WHO WE ARE

British Exploring Society is a world class youth development charity with a unique heritage, founded on the belief that challenging experiences can change lives, empowering and equipping young people with the courage, skills, resilience and determination to make the most of their future.

We give young people access to adventure and take them on expeditions to remote locations where they face challenges, gain skills and learn about themselves – as well as acquiring knowledge relevant to their lives and to the fragile environments that they explore. The results are transformative – not just in terms of practical skills and resilience, but in a newfound confidence and self-belief which they carry forward to their future life.

More than this, through their adventure together, our young people forge friendships for life and become part of a unique supportive and continuing community of Young Explorers with shared experiences, values and perspectives on the world.

The quotes throughout this report have been provided by our community, including supporters, volunteer Leaders, and young people taking part in our programmes in 2020.

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Thank you all
Marvin Rees, British Exploring Society’s President since 2019 and Mayor of Bristol, joined us as a young person on expedition in 1990 to Svalbard.

“With my wispy beard... walking through the airport with my rucksack and porridge stains on my blue and black fleece. Looking around thinking, ‘who are you people? I’ve just been in the Arctic, you haven’t.’ It wasn’t snobbery. It was an inability to comprehend life back in the UK and a sense of the smallness of it. The expedition was a new world for me. And what did it give me access to? The sense of being in a place that was untainted, climbing mountains that no one had ever climbed before. It’s very difficult to put into words – it just felt like we were breaking new ground. The real possibility of falling down crevasses and never being seen again. The experience of awe. All through our expedition we could hear the crack from the snout of the glacier on the edge of our camp. The freedom of that space.

It gave me a sense of the scale of the world – and how small the world I was rattling around in was. I come from the inner city, single mum, not much money. We didn’t really go outside our area very much. I think going up to Svalbard just blew my mind, just how vast the world was. I felt very, very vulnerable. Small and very insignificant. The irony was that, in that moment of insignificance, I knew I was alive in a way that I hadn’t felt before.

I trace a big part of my own personal development back to my expedition in 1990.

As the Mayor of Bristol it’s so important for me to tap into the sources of resilience for individuals and for wider society. We need individual resilience. We need community resilience. I am of the absolute belief that organisations like British Exploring Society can help make up for this deficit.

If certain sections of society are getting these opportunities and others are not then those already advantaged are getting phenomenal opportunities to build more resilience into their lives. We’re as strong as our weakest link. It’s important that we give opportunities to everyone in society to find a significance, and to build resilience.

Finally, we need to make sure we don’t kill the planet. The more people we can create the opportunity to engage with the wider planet for, the better.”
A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

Ian Maginnis

My expectations were high when I joined the Board of Trustees in late 2019. I’d worked as an outdoor instructor and expedition Leader for many years, so I already knew that what British Exploring Society does – challenging learning and adventure in wild, remote, locations – is hugely important and beneficial for young people.

And it is not just me that thinks this. We recently received kitemark accreditation from the Association of Character Education. This is a tremendous endorsement of how we work and the benefit our programmes and expeditions bring to young people. I was really pleased to see this recognised by others outside of British Exploring Society.

It won’t surprise you to hear me say that 2020 has been an extraordinarily difficult year for British Exploring Society. It was very disappointing that we could not offer our normal programmes and expeditions, particularly in a year when young people needed them most.

But we didn’t stand still: we continued to progress our strategy and positively impact the lives of young people, and are well positioned for 2021 and beyond. Honor and her team have shown amazing resilience and flexibility during the most difficult of years, and I thank them for their hard work and commitment.

We introduced a new programme, ’Wildestan’, and it has been a great success, receiving very good feedback from the young people who participated. Wildestan is a significant development for British Exploring Society. We never saw it as just a ‘gap filler’ while we couldn’t go to remote locations; it will be an integral, and increasing, part of what we do in the future, complementing our traditional expeditions.

We continued to build the capabilities needed to support our strategy, particularly fundraising and partnerships, and upgrading our ‘customer relationship management’ system, which is fundamental for improving how we engage with young people, partners, funders, Leaders and Members.

As Chair, I have taken the lead on ensuring that our corporate governance continues to be effective, and three new trustees joined us during the year to strengthen the board team.

Probably the biggest thing that I have learnt during my first year, is that British Exploring Society is not just an organisation, but a community working together to deliver amazing outcomes and impact.

This community has responded brilliantly during a very tough year. Thanks to our extremely generous donors we are in a good financial position. Thanks to the passion and innovation of our staff, the dedication and energy of our volunteer Leaders, and the support of our partners, we have had nearly 500 attendances at our training, adventures and workshops this year.

I’m proud to be Chair of British Exploring Society and to be part of this community. The need for what we do is more important than ever and will only continue to increase. While 2021 is likely to be another challenging year, I am confident that we will make a positive and lasting impact to lives of many young people.

“Wildestan is different to anything I have experienced before. I was able to meet new people virtually, the sessions were engaging and taught me things about exploring nature that I never knew.”

Venus Tamjidi
Young Adventurer, Wildestan 2020
A PROGRESSIVE YEAR

Honor Wilson-Fletcher, CEO

I would like to start by referring to the words of our President. This year we have established a new significance to our work. 2020 has been exciting and uplifting. We have learned new skills, discovered new ways to deliver adventure and challenge, and reaffirmed the capacity of our community to adapt and be hugely generous. We have been awed and thrilled as ever by the stories of the young people we have worked with.

Everything has changed and nothing has changed.

But we started out this spring with the recognition that as a small organisation there was a limit to our capacity to help tackle the negative fall-out caused by COVID-19. We needed to focus – quickly – on being positive and effective. We needed to make every effort and penny count. The events of this year have disrupted all of our normal planning and our approach to youth development. But during 2020 we also discovered that nothing has changed: that what young people have needed – more than ever – was engaging access to inspirational Leaders, rewarding learning opportunities and a safe environment to meet new people and be excited by the outdoors.

We still want young people to forge friendships and become part of a supportive and continuing community with other ‘explorers’ through our work. Spending quality learning time with our unpaid professional Leaders is a critical part of the development experience with us – and we will ensure that this is central to our work.

We are clear that these are valuable tools to fight the negative social impact of COVID-19 – just as they have helped for years to offset the impact of economic, educational and societal disadvantage.

A new destination in 2020

We are delighted to be exploring the opportunities of our new, virtual ‘eighth continent’ Wildestan. We are only just beginning to understand the scope of adventurous learning it enables us to offer young people.

Staying on track for the future

We met with our trustees for a virtual awayday in October to consider how our learning this year might impact on our strategy.

We have reviewed our strategy and produced an update called On Track. We will share this in more detail shortly. For now – it might be useful to know as a reader of this Report that, as the title suggests, we are checking our pace, scale and our bearings, rather than fundamentally changing direction.

We will continue to focus on efficiency and effectiveness and on measurement of impact as our model diversifies to meet the needs of young people mid – and post-pandemic – and to keep a tight rein on the number of priorities we take on. We have done well this year – but need to remain outwardly focused, aware of the unpredictability of the external environment.

We have refreshed our Vision and Mission to better reflect our commitment to positive community and environmental impact. So I will leave you with these. I hope you find the rest of this report helpful. Thank you so much for taking the time to read about our work.

Our vision is for all young people to be able to contribute confidently in the world. We want equal access to challenging learning and adventure in the wilderness as an unbeatable preparation for adult life.

Our mission is to grow a diverse, inclusive community of empowered young people with the skills, resilience and determination to deliver lasting community impact and positive environmental change.

“The team I am blessed to work with have been remarkable for their adaptability, resilience and willingness to tackle new challenges.”
British Exploring Society was recognized as a Charity of Character in 2020 by the Association for Character Education. This means that we are deemed to align with the Ofsted 2019 handbook criteria for:

“...developing pupils’ character, which we define as a set of positive personal traits, dispositions and virtues that informs their motivation and guides their conduct so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others. This gives pupils the qualities they need to flourish in our society.” – Ofsted’s School Inspection Handbook 2019

We also met or exceeded the Association for Character Education’s criteria that we adopt an explicit, planned and reflective approach to the cultivation of positive character qualities.

Tom Haigh the CEO at the Association for Character Education said this about their assessment work with our staff, trustees, Leaders and Young Explorers:

“Hearing directly from children and young people who benefit from an organisation’s provision, provides some of the strongest insights into the effectiveness of a charity’s character education.

Assessors were extremely impressed by the British Exploring Society approach to equality and diversity. The organisation was very transparent, at all levels, about the opportunity to diversify the demographic of young people who accessed the organisation’s provision...it is clear that British Exploring Society is committed to this priority, and is making significant strides in responding to this challenge.”

Kitemark feedback report

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Kitemark feedback report

“It was reported that respect, understanding and empathy was developed through interactions within socially mixed groups of young people.”

“Developing strong leadership is...found to be particularly strong. Young people are given significant levels of autonomy and responsibility.”

Kitemark feedback report
We believe that young people need the right skills, behaviours, and confidence to tackle contemporary challenges and opportunities. In assessing impact, we consider our success in supporting young people to acquire these skills, behaviour, and confidence through our programmes.

In 2020 we have been able to track:

- Programme impact data and qualitative feedback from young people and Leaders;
- The number of Explorers, Adventurers and Leaders we work with;
- Fundraising against strategy and annual targets;
- Levels of engagement with our Members.

The charity provided benefits through its programmes to **229 young people** (Young Explorers and Adventurers) in 2020.

We secured **475 attendances** from young people across our activities this year, with 80 young people attending one or more Wildestan Adventure. 135 young people attended an Expedition Workshop across 4 schools and 14 young people attended training for our Pinnacle 2022 expedition.

19 **Wildestan Adventures** were delivered (17 in Season 01, including 2 pilots, and 2 in Season 02 prior to the end of our financial year), as well as 5 Wildestan Expedition Adventures delivered during a week-long virtual expedition.

23 **volunteer professional Leaders and Experts** prepared for and delivered our Wildestan Adventures and Expedition and a further 39 have participated in induction training in preparation for programmes in 2021.

In 2020, we communicated with **29 partners and schools** about Wildestan and our 2021 expeditions.
Our immediate impact

Making decisions that matter
10 activities related to young people thinking about the skills needed to make decisions that shape their lives and the world around them.

The world and me
8 activities encouraged young people to think about their impact on the environment and what actions they can take to protect it.

Managing my feelings
5 activities helped young people think about how well they understand what causes them to feel certain ways and how they can manage their emotions.

Staying on track
During our Wildestan Expedition, Young Explorers took part in a Wellbeing in the Wilderness adventure which encouraged them to think about setting goals and working towards them even when they may be finding things difficult.

Confidence
4 activities helped young people to consider their confidence, including believing in their abilities, managing setbacks, celebrating their own successes, and understanding their values.

Communication
10 activities related to young people explaining ideas, including how they feel and think, expressing themselves, and listening to others.

Problem solving
15 activities, including expedition workshops, involved young people thinking around and solving problems they have not come across before, coming up with plans to fix problems using resources available, and working in a team to find the best solution.

People and me
5 activities related to community and feeling part of a team.

My Compass Reporting

British Exploring Society seeks to measure the degree to which young people have developed key skills and qualities using a participant self-assessment tool, called My Compass. This has been in use for several years.

My Compass is designed:

 ➔ To guide reflective conversations with young people, encouraging them to think about what they hope to learn from their time with us and to consider any areas of their own skills or personal qualities that they hope to build on;
 ➔ To generate programme impact data; and
 ➔ To provide a basis for organisational improvement and decision making.

Challenges to reporting in 2020

My Compass is designed to be completed multiple times over the course of an Explorer’s engagement with the charity, to assess any change over time. In 2020 we have been unable to deliver full-scale programmes and have not collected My Compass data in the usual way. However, we designed and mapped Wildestan Adventures (see p13) and our Expedition Workshops (see p15) in schools against My Compass desired outcomes. Here you can see illustrated the key skills and qualities shared with young people in 2020, and the regularity with which those themes were covered – and some of the responses we received from our Young Explorers in relation to those themes.

To find out more about My Compass Reporting, click here. 
For our Wildestan activities this year we collected simple poll data on fun, interactivity, learning and safety to understand the effectiveness of our new programme – and a new way of working. We also collected in-depth qualitative narratives from young people taking part in the programme.

Wildestan has produced many more repeat Adventurers than we could have expected, and through qualitative feedback so far, it seems to produce similar positive outcomes to those reported by young people in previous years. Young people refer to more confidence, greater enthusiasm for learning, focus and ambition and enhanced communication skills. We have also been told of the positive impact of having structured Adventures through lockdown on the overall well-being of participants. They looked forward to re-engaging with fellow ‘Wildestanis’ and to learning something new each week.

“I... could not verbally communicate until I was around 7 years of age. Wildestan is different to anything I have experienced before. I was learning how to build fires one week and then learning about birdsong the week after. I am more equipped to manage myself...Wildestan has opened my eyes to a world I have always wished to know more about...”

Young Adventurer, Wildestan 2020

“I really enjoyed Wildestan – I found it informative, engaging, and thought-provoking. Every session had different content, they were all interactive and managed to pack loads of information into less than 45 minutes... having a session every week provided some structure to what was a difficult time and reminded me and many others of the joys of being outside and it gave us optimism for the future and motivation to keep going.”

Young Adventurer, Wildestan 2020

**TOTAL NUMBER OF WILDESTAN ADVENTURE FEEDBACK POLLS COMPLETED: 229 & 100%**

- **The session was ‘Fun’ or ‘Very fun’**
  - 226
  - 99%

- **The session was ‘Interactive’ or ‘Very Interactive’**
  - 221
  - 97%

- **The participant learnt something**
  - 227
  - 99%

- **The participant felt safe or very safe**
  - 229
  - 100%

To find out more about our new Wildestan programme go to pages 13 and 14
Working with young people from across the UK, and with Leaders from the UK and abroad, our expedition and adventure programmes online and in the wilderness employ a unique and continuous mix of knowledge, adventure and personal development to inspire young people and help them make the most of their futures.

**Adventure**

We work in or provide a ‘window’ onto some of the most beautiful and remote wilderness areas on the planet. From rainforests to high mountains, each environment has a distinctive balance of flora and fauna and unique features to explore. We also help young people explore wilderness close to home through Wildestan – our online ‘8th continent’, when we cannot provide direct access to the wild. Wherever and however they ‘meet’, our teams (young people and Leaders together) design their own adventures, agreeing between them what and where they want to explore. On our longer adventures, they come to group decisions, make mistakes, share challenges and learn to compromise and support one another in an environment which is equally alien to all of them. This unique environment offers young people new opportunities to excel and to understand their own worth.

**Knowledge**

Our expeditions and adventures provide a rare opportunity for learning. We are supported by scientists and media specialists who, like our adventure Leaders and medics, are unpaid professionals. Together they all support our groups to find different ways to engage in each spectacular or unfamiliar environment and to understand and share their experiences. From cooking in the wild, basecamp management, communications technology and water sampling to star gazing, time-lapse photography and poetry our teams develop a richer understanding of how to engage with and look after the world around them which informs their actions and choices in the future.

**Personal Development**

Working with young people on the cusp of adulthood, expedition Leaders and Wildestan Experts provide Young Explorers and Adventurers with new and transformative role models for adulthood. Whilst not peers, our Leaders are not teachers or parents either, and they offer young people a greater degree of control and autonomy around their choices and learning and the impact of those choices than they may have had in other environments. The decisions young people make on expedition with us will impact on others. They will have many chances to lead. Every young person will help shape their expedition. Trained in supporting reflection, our Leaders will encourage young people to think about their own learning journeys. They will help them identify their strengths, build on them, and work with them to set ambitious personal targets for the future.

To find out more about Our Approach, click [here](#).
EXPEDITION WORKSHOPS

“I liked the ‘immersive’ experience of going to the Amazon and having to solve different problems.”

Our Expedition Workshops are delivered in schools and youth organisations around the UK. These stand-alone, fun and engaging sessions benefit from our nearly-100 years of experience in delivering adventurous learning to help young people develop skills and gain a greater understanding of what going on an expedition would really be like.

As part of our strategy review, Firm Footing, we’ve spent time looking at the impact of changes in our own programme design, significant shifts in Explorer profile, and wider societal shifts in our approach to recruitment and partnership. Asking young people to join us on an expedition programme is a big step for them to take. Expedition Workshops are content rich sessions that kick start the conversation, trust and initial relationship to foster the confidence in young people to consider further adventure and enrichment options such as taking part in one of our programmes.

Supported by the Hartz Family Foundation, we commenced delivery in early 2020 and were able to reach 135 students before lockdown. Feedback was positive from teaching staff and young people and we secured several further workshops before the pandemic postponed any further rollout. COVID-19 restrictions have meant that we were not able to reinstate workshops for delivery in schools in 2020.

We are looking forward to delivering more Expedition Workshops with our recruitment partners and providing an experience for young people that helps them to not only develop key skills but encourages them to consider joining adventures in the future.

Our aims for the Expedition Workshops are:

- To present new and relatable adult role-models to young people,
- To dispel myths about the outdoors – about fitness, money, suitability, and the purpose of modern adventure and exploration,
- To have fun and show learning in a new, exciting context, treating our audience as adults, as we do on our programmes.

135 STUDENTS ATTENDED EXPEDITION WORKSHOPS BEFORE LOCKDOWN
The journey of one Young Adventurer in particular was transformative. From joining one of the first sessions and being told that she may require extra support from a guardian and being very quiet to being part of the core group of returning attendees, contributing, interacting and participating in ways that we could not have envisaged at the start of the programme. This is testament to the power of the digital space, to the systems and controls that were put in place through Zoom, how returning week after week allowed comfort levels to increase and to see tangible progress in a Young Adventurer.

Season 01 Wildestan Adventures:
- Show me the ropes
- Fantastic bugs and where to find them
- Where on Earth am I?
- Survival in the wild: water
- These boots are made for walking (01)
- Tracks and trails
- Songs of the wilderness
- Leave no trace
- Survival in the wild: fire
- These boots are made for walking (02)
- Survival in the wild: when things go wrong
- Survival in the wild open fire cooking
- Survival in the wild: first aid in a crisis
- Leave no trace

To find out more about Wildestan Season 01, click here.
The second season of Wildestan enabled us to hone our new craft. The small pool of Wildestan Leaders who joined us in Season 01 expanded as we opened up the opportunity across our community, renaming them all Wildestan Experts and with each offering expertise from bushcraft to medicine, conservation to well-being.

Each Wildestan Adventure starts life as an idea in the minds of one of our remarkable Experts but this spark of inspiration goes on a long journey before it makes it to the Wildestan airwaves. Each Expert submits their idea to the office team and they are then paired up with a Host, a member of the British Exploring Society office team who can act as their guide through the weird and wonderful world of Wildestan. Working together the Expert and the host will develop the idea, working on everything from activities and icebreakers to bandwidth and microphones to make sure the session provides the perfect balance of adventure, learning and fun to our Young Adventurers. Experts spend countless hours writing scripts, developing slides and session resources, standing on windy hillsides testing bandwidth and running multiple rehearsals to make adventures in Wildestan the best they can be. When the curtain comes up, the host acts as the intermediary between Explorers and Experts, relaying questions, supervising activities, and launching polls so our Young Adventurers can benefit from the wealth of expertise our Experts have to offer.

Season 02 also presented a new challenge for Wildestan – programming in darkness! As the winter nights drew in, young people across the UK began leaving school after dark, and our normal after school slot of 5pm on a Tuesday night, saw Experts plunged into darkness.

Undeterred, our Wildestan Experts developed a diverse programme for the winter season, tackling the challenge of shorter days with everything from exercises in night navigation to pre-recorded footage. The programme even included a Wildestan session delivered live from the Canadian Yukon where daylight hours enabled Expert Abi Horobin to walk our Explorers through the building of a traditional Canadian snow shelter, called a Quinzee.

Other season highlights included:

- A plucky team of Young Adventurers working with RAF aircrew officer Nigel Painter to avert disaster in a scenario session all about leadership and decision making in cold environments.
- A tour of Wildestan after dark with Adventure Leader and Expedition Coordinator Sam Drawbridge, inviting Adventurers to learn essential skills to find their way when darkness descends.
- Reflective sessions from Adventure Leader Stu Meese and Doctor Sophie Redlin, inviting Adventurers to consider the impact of the wilderness on well-being and working with them to develop strategies for managing expedition life with their “kit list for an emotional rainy day”.
- Another examination of the creepy crawlies in Wildestan with Entomologist Susannah Cass.
- A look at the signs, symptoms and treatment of hypothermia with experienced expedition medics Drs Daniel Grace and Alex Taylor.
- A passionate team of Young Adventurers working with conservationist Jay Ham to work out sustainable solutions to the climate crisis.

To find out more about Wildestan Season 02, click [here](#).
The Wildestan Expedition concept revolved around creating and providing an immersive expeditionary experience through a multi-day approach, delivered daily during Half Term in October 2020.

Young people who signed up attended daily sessions designed to take them through skills and techniques required when setting out on expedition. Joining at the same time each day the group of young people who took part bonded and tackled the sessions together, really involving them in an expeditionary experience.

The week started with an introduction to the expedition and what to expect over the next few days, and challenged them to think about the mental skills required when preparing for an adventure. Alongside their physical preparation and equipment, logistics and plans, they looked at how they would prepare mentally, thinking about developing resilience and exploring ways to deal with issues and anxiety that will inevitably occur during an expedition.

The second day of the virtual expedition saw the group discussing campsites and how to choose the right places to set up their camps, looking at the type of ground and the considerations for accommodation.

The third day was a chance to think about what to do when things went wrong, for instance if someone became injured while in the wilderness. Essential first aid skills were demonstrated by an expert team of medics who explained ways to manage casualties.

On day four, the group turned their attention to science project development and looked at the fragility of the natural world, discussing issues, ideas and solutions for dealing with climate change and sustainability.

The last day, just like on our outdoor expedition programmes, was a chance to review the expedition and to think about how to communicate and articulate their expedition experience, looking at writing, video creation, and other media to share their experiences with others.

Delivering Wildestan in this immersive manner allowed the Young Explorers to become a team (albeit remotely) and to travel through the experience together, learning skills, interacting and developing their thinking, knowledge and confidence.

As well as hugely impacting to the young people involved through developing friendships, communication and team work, this method of delivering a Wildestan experience has proved to be an exciting way of delivering content to various audiences, and we’re hopeful that it could be used again for other groups, topics, environments or expeditionary styles.

Wildestan Expedition topics covered:

- Wellbeing in the wilderness
- Camp life
- When the going gets tough
- Our fragile world
- Recording your journey

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- Camp life
- When the going gets tough
- Our fragile world
- Recording your journey

James Dyer FBES, Deputy Chief Leader, Expedition Training and Leadership Advisor, and Wildestan Expert

To find out more about The Wildestan Expedition, click here.
PINNACLE
EXPEDITION TRAINING

Bruce Manning, Chief Leader

In March we held a selection weekend to choose 12 young people from the 24 who had passed the initial screening process to join us in Siberia for our Pinnacle 2021 expedition.

Our choice was to be based on specific criteria for this expedition. We sought applicants with some previous exploration experience, with significant drive and desire to be involved, tempered with an ability to work cooperatively with others. As with all British Exploring Society expeditions we were looking for those who had the potential to grow significantly and gain the most from the experience.

“As with all British Exploring Society expeditions we were looking for those who had the potential to grow significantly and gain the most from the experience.”

COVID-19 was already widespread but a full lockdown had not yet been implemented. In the end, 14 hopefuls arrived at Beaudesert Camp where they were put through their paces by our Leaders. They underwent exercises to test their team-working and problem-solving skills, physical fitness, mental agility, and robustness.

I think we all enjoyed the weekend. The leadership team departed with the difficult task of selecting the young people who would be joining the expedition. We concluded that every applicant met a significant portion of the selection criteria so we requested and were given permission to accept all 14 Explorers.

The country promptly went into lockdown. For a couple of months, we all wondered what had hit us. In May, the expedition leadership team realised that we would not be able to carry out our original training and preparation. A plan was hatched to hold monthly Zoom meetings to progress some preparations and to maintain contact – helping the Young Explorers and ourselves through a difficult time.

Our first Zoom session was in July and went well despite our lack of experience with the technology. After such a long break we reintroduced ourselves and updated the Young Explorers on the status of expedition planning, including how we would cope with COVID restrictions. James Dyer, the expedition’s Deputy Chief Leader, then led a session on what makes a great expedition team.

Our second Zoom in August followed a similar format. Values and fitness were covered by James Dyer and medical issues by Medical Leader Dr Sarah Wysling, who managed to find time out from her busy NHS schedule.

Our September session was also virtual – led by our Knowledge Leader Neil Smith – and focused on potential research projects. Four themes – media, environment, social and physiological – were discussed. Neil invited Young Explorers to submit ideas for projects and we received several good proposals.

As I write, our Explorers are being informed of our Trustees’ decision to delay our expedition until 2022. This is very sad but must be the right thing to do. We hope that all our Young Explorers will be able to stay on our team and we will continue contact with them over the next few months. During the summer we will aim to meet in person again, for day walks in the hills if circumstances permit – or via Zoom if we need to.

British Antarctic Survey – to discuss living in cold conditions and the choice of personal equipment.

Further sessions planned include a talk by scientist Nathan Smith, British Exploring Society Member, Expert and researcher in extreme conditions.
### FIELD NOTES

This table indicates the range, diversity and scale of activities undertaken in the UK and online between November 2019 and October 2020 in order to deliver our programmes and meet the needs of different groups of young people.

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<th>Leaders</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Bruce Manning</td>
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<td>Paul Batterbury</td>
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<tr>
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<td>James Dyer</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Wildestan Training</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Every Tuesday 19 May 25 Aug</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Wildestan Training</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Every Tuesday 13 Oct 20 Oct</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>Wildestan Training</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinnacle</td>
<td>Bruce Manning</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6 X 1 Hour</td>
<td>Postponed to 2022</td>
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In a time of such pronounced flux and when we need to be most adaptable, it is critical for us to have a clear, consistent sense of who we are trying to help, how we help, what we are trying to achieve and the outcomes and impact we are seeking. Our Theory of Change model helps ensure that, however much our approaches to providing adventure and challenge must adapt — or where we choose to innovate, we remain consistent in our focus on the most desirable outcomes.

Not everything we do delivers equal intensity of impact, as the model below indicates, but all our programmes contribute to at least some of the outcomes identified on My Compass (see p8). By sense-checking our existing and potential new activities against this Theory of Change, we can stay on track with our strategy, our mission, and, ultimately, our vision. Of course, if the needs of young people change, this model may change.

“5 of the words that came out largest in the reflective word cloud exercise asking ‘What is your favourite thing about Wildestan?’: Learning; Different; Interactive; Impact; Enjoyed”

James Dyer
Wildestan Expert, Past and Present, Wildestan 2020 Season 02
THEORY OF CHANGE

What is the need we are tackling?

Society is not providing access to the skills & confidence young people need to tackle challenges and seize opportunities.

Young people need non-cognitive skills - resilience, mental toughness - to solve problems, work together and communicate well. These are also called Character or soft skills.

No single non-cognitive skill predicts long-term outcomes. They are inter-related and need to be developed in combination.

Non-cognitive skills are considered as important as, or more important than, cognitive skills or IQ in explaining long-term outcomes and correlate with financial stability and reduced crime.

Evidence points to outdoor challenging activities having effects on a wide variety of non-cognitive and cognitive outcomes. Cohesion, relationships and living with difference improve as well as academic and financial security.

There is evidence that outdoor challenging activities are particularly effective for those who are vulnerable, or who are failing to thrive in the classroom.

There is evidence that there are benefits of our approach with greater impact, delivering through longer programmes (more than a week), and in a ‘wilderness’ setting.

We develop non-cognitive skills as essential preparation for adult life. We focus on those who will benefit most. Ultimately, we want all young people to have equal access to challenging learning and adventure.

Who are we here to help?

We believe everyone who participates - Leaders and young people - benefits. We are working hard to achieve equality of access - insofar as the benefits outweigh the risks or challenges for a particular young person.

We work with young people with a wide range of experiences of adolescence including those in care and those living with disabilities. The majority of our young people live with at least one form of disadvantage.

Our Young Explorers range in age from 14 to 26 depending on the programme they join us for.

Our members - anyone who has completed a programme with us - range from 14 - approximately 104 years old.

Ultimately, we want all young people to have equal access to challenging learning and adventure.

Activities / Services

Online adventures

Online training

Classroom-based team challenge activities

UK, in person training and expeditions

Overseas in person training and expeditions

Professional training, progression to outdoors careers

Components of Change

Access to reliable adult role models

Introduction of new ideas

Challenged by new experiences

Access to nature

Trusting and feel trusted

Recognised respected and accepted

Authentic responsibility

Live in nature

Freedom

Stretching goal setting

Increasing attainment against all measures based on depth and duration of provision

Outcomes - Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, Behaviours

Skills and knowledge

Technical, scientific, media, outdoor skills

Communication

Better self-expression, negotiation, willingness to ask for help

Making decisions that matter

Better management of personal health and well-being

Increased understanding of responsibilities

Willingness to follow rules, respect leadership

People and me

Active social contribution

More positive supportive relationships

Better teamwork and leadership

Respect for difference

Respect for the contribution everyone makes

Confidence

Greater independence, willingness to address issues, to set stretching goals

Evidence of purpose, direction, self-worth

Problem solving

Active listening, advance planning, learning from experience, working together, communicating clearly

Individual impacts on life chances and improved well-being including:

Improved mental health

Improved physical health

Better educational attainment

Improved progression to training or employment

A change in aspiration in education or employment

More positive relationships including with others from diverse backgrounds

A shift away from harmful behaviours/better personal safety

Community impacts including:

Dispersion for volunteering, charitable support/social action

Reduced reliance on welfare and state intervention

Advocacy and active support for aspiration in others
The Ripple Effect

"My first expedition changed the course of my life"
British Exploring Society Member, first expedition 1969

Our mission is to grow and celebrate a diverse, inclusive community of young people with the skills, resilience, and determination to make lasting positive decisions in their own lives, and to deliver community benefit and positive environmental change. How do we know we are meeting our mission?

We want to be sure that we are gathering information that matters and which helps us improve. We look at feedback from a wide range of stakeholders and at data from My Compass, our Outcomes Star. This tracks information that matters and which helps us understand the broader social, environmental, and economic impact that participation on Compass has on our work. We also want to understand the wider social, environmental, and economic impact that participation on our programmes can support – and over a longer period.

This way of thinking about the benefit of the investment we make with each young person we work with is called social return on investment.

First person testimony

Parents, carers, teachers, partner organisations and our Explorers themselves have long shared with us their stories. We learn of improved health and self-care and of safer relationships. Apprenticeships are secured and job placements won by previously shy and disengaged Explorers. Start-ups and creative enterprises are launched by young people who never thrived in school, and sporting and academic careers are aspired to, and blossom. Our Explorers give back: they develop principled, independent voices. They return as Leaders, or to volunteer. They provide us funds and they enable others to have the experience they have had.

Every journey is different

Each young person brings different life experiences to us, and the impact we will have on their life will be individual to them. The challenge for us is to articulate how much impact our work in defining a young person’s future.

The 'worth' of these various potential impacts is not all obviously monetary. But we are just starting to learn how we might capture our overall impact using a range of proxies. This is a challenging process – but provides valuable learning for us.

The test of time

A recent study by Penn State University showed that the positive impact of an expedition with us is still measurable after sixty years. In an online survey of 144 respondents where the mean number of years since their first expedition was 27 years, over half agreed that the expedition was one of the five most significant events in their life.

"It was the beginning of understanding myself."
Andrew (first expedition 1962)

100% of the same group said that the experience had had a long-term influence on how they connected with others.

Over 80% confirmed the positive impact it had had on fulfilling their potential, their self-knowledge, and career decisions.

The reports our Explorers share with us are a powerful starting point as we work to establish the Social Return for our work. Holly Burns, who looks after Explorer Recruitment, suggested we share Venus’s story:

"For me – Venus’ story comes to mind... she is someone who at the start of the year when we had our first ‘interview’ would hardly talk on the phone and I spoke to her sister more than her but who now picks up the phone and chats away each week telling me about her day at school and how her exams have gone..."

Holly Burns
Explorer Recruitment Officer

"I was diagnosed with Autism and Global Development Delay at age 3. I also could not verbally communicate until I was around 7 years of age. My connection with the unspoken world has always been strong and giving nature and wildlife a voice is truly my passion. Hopefully, I will be studying Biological Science at university next year. Whilst studying Biology, Geography and Photography at A-Level, I wanted to do more to explore and understand nature. This is when I came across British Exploring Society online. It sparked a big drive within me, to expand my knowledge and life experiences.

Their varied specialisms have also taught me...there is more I can do in my career, to help this planet.

Wildestan has helped me build new friendships. This is something I have found more challenging during my school life and I hope my ability to communicate and socialise during my expedition in Peru will help me when I start University. Being connected to nature and understanding how to navigate my way through it, will help me in my career.

British Exploring Society has included me, someone with learning and social communication difficulties, in something that I never thought I could be a part of. It has inspired and motivated me, and it is an organisation I hope to give back to one day in the future... It is a challenge, but I believe you have to be challenged to learn and understand new things about yourself and the world."

"...We were all sitting around the campfire looking at shooting stars next to a glimmering lake, listening to the distant wolf howls coming from the huge forest surrounding us."
Leader Allan Gibbs
Alaska 1995 & Svalbard 2009

I have been interested in wild remote places for all of my adult life. I’ve spent the last five decades travelling and exploring with a major focus on the mountains. After a career in education and twenty years as a head teacher, I decided I’d had enough of the day job and started a new life in the outdoors. We set up a very small outdoor company and for another twenty years travelled the world helping other people achieve their mountain dream. As an old person, I’m still working and climbing mountains both with and without clients. Some of my best moments have been when my own family have completed adventurous trips. I presently work as a Course Director for some of the Awards offered by Mountain Training. Essentially, this involves training and assessing Leaders.

I find this rewarding in that these younger folk will go on to inspire yet more people into the mountains. I also sit on the board of Mountain Training Cymru and we try to improve and extend training and resources to a variety of users. I used to have about fourteen jobs, all of which had to fit into a matrix of the year. Every year would find me working for several months in the Alps. Of late, I’ve slowed down somewhat, but still keep busy.

“Oppportunity to be directly involved with young people outside of the classroom and without the formal academic agenda.

It’s difficult to isolate just one memory since there were some exciting moments as a Leader during my two 6-week expeditions. But, besides all that, I think the quieter moments when we were gathered around the fire remain memorable too. There developed, I think, a bond of sharing and understanding between the expedition group that would be impossible to emulate in a similar timescale back in civilisation.

My last expedition was to Alaska in 1995, so, it’s been quite a while since my last British Exploring Society expedition. I continued involvement with Mountain Rescue and was an active team Member for almost twenty years. I set up an outdoor business, mentioned above. This took me to Everest, Kilimanjaro, all over South America and far afield to some very different places from the Welsh Borders where I live.

The Members of the expedition of 1995 are still in occasional contact. It’s remarkable to realise that the Young Explorers from that expedition are the same sort of age now as I was then. And scary too! It would seem that for many of those young people the expedition was formative in shaping their lives afterwards. Out of all their educational experiences, it remains, after all this time, the most extreme and profound. That’s quite a claim, but who remembers much of such influence sitting in a classroom?

I feel proud and honoured to have been a Leader on two superb expeditions. It was a privilege to help, in some small way, to contribute to their success. It was also very rewarding to see some of the Members of those expeditions grow in all sorts of respects to become the fine people they are today.

“I think the quieter moments when we were gathered around the fire remain memorable too.”
Leader Jennie Richardson

Jennie has led with us for nearly a decade and she has seen many changes in her own ability from her experience with British Exploring Society.

I grew up in the North East seaside town of Whitley Bay, but have lived in the mountains of North Wales for as long as I did in Tyneside. I love having North Wales as a base, as it has both a good selection of mountains and a beautiful coastline. The sea kayaking opportunities are pretty special too! It is not all big days out by any means, my best buddy Hestia (a sprocker spaniel) helps me explore close to home and appreciate the local adventures.

Working with British Exploring Society over the years has certainly given me more confidence in my own abilities and judgement, enabling me to leave my full-time job as a senior tutor for the Field Studies Council to work freelance for many different organisations.

“Working with British Exploring Society over the years has certainly given me more confidence in my own abilities and judgement, enabling me to leave my full-time job as a senior tutor…”

Each do slightly different things but all of them involve young people enjoying themselves, learning and developing in an outdoor environment. For me, one of the biggest differences is the depth of the personal experience and development when immersed in expedition life for up to a month or more.

I found British Exploring Society when I was looking for ways to explore destinations further afield. I knew I wanted a trip with more purpose than just booking a holiday. Having heard of another tutor becoming a Science Leader for British Exploring Society, I thought it sounded exciting and fitted my skill set – so in 2013 I applied to become a Science Leader for British Exploring Society. I was quite open minded about where I wanted to go… as long as it involved mountains. At the interview, James Dyer suggested I choose Finnmark (Arctic Norway) as a Trainee Leader Mentor and, as soon as he suggested it, I knew it was the right role for me.

As well as mentoring, I had the opportunity to get involved with most aspects of the expedition as the team was split into Fires. Since then, I have led in many roles with British Exploring Society, to the Indian Himalayas, Canadian Yukon and UK Explorers in Scotland.

One of my favourite moments was on my first British Exploring Society expedition to Finnmark. I joined one of the Fires on a remote camp for a few days, which had a peninsular with awesome sea view. For a few days and in a spell of good weather, the team had a pretty unique plan (thanks Neil and Ellie!).
First, heading up the mountain at the end of the peninsular to summit at midnight. Being in the Arctic Circle in July meant the sun doesn’t really go down, it just dips below the horizon.

On returning to camp in the early hours, we had some hot food and then, rather than snuggling down in tents, the Young Explorers headed out to bivi in their own spots close by and had a 24-hour solo experience. They had time to reflect, write, draw, think or just be on their own before returning to camp around midnight where we had the campfire blazing and kettles boiling. The Young Explorers, some of whom were initially skeptical, were all quite moved by the power of that time to be still and reflect.

Connecting with British Exploring Society has certainly been a significant part of making life decisions, focusing on the things that are important to me and a better life balance. The organisation has given me the opportunity to work with people who have shown faith in me and given me the space and opportunities to spread those wings… and to do it my way.
but wild animals can be very shy, so we were evidence of animals all around us like footprints, watching a black bear eating berries across the one which I will never forget was being able to appreciate what's around you. You're very much in the present and so really made the experience so much more special as daunting in this modern age but in fact this.

This was not a holiday though; the expedition that live in this amazing part of the world. Opportunities for adventure, to see beautiful and Yukon rivers. Exploring Society advert on social media. The expedition appealed to me over the Canadian Yukon expedition which was all round incredible experience for me. I have since applied for a place on the Peruvian Amazon expedition as a Trainee Leader. I have always been passionate about anything involving the outdoors, adventure, wildlife, and conservation. Since the age of 18, I have tried a few different jobs but no matter how hard I worked I never felt any sense of fulfilment or job satisfaction. After some of the hardest years of my life I decided enough was enough and I needed to make a change. I needed to try something completely different, so applied to take part in the Yukon expedition after seeing a British Exploring Society advert on social media. The expedition was five weeks, split up into three weeks trekking around the Mcquesten area and two weeks paddling down the Teslin and Yukon rivers.

This expedition appealed to me over the others because there would be plenty of opportunities for adventure, to see beautiful scenery and a chance to see some wildlife that live in this amazing part of the world. This was not a holiday though, the expedition was based around personal development and the challenges that come with living in a remote area. We had 5 weeks without phones, electricity or running water which might sound daunting in this modern age but in fact this made the experience so much more special as you're very much in the present and so really appreciate what's around you.

I have many memories I could talk about but one which I will never forget was being able to watch a black bear eating berries across the river from us for 45 minutes on the River section of the trip. Throughout the paddle trip there was evidence of animals all around us like footprints, but wild animals can be very shy, so we were extremely lucky to have this experience. No TV show or zoo can ever compare to seeing an animal like this in its natural habitat, doing what it is meant to do.

Life on expedition was both hard and rewarding. Once in Canada, we spent the first few days in Whitehorse preparing for our first three weeks in the wilderness. In pairs, we had to organise all of the food and equipment we would need to keep us going.

“My Compass has helped me with staying on track because it helped me visually see my progress and hopes for the future.”

To get to basecamp we had a 650km journey north into the wilderness to a location not far from Lake McQuesten. After arriving at our basecamp all of the Leaders and Young Explorers spent a day getting stuck in with tasks. We needed to make basecamp feel more like home. To help do this we built camp furniture, rain shelters, latrines, Tippy Tappies (Stand up taps) and a makeshift shower using a hose running from Cache Creek. There was a lot to do but this was a great chance to get to know some of the Young Explorers on the trip. What surprised me was how friendly everyone was, it didn't matter who you were or where you were from, we were all happy to be there sharing this experience together and the group gelled immediately.

To help measure each Young Explorers progress and to gain vital feedback, British Exploring use a tool called My Compass which is a book that tracks personal development before, during and after the expedition. It is all confidential and assesses; Confidence, Communication, People and Me, Managing my feelings, Staying on track, Making decisions that matter and Problem solving. I feel during my time away the things I developed the most from this were managing my feelings, staying on track and problem solving.

Problem solving was something everybody worked on as we were all having to adapt to the environment, using the kit we had and one of the hardest things I found on expedition was getting used to the toilet situation, so one afternoon when making our camp furniture I had a rush of inspiration and created the “Judd” which was basically a free-standing toilet using a square wooden frame. It is safe to say many people were happy about this addition to basecamp.

I developed on managing my feelings massively because, although I’m confident, I can be a shy person in large groups and in the past have suffered from anxiety; so being around roughly 70 strangers was quite tough at first but I soon learnt to get used to it and recognise how I feel in these kind of situations. This helped me a lot when I started a new job not long after arriving back in England.

“I have become more organised from looking after my kit, more independent and far more focused on developing myself...”

My Compass has helped me with staying on track because it helped me visually see my progress and hopes for the future. Seeing my thoughts and feelings about personal ambitions made me feel accountable in a positive way and think about the steps I need to take to achieve these tasks. I have since adopted a more organised approach to any task I must do in my life and as a result have less stress and more time on my hands.

When I first arrived back from expedition, I found things quite tough. Imagine spending 5 weeks in the wilderness where the only noise you can hear is the odd loon, then going back to a busy town full of cars. I missed spending everyday with my Fire who were like family by the end and I missed the simple routine of waking up, packing up before getting on the move for the day. Without realising it these five weeks had changed me. I have become more organised from looking after my kit, more independent and far more focused on developing myself which has all stuck with me to this day. I have gained various expedition skills such as route planning, knowledge about the kind of kit to take on an expedition and how to recognise different weather systems coming in.

I enjoyed the experience so much I have since decided to pursue a career in the outdoor industry, I have always liked the idea of this but never had the knowledge or confidence to do so. Thanks to the help and advice from British Exploring Society and my Leaders, I have come up with a three-year plan on how I can make this possible. To help me achieve this I have signed up for the Trainee Leader Programme which will provide a wide range of training and experience I need to help me complete my Mountain Leader award. This will be taking place in 2021. I’m very much looking forward to it, especially the validation stage in the Peruvian Amazon which will put all my skills to the test. The whole experience has helped me create an exciting future for myself. I would recommend volunteering for British Exploring Society to anybody, the staff went above and beyond their expectations from start to finish. It’s an adventure you will never forget.
Anonynous Member
Amazon 2017 & Pinnacle 2022

I first went on expedition with British Exploring to the Peruvian Amazon, and will hopefully be heading out to Lake Baikal in March on the Pinnacle expedition. At the time of the Amazon expedition I was at university studying languages and international relations, and was enjoying the Scottish Highlands with the mountaineering club. I’ve always had an adventurous streak and had been finding university somewhat challenging, so I decided to join an expedition as it was something I’ve always wanted to do and I needed a goal for myself. It turned into so much more than that, and British Exploring Society has become almost an alma mater to me.

“Cooking especially brought us together every night, where our banoffee pies were envied throughout the camp.”

I think one of the most defining moments of the expedition was on the very first night in the jungle. We had been flying for nearly 48 hours, landed at 3500m in Cusco, snatched maybe 3 hours sleep and were up again at 4am for a 12-hour journey over the Andes into the Amazon. I was jetlagged, dehydrated, hot, overwhelmed and as soon as it got dark, absolutely terrified.

Because of how easy it was to get lost in the jungle, we had to move around in pairs minimum except when you went to the toilet. So whilst I was waiting for my tent mate, it was the first time I had been alone in 3 days and it was pitch black. I can’t quite describe what it’s like to be alone in a jungle at night – even Attenborough doesn’t quite do it justice – and just as I was becoming aware of all the creepy crawlies around me, my head torch cut out. Just as I was starting to seriously panic trying to turn it back on, a huge firefly came over in the dark and landed right next to me. It was exactly the reminder I needed that not everything was out to kill me, and calmed me down enough to start admiring all the wildlife around me. I was still very glad when I managed to turn my head-torch back on though!

Although on the very first night, it was one of the moments I kept thinking back to on expedition, just as I was thinking I’d made a massive mistake and should have got an internship with air conditioning instead. I had struggled with confidence when moving to university, but the rhythms and daily routine of jungle life seemed to calm me down. There was no point stressing about the deadline that was over a month away, it was all about what problem faced you in the here and now (usually ants).

I was in a small Fire which allowed us to get to know each other incredibly deeply. Cooking especially brought us together every night, where our banoffee pies were envied throughout the camp. In such a small Fire, we learnt everyone’s strengths and weaknesses quickly, and seamlessly adapted to pushing each other and supporting each other when required. After the expedition, we have all gone our separate ways but have an active group chat. It is the sort of friendship that doesn’t need to be updated daily but can be picked up from where it was left off.

“Being on expedition for so long taught me to live in the moment...”

I had previously wanted to join the Army, and had been gutted when I failed the medical, but the Leaders had shown me such a diverse range of jobs that I had never even considered, and ways to keep the adventure alive in a 9-5 world. It is another dream to work abroad for a humanitarian charity, which British Exploring Society has definitely had a role in giving me the skills to be able to do so and the desire to create change in the world.

It only goes to show how influential British Exploring Society has been that nearly 4 years on, it is still one of the top things people want to talk to me about when they hear about it.
OUR GRATITUDE TO OUR MEDICS

Lucy Obolensky FBES, Medical Technical Advisor and Fellow

We owe a continuous debt of gratitude to all our Leaders. This year, we have been thinking in particular about the medics who work so hard with us, and who have faced such overwhelming professional and emotional challenges. We wanted to say thank you to all the medics we work with.

We asked our Chief Medic Dr. Lucy Obolensky if she could explain some of these challenges for readers of our Impact Report. Somehow, Lucy managed to convey both the incredible work of our medics on expedition and in our UK hospitals – but also to demonstrate the remarkable modesty of the medics we are so fortunate to know.

How being a British Exploring Society medic better prepares you for a pandemic

It is 2am, the moon shines brightly outside your tent, it is -2 degrees outside and you can hear the wind howling. You’re just dropping back off to sleep when you hear your next ‘customer’ trudging over to your tent.

The ‘knock’ on your tent door is followed by the low struggling voice of a Young Explorer: “please help, I’m feeling awful” before vomiting outside your tent door.

Somehow norovirus has found its way into base camp and is racing through the Young Explorers and Leaders. This is the 5th night in a row you have been sleepless with new cases, each time having to make your way into the medical tent in the cold and dark, to find the necessary drugs and treatment, then help your patients clean up their infected tents with freezing water and soap, all whilst ensuring your own hygiene and safety.

The next day you have to cope with the day to day tasks of expedition life, and ensure high quality public health measures are in place throughout the camp, train all the team in hygiene practices, see all your patients and again, ensure you’re looking after yourself. You want to ask for advice on one challenging case... but you are the only medic in the team and have to trust your own clinical judgement and instincts.

By day 8 you are exhausted, but slowly see you have turned the corner with fewer cases in the day, and that night there are no knocks at your tent door. At the end of the expedition the team give you a camping mug signed by all those you have helped and supported with a hug and handshake that means more than a thousand thank yous.

Expedition medicine gives you a resilience that never leaves you. You learn to bond with your team more than in any scenario in hospital, and you learn to be grateful for the little things.

COVID has been challenging to all medics in many different ways:

Some have been at the front line in the coal face of the worst affected areas, swamped with patients and having to make difficult decisions on which of those patients gets the precious intensive care beds. Trying to do the best they can with what they have, whilst also scared for their own safety and that of their family.

Some have lost loved ones, friends and family, have not been able to visit or hold the funeral they would have liked, bringing the pandemic from a professional challenge into a personal one.

What we have learnt is that we all draw strength from those around us, we value our colleagues and our team, we value the small wins we can make each day, and most of all we value the kindness shown to us by others.

I have no doubt that British Exploring Society has better prepared medics for this pandemic through the resilience, adaptability and team working they have acquired through expeditions and the community support of British Exploring Society that never leaves you.

Dr Lucy Obolensky is Chief Medic for British Exploring Society and is a GP, EM doctor and clinical academic.

FIELD FACT

WHEN CARRYING OUT FIRST AID, REMEMBER THAT THE PAIN OF ONE INJURY COULD ACTUALLY BE MASKING SOMETHING MORE SERIOUS. THIS IS KNOWN AS A DISTRACTING INJURY.
EXPLORER AWARDS

The Les Morgan Memorial Award

Each year, we award The Les Morgan Memorial Award to a Young Explorer who has shown exceptional initiative or leadership in adverse circumstances on expedition. The Award is made on the recommendation of the expedition Chief Leader and judged by our CEO. This year’s winner is Young Explorer Leon, Amazon 2019.

Leon
Peruvian Amazon in 2019,
The Les Morgan Memorial Award, Winner 2019

“Leon stood out as exceptional for two reasons. The first is the way in which Leon’s potential, hidden by timidity at the Training Weekend, blossomed so quickly — he really did become a different person in the jungle. The second reason I am nominating Leon is because of the support he offered the rest of his Fire. He gave generously of his time and energy, no task too small or beneath him; always the success of the group and the welfare of individuals at the centre of his activities.”
Recipients for our Leader Awards are nominated and shortlisted by fellow Leaders and Members of the British Exploring Society team. The final Award is made by a judging panel who look to honour spirit and skills.

Our external judges are:

Conrad Humphreys: an outstanding professional yachtsman and adventurer, competing in 3 round the world races, as well as taking on the role of Sail Master for the C4 recreation of Captain Bligh’s voyage from Tonga to Timor.

Shane Winser: who runs Geography Outdoors – the Expedition and Fieldwork team at the RGS – and advises a wide range of organisations and individuals working in field research and adventure with purpose.


Honor Wilson-Fletcher CEO of British Exploring Society also formed part of the panel.

Fellows

Fellowship at British Exploring Society is awarded by our Council. Fellowship is attainable by any individual involved in our work: staff, volunteers, partners, donors, patrons and explorers, and is granted in relation to exceptional contribution. The contribution that is recognised by Fellowship is in a field that aligns with British Exploring Society. This may include education, youth development, social work, fundraising, training, leadership, expedition design, science, geology, medicine, or enterprise.

We’d like to welcome our two new Fellows (who also happen to be British Exploring Society staff): Caroline Hodges, Head of Expeditions and Strategic Operations, and James Dyer, Expedition Training and Leadership Advisor.

Watson Emerging Leader of the Year Award in memory of Jean Sinclair

Watson Emerging Leader of the Year Award in memory of Jean Sinclair is designed to recognise and reward emerging talent, or to identify new, additional or more senior leadership actions on the part of a Leader who may have worked with us for some time. This year’s winner is Joanna McLaughlin, Media Leader, Canadian Yukon 2019.

The Les Morgan Leader of the Year Award

The Les Morgan Leader of the Year Award is to identify and celebrate consistent excellence in any area of leadership, or to recognise an individual who has supported and helped develop their fellow Leaders, providing guidance and direction for them – as well as for Explorers in preparation for and throughout their expedition experiences. This year’s winner is Chloe Moul, Senior Social Leader, Dangoor Next Generation 2019.

CHLOE MOUL

The Les Morgan Leader of the Year Award, Winner 2019

“Throughout this year’s programme, Chloe exemplified the behaviour, attitudes and values of a great expedition Leader, utilising her vast youth experience and knowledge to absolutely nail every interaction with the young people, sometimes at their most challenging time, and supported every Leader to help deliver their most effective intervention with their participants. She is a rock and a core Member of base camp team, highly professional and willing to be involved in everything that supports the development of the Young Explorers.”

JOANNA MCLAUGHLAN

Watson Emerging Leader of the Year Award in memory of Jean Sinclair, Winner 2019

“Joey has been absolute delightful to work with. She has been endlessly resourceful, with ideas for every stage of the expedition. With her positive approach and energy, she was able to inspire Young Explorers and Leaders too. Joey approached the role of Media Leader with a clear vision of helping young people express themselves and understand the cultural and historical significance of the Yukon territory. She approached the role with care, passion and throughout the expedition demonstrated her ability as a Leader.”
When we updated our identity a couple of years ago, we wanted to find a way to embrace, celebrate and represent our community and to suggest one of our favourite places to meet: around the campfire. Hence the circle logo next to our name. We still use the name for an individual expedition group that our founder Murray Levick coined because it also refers back to that place – a “Fire” – and conjures up the simple, powerful idea of a group of people coming together and learning from each other in a welcoming and unconfrontational place. We want all our activities to be like this.

We were fortunate to be able to host our Celebration evening in March 2020 at the Royal Geographical Society just before lockdown, when we announced our Explorers and Leaders of the Year and welcomed new Fellows to British Exploring Society. Since then, everyone has been exploring new ways to come together.

This year we launched Firesides These are virtual conversations with public figures who join us to consider our work with young people in the context of their own, fascinating and remarkable lives. Our vision of equal access to challenging learning and adventure in the wilderness for all young people needs to be championed with better communication of its importance. Our Firesides are part of tackling that commitment. In addition to raising awareness and encouraging debate, these events have so far also raised over £85,000 for the work of the charity. We hope to host 4 Firesides a year in future.

➔ 25th June 2020 Rory Stewart: ‘From Afghanistan to Wildestan’
➔ 20th October 2020 Marvin Rees: ‘A New Significance – why fair access to the outdoors is now more important than ever’

Our vision of equal access to challenging learning and adventure in the wilderness for all young people needs to be championed with better communication of its importance.

Exploring Membership
We had planned to host a facilitated weekend ‘on the hill’ with a proper campfire, time for hiking and leisurely conversation to bring together Members to ask for their help this year. Instead, over the course of 4 evenings we worked with a cross-section of our Members aged from 19 to 85 to consider how we might model membership for the future. As you would expect, they tackled new technology with great good humour. They sacrificed their evenings, and even supper, to share ideas, fantastic stories, and practical suggestions to move us forward.

They were united in their conviction that the purpose of membership is to support the core purpose of the charity – and that whilst reunions and events are fun, desirable and uplifting, it is our youth development work which should motivate active membership.

We were joined from Eastern Europe, Scotland and the South West. It seems likely that by working virtually we benefited from the advice of Members who would not have been able to join us if our weekend ‘on the hill’ had proceeded.

To find out more about our Fireside with Rory Stewart, click here, or for our Fireside with Marvin Rees, click here.

“In the UK, you can legally wild camp without getting permission in parts of Dartmoor and across Scotland.”

Bruce Manning
Wildestan Expert, Camp Life,
Wildestan Expedition 2020

£85k+ raised by our Firesides to support our work

“Our vision of equal access to challenging learning and adventure in the wilderness for all young people needs to be championed with better communication of its importance.”

Wildestan Expert, Camp Life, Wildestan Expedition 2020
"The only living bit of the trunk of a tree is below the bark, so you can actually kill a tree by damaging too much of the bark"

Roland Arnison, Wildestan Expert, Leave No Trace, Wildestan 2020 Season 01

SPECIAL MENTIONS

‘Thank you’ does not do justice to the contributions so many people make to our work. We hope that a brief description of the difference these people made this year might be more meaningful. This list will not be exhaustive – huge apologies to anyone not included here.

We are indebted to...

Our Chair Ian, our trustees, Our Development Board Chair Rahul, and all the members of our Development Board – for their tireless hard work, and for trust and confidence in us, which allowed us to move swiftly and to change plans when we needed to.

Our President Marvin – for helping us get our heads straight about some of the most important issues we addressed this year, and for an engaging and uplifting first President’s Address.

Daragh and Anne Horgan, John and Catherine Hartz, and David Dangoor – for their consistently confident and uplifting messages of support which made this year so rewarding.

Rory Stewart – for christening our Fireside series of talks with consummate style and grace, and for helping us raise considerable funds for our work in the process.

James Dyer – for perpetually volunteering time, expertise, good humour, and energy to the organisation he loves and has done so much to shape.

Lisa Cawley – for being an exceptionally generous person even when insanely busy and, in the words of the team, also a ‘badass’.

Kate Wilson – for generous, practical, and effective communications advice which helped us stay close to the people who matter most to us this year.

Zenna Hopkins – for keeping us on the right track and providing succinct advice when it matters most. For always having the best interests of vulnerable young people close to her heart.

Alison Mackay – for her sage advice and guidance to a Leader with no pre-existing playbook to tackle an interesting year.

Quintilla Wikeley – for sensitive and pithy communications advice, at speed and with absolutely no fuss whatsoever.

Simon Wheeler – for his enthusiasm, sense of the possible and pragmatic guidance as we worked out how to shape and deliver Wildestan from scratch. Quickly.

Georgie and Shona at the Aldridge Foundation and Angela and Chloe at Outcomes First Group – for staying optimistic when most people weren’t.

All the Leaders who gave us their time and sprinkled their magic over Wildestan to make it the exciting and rewarding place it has become. Particular thanks to those who signed up for a programme in Scotland, which then moved to Wales, then Brighton and Darwen, and then online. And still did a great job. You are all wonderful.

Joshua, Chris, Chris, Jennie, Crispin, Ele, Glyn, Ed, Joanna, Soo, John, Sophie, Nando, Natalie, Graham & Tony – the Members of British Exploring Society who gave up a serious amount of time (and several evening meals) to share ideas and wrestle with new technology with good humour to help us successfully move forward with membership.

Cecelia Martin and Lucy Harper independent facilitators – for giving body and soul to understanding us and to the process of consulting with our Members, becoming part of the family in the process.

Kyle & Millie & Joshua – for stepping forward bravely and being questioned, live, by the estimable, benign but intimidating Worshipful Company of Educators. Your responses were exceptional, and an uplifting tribute to your own achievements – and to the work of our Leaders as they supported you on your journey with us.
MEMBERSHIP

This year in Membership has been one of reconnection. The contribution and warm engagement of Members has allowed us to gain a wealth of knowledge about the lives our Members lead post-expedition, and to appreciate the many inspiring things they do. We continue to welcome new generations of Young Explorers from the same families, too. The children of five current Members are already confirmed to go on their first expedition with us next year – and we can’t think of a more solid endorsement of the value of the work of our Leaders and the team.

Our thanks goes out to everyone who got in touch to tell their story and anyone who has offered encouragement or help in shaping the future of Membership.

The Campfire

We have produced four new editions of our Members Magazine in the last 12 months. Readership has remained strong since its launch in 2019, with 3283 individual readers throughout the last year. With every edition we receive more letters and emails of thanks, and more offers to contribute. The stories that our Members provide are a vibrant and often light-hearted mix of history, knowledge, and experience. The Campfire has provided what any campfire should – a place where Members can share their individual experiences and re-connect with each other and our work.

Starting the journey as a Member

At the start of this year, we launched our “New Member Journey”. This is a 12-month communication and resource plan to help those who have recently come back from expedition with their next steps. These first 12 months are critical to embed the benefits of the expedition experience and form the bedrock for how our newest Members interact with us. It may also influence how likely it is that each Member will become actively involved with the work of the charity in the future. New Members receive support and ideas on how they can translate their experience on expedition into activities to help in their everyday lives and futures, as well as incentives to continue their outdoor adventures – access to discounts for kit for example. Critically, they will find support to sustain the momentum they built during their time with us. They can also find inspiration for organising reunions. The resources have been received well so far, with an above-average open rate. Several new Members have taken part in other activities with us – writing for The Campfire, organising reunions, and participating in online events.

We would like to extend our special thanks to the following contributors to The Campfire:

Graham Ferguson (Himalayas ’17)
Natalie Thomas (Norway ’05, Greenland ’06 and ’07)
Sir John Chapple (Newfoundland ’47, Northern Norway ’49, Iceland ’52, British Columbia ’53, and Labrador ’58)
Dr Fernando Mateos-Gonzalez (Amazon ’17, Canadian Yukon ’18, Dangoor Infinity Pilot ’18, UK Explorers ’19, and Dangoor Infinity Iceland ’19)
Dr. Maria-José Ramírez
Nick Nichol
Carolyn Young
Sophie Harrowes (Iceland ’85)
Andy Browning (Amazon ’17 and ’18, UK Explorers ’19)
Jackie Kerr
Millie Flynn (Amazon ’19, Wildestan ’20)
Suzette Beech Bowater
Timothy Deighton (Western Himalayas ’88)
David Bartles-Smith (Project New Horizons: Iceland ’15, Dangoor Next Generation ’16)

To find out more about our Membership click here.
As a charity dedicated to inspiring young people to realise their ambitions and providing them with the tools, information, experience and support they need to succeed, we are delighted to partner with British Exploring Society.

We believe that where you come from should not dictate where you are going. We want to give disadvantaged young people from deprived communities enriching experiences that will help level the playing field when it comes to confidence, life skills and opportunities. Helping them realise their potential at school and beyond. British Exploring Society’s expertise in expeditions to remote locations offers our young people unparalleled and often transformational life experiences.

“We believe that where you come from should not dictate where you are going.”

The initiatives we are developing with our partners are linked by the common theme of helping young people to develop the enterprise skills and entrepreneurial mindsets to succeed. Skills we refer to as the Aldridge Attributes. Teamwork, Passion, Creativity, Determination, Risk-Taking & Problem Solving. We have found that British Exploring Society expeditions provide a unique environment and opportunity for young people to develop these skills, learning to think for themselves, work together and take responsibility while challenging their perspectives and encouraging growth.

Our first partnership together, the Dangoor Infinity programme, was a 4-week long expedition in August 2019 consisting of two weeks trekking through Iceland’s volcanic landscape and two weeks voyaging at sea aboard SV Tenacious, made possible by the partnership with British Exploring Society and Jubilee Sailing Trust.

As part of measuring the impact of this programme, our young people were surveyed before and after taking part in the trip on British Exploring Society’s My Compass areas such as Making Decisions That Matter, The World and Me, Managing My Feelings, Staying on Track and Communication. In each case the skills increased, with some showing a significant increase from the expedition experience.

The feedback from our young people was even more revealing:

“I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to improve myself and see the world from a different angle. I would also like to thank every single teammate who was with me that inspired me with their personal experiences and that helped me overcome my social shyness.”

“My level of confidence has massively increased since I went on this expedition, not only in myself but for what the future may hold.”

“If I were to say just one word to someone to describe the trip, it would be ‘life-changing’.”

“It was challenging physically, mentally and socially. It has made me a stronger person and will affect every decision I make in the future.”

As an organisation we found that the British Exploring Society team shared our passion and values. We admire how the organisation adapted to the COVID-19 situation to ensure young people were still able to digitally access some of the experiences of going on expedition. Sadly, the pandemic meant that our programme with British Exploring Society for 2020, which had attracted a strong sign-up across our schools, had to be postponed, but we are looking forward to working together again in future on activities within the UK and overseas.
OUR FINANCIALS

Excerpts from the Annual Report of Council

President
Marvin Rees

Members of our Council
Ian Maginnis (Chair)
Rupert Eastwood (Treasurer) (Resigned 2nd April 2020)
David Tilston (Treasurer) (Appointed 5th February 2020)
Joanna Wolstenholme (Resigned 2nd April 2020)
Susan Redshaw
Jane Park-Weir
Rahul Moodgal
Carolyn Young
David Bartles-Smith
Patrick Van Daele
Jane Park-Weir
Rahul Moodgal
Carolyn Young
Patrick Van Daele
David Bartles-Smith (Appointed 2nd April 2020)
Ruth Owen (Appointed 30th September 2020)
Michael Blakey (Resigned 5th November 2019)
Jonathan Gisby (Resigned 1st November 2019)
Douglas Oppenheim (Resigned 1st November 2019)

How we work
The international events and national guidelines imposed this year disrupted our everyday working life, all our normal planning and our approach to youth development. But we were clear about what had not changed: that young people needed – more than ever – engaging access to inspirational Leaders, rewarding learning opportunities and a safe environment to meet new people and be excited by the outdoors.

Our staff team and volunteers have remained motivated despite a wide range of challenges. We have stayed focused on our purpose and we have continued to progress our strategy particularly in relation to our systems and fundraising capability. We have protected our financial position and ended the year in a respectable position.

We recognise that the next year will also be very challenging.

We also recognise with huge gratitude the faith and generosity of our donors in helping us sustain financial stability and continue to serve our communities energetically.

We have strengthened governance to help us deliver our strategic aims. We have 3 new trustees – in particular a Lead Trustee each for Safeguarding and for Mental and Physical Impairment – and we have sustained our relationship with two skilled retiring trustees with particular expertise in working with vulnerable young people as Board Advisors.

Finally, we sought external validation for our approach to youth development. We were awarded the Charity of Character Kitemark in 2020. In confirming this award, the Association for Character education advised us that:

“Your organisation uses incredible experiential learning to implicitly develop character, while ensuring it is explicitly explored through My Compass and coaching led dialogues...It is apparent that British Exploring Society is taking strategic led action to ensure its offer continues to reach a broader demographic of young people.”

Tom Haigh
CEO, Association for Character Education

Our community of Explorers and Adventurers

Our community of Explorers and Adventurers now represents an inclusive and diverse cross section of young people from a wide range of communities and experiences of adolescence. We work with young people in foster care, leaving care, and those living with mental and physical impairment as well as those growing up in communities identified as facing multiple disadvantages.

Financially, we support Explorers in different ways. Whereas some expedition places are fully paid for by Explorers, others are free to participants if funded through our programmes in partnership, or subsidised using bursaries. Going forward in 2021, all our programmes (except for our professional training qualification for Trainee Leaders) will fully funded for our participants. As part of their commitment to us and to the programme they join, we now ask young people to fundraise towards the work of the charity when joining us for full expedition programmes. Each young person’s contribution is subject to a simple means-test, to ensure equality of access for all – and to some extent reflects the scale of the challenge they are taking on through their expedition.

A shared commitment and shared benefits

Everyone who participates in our programmes agrees to a Code of Ethics and Good Conduct. Everyone who completes a full programme with us becomes a Member of British Exploring Society for life. The work of British Exploring Society is transformational for everyone who participates (Leaders and Experts as well as Explorers and Adventurers) and British Exploring Society believes that society benefits considerably, over many years, from the impact of what it does and from the culture and community it fosters.

“I believe that my confidence has leaped forward and has encouraged me to explore the wilderness around me.”

Young Adventurer, Wildestan 2020
Our Financials

Our Leaders, Experts and volunteers

Our professional volunteers have risen to the challenge of adapting to new approaches and learning new skills with consistent energy and optimism. Our volunteers have supported us to design new programmes, keep our archive going, make governance more professional, help the charity fundraise, as well as providing the knowledge behind the adventure, science and creative experiences that define our programmes. The volunteers who donate their time each year to take part in programmes are vital to the charitable purpose of British Exploring Society – and they have made a critical contribution this year, particularly as expert presenters for Wildestan.

Adventurer feedback from Wildestan Adventures:

“…could not verbally communicate until I was around 7 years of age. Wildestan is different to anything I have experienced before. I was learning how to build fires one week and then learning about birdsong the week after. I am more equipped to manage myself...Wildestan has opened my eyes to a world I have always wished to know more about...”

Young Adventurer, Wildestan 2020

Notable activities and achievements in 2019/20

Pinnacle Expedition Training
Throughout 2020 – departs February 2022

14 young people and 7 Leaders were recruited and then took part in extensive engagement and on-line training sessions in preparation for our first expedition to Lake Baikal in Siberia. This programme, generously supported by Sandy and Zonica Glen, has now been postponed to February 2022, but we will continue to provide training and support for all those already signed up for the expedition.

Expedition Workshops
January – March 2020

“In tough situations that life throws at us we need to consider other people around and decide collectively on the best outcomes for all our needs.”

“I liked the 'immersive' experience of going to the Amazon and having to solve different problems.”

“I learnt that at the end of the day it’s the people you have on your team that make the experiences you have, and that cooperation and good judgement are essentials.”

Participants, Expedition Workshops, 2020

First delivered in 2020, we worked with Leaders to design active participation workshops for secondary schools. Our aims were:

→ To provide valuable content for our partner schools and stand-alone learning for participants;
→ To develop experience in decision-making under pressure and support strategies for positive well-being for young people;
→ To present new and relatable adult role-models to young people;
→ To dispel myths about the outdoors – about fitness, money, suitability, and the purpose of modern adventure and exploration;
→ To have fun and show learning in a new, exciting context, treating our audience as adults, as we do on our programmes.

Supported by the Hartz Family Foundation, we were able to reach 135 students before lockdown.

Wildestan Adventures
May – October 2020

British Exploring Society launched ‘Wildestan’ as a strategic response to COVID-19 – and our first virtual destination – in May 2020. With the support of the donors who de-restricted their gifts with us, we have been able to provide live, virtual, interactive adventures and expeditions for young people aged 14 and above in Wildestan. Each adventure is hosted by one of our professional Leaders and is themed around – and where possible is delivered in – the wilderness. Our Leaders accessed wilderness from across the UK and in Europe for our Young Adventurers. We have used as much as we can of the same mix of Adventure, Knowledge and Personal Development as we have used in the wilderness for nearly a century to engage young people in lively activities – but using only ‘kit’ found in the home.

Wildestan Adventures are designed to be fun, most importantly, and to provide the challenge of learning something new alongside other young people. Each Adventure develops key outdoors skills, offers learning about the natural world, and develops confidence. Most importantly, they allow the opportunity to meet and connect with inspiring Leaders in a safe environment.

Wildestan Expedition
26th – 30th October 2020

‘I attended the expedition to Wildestan because it was a great opportunity to learn interesting facts from actual expedition Leaders and to escape from lockdown in a city by being whisked away into the wilderness... (It) provided some structure to what was a difficult time and gave us optimism for the future!’

Young Adventurer 2020

Over the autumn half term, we delivered our first Wildestan Expedition.

5 consecutive days of live, online, interactive Wildestan workshops with the same cohort were led by different Experts to prepare participants for life on an expedition and to provide an introduction to some of the learning, skills, and personal development benefits of an expedition programme.

Firesides/Webinars

Our vision of equal access to challenging learning and adventure in the wilderness for all young people needs to be championed with better communication of its importance. To that end, and to support our fundraising, we have hosted a small number of events, virtually for the time being, to bring together interesting speakers and audiences on the general themes of adventure, personal development and fair access.

25th June 2020 Rory Stewart: ‘From Afghanistan to Wildestan’.

20th October 2020 Marvin Rees: ‘A New Significance – why fair access to the outdoors is now more important than ever’.

In addition to raising awareness and encouraging debate, these events have so far also raised over £85,000 for the work of the charity.

Financial Review: excerpts

2019/20 has been a unique year for British Exploring Society. In the wake of the pandemic, the financial outcome looked uncertain. However, most of our longstanding funding partners on restricted programmes generously de-restricted their donations in-year. The charity was able to recover, deliver new programmes and to sustain its core team, growing unrestricted and restricted reserves to put us in a stronger position to face future challenges and be ready to deliver benefit in the face of increasing need.

British Exploring Society generated £1,276,453 of income (2019: £1,762,053). The total cost of our charitable activities amounted to £833,011 (2019: £1,599,990). Due to cancellation of our overseas and wilderness programmes, we awarded only £2,994 in grants to individuals (2019: £166,514). This was funded through restricted funds.
OUR FINANCIALS

There was net surplus on the unrestricted, restricted and endowment funds of £371,572 (2019: £62,093 net expenditure) The Council confirms that the charity’s assets are available and adequate to fulfil the financial obligations of the British Exploring Society.

Reserves Policy

The reserves fund is a sum set aside by Council. The minimum amount to be designated as reserves is designed to be enough to maintain ongoing operations and programmes for a set period, measured in months. The target minimum is equal to 3 months of average operating costs. The maximum level of the reserves is equal to 6 months operating costs. British Exploring Society sets as a requirement the addition of reserves equivalent to one month’s operating costs over a year if our reserves stand at less than six months’ worth of operating costs at its commencement, or to bring reserves up to three months’ worth of operating costs if at less than three months at the beginning of the year.

The balance held as unrestricted funds at 31st October 2020 was £449,403 of which £371,572 are regarded as free reserves, after allowing for funds tied up in tangible fixed assets. The balance held as restricted and endowment funds at 31st October 2020 was £299,746.

Statement of Public Benefit

The trustees of British Exploring Society have taken due note of their responsibilities, under the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit, to deliver public benefit and are confident of the impact of British Exploring Society in the following areas:

→ The advancement of education – through the development of individual capabilities, competencies, skills and understanding.

→ The advancement of education – through specific programmes to provide progression opportunities for young people most at risk in society.

→ The advancement of community development – through the active promotion of volunteering and civic responsibility.

→ The advancement of science – through research, and independent research projects, and

→ The advancement of environmental protection – through the promotion and better understanding of sustainable development and biodiversity.

Statement of responsibility in relation to fundraising

British Exploring Society takes its duties in relation to fundraising under Data Privacy and Protection regulation and per The Code of Fundraising Practice seriously. Our Data Protection and Privacy Policy was reviewed and revised alongside our Ethical Fundraising and Partnerships Policy in June 2020. The Code of Fundraising Practice outlines the standards expected of all charitable fundraising organisations across the UK. Those standards were developed by the fundraising community through the work of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising (CioF) and the Fundraising Regulator. Council has overall accountability for fundraising standards at British Exploring Society, with management and the Development Board responsible for ensuring that related policies and procedures are followed. Any material issues that arise are reviewed by the Finance Committee in the first instance, before escalation to Council as appropriate.

We rely on fundraising received as:

→ Restricted and unrestricted donations from Individuals or Members;

→ Corporate donations;

→ Sponsorship;

→ Legacy or donating in memory, and

→ Trusts and Foundation giving.

Our fundraising activities are delivered by our in-house fundraising team, who are obliged to observe our policies and the highest standards in fundraising.

We received no complaints in relation to fundraising activities in the 2019/20 financial year. Finance Committee had no cause to review any non-compliance with any area of fundraising activity.

Our work brings us into regular contact with young people between the ages of 14 and 26, some of whom may be particularly vulnerable. We work and fundraise alongside our community of Members, families and carers, schools and public institutions, other charities, and local communities. British Exploring Society is committed, and recognises that it has an obligation, to always protect those in vulnerable circumstances. Should we ever suspect that someone we engage with through our fundraising activity is lacking capacity or is in vulnerable circumstances, we will take steps to terminate any contract or commitment in a way which seeks to protect that person and their dignity, having due regard for any desire they have expressed to support British Exploring Society.

Independent Auditor’s report

On 4th February 2021 Stephen Tanner the Senior Statutory Auditor, signed for and on behalf of Kreston Reeves LLP an unqualified audit report on the statutory accounts of British Exploring Society for the year ended 31st October 2020.

Stephen Tanner BSc(Econ) FCA, Senior Statutory Auditor

For and on behalf of Kreston Reeves LLP, Statutory Auditor

Third Floor
24 Chiswell Street
London
EC1Y 4YX

Our full Financial Statements are available on our website, on the Charity Commission website and from Companies House.

“I am a donor, a trustee and I Chair our Development Board, which is growing fast in strength and commitment. We are all totally behind the vision of this organisation, and I am very excited (and totally driven) by what we are going to achieve in the next couple of years.”

Rahul Moodgal
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Unrestricted Funds (£)</th>
<th>Restricted Funds (£)</th>
<th>Endowment Funds (£)</th>
<th>Total 2020 (£)</th>
<th>Total 2019 (£)</th>
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<td>Donations</td>
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<td>125</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income from charitable activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions from participants, supporters and sponsors</td>
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<td>9,617</td>
<td>139,674</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>149,291</td>
<td>1,008,226</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income from investments</td>
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<td>914</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>914</td>
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<tr>
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<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>107,506</td>
<td>1,290</td>
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<td>Total incoming resources</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,133,955</td>
<td>142,373</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1,276,453</td>
<td>1,762,053</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Expenditure |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Expenditure on raising funds |  | 5,680 | – | – | 5,680 | 10,710 |
| Expenditure on charitable activities | 6 | 849,638 | 49,563 | – | 899,201 | 1,813,436 |
| Total expenditure |  | 855,318 | 49,563 | – | 904,881 | 1,824,146 |

| Income from charitable activities |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Contributions from participants, supporters and sponsors | 3 | 9,617 | 139,674 | – | 149,291 | 1,008,226 |
| Income from investments | 4 | 914 | – | – | 914 | 1,868 |
| Other income | 5 | 107,506 | – | – | 107,506 | 1,290 |
| Total incoming resources |  | 1,133,955 | 142,373 | 125 | 1,276,453 | 1,762,053 |

| Expenditure on raising funds |  | 5,680 | – | – | 5,680 | 10,710 |
| Expenditure on charitable activities | 6 | 849,638 | 49,563 | – | 899,201 | 1,813,436 |
| Total expenditure |  | 855,318 | 49,563 | – | 904,881 | 1,824,146 |

| Net income / (expenditure) and net movement in funds for the year before transfers |  | 278,637 | 92,810 | 125 | 371,572 | (62,093) |
| Transfer between funds |  | (1,000) | 3,000 | (2,000) | – | – |
| Net income / (expenditure) |  | 277,637 | 95,810 | (1,875) | 371,572 | (62,093) |
| Reconciliation of funds |  | – | – | – | – | – |
| Total funds brought forward |  | 171,766 | 158,345 | 47,466 | 377,577 | 439,670 |
| Total funds carried forward | 15 | 449,403 | 254,155 | 45,591 | 749,149 | 377,577 |

| Fixed Assets | Note | Unrestricted Funds (£) | Restricted Funds (£) | Endowment Funds (£) | Total 2020 (£) | Total 2019 (£) |
| Tangible assets | 7 | 74,548 | – | – | 74,548 | 63,867 |
| Investments | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Total fixed assets |  | 74,548 | – | – | 74,548 | 63,867 |

| Current Assets |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cash at bank and in hand |  | 392,359 | 253,030 | 45,591 | 690,980 | 371,065 |
| Debtors | 8 | 82,119 | 1,125 | – | 83,244 | 132,895 |
| Total current assets |  | 474,478 | 254,155 | 45,591 | 774,224 | 503,960 |
| Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year | 9 | (99,623) | – | – | (99,623) | (190,250) |
| Net current assets |  | 374,855 | 254,155 | 45,591 | 674,601 | 313,710 |
| Net assets |  | 449,403 | 254,155 | 45,591 | 749,149 | 377,577 |

| The Funds of the Charity: |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Endowment funds | – | – | – | – | 45,591 | 47,466 |
| Restricted income funds | – | – | – | – | 254,155 | 158,345 |
| Unrestricted income funds | 449,403 | – | – | – | 449,403 | 171,766 |
| Total charity funds | 15 | 449,403 | 254,155 | 45,591 | 749,149 | 377,577 |

British Exploring Society Statement of financial activities for the year ending 31st October 2020

Balance Sheet as at 31st October 2020
It is with thanks to the commitment of our growing community that we have been able to achieve so much during this past year.

Whilst we have not been able to see many of you as often as we might have liked, you have continued to share our Vision and Mission and make it possible to continue to deliver for young people during a time that has seen the need for the strength in our community more than ever.

Our warmest wishes to the families of:
Dr Terry Adams

Our thanks to the relatives who have continued to support more young people taking part in our programmes with particular thanks to the families of:
Jean Sinclair, Tim Ward-Wilson, Michael Garvey, Les Morgan, Alexander Eastwood, A. Croft

Patrons

Charities, Trusts and Foundations

Our Programme Partners

Our Companies

Our President
Marvin Rees

Our Chair
Ian Maginnis

Our Trustees

Our Leaders
Thanks to our 57 volunteer Leaders, whose combined talent and generosity have supported our activities this year.

Our Fellows

Our Development Board
Arabella Connell – Carlotta Newbury – Caspar Craven – Hugh Crossley – Rahul Moodgal (Chair) – Tim Passingham

Schools

Image Credits

THANK YOU ALL

“These are the most difficult times to do anything, and we are proud and grateful that you have managed to achieve what you have in these last few months. What you and the team are doing is beyond all expectation and we have the greatest trust that you will continue to be able to do just that.”

John and Catherine Hartz
WHO TURNED YOUR SPARK INTO A FLAME?

British Exploring Society develops resilience, life-skills and confidence in young people to help build stronger futures.

At a time when those aged 16 to 25 are nearly four times as likely to be unemployed than the rest of the working-age population* the need for these qualities is greater than ever.

Join us on our most important expedition and learn how your support could unlock young people’s potential at britishexploring.org/help-us/donate/

*Princes Trust Tesco Youth Index 2021 | British Exploring Society is a registered charity in England and Wales (no. 802196)

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