities on offer include the usual table tennis, pool, table football and air hockey etc as well as access to a wide array of games, electronic and old school.

It's good to see that old favourites such as dominoes and card games are still popular and former members who remain in contact have told us how useful this has been for making friends at college and university.

We get outside as often as the weather will allow us and through the year we have played football, tennis, cricket, badminton and a thousand and one variations of running around with a ball. With huge thanks to Peebles CAN, our Peebles Youth Club garden area now looks great and we have a wonderful space for outdoor conversations and barbecues.

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 meet identified needs of our young people as well as discussing topical and relevant items in the news. Structured inputs this year have included work on relationships, mental health including self-harm and suicide, online safety, physical health including healthy eating, risk taking behaviour, sexual health and sexuality and inclusivity and bullying.

In the current climate of constant connectivity and increasingly online nature of relationships, 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, now through our Saturday evening drop-ins in Peebles.



Funding from The Bank of Scotland Mental Health fund and Big Lottery 'Improving Lives' fund (Stepping Stones) allows us to continue 1:1 work and more structured group work outwith the drop-in environment. 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. This has allowed us to use more focused interventions to meet individual needs and we continue to work in partnership with the High School and the CLD team to identify y/p needing support.

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.

Once again we collaborated with Peeblesshire Youth Trust to deliver a summer transitions programme for ten Primary sevens moving up to High School. Weekly sessions culminated in an overnight camping trip to Netherurd.

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 represent youth club 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.

Work on this space allowed us previously unavailable access to our outside space at the back of the youth club and in April 2019, young people worked with TCV and Peebles Can to create a herb garden, seating area and "zen table". We now have a popular and much used space for quiet reflection and outdoor group work as well as a barbecue or 2 ☺

Craft Punks

Art and craft continues to be highly effective in engaging young people who wouldn't typically attend TYA drop-ins.

The team have been busy with a wide array of projects and affordable decorations, tying in themes throughout the year but most notable, we were able to participate in a huge, 100+ metre long mural at Tweedbridge Court in Peebles.

Artists Ross McCrae and Michael Jessing had previously worked with Craft Punks to create stencils and over 2 days in May 2019, our young people got hands on with spray painting and creating the mural.





Food Punks

Food Punks has made huge strides forward and funding from LEADER and Robertson Trust has allowed us to buy our own van and invest in our Innerleithen kitchen which is now of a commercial standard with the space and equipment for Food Punks to cater more ambitious events.

Our eye-catching van and stand alone Food Punks website has helped to promote our catering services and brought in new business.

Word of mouth is still our greatest asset though and we are grateful to current and former customers who continue to recommend us to friends and family.

This has been our busiest year yet with the spring and summer months sometimes seeing us deliver 2 events a week.

Throughout the year, Food Punks crew of 18 y/p have catered 30 events and doubled turnover with a total profit of over £6,000 to feed back into the Food Punk/TYA coffers.

Events have been a mix of event catering, outside catering, cookery sessions, cookery demos and trialed crepe and toastie stalls at Peebles Community Market.

Food Punks continues to work well as a model of engagement, not only for those with an interest in food. We often work with some of the most disengaged and disenfranchised young people and the Food Punk's environment not only provides opportunities to build industry specific skills in food preparation and cookery but also highly transferable skills such as communication, team work and organisation skills. Food Punks relish the challenge and pressure that go hand in hand with event deadlines and all of this helps to build

confidence, self-esteem and resilience. Food Punks understand the importance of commitment and reliability, the value of teamwork and the ability to self-direct and take pride in their hard work.







It's not all been work though and in February we were delighted to take some of our Food Punks through to Edinburgh for a fine dining lunch at Michelin starred The Kitchin. Best of all, we were able to meet celebrity chef and patron Tom Kitchin who also told us that Food Punks could get in touch if they were interested in work experience.

This is an incredible opportunity and the whole experience of sitting together and eating food that many hadn't tried before was inspirational and aspirational, inspiring the brigade to keep pushing.



Bike Punks

Bike Punks continues to grow and grow and in April 2019, funding support from SEStran allowed us to add an electric bike library and electric cargo bike delivery service to Bike Punks output.



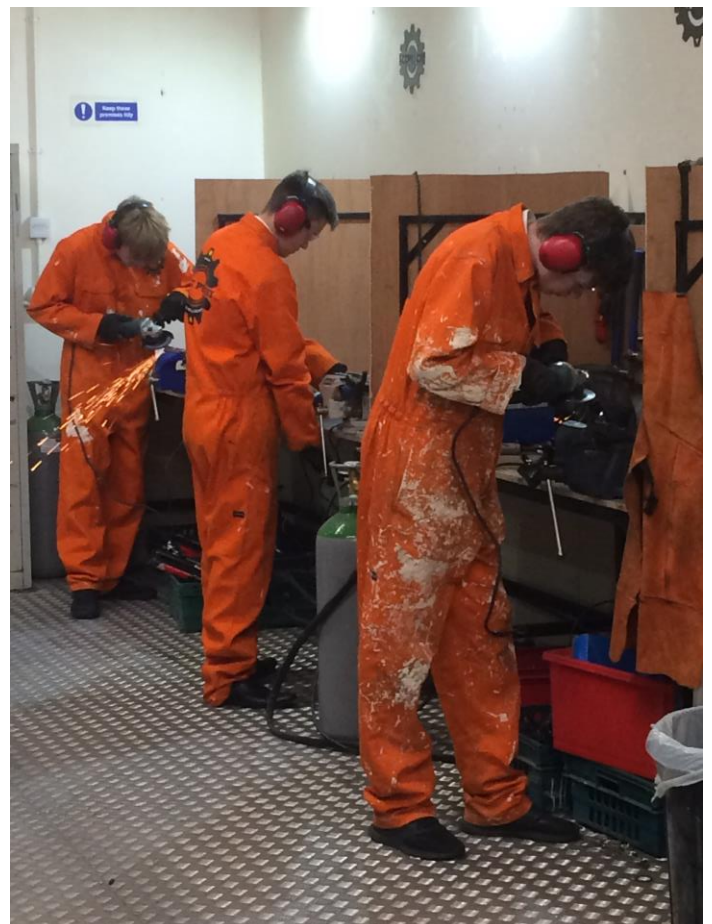


Bike Punks continues to be very successful at engaging young people who have struggled to engage with formal education. We continue to support young people's blended learning as part of their school timetable as well as through open access workshops on Tuesday evenings.

Future plans include continued income generation from manufacture and design opportunities such as the production of bike boxes for electric cargo bikes.

Specialised metalwork equipment such as our CNC machine will also give our young people hands on, practical experience of tools and machinery that will be used in the Mountain Bike Innovation Centre that is scheduled for Innerleithen in the coming years.

Understanding how to use this niche equipment will open employment opportunities for our young people and help keep young talent in the Scottish Borders.





Out and about

It's been a busy year and we have managed to get out and about quite a bit, particularly during the summer.

High-lights have included lunch at The Kitchin and residential trips to Stirling (Youth Management Team) and Netherurd (Transitions) but we've also had some weird and wonderful experiences, including a disastrous trip to Blackpool that saw us caught up in the M6 being closed in both directions for 3 hours and an impromptu photo on the central reservation.



Once again we made it back to Youth Beatz music festival in Dumfries and once again this was many of our young people's first gig and experience of live music.





Many of our young people don't get to the beach very often but our annual pilgrimage to the seaside included 1 young person who had never been to a beach before!

This year's seaside trips to Burnt Island in Fife also allowed us to catch up with one of our long term members and Food Punk stalwarts who had recently moved there. His family are still back in the Borders and it's great to be able to maintain a link.

Making friends, consolidating friendships, breaking down barriers and opening themselves up to new ideas and new experiences can be life changing and we have seen increased confidence, self esteem and aspirations as well as reduced anxiety, loneliness and isolation on the back of these trips.

It's not rocket science, it's about belonging, having an identity and seeing there is reason to be optimistic and hopeful for the future. If young people don't get this through positive experiences, they will find it through other means.

Across all activities Tweeddale Youth Action has created 3,819 youth work opportunities from 148 active members throughout the year.

Our Funders

We are extremely grateful to the continued financial support and investment from our funders The Robertson Trust; Scottish Borders Council; LEADER; Corra Foundation; Bank of Scotland Foundation; National Lottery; Saints and Sinners Club; STV Children's Appeal; Scottish Government and SEStran

Their collective support has allowed us to maintain and grow both our service provision and 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.

Retrospective funding from LEADER has proven to be particularly challenging. Large project costs that needed paying upfront before being reclaimed and a slow and onerous claims process led to cashflow difficulties and considerable worry. We are tremendously grateful for a loan from Peebles Common Good Fund which allowed us to complete our LEADER project spend and invest in much needed equipment and resources for Food and Bike Punks.

We are now 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 2020-2021.

Outlook

The past 18 months have seen unprecedented change and progress and we are now on the cusp of owning our Innerleithen premises, giving us control and ownership of our Innerleithen Youth Club and our Food and Bike Punk projects which are based there.

Food and Bike Punks income aspirations are now a reality and both have already contributed to making Innerleithen Youth Club ownership a reality.

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 still remain vulnerable to the short termist nature of third sector funding and recent Covid 19 restrictions leave Food and Bike Punks income generation uncertain in the short term.

The year ahead will almost certainly be strange and different but we must embrace change and adapt services to best meet the needs of our young people.

We look forward to 2020-2021 with optimism and hope for the further growth and development of TYA and the continued increase of services, opportunities and support for young people across Tweeddale.