



**ANNUAL REPORT**

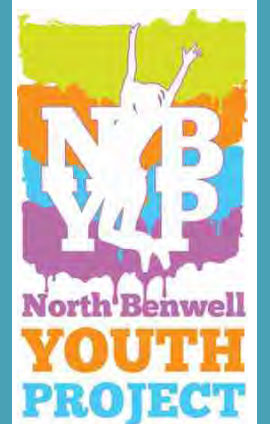
**2023 - 2024**



**NORTH BENWELL YOUTH PROJECT CIO**

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## Chairperson's Report

As we close out another year, I am delighted to share the outstanding progress we've made across numerous areas of North Benwell Youth Partnership. It has been a year full of dedication, resilience, and accomplishments, and I am proud of the incredible efforts of our staff, volunteers, and young people.

Our team continues to work with enthusiasm and dedication, and we are delighted to welcome two new members to the team. This has enabled the project to expand opening times, particularly on a Saturday.

Our project has been buzzing with activity throughout the year, and I want to extend a special thanks to the Youth Participation Committee (YPC) for their exceptional initiative. Their hard work resulted in successful events like the Halloween Disco, Riverside Christmas Market, and the unforgettable Easter coach trip to South Shields. These events not only brought our young people together but also raised vital funds for the organisation, including their contribution to the minibuss appeal.

This summer was packed with enriching experiences: from Beadnell residential trips to adventures in Liverpool, the YPC pool party, and surf lessons. The young people thrived during these activities, which also provided valuable life skills and memories that will stay with them for years to come. Our garden project also bore fruit (or rather, vegetables!) with a beautiful crop of

potatoes and carrots...testament to our commitment to holistic learning and engagement.

A heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in the fundraising efforts for the new minibuss. While our current one is being repaired, our Go Fund Me campaign, plus support from events like the Riverside Christmas Market, have kept momentum going. We are grateful for the community's generosity and will continue to explore every avenue for securing a reliable minibuss.

On the funding front, we've had several notable successes this year, including £33,000 from the Million Hours Fund, £30,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation, and £10,000 from the Wellesley Trust. These contributions will allow us to maintain and expand our group work sessions and activities, including the incredibly successful summer programme. We are also grateful for smaller but impactful grants that have supported specific projects, such as the £1,000 for private swimming lessons for girls and young women.

It's been a year of growth, not just for our young people, but for our physical space as well. Our newly installed summer house has provided us with a wonderful new area for group sessions, one-to-one work, and activities. This, combined with the ongoing maintenance work, has ensured that our environment remains safe, welcoming, and conducive to learning and fun.

This year, we've continued to strengthen our ties with other community organisations. Our participation in the Centre for Social Justice event opened new doors to potential funding avenues and gave us a platform to raise the issues facing grassroots organisations like ours at a national level.

Our work in partnership with Hat Trick, exploring barriers for young women in sports, continues to gain momentum. We are excited to see the fruits of this collaboration in the form of swimming lessons and Nintendo Switch Just Dance sessions, which will engage even more of our community in health and fitness activities.

The future looks bright, and we are already planning an exciting programme for next year. Our 25th Anniversary celebrations will be a key highlight. We will also continue to pursue new funding opportunities and partnerships that align with our goals of enriching the lives of our young people and supporting the broader community.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of our staff and volunteers. Their resilience and passion are truly inspiring.

Thank you all for your continued support. Together, we have achieved much, and I look forward to all that 2025 will bring.

Thanks, Andrea Spowart





## 25 YEARS OF NYBP

We are celebrating the 25th anniversary of North Benwell Youth Project. 25 years of serving the local community. We will be holding a community event at the Ven Bede church hall to celebrate with children, young people, parents, residents and organisations we have worked alongside.

The idea of NBYP first began when the vicar of the Ven Bede Church, John Hardy was facing issues when young people were vandalising the roof of the church. He could have informed the police, but he opted for meaningful engagement, understanding that the young people needed somewhere to hang out with friends and take part in enriching activities.

Please read our 20th anniversary report for a full history of the project's development.

After 25 years we are working with the next generation, many parents attended when they were growing up and want their children to have the same experiences.

2023-2024

This report will be celebrating the work which has taken place during the past year.

Highlights have included -

- The growth of our Saturday work
- Events organised by our Young Peoples Committee
- Our new summer house
- Developing young volunteers

Huge thank you to our exceptional trustees, staff team and funders for making NBYP a special place

for children and young people living in North Benwell.

Thank you

On a personal note, I was overwhelmed with the surprise event organised for my birthday in August by Lisa and the Young Peoples Committee. I was led blind fold to the Ven Bede Church where children, young people, trustees, parents' local organisations, the vicar and community police had gathered quietly, they yelled out 'happy birthday!'. So much planning and effort went into the event - a delicious buffet, balloon decorations, local bands, arts and crafts, photo presentations, face painter, and bouncy castle. What an amazing day. Thank you.

Margaret Ridley





# BLAST FROM THE PAST

Here are an array of photos of children and young people from over the years. The last 10 years has been so much easier to keep and store photos on our computer, previously we had to get photos developed and store in boxes.

There are children on these photos who are now adults, many with families of their own. Some of their children now attend NBYP, enjoying the same opportunities that they had.







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# OUR WORK 2023 - 2024

## THE IMPORTANCE OF GROUP WORK

We offer group sessions for all ages - juniors -8-11, Inters 12-15. Seniors 16+. We run 12 different sessions a week so we can include everyone who wants to join.

We offer a safe welcoming space, right on their doorstep. Children and

young people take part in a diverse range of activities, of their choosing. We have an informal way of supporting children to learn while doing. All attendance is voluntary, they come because they want to come. Giving them control of their sessions gives them a sense of belonging and ownership.

It is not about the activity itself, but all the skills they develop while being together - building self-confidence

and self-worth, communication skills, sharing, patience, understanding unacceptable behaviour, negotiating - the list is not exhaustive. There is no financial cost to families, all our sessions and offsite activities are free.

Having fun is always high on the agenda, young people are often coping with many challenges and know at NBYP they can relax and let off steam.



## JUNIOR GROUPS

We currently run 3 Junior sessions with different attendees for each one. This age group come with a lot of enthusiasm and energy. They learn to socialise, make new friends, learn they have a voice and can direct their own sessions.

It is important for these children to learn social skills outside of school whilst developing their confidence and working on acceptable

behaviours. Overall, they have blossomed into great young people with growing confidence levels, improved English-speaking skills and more of an awareness of the world around them.

During the sessions the children have learnt to cook more challenging recipes including healthier options.

They have taken part in activities which improve their ability to cope with life's challenges, get involved in team building exercises, shared resources and ideas with others.



## INTERMEDIATE GROUPS

Transitioning from junior school to high school is an unsettling time, adapting to new routines and structures.

Dealing with puberty, gender identity are just a few challenges young people face growing up. Workers are there to listen and guide when risky behaviours become apparent.

The young people need a safe environment where they can talk in confidence and be listened to. Older members can act as a mentor to the younger members. Often, they have experienced the same issues and can empathise.



## SENIOR GROUPS

Young people 16+ attending NBYP often need guidance from workers, a safe place to talk about their life, relationships, their future, issues worrying them. One of their favourite sessions is to talk.

Many are adjusting to life away from school and education, somewhere they have attended since they were very young.

Workers can support them on the next step of their journey by helping with college applications, apprenticeships, apply for jobs, opening bank accounts.

The groups still enjoy cooking sessions, challenging each other, visiting gyms, drives out in the minibus, games of pool







## SATURDAY WORK

Saturday work has now been running for a year!!!

This has been the busiest session of the week for the past year with triple the amount of young people who would normally attend a single session. There have been many new faces attending getting to know others who attend during the week. As it's an open session we have had many different age groups mixing, doing similar things. Thanks to the funding we were given, staff have been able to provide the activities the young people have asked to do whilst making sure they have a warm meal when not at school.

Therefore, offering them an opportunity to come together in a safe space, meet friends have food and do activities. There is a weekly pool competition which provides the winner with a small prize to take home.

Each week the young people can do a different craft or art piece of their choice. We have tried several quick recipes including biscuits, croissants, churros and pizza making. They choose to take part in crafts, art competitions, playing on the PlayStation as well as chatting with staff and friends.

Overall, the open session has been a total success not just for staff and the young people but also for the young people who have gained experience volunteering; bringing them out of their shell and giving them a lot more confidence in their abilities to engage with others.

Furthermore, it opened up an opportunity for a young person who volunteers during the week to become a paid member of staff on a Saturday raising their confidence and work experience levels.







## YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE

What another busy year the YPC have had!

They are excelling in everything they do and are a credit to NBYP. They meet every other Thursday to discuss and plan their next idea.

The aim of the YPC is to support the work of the project, giving them a voice of how they would like to direct the project. It helps them to develop an array of skills that will benefit them in their future, such as planning and organisation, budgeting, leadership, communication, and teamwork.

In the last year they have:

- Organised a Halloween disco at the Ven Bede church hall for children who attend the project.
- Put together art packs and food parcels for families at Christmas.
- Made a variety of crafts to sell at a Christmas market held at Riverside project.
- At Easter they organised a community coach trip to take families to South Shields for the day, they provided snacks and fair tickets.
- Organised a summer pool party at Elswick pool and a buffet for after.
- Organised a surprise celebration event for the project coordinators birthday inviting families, trustees, workers from other organisations, the local vicar and the police. They had bands playing, arts and crafts, food, bouncy castle, a raffle and lots of decorations.
- They have organised various raffles to raise money for the project such as a large food hamper and a pamper hamper.







## YOUNG WORKERS & VOLUNTEERS

Many of our sessions are supported by volunteers who attend NBYP.

Filip supports the music sessions, Keera with the girls' groups, Martina and Laura with Saturday's sessions. We recently employed 2 young people to help with Saturday's session as they are very busy.

Keera and Jan both for 4 hours support Lisa and Jenifer to run the activities.



## MUSIC AT NBYF

Music session continue to run every Monday and Wednesday thanks to Gemarts and the East by Northeast music project.

We have a music room full of instruments and microphones, Gemarts provide talented professional musician to teach and mentor children and young people. They can get involved in everything from writing lyrics, singing, rapping, learning an instrument and performing at local events.

Lily who attends the girl's session has come on in leaps and bounds. Her confidence has grown after each singing performance, the latest being at the Benstock Festival.

All young people get the opportunity to perform if they choose to. This year they have performed at our annual celebration event, a sharing performance at the Light Transformational Church and a birthday celebration at the Ven Bede church.

As well as learning new music, the boys enjoy playing and singing traditional Roma music, remembering and celebrating their heritage.







## DETACHED WORK

Detached work is a way of meeting young people outside, on the streets near where they live. Workers tend to stay around the vicinity of terraces where the groups congregate.

The Box is a popular meeting spot for all ages as there are seats and fenced court to play football. Not all young people want to attend the project base, detached is another way of meeting young people and letting them know what support we can offer, or just to have a chat.

It is always good to catch up with those used to attend.

## NCS - NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE

Funding from the National Citizen Service has helped us to focus on 15-17-year-old to develop a range of skill including life skills, employability and social action.

This is to help prepare them for when they leave education and enter the employment market. They can be part of a weekly group or one to one support for employability sessions. Often when we help a young person write their C.V it can be a challenge when they don't have any formal qualifications or experience to add.

Taking part in project activities, learning new skill and volunteering, they can boost their confidence and develop an array of transferable skills.

### One to One Support 16 - 25 Years

One to one support is runs better when a young person has an appointment. This means workers can priorities that young person's needs.



- Finding N.I. numbers
- Opening a bank account
- Helping to get I.D. documents
- Applying to college / training courses
- Apply for a provisional Driving license
- Looking for work
- Searching for their first home
- Medical appointments
- Applying for grants/ student loans



## MUM'S GROUP

This group has been running for many years now. The mums have regularly attended every Thursday to have a cuppa whilst chatting to others who attend to get some advice or a short break from daily life. The younger children who attend with their mums get the opportunity to socialise with other children whilst playing with the many toys we have collected over the years.

This group continue to engage with staff and others who attend gaining knowledge and experience to improve their lives.

This year we have supported one member with her volunteering role, given support around benefits and health care. They continue to explore new recipes and try new foods; they have tried out new places to take their children. They went to Lilidorei at Alnwick gardens which was great fun and Hall Hill Farm in Durham which had a mixture of animals and rides for all ages.

Due to the growing number of young people attending the project we have been limited to how many times we can take this group out which has meant trips being changed to during a week which also limits the amount of time we can go out.



## NEW SUMMER HOUSE

We are always trying to gain more space in the project base. There are no more walls we can knock down!

We were given a second hand outdoor shed a few years ago but overtime it became unsafe.

Funding from William Leech meant we could replace it for a bigger summer house, one we could use as an extra room when needed.

It is cosy, has deckchairs and a bean bag sofa. We have a portable heater so it can be used all year round.

The Young People Committee decorate it for Halloween and Christmas.







## GROWING VEG

For the first time we attempted to grow our own vegetables.

We planted potatoes, carrots and tomatoes from seed.

Potatoes and tomatoes grew well, carrots were small - but all a learning curve for next year.



## SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

There is a growing need from residents / parents asking for our help. Families are struggling with the increases in the cost of living, rising energy prices and increased rents.

We have had families being evicted from their homes and coming to the project distraught, they did not know where else to go.

We are a youth project first and foremost, but we feel a responsibility to support parents of the children and young people we work with. We are not experts but will listen and try to work out the best place for support, helping to make phone calls, fill in applications on their behalf as often there are language barriers.

Many who we support are from the Eastern European Roma community, they trust the workers, we will help where we can.

Settled Status applications has been an ongoing struggle for many. Sylwia a EUSS advisor from Migrant Help, has been attending the project every fortnight to help with applications. She has a lot of experience and knowledge of the scheme.

Other types of support given include;

- Universal Credit issues and applications
- Apostils
- ID and passport applications
- Grants to supply household items
- School applications
- Explaining official letters
- Housing issues





### Free Giveaway Days

Every few months we hold free giveaway days. We receive donations of clothes, toys, baby equipment household items etc. When our store room is full, we bring it all downstairs, sort it all out into sizes etc.

Residents make an appointment and can come along and take what they need. In winter we supply warm coats and hats, in summer, swimming costumes and light clothing.

As well as supporting local families we are recycling and preventing items from going to landfill.



### Food Parcels

Each Wednesday we continue to provide food parcels for local families.

There is a charge of £1 to cover our Fareshare membership costs. The parcels contain fresh fruit and vegetables, baked products, meat, sometimes tins, cooking sauces, drinks etc.

This year we received funding from Hill-Dickeson Trust that meant we could supplement the parcels with extra food such as fresh bread, cereal and milk.

### YOUNG CHEFS

Cooking and baking have always been a popular activity in sessions, for all ages.

Not only do they get to take

something delicious home, they are developing many skills such as following a recipe, weighing and measuring, time management, creativity, and attention to detail.

We try to make everything from scratch where possible.







## HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES

Every school holiday we organise trips to a variety of locations. Summertime we try to keep the activities outdoors, wintertime is a time for ice skating.

The past year we have visited various swimming pools, with Haltwhistle outdoor pool being the most popular. Groups have gone surfing at South Shields surf school, tour of St James Park, Lilidorei Adventure Park in Alnwick, Ninja Warrior assault course, beach days, residential to Liverpool and Beadnell Bay,

trampolining, roller skating, snow-tubing, laser tag, escape rooms.

These activities give new experiences of visiting places near and far, developing valuable life skills, making memories to treasure, with no financial cost attached.







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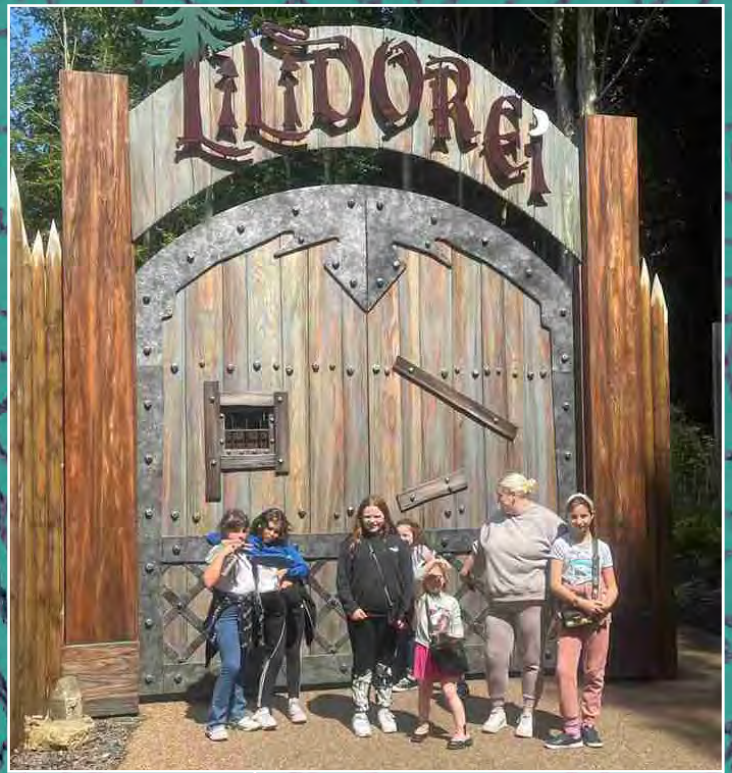
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## What is Youth Work

Youth workers play a crucial role in the lives of many thousands of young people. They bring fun, a sense of structure and a whole host of new opportunities to the people they work with, broadening their horizons, boosting their social skills and giving them a place to simply be themselves.

By supporting young people at one of the most important periods of their lives they help them learn new skills, embrace their passions and develop a sense of identity and independence. And because youth work is not confined to a single location or structured curriculum, it offers a flexibility that traditional education cannot.

Youth workers build voluntary, trusted relationships with young people, away from many of the other pressures they may be facing in their lives. (National Youth Agency)

## What is the North Benwell Youth Project CIO?

The North Benwell Youth Project CIO is a charitable Incorporated Organisation governed by a constitution which states every trustee must be appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.

The objects of the CIO are to help young people up to the age of 25 living in North Benwell (the area of benefit), especially but not exclusively through leisure time activities so as to develop their capabilities that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society.

The trustees have ensured that benefit to the local community has been at the centre of the work of the project.



# STAFF AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## Management Committee

*Chairperson* - Andrea Spowart

*Treasurer* - Glen Foreman

*Trustees* - James Garratt, Mike Keller, Kirsty Daniels

*Young Persons Representative* - Keera Storey

## Staff Team

Margaret Ridley

Lisa Young

Malcolm Wharton

Sarah Howe

Jennifer Horvathova - *Trainee Youth Worker*

Sue Leeder - *Administrator*

Laura Ward - *Volunteers*

## Young Peoples Committee and Young Volunteers

Martina Horvathova

Lucie Cinova

Marketa Gaziova

Keera Storey

Jennifer Horvathova

Adela Sivakova

## Young Volunteers

Filip Sivak, Lucie Cinova, Keera Storey,

Adela Sivakova, Martina Horvathova

