

2022 Annual Report

Friends of the Award



Chair's Report - Patrick Neville

Everybody involved in supporting Friends of the Award through 2022 can rightly feel a huge sense of pride in how the Charity has responded to the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic through the last two years. Although this year has been a transitional year for us, we are now very much back up and running. Rob Bushby, our new Chief Executive, and his team are delivering many wonderful outcomes for the young people we support and brimming with ideas for the future. We can look forward to 2023 with a great sense of optimism, knowing that what we do matters more than ever.

Grateful thanks are due to all our funders who have again been hugely supportive this year. City of Edinburgh Council continues to provide foundational funding of c£80,000 per annum over 3 years, to September 2023, to support our youth development work. It's a highly collaborative relationship, supporting Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions for a number of schools and youth groups in the Edinburgh area, as well as providing support for individual participation. National Lottery Community Young Start funding is in the 2nd year of a 3-year grant and along with Chance to Succeed funding has given invaluable backing for our 1:1 mental health support work primarily partnering with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. It has enabled the team to provide imaginative and empathetic bespoke support to a large number of young people throughout Edinburgh & The Lothians. Our work with secondary school students with additional support needs also continues with dedicated support to The Hub @ St David's RC High

School in Dalkeith, Midlothian. Backing from The Edward Gostling Foundation, The Agnes Hunter Trust and the Christina Mary Hendrie Charitable Trust has enabled us to work with more young people in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Our self-generated income reduced to almost zero during lockdown and there is more work to do to restore some meaningful income to support our work. We built some momentum delivering a limited number of Open Expeditions this year but there is work to do to restore this activity to levels achieved pre-pandemic. We have rationalised and simplified our Junior Award Scheme for Schools/JASS operating model. Although sales have reduced to a third of pre-pandemic levels, it is clear that there is a place for this 'younger years' award offering; our lower cost model means that any surplus from JASS sales contributes directly to our broader activities.

We can look forward to the next 2-3 years with cautious optimism. The need for what we offer is higher than ever. Under Rob's leadership we are refreshing our strategy to ensure we remain relevant, providing meaningful activities and support in a fast-changing environment for young people. You will see more on this in the coming months!



The descriptions and testimonials of the work that we do really bring alive how important our work continues to be. I'd like to close by thanking the Board of Trustees and our highly professional team of staff and volunteers who have all 'gone the extra mile' to maintain and adapt our operations through such a challenging period.

Expeditions

2022 saw a continued impact of the pandemic. A gradual easing of restrictions allowed the return of a blended learning approach to expedition training, with some sessions online and some outdoors. Expedition flexibilities have seen participants go home overnight and #DofEwithadifference Covid-19 flexibilities extended.

Expeditions have been funded by the City of Edinburgh Communities and Families Grant scheme, and by the Alpkit Foundation. Places for participants referred via our Mental Health support/CAMHS project have been funded by Peter Wright's fundraising activities.

After 9 years as Expeditions Co-ordinator Neil Birch departed at the end of 2021, with Sarah Kerr taking over and a seasonal support role taken on by Iain Cruwys. Neil has (helpfully!) continued in a support role through the expedition volunteer pool, working behind the scenes on a tracker system and supervising expeditions.



Renewals were confirmed with Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA), DofE Approved Activity Provider for Expeditions and Ofcom business radio licence in preparation for the 2022 season. Having gained an AALA licence in 2020 our first on-site inspection resulted in a licence renewal for just over 2 years, a great achievement!

Edinburgh Schools Expeditions

Friends of the Award has worked with Drummond Community High School, Gracemount High School, Portobello High School and St Augustine's RC High School to deliver DofE Expeditions. 81 young people have been supported to participate in and complete their expedition training; 52 completed their Bronze expedition, and 9 their Silver. Support involves organisational input, provision of qualified leaders, additional assistance by volunteers, financial assistance and equipment use.



In addition, Lasswade High School and Beeslack High School in Midlothian have been supported, with Curricular DofE groups including Bronze walking expeditions and a Gold canoeing expedition. 2022 has seen Midlothian Schools increasingly move to in-house provision of their DofE programmes.



Open Expeditions

The Open Expeditions programme has been mixed. April activity was cancelled due to lack of uptake, put down to exam anxiety, and the early summer programme delayed with many young people on holidays. Autumn programmes, however, saw a team complete their DofE expeditions at each level.

The Bronze qualifying expedition in the north-western Pentlands consisted of 3 participants from Citadel Youth Centre and 2 supported by our Mental Health/CAMHS project. Participants planned their route to an identified camp site using skills gained in training. Their aim focused on trees, identifying them, drawing leaves and taking rubbings of leaves and bark.

The Silver practice expedition followed a series of training days in which participants planned routes through the northern Pentlands from Hillend to Penicuik via a wild camp in Dreghorn woods and a semi-wild camp at Youth Vision's campsite at Threipmuir Reservoir. This was a complex team with a number of support needs. One participant decided they weren't yet ready; another made use of the #DofEwithadifference variations to go home each night on practice and qualifying expeditions. A team of 5 progressed to complete their qualifying expedition on a wet weekend, walking from Kirkcaldy to Pettycur Bay, through the Fife countryside to Fordell Firs Scout camp and crossing the Forth Road Bridge to finish in South Queensferry. Their expedition aim was to find geocaches along the way. Public transport was used to get to and from start and finish points, an important development



giving young people confidence and skills to head off on their own in the future.

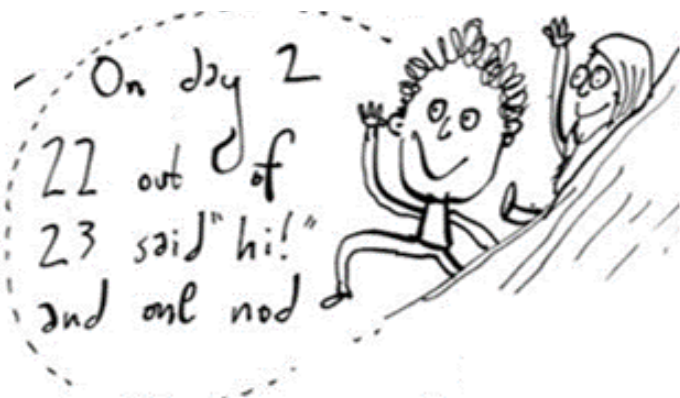
Training for Gold expeditions was delivered as part of a residential. Covid-19 restrictions prevented camping whilst completing Bronze and Silver awards, so this was the first camp out for many. A number of individual needs required consideration when route planning; close working with City of Edinburgh Council's Outdoor Learning team ensured the selected route was a suitable, achievable challenge for all involved. Training and practice took place in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. A permanent orienteering course at Doune Ponds allowed for some navigation skills revision; SOEC Dounans and the Queen Elizabeth Forest provided a training base. Covid drop-outs left a tight-knit group of 4 (who had completed their Silver expeditions together during 2021) for the practice expedition.



The Gold qualifying expedition route was carefully planned through the Atholl Estate to ensure access should anyone need to be extracted. All completed, having experienced a sense of remoteness and camped in some beautiful (although midgey) places. Using the 'Mission:Explore Camping' book for an aim led to, among other activities, building bridges, a den (in a location marked as "The Den" on the map), making natural rafts and counting the number of people who said 'Hello' along the way. Activities proved to be a welcome distraction from the aches and pains of walking with rucksacks.



An 'end of season' evening provided a great opportunity to celebrate achievements as Silver and Gold participants shared presentations to complete their Expedition Sections. For some, completing their presentation was the final stage to complete their Award. Some of the Bronze team received their Expedition Sectional certificates. Fittingly, the illustrator of the Mission:Explore books, Tom Morgan-Jones came along to capture quotes and experiences in ink (as seen throughout this Annual Report).



Expedition Volunteer Support

Without the excellent volunteer pool, it would not be possible for Friends of the Award to deliver the volume and quality of expeditions it does. A pool of 35 qualified and assistant volunteers shares many years of experience in different roles. Overall, 62 volunteer days helped deliver expeditions, 29 volunteer days supported training for expeditions, and 18 volunteer days provided essential home contact safety cover.

Training for volunteers included Leave No Trace, a walk including micro-navigation skills, and exploring how expeditions and DofE activity can blend with the John Muir Award. Opportunities have been created, shared and financially assisted (with many offerings free for volunteers) to gain walk leadership training and qualifications, Outdoor First Aid, and/or complete DofE Expedition Assessor accreditation. We have assisted financially with training courses and assessments as well as supporting with signposting, guidance and kit in preparation for training courses and assessments. One volunteer has gained their Lowland Leader Award and 3 their Mountain Leader Awards, with a number completing Mountain Leader training.



on your path,
What is around
the next corner?

1:1 Mental Health & Youth Awards Support

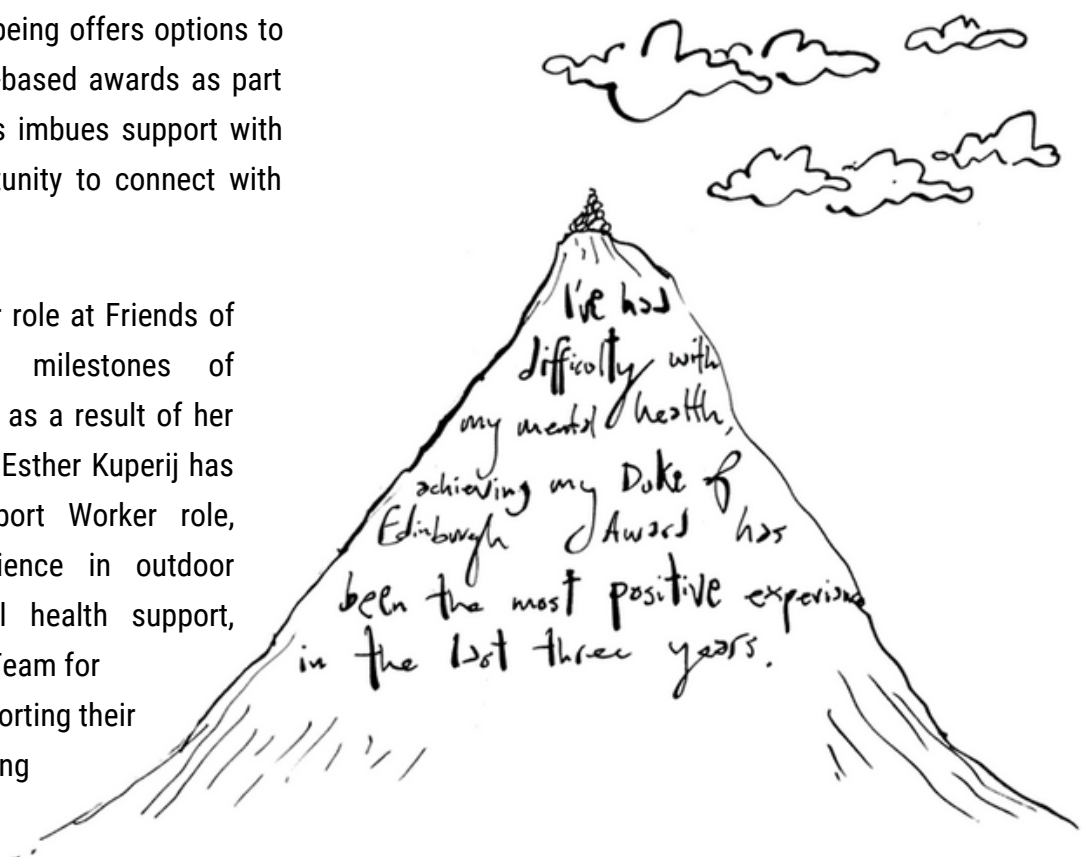
We work with young people aged 14 to 25 with experiences of mental health difficulties, with no fixed period of involvement. The focus is on working towards their personal goals through the framework of youth awards, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the John Muir Award. Youth awards offer a framework that can recognise achievement at every step of involvement, from making an appointment and getting on a bus to completing an adventurous expedition or running a conservation/climate campaign. Every young person's needs, strengths, and timeline is unique, and a tailored 1:1 approach can provide the time and support to identify suitable opportunities, reach milestones, and celebrate every success.

Referrals for 1:1 support can come from mental health services and via schools, youth clubs, outdoor centres, or community groups. 2022 has seen 39 young people engaging with youth awards through tailored 1:1 mental health support from Friends of the Award, taking part in an incredibly varied array of activities and volunteering placements. It has been a year of change and revitalisation with a renewed approach to awards support. For participants, a focus on nature connections for wellbeing offers options to engage with a range of nature-based awards as part of their support meetings. This imbues support with increased meaning and opportunity to connect with local wild places.

Jen Murray moved on from her role at Friends of the Award, leaving many milestones of achievements by young people as a result of her creative and attentive support. Esther Kuperij has been welcomed into a Support Worker role, bringing a wealth of experience in outdoor learning settings and mental health support, having worked with The Green Team for many years, most recently supporting their Nature of Scotland Award-winning Thrive Project.

1:1 support towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award continued to be central in 2022, with 3 Bronze awards and 3 Silver awards achieved by supported participants, as well as 32 unique Sections in circumstances that, post-pandemic, remain unsettled for many. Behind these achievements are countless hours of voluntary contributions to their communities, intrepid expeditions and residential excursions, and the inspiring pursuit of new skills and interests. A huge well done to every single participant, who have all shown incredible dedication to their unique goals and aspirations. We can't wait to see what 2023 will bring!

In September, two participants joined staff on a trip to the West Lothian Bings, collaborating with local artist Alec Finlay towards a Day of Access, experiencing the site and reflecting on its wounded and healing landscape. Our Online Group has been a great hub for creativity and connection, with thanks to the young people who have been central to its development. Regular Online Group meetings resume for all interested participants in the new year, as well as kicking off a newly imagined social group, with a focus on nature connection and progress towards awards achievement, in the spring.



Midlothian Schools

The Hub @ St David's RC High School, Dalkeith, is a Complex Needs base for secondary-school aged pupils. A partnership with Friends of the Award provides focused activity to work towards a range of youth awards. Funded by The Agnes Hunter Trust, in the academic year 2021-22 pupils achieved:

- 5 Junior Award Scheme for Schools/JASS Awards
- 8 John Muir Awards at Discovery Level and 7 at Explorer Level
- 15 Leave No Trace certificates, increasing awareness of responsible outdoor use
- 13 Duke of Edinburgh's Award Sections.

Building on the fantastic work of pupils and commitment of teaching staff, the partnership is continuing into 2023.

Youth Development Project

Our Youth Development Project creates opportunities for disadvantaged young people in Edinburgh to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, increasing access to personal achievement and training opportunities. Youth groups, schools and individuals with additional support needs (behavioural, learning or physical) can get support and financial assistance to complete all Sections (Skills, Volunteering, Physical, Expedition) with an emphasis on outdoor learning and nature connections.

An 'Open Group' sets up young people whose needs aren't catered for to achieve DofE Sections, supporting schools and youth groups with limited capacity or expertise, and welcoming individuals. Drop-in sessions have resumed with an active group of 14 young people, with 12 new enrolments in November. Assistance is offered to upload evidence onto eDofE and, when participants are ready, access to the Open Expeditions programme.

Targeted support has been provided to 8 partner groups, including Broomhouse Young Carers and Citadel Youth Centre (5, 8 young people respectively).

Junior Award Scheme for Schools/JASS



Junior Award Scheme for Schools, or JASS, is an inclusive, easy-to-access award scheme designed for ages 5-14. It provides a holistic framework for a wide range of learning experiences to encourage, capture and recognise personal achievement. Its framework can be adapted to a range of ages and abilities, and is ideal for use in home education, residential, youth work and Additional Support Needs settings.

Changes have been made this year to streamline JASS, making easier to use and manage. We estimate that over 7,000 children and young people have made use of JASS in 2022, including primary, secondary and special needs schools, The Boys Brigade, The Destiny Project and more. It has been fantastic to see lots of inspiring activity children and young people have shared over their school's twitter feeds.

"JASS has helped engage some of our most disengaged learners"



Trustees & Staff

Trustees

Ruth Cardwell Moore
Sheena Henderson (to October 2022)
Alison Hesketh - Company Secretary
Alison Howe (from June 2022) - Treasurer
Emma Locke
Catriona McFarlane
Patrick Neville - Chair
David Pyper
Jacqueline Roulston

Staff

Chief Executive: Rob Bushby (from April 2022)
Finance Officer: Christine Carlton
Fundraiser: Susan Irwin
Administrator: Louise Tibbey (from April 2022)
Expeditions Co-ordinator: Sarah Kerr
Seasonal Expeditions Support Worker: Iain Cruwys
(April to October 2022)
Mental Health & Youth Awards Support Workers:
Heather Hughes (from May 2022)
Mental Health & Youth Awards Support Workers:
Jen Murray (to September 2022)
Esther Kuperij (from November 2022)
Youth Development Officers:
Ant Mayer (to August 2022)
Rebekah Green (to October 2022)



Funders

Trustees, staff, volunteers and young people we work with are grateful for the support of a wide range of funders, funding partners, and support in kind. Thanks to:

The Agnes Hunter Trust
Alpkit
City of Edinburgh Council
Chance to Succeed
Christina Mary Hendrie Trust
Edinburgh Council Business Discretionary Support Fund
Edward Gostling Foundation
Garfield Weston Foundation
Nancie Massey Charitable Trust
National Lottery Community Fund - Young Start
Outdoor Education Recovery Fund
Robertson Trust
SCVO Resilience and Cyber Essentials

Annual Accounts

Annual accounts to 31st March	2022	2021
	£	£
Income	275,253	278,419
Expenditure	251,294	223,460
Movement in funds	23,959	54,959
Total funds at 31 st March	142,853	118,894
<u>Sources of income</u>		
Grants and donations	208,952	202,406
Charitable activities	66,301	76,013
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Staff costs	172,580	159,282
Other costs	78,714	64,178



Inky illustrations: Tom Morgan-Jones,
inkymess.com

Friends of the Award Edinburgh and the Lothians
The Risk Factory, 20 New Mart Road, Edinburgh
EH14 1RL
0131 467 4753
admin@fota.org.uk
www.fota.org.uk

Company No: SC184821
Charity No: SC027771

