

HEXHAM

YOUTH

INITIATIVE



Annual Report 2022

Working to improve the lives of young people
in the Hexham area

Welcome from the Chair of Trustees



I am always delighted to write some introductory words for our annual report.

I continue to feel absolutely privileged to head up the Hexham Youth Initiative. The Annual Report, with its photos and quotes, gives a good idea of the scope and work of our charity, an organisation which I know means a great deal to so many young people and families in Hexham and the surrounding area.

We can see from the numbers of young people participating this year that there has been a great surge in the use of voluntary after-school and holiday provision. We think this has come from the need to socialise and make the most of life following the restrictions imposed by lockdowns.

The Hexham Youth Initiative has responded with a great many different weekly groups and activities, both general and specialised. In addition to the D of E group and Young Carers, we have offered various Drop-in sessions, Junior groups, football sessions and a new addition, an art club.

We try, wherever possible, to respond to need and have offered a Ukrainian club this year, for young

people who have re-located to the area, escaping the war in Ukraine. We have supported 14 Ukrainian children and young people this summer.

Our holiday provisions have been busier than ever this year. This is in part due to funding from Northumberland County Council which enabled us to offer many activities for free with a meal. The Holiday Action Fund is designed to combat holiday hunger and the sessions have been extremely popular, with often over 100 young people attending. It is also because we produce such a varied programme, with activities to suit everyone, ranging from surfing and wild swimming to cinema days, art and craft sessions and theme park trips.

In term time, we also run a small alternative education programme which offers core subjects and vocational learning to young people who, for whatever reason, are struggling in mainstream school. We are delighted to report that most of the young people who join this

provision go on to further training and education. The staff of tutors and support workers, headed by our Alternative Education Co-ordinator, Karren Spowart, ensure that young people begin to feel better about themselves and start to plan for a more positive future.

As well as these things, staff and volunteers from the Youth Initiative support many children and young people on a one to one basis as well as their families. This intensive one to one support is time consuming and often very complicated, but can be life changing. The positive relationships that young people form can be just what they need to move on..

The whole HYI team of staff and volunteers deserve huge praise for their dedication and commitment in the way they have worked this year. I know they all work above and beyond their job descriptions to support and encourage young people, often working antisocial hours and long days.

I must also thank the Town Council for their continued commitment to support our organisation, both in terms of core funding and also because of the huge support they give us within the Town. We are all looking forward to the redevelopment of the skate park area, the result of a great deal of partnership working. Thanks also to



Antonia Azocar Nevin and the Rank Foundation for their commitment to this project.

We are also grateful for the support of Northumberland County Council and specifically to Carol Leckie, for her help and support ensuring the robustness of our safeguarding practice at HYI and the Holiday Action Fund Team.

Sincere thanks to all of the funders, large and small, listed on the back page of this report, whose trust and vision have enabled us to carry out this work.

HYI trustees have continued to be loyal and dedicated in this challenging year. Their support is very much appreciated. I am very proud to be part of such a talented, highly skilled team who are passionate and committed to work hard to ensure the continued success of the charity. As ever, we are all supported by Mandy Senior, whose administrative expertise we value so much!

The coming year looks to be a challenging one. We know already that many families are dealing with complex issues, compounded by the cost of living crisis. I hope you enjoy our report and that you can all be involved in our project in some way in the coming months as we continue to work for positive change in our community.

Di Harris
November 2022

Facts and Figures

Between November 2021 and October 2022 the Hexham Youth Initiative worked with 684 different young people. This is a substantial increase on the previous year's total of 549. We believe this is because of an increased urge to participate in social activities following the pandemic and that it also reflects our substantial and very well attended holiday programmes which were offered free or at a very reduced cost. The contacts rose from 10,685 to 12,417 this year.

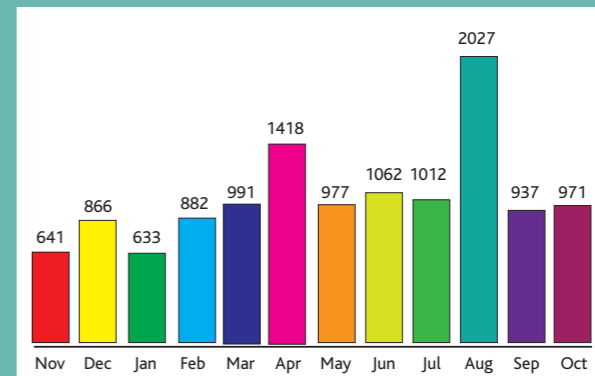
Many young people come to Youth Initiative sessions and activities to meet others and socialise with friends. It is a safe place where supportive, caring staff initiate positive activities and young people are listened to and respected.

A recent survey in October 2022 shows that 98% of young people state that they feel safe or very safe in the project.

For some young people, attending sessions at the Youth Initiative is just about an opportunity to socialise and have fun. But others lead difficult lives and have complex issues to deal with. Some of the problems young people regularly ask for support with include: poverty; feeling low; feeling suicidal; self-harm; caring responsibilities; family problems; crime and anti-social behaviour; friendships and relationships; sexual health; housing issues; exploitation; bereavement; abuse and neglect; gender identity and teenage pregnancy.

Many young people continue to feel anxious about the future, isolated and stressed because of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.

96% of young people feel that youth workers are easy to talk to and approachable.



Ages of participants	
U8	58
8 – 13	316
13 – 19	274
19 plus	36
Total	684

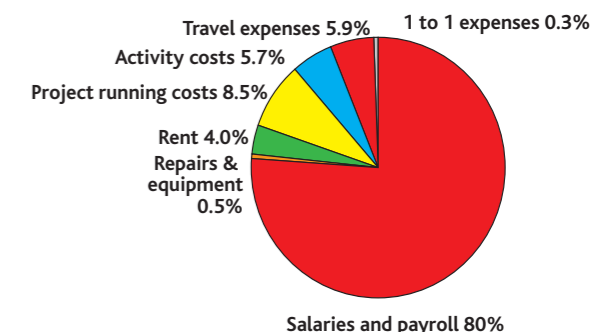
Ages of young people we worked with (including parents group and creche)

The two figures above the bars compare contacts last year with this year and show clearly the effect of emerging from the initial lockdowns.

£££

In the year ending March 31st 2022, the Hexham Youth Initiative received £186,058 in grants and other income. We spent £215,666 running various projects and activities with the majority of expenditure relating to staff costs. The expenditure includes some grant aid received

in the previous financial year but earmarked for costs in this financial year. We are most grateful to all the funders, listed on the back page, who have enabled us to carry out our work by providing grant aid and donations.



Duke of Edinburgh Award



It also introduces young people to new experiences and offers a considerable physical challenge. This year, as well as practice walks, we held our practice expedition in the Lake District and our assessed camps in Hadrian's Wall country.

As well as the expeditions, young people complete skills and sports sections as well as a volunteer section. We are delighted that some of our young people are supporting the Community Centre's Open Arms Group this year. This is an opportunity for intergenerational

Hexham Youth Initiative staff are delighted to offer the Duke of Edinburgh Award at Bronze and Silver levels.

We are all delighted to be back out on Duke of Edinburgh Expeditions this year, after lockdowns and covid outbreaks put a hold on so many activities.

It has been a pleasure to see new friendships forming, Young People working together and learning new skills. The Award encourages independence, team work skills and thought for others.



We were fortunate beneficiaries of the Rotary fundraising concert held in the Abbey to celebrate the late Queen's platinum jubilee. Here, Sandy Means, presents the cheque to Jamie Yeowart, our expedition supervisor.

socialising with old and young benefitting from the chance to talk and exchange views over tea and cake, a game of bowls or chocolate bingo.

Thanks to funding and support from the Rotary Club, we are able to offer another year of the awards and the new cohort is filling up fast.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award consists of 4 sections – Physical, Skill, Volunteering and Expedition. Our 2021 cohort is now almost all completed and we have a new intake filling up fast. We are very grateful for support from Sam Emmerson and the Duke of Edinburgh team to help us deliver the award.

Alternative Education



"One to one lessons help a lot more because the tutor helps you more and has more time for you"

A total of 10 young people attended our Alternative Education project in the academic year Sept 2021 – Aug 2022. Students from NCC and local High Schools are referred because they benefit from one to one teaching, small group work and a calm and supportive environment. We focus on core academic subjects – English, maths and science, taught by experienced tutors who help students to re-engage and get back on track with their learning. Other GCSE's can be offered if required and all students undertake a personal development programme which helps our students to focus on their futures and to work through any issues which have been holding them back.

Other learning activities

include: cooking; personal fitness sessions; sports tasters; visits to national parks; taking part in outdoor and environmental work and arts, crafts and technology sessions. In a recent evaluation, all students felt they had made progress with their learning and they all felt that it was a safe, positive learning environment.



Holiday Fun

As each school holiday approaches, we talk to young people about what activities they might like to try out. They usually suggest a mixture of new things and old favourites. Our Summer Programme was probably our busiest yet. We worked with over 370 different young people (500 people including parents, toddlers and grandparents who came along) enjoying a varied programme of activities. We provided lunch each day, sometimes

hot lunch and sometimes sandwiches, thanks to funding from the Holiday Action Fund. We tried to ensure that there was something for everyone on offer and we did whatever it took to make sure that the most vulnerable children and young people could attend. We have received very positive feedback

volunteers, support from other community organisations and help from local businesses. In addition to the HAF funding, we received help from Waitrose, Trinity Methodist Church, the Rank Foundation and kind private donations.



from young people and their families. We were able to do this with the support of a very dedicated team of staff and



Footy



This year we've been aiming at supporting, enabling and encouraging young people, to participate in sport/physical activities. successfully we have achieved this by hosting an (all age) footy and physical group which has been a massive success in the

community! .Each session brings in roughly 20+ young people and also brings laughter and smiles all round! We shall continue to provide these sessions at Wentworth leisure centre / Hexham Priory football field and look forward to building skills and some first class games.

Eco club



Eco club first started as a way to help give young people an opportunity to get involved with environment.

We started by anonymously writing down what people already knew/what they do to help the environment and we read these out as a group. This helped young people realise the positive impact they already have and also find out what others have done. We did litter picks with some help from a local eco shop 'Matthias Winter', they provided litter pickers and reusable bin bags. When QEHS offered land

for gardening, the eco group started helping out. One game that they loved was getting into pairs where one guided their blindfolded partner to a tree, the blindfolded partner would use all senses apart from sight to remember the tree, then the guider would take them back to the start where the blindfolded partner would remove their blindfold and find their tree. This game enabled the young people to connect with nature in a fun and socialising way, while also building on trust.

Drop-ins

Thursday night drop-ins is one of the longest running groups at Youthy. We are always busy with pool, card games, music and the ever popular cheese toasties! As always Young People can also access the C-Card scheme and this year we have also had a visit from SORTED. We also have a Tuesday after school drop-in and here Young People join the Community Centre's 'Open Arms' session – an intergenerational social group who always have a good chat and some homemade cake.

Art Club

A new session on Saturday mornings, young people have been working with a local artist to try out different techniques and let their creativity run wild. We realised that young people enjoyed the art sessions in the holidays and so decided to offer them on Saturdays too. They have been very popular.



LGBT Hexham

LGBT Hexham has had a busy year! The 2 QEHS LGBT+ groups are still running, with an addition of a Haydon Bridge High School lunch group. All sessions are very well attended and have taken part in quizzes on LGBT history month, crafts and games. Over the past year we have also had 4 out of school meet ups including a movie night and bowling. Looking forward the groups are keen to attend a Pride event next year.

Young Carers



Young Carers has become a well-loved regular session at Youthy. Several older members have recently left us to pursue further Education and we now have new younger member joining us. Amber continues to provide transport from across West Northumberland, meaning we have several schools represented and this gives Young Carers an opportunity to meet others in similar situations. The group is a mixture of structured activities as well as a time for relaxation away from caring responsibilities. The group are looking forward to their Christmas ice skating trip which has become an annual tradition.

Parents' Group

After a short break our parent's group and crèche is back on Wednesday mornings with support from Tynedale Women's Training Group. The parents get the opportunity to have a break, a cuppa and access training opportunities such as first aid and food hygiene courses whilst the children play in crèche. This is funded by the North of Tyne Combined Authority.

Revamp the ramps - 'It will be awesome'

The Young People are very excited, because, after 3 years of planning, fundraising and negotiation the skate park on the Sele is about to be rebuilt. The company, Gravity, have worked with the young people to ensure that all of their ideas have been incorporated into the plans. Stephen Ball, a Hexham Town Councillor, proposed initial funding of £25,000 from the Council and this was agreed. Further funding applications to Suez and Northumberland County Council (section 106 Developers fund) were successful and the young people embarked on their own programme of fundraising events. Our mayor, Derek Kennedy and Cllr Suzanne



Fairless Aitken, also contributed from their Member funds. The young people have some great ideas for use of the space and they are planning further projects. 'We can't wait until it is complete', says T, 12 'It will be awesome'

QEHS New Garden



We are so pleased to be back at QEHS after all their building work. We have a new garden in the school and some very enthusiastic lunch time gardeners who have been clearing, planting and building. We are so looking forward to creating another beautiful space on the site.

Job Club

Job club is a 16+ day time session providing support for those looking for training, employment or further education opportunities. We can also help with housing forms, benefit enquiries or come and have a friendly chat about whatever issues people are facing. We have also continued to work in partnership with Heartwood, a local charity offering therapeutic outdoor sessions.



Saturdays



Saturday Drop-ins are a popular session, offering the opportunity to play games, pool and playstation and to cook and socialise with friends.

Acomb Youth Club

We are fortunate to run Acomb Youth Club with help and support from Acomb Parish Council, Action4Acomb and two lovely community volunteers.

Young people meet weekly, every Wednesday, in the village hall in the winter and the pavilion in the summer. They enjoy games, crafts, socialising and meeting up with friends. When we have the hall, we

play soft ball games in the large area. Most of the young people get involved in dodge ball, stuck in the mud and Danni, a game that the young people request every single Wednesday. In the smaller part of the hall, we play board games such as bananagrams and connect 4.

We also get them involved in crafts such as felting, drawing and clay sculpting. In the summer we take

full advantage of the park and field in Acomb where the young people enjoy much of the same physical sports we played in the hall. They also enjoy trips out, with trampolining being a favourite. With over 25 members, we see the benefit of providing a fun, social space within the village where all the local children feel welcome.

thank you thank you thank you

Funders and supporters 1 Nov 2021 – 31 Oct 2022

Acomb Parish Council	Holiday Action Fund
Active Northumberland	J Clark
Adrian Jenkins	The Key
Andrew Jenkins	K J Wills
Ballinger Trust	Leading Link
E C Graham Belford Charitable Settlement	Children's Services
Colin Walker	NCC Disabled Children's Team NCC
Community Foundation	Supporting Families
Core Music	NCC YouthService
D C Halpin	North of Tyne Combined Authority
Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme	Northumberland County Council
Egger	Northumberland Communities Together
Family Support Fare Share	Ponteland High School
Forum Cinema	Queen Elizabeth High School
Garfield Weston Foundation Hadrian Learning Trust Haydon Bridge High School Henry Bell Trust	Hexham Rank Foundation
Hexham Children's Centres, West	Rotary Club
Hexham Middle School	Trinity Methodist Church Tynedale
Hexham Town Council	Lions
High Sheriff of Northumberland	Waitrose
	West Northumberland Foodbank
	William Howard School
	Neill Wylie

Staff and volunteers

Antonia Azocar	Keda Norman	Lauren Stewart
Nevin	Amber Proctor	Clim Williams
Laura Donothey	Lisa Pyle	Gillian Wood
Joanne Harrison	Chris Roberts	Jamie Yeowart
Kieran Irving	Mandy Senior	Kitty Veale
Tara MacKenzie	Leonie Serbrock	Jim Vennart
Paul McKie	Nicola Shipley	William Armstrong
Shelley Murray-Hill	Karren Spowart	

With special thanks to

Acomb Parish Council
Hexham Children's Centre
Forum Cinema
Claire Heaviside and Number 28
Corbridge Youth Initiative
Hexham Community Centre
Stephen and the Open Arms Group
Core Music
Cllr Derek Kennedy
Cllr Suzanne Fairless-Atkin
Sam Talbot – NCC
Pastoral staff – QEHS
Hexham Community Partnership
Sandy Rutherford
Jonathan Hill
Julie Humes and Tynedale Youth Forum NDAS

Trustees and Management Committee

Diane Harris (Chair)
Rosemary Theobalds
Tony Webster
Neil Morrison (Treasurer)
Kathy White Webster
Pat Nesbitt
Stephen Ball
Sandy Rutherford
Melanie Postill
Jonathan Hill
Terry Eccles
Richard Zabrocki



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