



Tweeddale Youth Action Report To The Trustees For The Year Ended 31 March 2021



Introduction from the Chair

The past 12 months have been a time like no other, but it is during these unprecedented times that we see truly examples of endurance, determination and dedication- examples that we as a Board are proudly able to see made by our Tweeddale Youth Action project manager, staff and young people alike.

It is our view as a Board that our evening drop-ins, group work, external activities and one to one work are integral components of the foundation of TYA. These components ensure that we adhere to our mission of building genuine, long standing relationships with our young people, which further emphasises that TYA is a place of inclusivity and diversity. One great example is TYA's participation in 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.

We are extremely grateful to funders who continued to show faith in TYA during the covid crisis. Their funding allowed us to pay our contribution to furloughed staff and also ensured that we could offer online activities (via Zoom) to our young people during those months when face-to-face contact within the youth club was prohibited.

Undoubtedly, TYA has faced challenging times and uncertain circumstances. However, the future's looking bright and will no doubt secure TYA as a shining beacon within Scottish Borders youth work. The soon purchase of a new youth club in Innerleithen signifies the need and value that TYA brings to young people throughout the Borders community. As a Board, this expansion represents an exciting opportunity to provide more young people with a safe space and a sense of belonging, particularly during a time of maturity that is often confusing and overwhelming. We would like to also note the continual growth of Food Punks- which has become an integral part of TYA, much in the same way as our drop-ins or activities. In the last year Food Punks has gone from strength to strength and has become synonymous with quality and innovation, and we are incredibly proud of what has been achieved under the guiding hand of Dave, and the commitment and dedication of every young person involved. We are extremely excited to see where Food Punks will go, and we have no doubt that it will continue to evolve and develop as the years go on.

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 young people of Tweeddale. As the Chair I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my fellow Board members, all of whom are skilled in a number of diverse subjects, which undeniably ensured that we are able to provide a concise and comprehensive vision from which Dave is able to implement and execute. Whilst we may differ in our knowledge or experience, what unites us is our dedication to ensuring that young people receive the best possible opportunities, in a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment- something which I believe has previously been achieved, presently maintained and will continue on as such.

As a Board we must note that none of the things achieved within this report, or the reports to come could have been achieved without TYA's project manager, Dave Hodson. To know Dave is to know tenacity, determination, grit, endurance, leadership- and most importantly a pillar of strength within the community.

Grace Hopper once said: "*A ship in port is safe but that's not what ships are built for.*" Dave has led TYA through stormy seas and uncertain times, and as we can see, has navigated us to calm waters, all the while remaining passionate about what we do, and eternally optimistic for the undeniably bright days ahead for TYA.

TYA Staff Team

Our team comprises of:

Full time Manager: David Hodson

Sessional Youth Worker: Scott Wight

Sessional Youth worker, Aaron Thomson

Sessional Youth Worker Chloe Lacey

Sessional Youth Worker Kristin Denholm

Sessional Craft Punks Textiles Worker: Laura Maciver

Food Punks Trainee Jack Turnbull

Bike Punks Lead: Aegir Maciver

Bike Punks Trainee Matthew Rogan

Bike Punks e-bike co-ordinator Austin Reid

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 sad to report redundancies within the Bike Punks team and former Bike Punks lead, Aegir Maciver and former e-bike co-ordinator Austin Reid are no longer working at TYA.

Other changes within the team have included Community Jobs Scotland Trainees, Matthew and Jack moving on to paid work and new Food Punk trainees, Jocelyn and Amber starting with Food Punks.

Long time Sessional Youth Worker, Scott Wight has moved on to focus on his management role at Works Plus and Craft Punks worker Laura Maciver has also moved on.

Food Punks lead, Mary Shields has moved on to focus on her cafe at Traquair but we continue to collaborate and work in partnership for events.

We have welcomed two former service users to our volunteer team and their support, particularly with Food Punks online sessions has been invaluable.

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.

There have been changes within our Board of Trustees and we are delighted to welcome new Trustees, Samuel Marriott Dowding, Jamie McCubbin, Lorna Stoddart and Miriam Adcock.

Trustees Amanda and Jorge Kubie have stepped down. We are grateful for their support and hard work during the past years.

TYA Chair, Chris Clarke has also stepped down as Chair but remains a TYA

Trustee. Our current Board of Trustees:

Chair of Trustees: Samuel- Marriott Dowding

Treasurer: Catherine Maxwell Stuart

Trustee: Moira Stark

Trustee: Graham Lumb

Trustee Grace Mitchell

Trustee Christine Clarke

Trustee Miriam Adcock

Trustee: Jamie Mc Cubbin

Trustee Lorna Stoddart

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.

2020/21 has been a very difficult and challenging year, dominated by the impact of Corona Virus, both directly on our children and young people, staff and volunteers and also through the restrictions on being able to deliver face to face work.

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!

Overview of Activities

Restrictions easing and re-starting again have led to a stop/start service- combining online delivery and support with in person sessions as and when possible. The following is an overview of regular and ongoing activities during the year:

Online:

Monday to Friday lunchtime and late afternoon phone and online support.

Wednesday evening quiz

Thursday afternoon baking ingredients drop off- treat bags and art supplies

Friday afternoon baking session

Ad-hoc art sessions- t-shirt printing, poster competitions and out and about treasure hunt games

Face to face youth work:

Monday- Thursday daytimes:

Food Punks preparation and cooking

Tuesday

5 a side football (Gytes- Peebles 6-7pm)

Wednesday

Drop-in (Peebles 5-7pm)

Thursday

Drop-in (Innerleithen 5-7pm)

Friday

Youth management team (Peebles 5-5.30pm)

Drop-in (Peebles 6-8pm)

Saturday

Targeted risk taking behavior session (Peebles 7-9pm)

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 sign post services, support and opportunities in a non judgemental way.

Activities on offer include the usual table tennis, pool and table football 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 many young people seek interactions and games that are rarely played at home.

Corona Virus restrictions have limited numbers of young people able to attend our drop-ins- particularly indoors. Never have we been more grateful for our Peebles Youth Club garden space!

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 through

our Saturday evening drop-ins in Peebles.

Stepping Stones: We appointed Sessional Youth Worker, Aaron Thomson as TYA's Stepping Stones Project Worker and during this year Aaron has delivered valuable one to one and small group work support for young people within Tweeddale.

Of particular note was project cupcake- supporting y/p to make and deliver cupcakes to local businesses and organisations that have stayed open, supporting our community during the pandemic. During the year, 5 y/p baked and distributed 70 boxes of 10 cupcakes- an excellent way of bringing some cheer and being at the centre of community life.





Food Punks

This has been a very strange year for Food Punks. Before the Corona Virus pandemic struck we had a busy calendar of events throughout the year- almost all of which were either cancelled or postponed.

When restrictions lifted for a brief time we were able to deliver a couple of events- including much anticipated barbecues for Langlee Youth Club.

We did, however find opportunities to include our young people in the Food Punks crew and we managed to teach some pretty nifty cookery skills through delivering online cookery sessions to other organisations, including youth groups in Barra and South Uist!

Peebles Citizens Advice Bureau approached us to make some hampers for their staff and volunteers and this gave Food Punks a great opportunity to learn some new techniques and skills- including smoking our own salmon.

Despite the lack of events we incredibly managed to earn £5,000- half of which is profit to support TYA activities.

During this year we also managed to form some great partnerships:

Firstly with "Whippin Cheesecakes"- a micro enterprise set up by one of our youth club members, making and selling cheesecake through social media. TYA gave him access to a commercial kitchen and equipment and business support.

Secondly with Stuart from Underdog: Stuart used our kitchen as a base for his Underdog catering trailer preparation and included our young people in food preparation and service at an incredibly high level.

Stuart is the holder of a Michellin Bib Gourmand and has experience of working in some of the finest kitchens in Europe!

Through Food Punks/Underdog we have been able to support 5 Food Punk volunteers-

three of them moving into paid CJS roles directly with TYA.



Bike Punks

We have been unable to open our Bike Punks workshop this year but we have recruited a volunteer team of retired engineers and we are working towards re-opening the workshop for projects focusing on STEM something along the lines of A Team workshop meets Robot Wars

Specialised metalwork equipment such as our CNC machine will 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

Opportunities to get out and about have been thin on the ground and Corona Virus restrictions made travel virtually impossible.

We did still manage to get into the fresh air though and during the summer we had several walks, picnics and treasure hunts in Peebles and Innerleithen.





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.

Online:

Corona Virus restrictions have forced us to adapt and use our resources to best support young people during times when face to face youth work has not been allowed.

As detailed at the beginning of the report, we have maintained contact and offered support to our young people, many of whom have struggled with social isolation and loneliness- as well as facing increased poverty and sometimes fraught home environments.

At times, TYA represented a link to the outside world with sessions being something to look forward to. Activity included treat bags, activities, tutored art sessions and opportunities to come together and have fun. Of all the activities we delivered online, by far the biggest success has been our weekly cookery sessions- participated in by sometimes more than 50 young people each week.

These sessions gave us an opportunity to bring everyone together, to teach some pretty nifty baking and cookery skills, to help address food poverty by supplying all the ingredients needed and often bringing some cheer and something to look forward to on a Friday afternoon.

Delivering the ingredients and treat bags on a Thursday gave us a good opportunity for garden gate and door step conversations and for those who didn't join us on a Friday we still managed to remain in contact with them through social media- celebrating their cooking and trouble shooting when things didn't work as planned.

These sessions have been so effective at bringing everyone together that we are now working towards upgrading cameras and lighting to allow us to continue delivering these sessions in the future- reaching young people in remote communities that struggle to access provision at our youth clubs.



Across all activities Tweeddale Youth Action has created 2,034 youth work opportunities from 76 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; Bank of Scotland Foundation, National Lottery, LEADER, Saints and Sinners Club, STV Children's Appeal and Children In Need.

We are also extremely grateful for new financial support from Garfield Weston Foundation, Hugh Fraser Foundation and Ryvoan Trust

Their collective support has meant that, despite the challenges of Covid 19 we have been able to continue supporting young people and making a positive difference in their lives

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 2021-2022.

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 still 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.

Looking forward, we are in the process of purchasing our Innerleithen Youth Club. This will allow us to make necessary repairs and refresh this much needed youth work space. Owning our own building also sets down a marker and gives a future legacy of youth work within Innerleithen and Tweeddale. Innerleithen Youth Club is the home of our commercial kitchen and bike repair/metal work workshop and our goal is to continue supporting learning, training and youth enterprise during the daytime while continuing to offer a universal youth work service during the evenings.

Our Peebles Youth Club is also in need of redecorating and refreshing. One of our goals for the coming year is to update the youth club- offering the fit for purpose, vibrant and exciting space that our young people need and deserve.

Corona Virus restrictions continue to ease and we are hopeful that they will allow the return of face to face work.

We are planning the busiest and most active Easter and summer programme we have ever undertaken and we are looking to 2021-2022 with optimism and the hope for further growth and development of TYA