

The Bank Youth Project – Registered Charity, Number 1075067

MANAGEMENT GROUP ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Management Group Members

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| Alison Irens | Trustee and Chair |
| Joe Elston | Trustee and Vice-Chair and Funding Group Chair |
| Elaine Baker | Trustee |
| Deborah Sterling | Trustee, Hon. Treasurer |
| Jane Gibbs | Trustee and Hon. Secretary |
| Peter Brewer | Trustee |
| Rev. Mark Rylands | Trustee |
| Alison Thomas | Trustee |
| John Nutley | Town Council Representative |
| Jenny Weigel | Management Group Member |
| Amy Capron | Management Group Member (from May 2023) |
| Philip Vogel | Management Group Member (from February 2024) |

Staff

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| Michael Park | Lead Youth Support Worker (part-time) |
| Kate Martin | Asst. Youth Support Worker (part-time) |
| Samantha Leader | Asst. Youth Support Worker (part-time) |
| Arwenn Stickland | Asst. Youth Support Worker (part-time, May 2023-Dec 2023) |
| Lesley Booker | Administrator/Management Support (part-time) |
| Lynn Travers-Howard | Finance and Facilities Administrator (part-time, from Oct 2023) |

1. Introduction

BYP entered its 25th anniversary year with a positive external evaluation, conducted by VOYC and DYS Space. The evaluation highlighted well-run sessions, effective governance and policies, and showed a very high regard for what BYP offers from around 50 respondents to a stakeholder survey. The very fact that BYP has survived and continues to function well despite the many challenges affecting all youth organisations through recent years of pandemic, cost rises and staffing/recruiting difficulties is, in itself, remarkable.

BYP also responded to some recommendations, and with the help of its final year of National Lottery Community Fund grant income and earmarked NLCF Development Funds, continues to lay foundations for greater sustainability for the future. BYP continues to be self-reflective and evolve, with the changing needs and interests of local young people at its heart, as it seeks new funding to hold this space for them for years to come.

2. Membership and Attendance

Total membership was around 180-200 young people across age groups. Wednesday evenings for the younger groups remain consistently popular. Even as members gradually move on to sessions for older age groups, new members join with some sessions reaching attendance as high as 40. Older groups fluctuated more over the course of the year. Staff have been aware of more young people with mental health issues, including anxiety and bereavement, as well as with SEN, including autism and ADHD.

3. Programme

(a) Youth Club Activities

Special activities offered over the last year included a series of summer swim sessions at Ashburton Pool and a successful trial of facilitated Dungeons and Dragons sessions with the help of Cllr Sarah Khan's Devon County Council (Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Ward) Locality Funds, which also sponsored the development of outreach work by BYP staff to spaces around town where young people often congregate. There were bushcraft sessions on Dartmoor funded by Widecombe Fair, an overnighter at Shallowford Farm in conjunction with the Bungalow Youth Project in Buckfastleigh, Halloween parties for older and younger age groups, participation by some members in a local Folk Orchestra performance, photography and 25th Anniversary logo competitions, which were both supported by local photography and art experts in the community as judges, and a BYP 25th birthday party in December. BYP entered 2024 proudly displaying its new logo, designed by BYP member Amber Sutton, on the building, website and communications.

Throughout the year BYP continued to offer a variety of creative, developmental, educational, recreational and social activities, including: -

- Life skills such as cooking, healthy eating, communicating, team building and self-expression
- Debates and discussions
- Outdoor team games, and indoor games including pool and table tennis
- Quizzes, competitions
- Arts and crafts and music activities

The Youth Support Workers delivered these activities with support from responsible and dedicated young volunteers.

The staff team monitor behaviour, follow BYP's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and regularly receive training.

(b) Personal Development

BYP works to support members' wellbeing and positive development as individuals, family members and members of the local community in the following ways: -

- Being able to 'let off steam' safely
- Sessions to help members develop self-esteem and self-confidence
- Awareness raising for members on issues affecting young people, such as health and wellbeing, bullying, LGBTQ, homophobia and equal opportunities
- Encouragement of socially isolated members to become more engaged
- Training and positive experience for youth volunteers with guidance from our youth workers
- Involvement of members in planning, organising and leading activities in the BYP programme.

(c) Advice and Support Services

BYP continues to be a source of information, advice, support and guidance through:-

- Group discussions and one-to-one sessions with qualified staff, with the emphasis on promoting positive values
- Working 1-2-1 to support young people with mental health issues, as needed - with some members of staff responding to need by undertaking training in mental health first aid and bereavement support
- Confidential sexual health advice and support, including provision of the newly rebranded national DOINK scheme (previously C-Card), offering access to contraception, though take-up of this service has been lower than in previous years
- Collaboration and support from the local police and Youth Intervention Officer on issues such as County Lines and awareness of local trends in criminal activity, drugs and alcohol and staying safe
- Advice and support on a variety of issues relating to training, education, health, relationships and family matters, housing and benefits
- Leaflets, signposting, and referral to other specialist agencies.

Being able to provide a wide range of support services for young people in an informal, friendly, trusted and supportive space away from home and school provides local young people with the comfort of a safe place to be themselves. Our staff get to know young people over time, helping build relationships to support them in bad times and good. Diversity of personality within the staff team, coupled with relevant training, allows more choice for members to be able to engage with whoever they feel most comfortable.

(d) Community Engagement Activities

BYP continued to engage with the local community in a number of ways, including:-

- Open House activities at the Ashburton Food Fair
- Remembrance Day wreath laying ceremony
- Rotary Club's Santa Christmas collection
- Art and music workshops, including workshop and performance with the local Folk Orchestra
- Working with local organisations and individuals to bring BYP to the attention of the wider local community and to try to attract more people to volunteer as adult helpers, or as members of the management group
- BYP updates in *Around Ashburton*, FaceBook and on the BYP website.

5. Staffing

This year marked a change in leadership of the youth team with Michael Park stepping up to the lead role after the resignation of Julian Skinner in April after almost 20 years with BYP. Recruiting qualified staff and having sufficient capacity in the team to juggle schedules to cover for staff illness or emergencies remained an issue, reflecting national trends in youth work. BYP was pleased to welcome Arwen Stickland to the team in May and sad to see her leave for a full-time role in January.

Over the year, Michael worked towards a formal advanced qualification in youth work. Kate Martin and Sam Leader continued in post and undertook further training in youth work, Mental Health First Aid and suicide awareness. Most of the youth work team updated their Emergency First Aid training.

Lesley Booker continued as administrator, with the Management Group supporting her proposal to divide the role in the autumn to create a new part-time Finance and Facilities Administrator role. Lynn Travers-Howard was recruited in late October with Lesley continuing with reduced hours as Management Support Administrator, focusing on support for meetings, reports, communication and fundraising.

Richard Langston and Suzy Bingham joined the team as adult session volunteers, working alternate Wednesdays, where they have offered great support for the younger sessions while enjoying the experience.

Youth volunteers Harriet Brown, Amy Hayman, Reuben Hornshaw and Laila Manns took on responsibilities supporting sessions at BYP, particularly the Wednesday evenings for younger members.

The Management Group reviewed pay and approved an increase in staff wages for the 2024-25 financial year, based on the most recent national JNC agreement for youth workers and equivalent for admin staff. Running a youth club such as BYP is not always easy, and the hard work and commitment of our staff team is much appreciated by Trustees and others on the Management Group.

6. Premises

Steve Chew installed a metal trellis for improved safety by the stairs in the courtyard. The Youth Team offered time during the August break to redecorate the downstairs spaces and installed a new blackboard on the front door to advertise upcoming activities. Repairs to the building included repairing leaks; updating the kitchen with contributions from Glendinning, Barnes Kitchens, and Will Khoo and Amy Capron; installation of a new sliding door to better control access to the basement floor; and a popular new easy-to-move beanbag sofa in the basement. Rotary donations funded a new projector and badgemaking machine. BYP commissioned an energy audit to identify ways to improve energy efficiency and gauge the practicality of solar energy. Regular checks and replacements, as needed, were made of fire safety equipment, lights, etc.

7. Funding

BYP received the final two payments from its five-year grant from the National Lottery Community Fund - with payments of £29,270 in August 2023 and £28,261 in February 2024. Earmarked NLCF Development Funding paid for a subscription and entry of paper-based member records to a new secure GROOP digital platform, which will support more accurate and efficient membership data and impact measurements, and a facilitated Away Day to help develop plans for the coming years.

Other grants included: DYS SPACE with £5,000 toward staffing and operating costs. Devon County Council Locality Fund with £960 for summer swim sessions and outreach work, and Hall & Woodhouse Community Chest with £600 for redecoration/furnishing in the basement space.

We are extremely grateful for the regular and one-off support we receive from the community: Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Rotary Club (£1,500), Ashburton Post Office (£1,000), Buckfast Abbey Trust (£600), Ashburton Quakers (£135), and Ashburton Festival Association (£300, BYP beneficiary of closing).

Conscious of the forthcoming need to replace the NLCF grant, during 2023 the BYP Funding Working Group was re-established and developed a comprehensive Fundraising Strategy, with helpful input from Sarah Kersey, Development Worker at Teignbridge CVS. This clarified the way forward in terms of our funding and development needs, identified a variety of funders to approach over the next year or two, and our own priorities for fundraising. In particular we aim to diversify our income sources, both from making greater use of our building, not relying on a single major donor, and increasing the value and diversity of local financial contributions. (We already receive around £1000 a year from members' session subs and takings from our 'tuck shop'.) We are most grateful for the five years of Lottery support and financial stability this has provided, and their advice as we go forward.

As part of efforts to reduce dependency on major grant funding, BYP trialled various daytime rentals of BYP's building. Ultimately, BYP accepted a proposal by Jason and Lisa Gee to rent the space for the Ashburton Cafe @ BYP, which opened in March. We wish them every success.

8. Conclusion

Ashburton can be proud to have maintained and grown an independent open access youth service to support young people growing to adulthood over the past 25 years. Attracting new funding, staff and volunteers for the Management Group and to support sessions with young people will be key to its role in the town in the future.

Alison Irens
Trustee & Management Group Chair

Lesley Booker
Administrator

Doris Hocking
Lead Youth Support Worker
(from May 2024)

