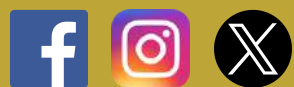


ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2022- 2023

Perth & Kinross Duke of Edinburgh's Award
Association SCIO



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PERTH & KINROSS
ASSOCIATION SCIO



HIGHLIGHTS

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THOUGHTS BY OUR CHAIR



It has been a challenging year, for despite the huge progress made in fundraising, partnerships, and direct work with young people, we did lose some valued staff.

This is a reflection of life. Things change. We have to adapt. Seek opportunity out of adversity. Be resilient. Be there for each other. Be compassionate. Be tolerant. Be caring. The very elements that we seek to develop in the young people we work with.

And I believe that this is what our staff, volunteers and Trustees have demonstrated. And it is what our young people are doing too, which is why they are such an inspiration to us.

There are so many people to thank for our team of supporters is growing all the time. Catherine Drummond Herdman for continuing to support us and give us the use of her amazing estate. And for her wise and supportive words.

Our staff team who now include two young people, Kayleigh and Will. You all make a very , very special group of people. You are there for each other, there for the young folk, and your belief in the work you do is felt by every young person we work with. You make a difference to their lives. Thank you, each and every one of you, operations and business staff, for the work you do.

Thanks to the Trustees. This has not been an easy year for the Board but together we have weathered some stormy moments, have kept the boat moving safely forward, and we now have earned the chance, together with the staff and volunteers, to open up new experiences to the young people we are here for. Thank you for holding fast, and moving together towards implementing our combined strategy.

THOUGHTS BY OUR CHAIR *-continued*



Our small but growing band of volunteers. What a huge difference you make. The garden is a beautiful, fruitful, and cared for environment because of your efforts. And you serve as role models to the young people who witness the care you show towards the environment and each other. Thank you.

Our trusted partners are growing in number. But the Gannochy Trust and Robertson Trust have been the foundations and the springboard to make what we do possible. Thank you for being there for us and supporting and encouraging and providing the core finances without which we would struggle to do the work we are doing. And, of course, Perth and Kinross Council. The “umbrella” you provide for our Duke of Edinburgh’s Award work is invaluable.

Finally, the people who we exist for. The young people we work with are truly amazing. One young man recently said to me about a member of staff - “she fixed me”. My reply was that he had fixed himself – with the help of the member of staff. We are helping young people fix themselves. We are making a difference. And also to the parents that care for and love them. Priceless.

Robin Illsley, Chair

February 2023





FOREWORD

The Association was set up over 30 years ago to advance the mental and physical welfare of young people between the ages of 14 and 25 by promoting the scheme of awards known as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE). In the last 7 years we have focused our attention on young people of all ages with additional support needs facing economic challenges, recognising the barriers they face to participate are far greater. And so, Starfish Way began.

Starfish Way offers personalised programmes of physical and outdoor activity, mental health support, employability skills and mentoring. Using our partnerships with Perth & Kinross Council, Megginch Castle and varied community groups, we are able to target support through a wide variety of outdoor experiences, to support young people who face barriers to involvement but have the most to gain.





FOREWORD -continued

We are based in the Gannochy buildings leased to us beside the Doocot, Kincarrathie Drive, Perth. We also have the use of several areas at Megginch Castle, the spiritual home and base of our Starfish Way activities and are opening a second multi-use, residential, site at Cultybraggan in West Perthshire.

Now in our 7th year, Starfish Way continues to flourish as demand for our services to support vulnerable young people across Perth & Kinross reaches a new high. Originally designed to engage those typically not accessing the DofE Award – disadvantaged young people with additional support needs (ASN) – we now design bespoke high nurture programmes for 1:1 and group participation for young people with wide ranging and often complex ASN. Our high staff to participant ratio remains at the core of all we do. This ensures trusted bonds are forged and progress and achievements made by our young people are life changing and, most importantly, sustainable.



KAYLEIGH, GOLD AWARD ACHIEVER, ASSOCIATION AMBASSADOR AND SOCIAL MEDIA APPRENTICE

“My apprenticeship allows me to give something back to the Association after they helped support me through all of my DofE Awards, enabling me to share my passion and belief in Starfish Way. As I carry out my Ambassador duties I share my story to inspire other young people to take part in this incredible experience. If you have additional support needs like me and you are thinking of getting involved with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Starfish Way, I would say that you are going to have an incredible journey ahead of you - meeting a great group of friends along the way, developing your confidence, resilience, independence and social skills.

So if you are lucky enough to take part, push yourself and take the leap as you are in for an experience like no other.”





SUPPORTING VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE

Starfish Way was created to support vulnerable, disadvantaged young people living in poverty and isolation. We work alongside those with physical disability and learning challenges, victims of abuse and neglect, refugees and asylum seekers, young carers, those with crippling mental health challenges from trauma and adverse childhood experiences, 'edge of care' young people, those with chaotic family environments, the socially and rurally isolated and those that have a lack of opportunity.

This year we have also supported looked-after young people who have been removed from their family homes following abuse and neglect, and we continue to see the traumatic impact that being locked down in unsafe environments has had.



Starfish way offers tailored support programmes for referred young people who are having difficulty in engaging with education or their local community. It offers time and space for young people to build trusted relationships and take part in activities that are adventurous and out of the ordinary. Through coaching and mentoring, staff engage fully with young people to allow them to talk and identify strategies that allows them to make positive changes in their confidence, mental health and behaviours.

Brian Hutton, Perth & Kinross Council
Youth Services Manager

INTEGRATION AS NEW SCOTS

This year we have had the privilege of working with groups of young refugees (CASA – Children Alone and Seeking Asylum) from Syria and Afghanistan. They have suffered the effects of unimaginable events in their home countries and separation from their families.

We have designed specialised programmes to support their integration as New Scots and offer experiences and opportunities for social connection, communication and employability. However, it is not all about the practical activities – fun, levity and camaraderie are an equally important part of the experience for these resilient and inspiring young people.



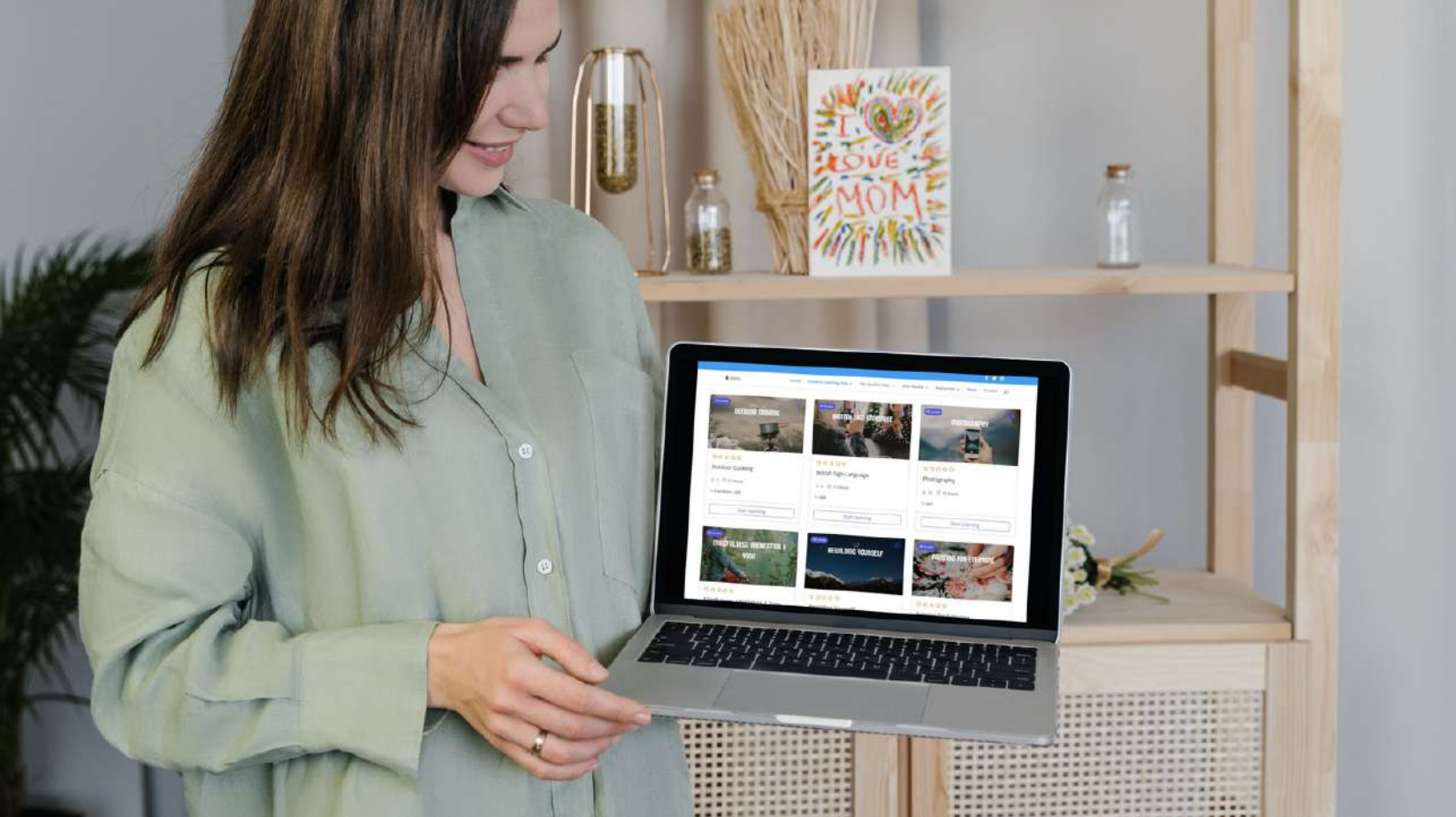
INNOVATIVE ONLINE LEARNING



Our innovative online Distance Learning Hub (DLH) continues to be developed and activities added, with a wide variety of 12-part modules for Physical, Skill, Volunteering and Expedition activities. With over 600 users from around the globe, it is being accessed by DofE participants, DofE groups, individuals, families and schools and caters for all ages and abilities. We continue to make them accessible to all and provide the necessary equipment and resources to the young people we work with directly, removing financial barriers to participation and promoting digital inclusion. We also provide support and DofE section assessment.

Last year it attracted over 300 regular users from all over the UK and further afield. Since the redesign and launch in February 2023 (users now have their own 'dashboard'), there were 53 registered users in the first week, and a total to date of 663 sign ups to the DLH.

We provide online mentoring and assessor assistance to over 50 participants. In consultation with our young people, the range of modules has increased, reaching out to a wider audience. Audio files have been added to enable those with visual impairment or reading difficulties to participate, and we are exploring module videos with sign language for those with hearing impairment.



INNOVATIVE ONLINE LEARNING -continued

We provide online mentoring and assessor assistance to over 50 participants. In consultation with our young people, the range of modules has increased, reaching out to a wider audience. Audio files have been added to enable those with visual impairment or reading difficulties to participate, and we are exploring module videos with sign language for those with hearing impairment.

We have been approached by several organisations nationally to work in partnership with our digital learning programmes.

Our social media presence has increased significantly with regular posts on our Twitter (now known as X), Instagram and Facebook accounts. With guidance from our expert Digital Media Manager, our Social Media apprentice is developing skills in content writing, posting and scheduling stories as well as creating text, audio and photographic content for our monthly DLH email broadcast.

“The employability programme is packed full of vital transferrable skills, fun ways to unlock hidden potential, recognised awards and certificates to be earned.

The young people enrolled in the programme this time around have not only enjoyed themselves but learned new life skills.

Ross MacGregor, Perth & Kinross Council Youth Services

”



SUPPORT WORKER

“From being a shy and introverted lad, Kyle has now gained so much more confidence. He is more outgoing and takes on tasks that he never would have previously done. Kyle has become an excellent and avid cook and a very keen gardener. He was incredibly anxious and isolated before and will now involve himself in conversation with others - which doesn't sound like a big deal, but for Kyle, it's huge! There is no doubt it has helped him with his success at college too. The confidence he has gained on the Starfish programme has directly contributed to his achieving his NC course.”



DEVELOPING AND INSPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH:

Increased participation, opportunities and experiences through physical activity, culture, leisure, environment and heritage

Raising aspirations and realisation of full potential

Improved access to accredited training and learning

Increased employability and employment options

Increased leadership and mentoring

Developing independent living skills



■ IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE THROUGH:

Creating positive change in people's lives and communities

Increasing inclusion, empowerment and independence

Increasing access to employment, volunteering, education and leisure opportunities

Increasing equality of opportunity and active citizenship

Creating respite opportunities



ALEX, ASSOCIATION OPERATIONS MANAGER AND TRAUMA SPECIALIST

“It has been great to reflect on our young people’s developments in the last year, and the benefits of accessing our services is very apparent. Attainment of accredited awards is fantastic but it’s their own personal journey and self-discovery that is the real the success story. These young people came to us very withdrawn and anxious and it is incredible to watch as they discover their own capabilities and strengths. They have grown in confidence and are learning so many beneficial life skills that they can take with them on their next steps into college and the world of work.

The high nurture and empathy that our students receive is key to our success. Making their experiences purposeful and personal is critical, so that it is not just a box ticking exercise but is meaningful and personal to each student - and sustainable in the long term.”





FACTS FOUND



663 Users
of the Distance Learning
Hub



1736
took part in DofE
activities across P&K



23 new partnerships



287 Awards achieved
189 Bronze
70 Silver
24 Gold



**6123 hours of
volunteering**
A social value of £30,000



**6 newly introduced
activities**



SUSTAINABLE AND HIGH-IMPACT INNOVATION

In my first year with the Association I have seen so many personal achievements for our young people. The nurturing environment at Megginch provides opportunity to develop social skills that may be difficult in busier environments. It fills me with joy when someone we have worked with finds passion in a new activity or steps out of their comfort zone to try new things or even talk to those they do not know. Their bravery and resilience are breathtaking.

Nicola Loxton

We provide a bespoke range of Starfish programmes for groups of young people which are matched to their needs.

We provide high nurture programmes on a 1:1 basis with referrals from Perth & Kinross Council's Social Work and Edge of Care teams. Personalised Action Plans have been introduced to aid planning and meet individual needs, updated by our Development Workers on an ongoing basis. We ensure that staff are carefully matched to each young person to best meet their needs.



6 Groups represented

- Perth High School
- Blairgowrie High School
- CASA refugees
- Employability Skills
- Men and Children Matter
- Young Carers

MATCHING PERSONAL REQUIREMENTS OF EACH PARTICIPANT

The range of locations and activities we provide enables us to match the personal requirements of each participant.



We now offer 10
recognised Awards



OUR LOCATIONS

LOCATION

ABOUT & ACTIVITIES TAKING PLACE

MEGGINCH CASTLE ESTATE

- provides privacy, security, a calm and therapeutic environment
- experience including heritage, wildlife, gardening, woodwork, archery, outdoor cookery, bushcraft, meditation, navigation, photography, fitness trail and socialising in the beloved Coorie Hoose

ABERDALGIE CHURCH

- Christmas wreath making
- Base for potential further activities

QUARRYMILL & AUCHINGARRICH COUNTRY PARK

- activities including expedition practice and volunteering, and we use additional locations for walks, paddleboarding, litter picks
- to explore new environments such as the beautiful Scottish coastline and beaches

CULTYBRAGGAN

- provide progressive experiences for those with more confidence and able to venture further from home



PERTH & KINROSS
ASSOCIATION SCIO

STARFISH WAY PARTICIPANT

“I like Megginch a lot, the Coorie Hoose to sit, talk in and chill out. I like seeing the dogs and animals too. I feel safe and relaxed here. Trying activities that I haven't done before like nature art is really good fun and there are always staff there to listen and be there for you. You don't get that anywhere else.

Growing up is hard and makes me feel lonely sometimes but when I come to the Starfish I feel listened to and respected, it's nice.”







SUPPORTING ALL INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

This year we have worked with a wide range of young people and volunteers including those who identify as LGBTQI+, asylum seekers, neurodiverse and physically challenged. We have supported individual needs including cerebral palsy, heart condition, fragile X syndrome, autism, ADHD, damaged spinal cord, dyspraxia, anxiety, depression, self-harm, attempted suicide, English as an additional language (EAL), visual impairments, poor attenders at school and young people in care.

As word of our achievements spread, partnership working continues to increase and this year includes Perth Autism Support, Mindspace, Stepping Up, CAYAG, Sheltered Housing and Trellis. We plan to work with Sheltered Housing and Trellis to provide support in their sheltered housing gardens and facilitate sessions for Mindspace during the summer for their service users.



SUPPORTING ALL INDIVIDUAL NEEDS -continued

We have been brainstorming mutually beneficial ideas with Stepping Up, a charity that helps prevent young people entering the criminal justice system or supports those that have been through it.

We have identified opportunities for support in the garden at Megginch and Cultybraggan and teaching culinary skills to our young people. We also are exploring ways to engage with the young people of Coupar Angus, with a focus on achieving accredited awards with CAYAG.



This year, one of our very first Starfish Way participants joined the team as an apprentice Outdoor Development Worker. With a host of personal challenges, he struggled at school but very quickly thrived in the outdoor environment that Starfish Way provided. He knows just how life changing Starfish Way can be and is always the first to offer a helping hand to participants and staff alike. It's a privilege to have him on the team.

“Being at the Starfish Way helped with my school life as it gave me something to look forward to every week and set me on the right path. I was no longer dreading school as I knew I was going to be outdoors, achieving things and learning every week at Starfish. It gave me confidence to know I could learn things, and it was just that I couldn't learn in school. The staff are all incredible and know just how to bring out the good bits of everyone to help them succeed. A few years later and now I'm working for the Association helping kids like me and providing the activities I enjoyed so much. I will forever be grateful for coming on Starfish Way all those years ago, and now having been given this amazing opportunity to learn even more.”

Apprentice Outdoor Development Worker

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IMPACT STATISTICS

	Nearly All (80%+)	Most (60-79%)	Some (20-59%)	Few (less than 20%)
Confidence				
Communications				
Self Esteem				
Attendance				
Leadership				
Responsible				
Empathy				
Resilience				



EXPEDITIONS

It is without question the most eagerly anticipated activity on the calendar and this year was no exception – it's Expedition time!

Our PKAVS group successfully completed their Bronze expedition in August 2022. With aching feet but happy hearts, they braved the wilds of rural Perthshire. The team completed a 2-day expedition together in Dunkeld with some stunning Scottish weather! A new recruit has joined the team and they will complete their Silver expedition together.

There was no stopping the intrepid bunch and training for the expedition took place all over Perthshire, including Kinnoull Hill, Deuchny Wood, Quarrymill and Moncrieffe Hill. We are incredibly proud of the groups' achievements, successfully navigating, hiking and working as team.

Out and about too on their Expedition adventures were our Polish Scout Group whose expedition took place in the stunning countryside of Pitlochry.



CASE STUDY: ASN OPEN GOLD 2019

Having completed their DofE Award last year, this close-knit group attended the Award presentation celebrations at Holyrood to receive their Gold Awards, completing their DofE journey. Kayleigh was front and centre at the event, giving a speech on her DofE journey and hopes for the future of the Award for young people with ASN. Included in the audience of over 1,000 attendees was the DofE Award CEO Ruth Marvel and dignitaries from Scottish councils and other youth organisations.

We could not be more proud of their achievements – they truly are an extraordinary team. We will remain in contact with them all and eagerly follow their progress, offering our support where we can. They continue to provide us with invaluable advice on promoting participation and engaging ASN young people with Starfish Way and DofE. Kate Sommervail has been an exceptional leader to this group and an expert source of advice and support to the Association.

‘It was lovely to all be able to celebrate altogether as a full team, it was an amazing experience that we will all remember for a lifetime’
- Kayleigh



“My daughter has Autism Spectrum Disorder and EAL, so things are very challenging for her. After Mara started Starfish Way her confidence increased tenfold and she thrives being outside. Mara really likes the varied activities and I am happy that she has been fortunate enough to get a place at Megginch. She is so happy to be away from the school style environment which she finds very difficult. She is gaining practical experience and life skills, and is always happy when she comes home! This programme really helps young people boost their confidence, make friends and build social and emotional strength. Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

PARTICIPANT'S MOTHER



CASE STUDY: ASN OPEN GROUP 2022

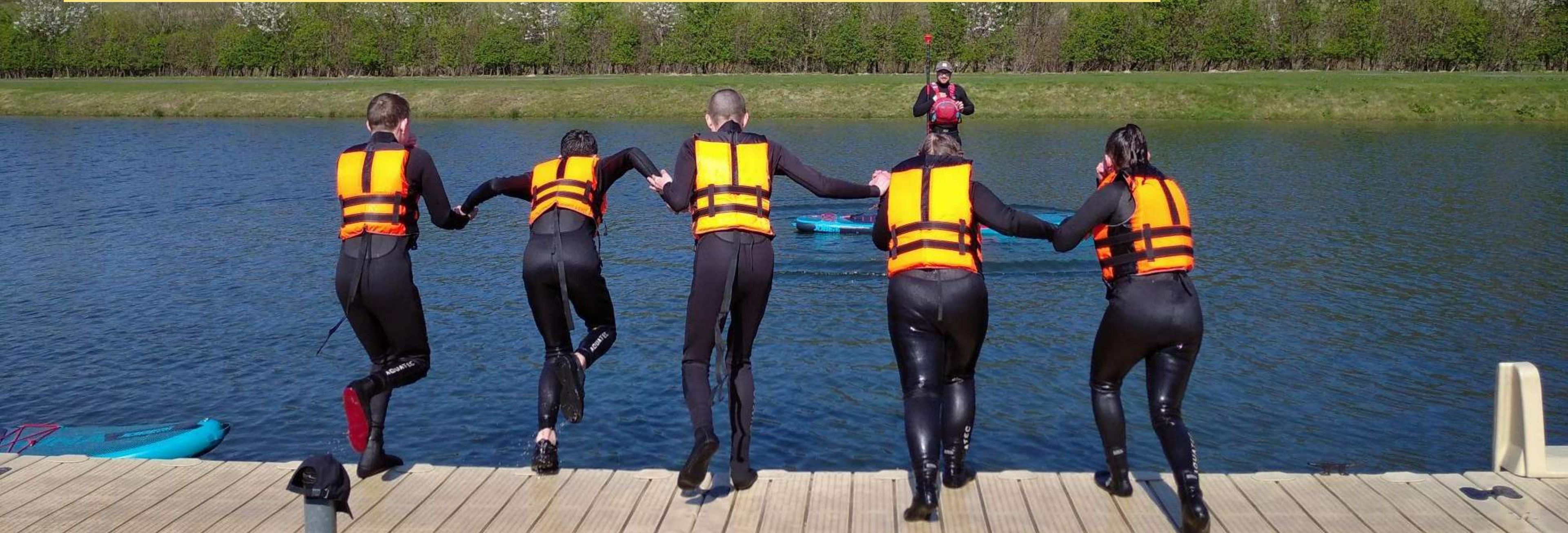
Started in February 2022, this amazing group of young people continue to go from strength to strength. The group of 8 are working towards their Silver and Gold Award level, having already achieved a Saltire Award – The Challenge.

This is a high nurture group that focuses on enabling participants to improve their social skills and increase confidence, offering support to move on to the next stages of their lives – and they are achieving all this and more! They have become a very tight group of friends, providing essential social and emotional support to each other. The group is already practising for their Expedition this autumn and are beyond excited to get into the hills and get their tents up!



STARFISH WAY PARENT

“The difference in my son these last 18 months is incredible. He has gone from a boy excluded from school, bullied and withdrawn to a young man who is outgoing and confident and sees his worth. I wish more young people could have these experiences. It honestly has changed his life.”



CASE STUDY: ASN GOLD GROUP 2023

These 6 young participants progress was significantly impacted by the Covid pandemic. Although they are fairly spread out geographically, the group are thrilled to be coming together after summer to discuss their plans and recommence activities to complete their final DofE Award.



How many beneficiaries were there?	
Age Group	Total
Under 12	2
12-18 years 18-25 years	261
25-65 years	43
Total	306

→ LOOKING AHEAD

The Impact We Make is Clear, Powerful and Easily Communicated

Our reports will be based on the key themes that emerged in our strategic development planning, a process that involved full consultation with young people, parents, staff, volunteers and Trustees. The consultation took place both online and at two key events – a staff away day and a full day conference based in the premises at Perth Autism.

Evidence will comprise of photos, quotations, charts showing numbers of participants, sessions and awards achieved. They will also show the impact on skill development such as resilience, teamwork, communication, ability to follow instructions, safety and empathy.

Our Communication and Dialogue with Referring Partners is the Best it Can be

Pre-programme planning and review meetings are conducted, with new referral forms piloted and feedback gained. Where appropriate, we attend case conferences and provide progress reports, all the time listening and responding to referrers needs and reviews.

Reach Out to Even Greater Numbers of Young People as Our Capacity Permits

We continue to support young people with a high level of need with individually tailored programmes, with staff ratios from 1:1 to 2:6. Even more young people are receiving online mentoring and assessment on the Digital Learning Hub, assisting them to complete DofE Award sections. Already having worked with 4 high nurture referrals from Social Work teams requiring 1:1 attention, we have an increasing waiting list to receive this highly personalised support. In the last year, we have tailored programmes from 830 week blocks.

Expand the Number of Volunteers & Mentors

With a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator, our band of loyal volunteers continues to increase. They work with our groups, in the garden and supporting expeditions.

We have a regular gardening team that work in the grounds of Megginch. The team plan and develop the flower and vegetable beds and help maintain the garden and the equipment. They support our groups and mentor young people and it is this additional contact with trusted adults that has really benefited the participants while strengthening intergenerational links. We have set up a Communication Board in the Coorie Hoose which creates a link between groups and volunteers on priorities for the garden, if they are unable to meet in person. We have 2 new volunteers from the Open Day at Megginch at Easter, and a Gold student assisting with this year's summer programme.

Our staff and volunteers have a wide array of complementary skills and qualifications, and we continue look for innovative ways to further develop and share skills.

GOING FORWARD -continued

- Families Empowering Communities, Letham – plans are underway to facilitate summer sessions for children aged 2-11 as well as offering their youth group a 30-week Starfish Way programme in autumn 2023.
- With funding from Women in Scotland, piloting Girls Group with Perth Academy and establishing the viability of this group on an ongoing basis.
- Exploring opening another ASN Open Group as our current group reaches capacity.
- Looking at developing a Youth Group for younger children following increasing under 14 referrals. Providing a blend of both play-based and attainment experience. Offering outdoor play experiences with wider achievements such as Hi 5 and our own certificate of achievement.
- Developing Volunteers Area on our website and looking to secure more volunteers to support groups and expeditions.
- Developing further partnership with Laura Annadale's Dog Training programme.

“I cannot exactly put my finger on what has changed for me, but I feel different in a positive way. You are allowed to be yourself, not like when you are at school and must be like everyone else to fit in. I have learnt new skills, I love fire lighting and using the bushcraft knives. Megginch is peaceful and lets us all just be happy to be us but it's the friendly people that make the starfish way!”

Starfish Way
Participant



NEXT STEPS

CULTYBRAGGAN

We have negotiated a 10-year lease for Hut 47. We aim to use the site as a basecamp for expeditions, a centre for ASN residentials and as a facility to help young people begin to take the first steps towards independent living. We will also use it for family residentials and respite breaks.

We know there is a chronic lack of accessible residential accommodation offering doorstep access to stunning lochs and rivers that provide opportunities for water sports, and the Perthshire hills and moorland for wild camping and expeditions. Having already received much interest from Perth & Kinross Council's Youth Services, Social Work and Edge of Care teams and youth groups locally and nationally including the DofE Award, this will allow us to generate an ongoing income for the upkeep of the hut and facilities.



NEXT STEPS:

- Ensure our learning experiences are of the highest quality and meet the needs of the young people
- Refurbish our hut at Cultybraggan and make it operational
- Provide ASN residentials, independent living opportunities, and opportunities for young people in Western Perthshire
- Provide a Starfish Way programme in Kinross-shire, and reach out to other schools
- Build further infrastructure at Megginch
- Create heritage trails at Megginch, Cultybraggan and Aberdalgie.
- Ensure young people gain a range of additional qualifications and certified awards
- Train our staff as qualified leaders of paddleboarding, climbing, archery and expeditions
- Ongoing development of our Digital Learning Hub
- Generate £250,000 for 2023/2024 through a combination of grants and contracts
- Devise and implement a 3-year Funding Strategy
- Approach corporate businesses for support and sponsorship
- Build action plans based on our Strategic Plan for the next 3 years
- Implement our Marketing Plan
- Offer First Aid training courses to generate income
- Continue to expand the numbers of our volunteers and mentors





GOING FORWARD -continued

- Exploring a collaborative partnership with Stepping Up, to provide garden development, maintenance and cookery training.
- Progress plans to work with CAYAG (Coupar Angus Youth Activities Group) to deliver fun, educational activities working towards accredited awards for their young people.
- Developing even more modules via our DLH with increasing accessibility.
- Planning to develop our outdoor cooking area to offer this activity from Bronze to Gold level. This will allow participants to get more creative with the produce they grow and teach the importance of good nutrition and culinary skills. This will be a great addition to our facilities at Megginch, providing an activity that develops confidence while also teaching an essential life skill. Realigning the archery area and building a low level traversing wall and fitness trail.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

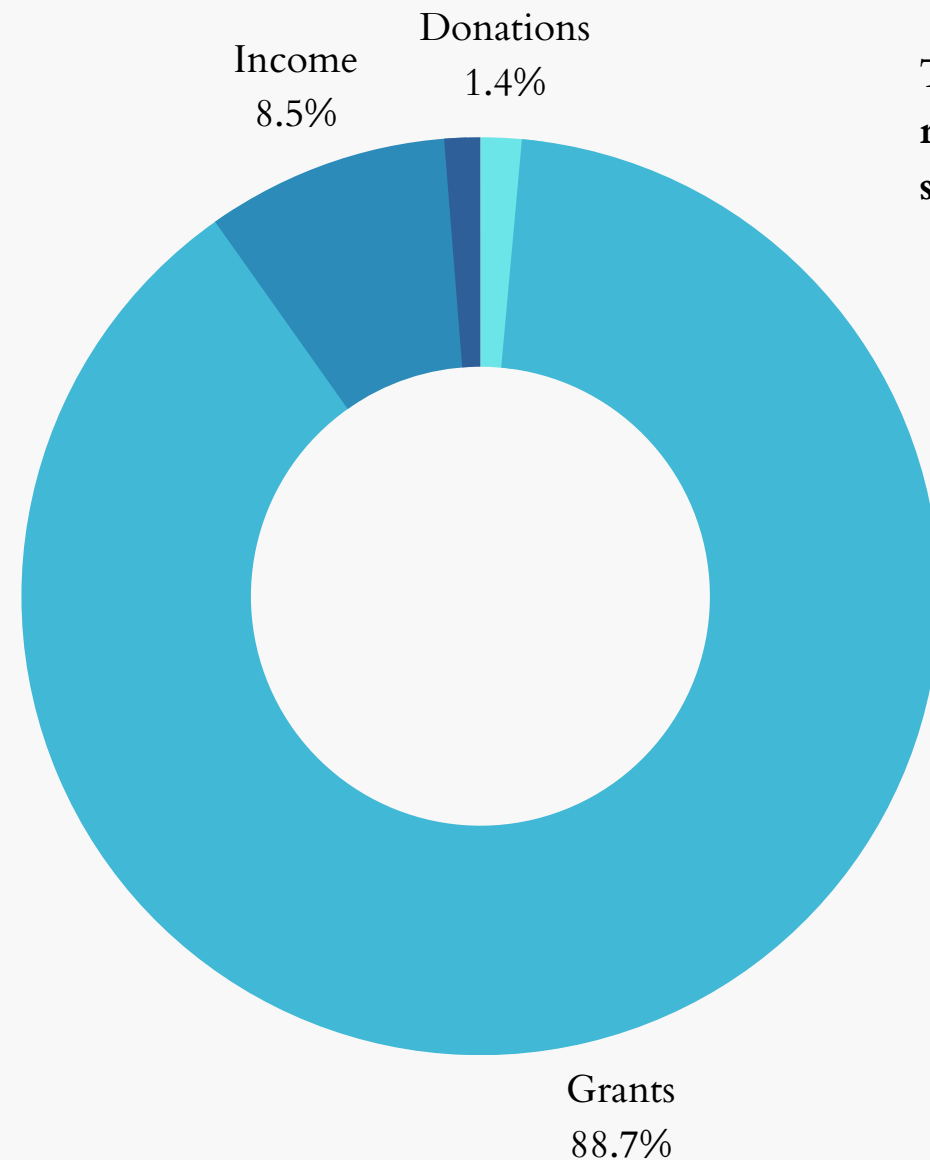
TOTAL INCOME 2021 - £124,381
TOTAL INCOME 2022 - £180,327

TOTAL EXPENDITURE 2021 - £85,396
TOTAL EXPENDITURE 2022 - £110,724

NET SURPLUS 2022 - £69,603

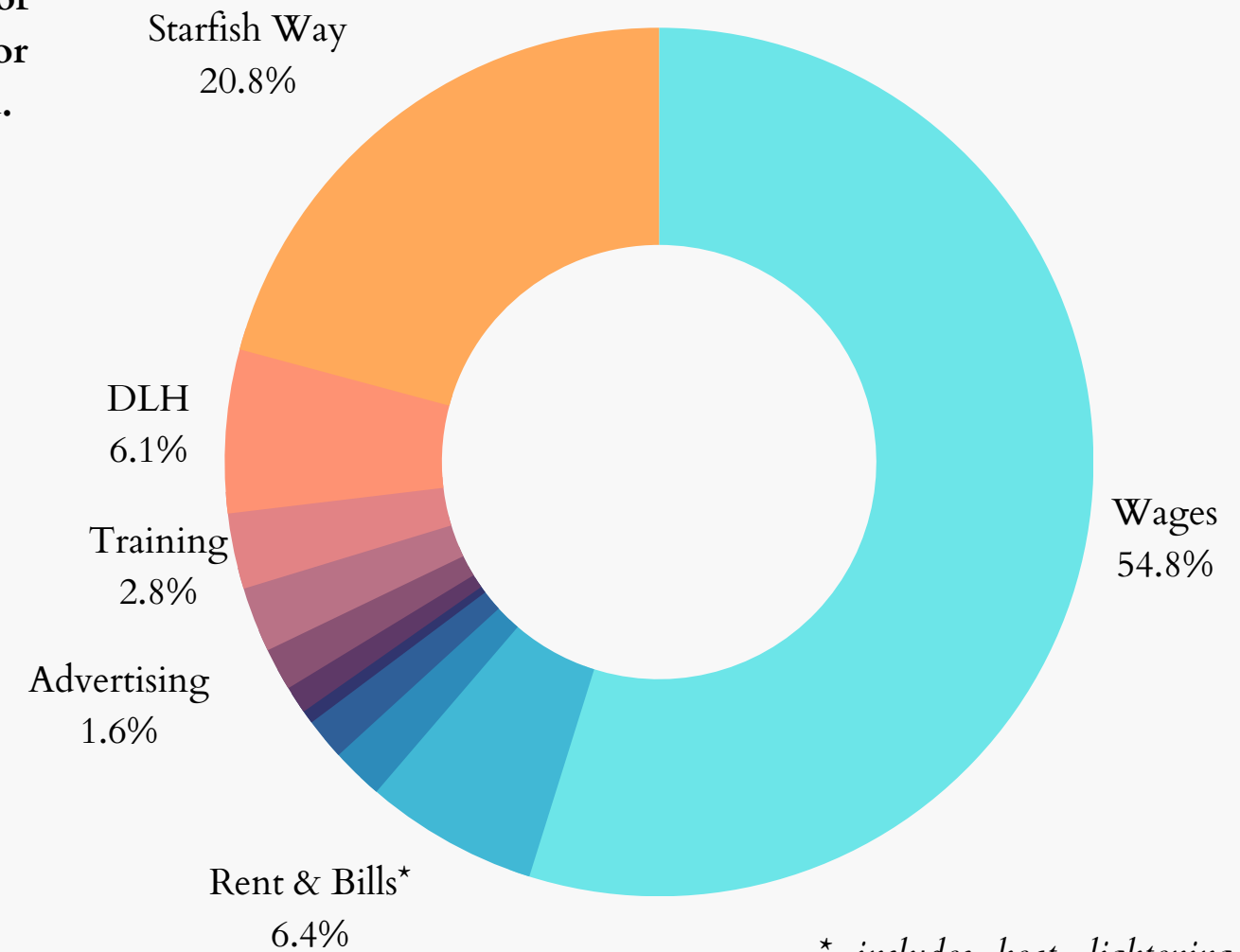
CLOSING BANK BALANCE 2022 - £167,544

BREAKDOWN OF INCOME 2022



The apparent surplus is made up of restricted funds that are designated for specific spending plus a small reserve fund.

BREAKDOWN OF EXPENDITURE 2022



* includes heat, lightening, postage, telephone, stationary and computer expenses.





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THANK YOU!

The Perth and Kinross Duke of
Edinburgh's Award Association
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SC051572

07796 600482
admin@pkdofe.com

www.pkdofe.com
@PKDofE

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