

2021 Impact Report

A year of connecting
young people to nature



THE GREEN TEAM

CONNECTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH NATURE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our first ever impact report – a chance to tell you more about what we do and the positive change it brings about.

The Green Team believes that every young person, regardless of their background, has the right to enjoy positive experiences in the outdoors. Our programmes provide opportunities for environmental conservation, exploration and play, outdoor learning, respite, skills development, and fostering positive relationships.

With the strain of the covid pandemic and the reality of the climate crisis, young people have never been under so much pressure, nor been so determined to make a positive contribution to the natural environment. We exist to support them and this is our 2021 story...

OUR VISION

A Scotland where everyone values and can enjoy the natural environment.

OUR MISSION

To provide transformational outdoor experiences that connect children and young people to nature, others and themselves.



2021 AT A GLANCE

Despite starting the year in lockdown, 2021 has been our busiest year ever.



Behind these high level statistics are individual young people, each with their own experiences and each on their own journeys. They are at the heart of the Green Team and this impact report tells you more about their achievements.



I HAVE LEARNT HOW TO START FIRES, PLANT TREES, MAKE LOTS OF FRIENDS AND I HAVE LEARNT THAT WHAT MAKES ME THE MOST HAPPY IS BEING IN NATURE.



OUR PROGRAMMES IN 2021

Green Angels

Green Angels supports the positive wellbeing of girls through environmental volunteering, gentle nature connection and spending time with others.

In 2021 additional funding enabled us to increase our capacity to deliver regular midweek projects as well as our ongoing weekend projects.



Participant Outcomes



enhanced wellbeing



increased nature connection



had a positive experience



THE GIRLS DEVELOPED IN CONFIDENCE OVER THE WEEKS, BOTH IN TERMS OF THEIR ABILITIES TO WORK WITH OTHERS AND THEIR OWN ABILITIES ... IT WAS SO LOVELY TO SEE THEM DEVELOP THE SOCIAL SKILLS THEY WILL USE FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES.

referring partner

Green Volunteers

Through completing conservation tasks, participants in our Green Volunteers programme made a difference to the natural landscape through environmental volunteering.

A particular highlight of 2021 was running a residential weekend, for the first time since covid began, with 15 young people camping out under a blanket of stars and waking to the dawn chorus, a gentle sunrise and the smell of breakfast on the fire.



Participant Outcomes



increased care for the environment



increased nature connection



increased enjoyment of the outdoors

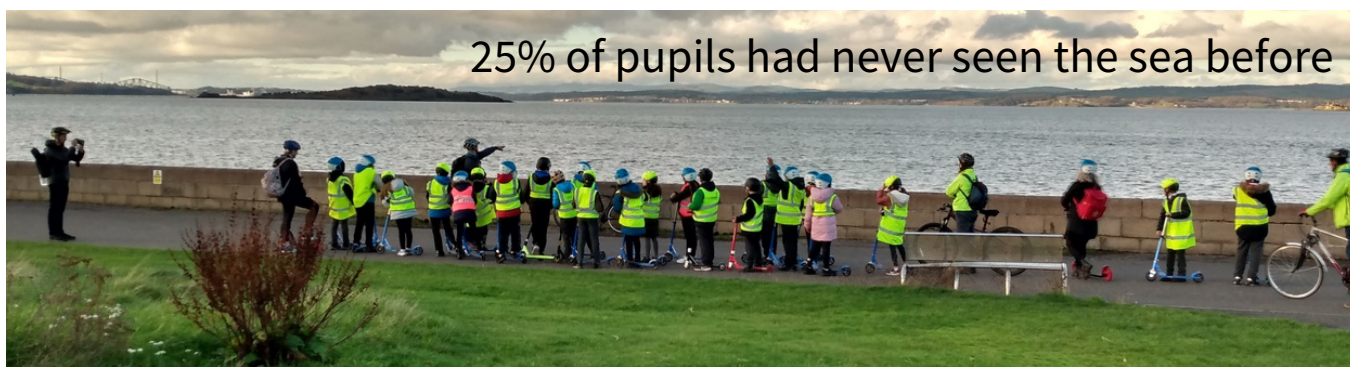


GREEN VOLUNTEERS HAS HELPED ME THROUGH LOCKDOWN BY GIVING ME A CLOSER CONNECTION TO THE ENVIRONMENT

IT WAS GOOD FUN, MEETING NEW PEOPLE AND DOING THINGS TO HELP THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Green Schools

Building on children's natural curiosity and delight to be outside, our Green Schools programme offers a range of outdoor learning, environmental education and nature connection activities in school grounds and local greenspaces. Pupils get involved in activities that encourage discovery, exploration and a deeper understanding of the natural world – ensuring that good quality outdoor learning is available to all. Let's dig a little deeper into one of our 2021 projects, working with St. David's RC Primary School.



I WISH WE COULD ALWAYS DO OUTDOOR LEARNING



OUTDOOR LEARNING IS NOW MY FAVOURITE THING

Green Schools 2021 Stats



100% of teachers said their pupils had a better understanding of the natural world



209 JASS/ John Muir Awards earned



90% of teachers said they felt more confident using outdoor play to develop skills and increase learning



100% of teachers said they were more aware of outdoor activities to teach numeracy and literacy



I HAD SEEN OUTDOOR LEARNING PREVIOUSLY AS AN ONEROUS TASK AND LACKED CONFIDENCE IN THIS. WITH THE SUPPORT OF MARGON, I WAS PUSHED OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE AND WAS ABLE TO TAKE LEARNING AROUND THE JOHN MUIR (AWARD) FURTHER THAN ON MY OWN. IT HAS REALLY IMPACTED MY PRACTICE AND GIVEN ME A LOT OF FOOD FOR THOUGHT ON HOW TO CHANGE IT GOING FORWARD.

Teacher



SO MUCH LITTER... AND THIS IS JUST ONE PARK!



I ENJOYED SCOOTING - IT WAS FUN AND FAST!



Thrive

Thrive offers teenagers who are struggling with their mental health, the opportunity to take part in long term projects where they can make a positive contribution and enjoy respite through nature connection and nurturing relationships.

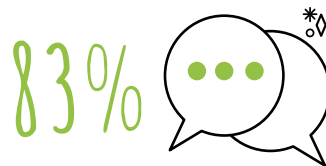
It was amazing to hear one participant share how they were fed up missing project sessions after being hospitalised following overdose attempts and committing to seek the further help they need to allow them to attend.



Participant Outcomes



enhanced wellbeing



increased social skills



increased participation/engagement



(THIS PROJECT) ENABLED ME TO BECOME FRIENDS WITH MORE PEOPLE SO THAT I DIDN'T FEEL ENTIRELY WORTHLESS.... I FEEL A WHOLE LOT BETTER THAN I DID, WHICH IS GOOD BECAUSE I WASN'T FEELING VERY GREAT AT ALL

Green Explorers and Holiday Activities

Green Explorers and our Holiday Activities give young people the chance to play, make friends and explore some amazing local wild places.

It has been particularly rewarding to see participants develop practical and social skills. A small group of close friends got really interested in den building – what started as basic stick shelters progressed over the weeks as they learnt about knots and tarpaulins and incorporated these into their builds. Over time the small group grew as they welcomed other participants into their adventures and formed new friendships.



I'm grateful for...

"THE CLIMBING TREE" "WHITTLING"

"HOT CHOCOLATE"

"MEETING FRIENDS & PLAYING IN THE WOODS"

"I'M HAPPY I GOT TO SPEND TIME OUTDOORS WITH FRIENDS"

Green Shoots

Green Shoots uses wilderness survival skills and nature connection activities to help young people develop life skills that give them the confidence and resilience to deal with any challenges they face. This fictional diary is based on the actual feedback and experiences of young people who took part in 2021 and provides insight into a typical journey over an 8-week Green Shoots project.



Day 1: Not sure what to expect but it's got to be better than school, right?
Here goes!
We took the minibus to Bonaly Country Park, played some games and cut down gorse to prevent fires spreading.

After lunch we used a knife to create a sharp point on a stick and then toasted marshmallows. I felt a bit anxious during the day cause it was all new to me but will definitely go back next week.

Day 4: Rubbish start - fight with brother. Was in a bad mood but got the minibus to a beach where we explored, went crab hunting and picked up loads of litter - 8 full bags!!

Learnt different ways to make a fire. Got a spark on my first try with a flint and steel. Made a fire and cooked sausages - group had noticed I was in a mood at the start of the day so they told me jokes to cheer me up!



Day 8: Last day! Did loads today - played stalking game, fixed a path, made a rope swing to cross a river, put up hammocks (and chilled!) and made burgers on the fire. Really enjoyed it all despite the rain.

Finished with a chat around the fire - what we learned and achieved. I feel really proud of myself. Was given certificate because I achieved the Hi5 award. Glad I stuck with it. Was such good fun.

Participant Outcomes



OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ALL HAVE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR AND THIS PROGRAMME ALLOWED THEM TO SIT WITH THEIR FEELINGS AND WORK THROUGH THEM GIVING THEM VALUABLE SKILLS TO USE IN THEIR HOME AND SCHOOL LIFE. MANY TIMES KATE PATIENTLY SAT AND SPOKE THROUGH HOW THEIR BEHAVIOUR WAS IMPACTING THEIR IMMEDIATE AND LONG TERM SITUATION. THIS HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE IN HOW THEY SEE THEMSELVES ALSO.

Referring partner

Nature Play

Nature Play helps parents and carers and their pre-school children to spend time together outdoors - engaging in early years play and social interaction.

After periods of lockdown and isolation, we were thrilled to provide 57 sessions for young children during 2021.



JACK HAS COME ON LEAPS AND BOUNDS. IN PARTICULAR, HIS SPEECH AND COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER CHILDREN, MOVEMENT IN TACKLING CLIMBING AND UNEVEN GROUND SURFACES AND SOCIAL SKILLS HAVE COME ON IMMENSELY. HIS GENERAL LOVE FOR THE OUTDOORS AND MEETING WITH OTHERS, HIS CONFIDENCE AND INDEPENDENCE... IT TRULY IS A MAGICAL TIME.

Participant Outcomes (parents)



more ideas of how to use greenspace to engage with their children



more likely to use and care for local park in future



better understanding of how outdoor play can aid learning

Green Wellies

Green Wellies is a programme for over 18's. Participants meet regularly to take time out in nature to improve their wellbeing and the greenspace around them.

Following a pilot session in 2020, we ran 7 Green Wellies days in 2021.



AFTER A DIFFICULT YEAR THAT HAD REALLY HIT BOTH MY MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH, I NEEDED AN ACTIVITY THAT COULD GET ME OUT OF MY ISOLATION FLAT, GETTING FRESH AIR IN GREENSPACES, AND SPENDING TIME WITH FRIENDS

Additional Work

As well as our usual programmes, we are always keen to explore different ways of connecting young people to nature and develop new partnerships to make this happen. Over 2021 we noticed a great demand for opportunities to spend positive time in the outdoors – to provide respite from the stress of covid, to enjoy spending time with others after periods of isolation and to take practical action to look after the natural environment.

We are delighted to have run sessions for the first time with Edinburgh Young Carers, Edible Estates, Home Education Groups, Canongate Youth and Stepping Stones.



TO BE HONEST, IT JUST MAKES ME FEEL FREE. IT MAKES ME FEEL HAPPY AND RELAXED

Young Carer

Corporate Groups

Over 2021 we ran sessions with 8 different companies – providing employees the opportunity to get actively involved in important conservation tasks, to strengthen team connections or to enjoy a break in nature from the stresses of working life. Income raised from these sessions helped to support the valuable work that we undertake with young people.



I HAD A LOVELY TIME AND IT WAS GREAT JUST TO TAKE TIME OUT FROM THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE, LISTEN TO THE NATURE AROUND ME AND MEET SOME NEW PEOPLE TOO.



Our Volunteer Leaders

Our volunteers are at the heart of the Green Team. We are pleased to have delivered training in areas including child protection, first aid, philosophical enquiry, tool maintenance and outdoor activities. And we are even more pleased to have given something back to them through their positive experiences with young people and the rest of our volunteer community.



*THERE IS SO MUCH I AM LEARNING. I THINK THE GREEN TEAM REPRESENTS HOPE TO ME AMONGST THESE HARD TIMES – ALL THE GENTLENESS AND KINDNESS I SEE AND RECEIVE
.. .THANK YOU SO MUCH*

A FINAL WORD FROM OUR CEO



2021 has been quite the year! We have faced many challenges and opportunities along the way and it is wonderful to be able to look back on the year with a sense of pride for what we have achieved and excitement for what lies ahead.

Publishing our first impact report, is a significant development for the Green Team. It provides a platform to share what we do as we continue to strive to do more. Most importantly, it helps us to stop and reflect on the difference that we are making for our natural environment through conservation and education, and for young people who have been hard hit by the coronavirus pandemic. I am thrilled that we have provided so many children and young people with opportunities to connect with nature, others and themselves.

Seeing the impact of our work so clearly reflected in statistics and quotes reinforces the importance of everything we are trying to do. I am lucky enough to see all the other evaluation, feedback and photos that didn't make it into this report and it all brings a little tear to my eye and a smile to my face. One quote in particular summed up what we have achieved:

"WHATEVER YOU AND THE OTHER GREEN TEAM MEMBERS HAVE BEEN DOING, YOU'VE BEEN GETTING IT RIGHT. GRACE COMES HOME MUDDY, EXHAUSTED AND FULL OF CHAT. SHE THOROUGHLY ENJOYS THE VOLUNTEERING... AFTER SUCH A DIFFICULT YEAR FOR SO MANY, HOME LEARNING AND TEENAGERS BEING UNABLE TO INTERACT CLOSELY, GREEN TEAM HAS BEEN AN ABSOLUTE SAVIOUR!!"

I started this note by mentioning the challenges we have faced and it seems right to finish it by recognising the amazing generosity, resilience, flexibility and skills of so many people that helped us face those challenges – our youth panel, volunteers, partners, supporters, parents, staff, fundraisers, funders and our Board. Thank you to you all.

And finally a big thank you to all the young people who have made this year so much fun and who have achieved so much.


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Radway". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Penny Radway, CEO




THE GREEN TEAM


CONNECTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH NATURE

 @TheGreenTeamEdin

| www.greenteam.org.uk |

 @GreenTeamEdin



 @greenteamedin

