

BEYOND EARLSTON

Annual Report Year Ending 31st March 2026



Beyond Earlston

Broadening horizons for our young people





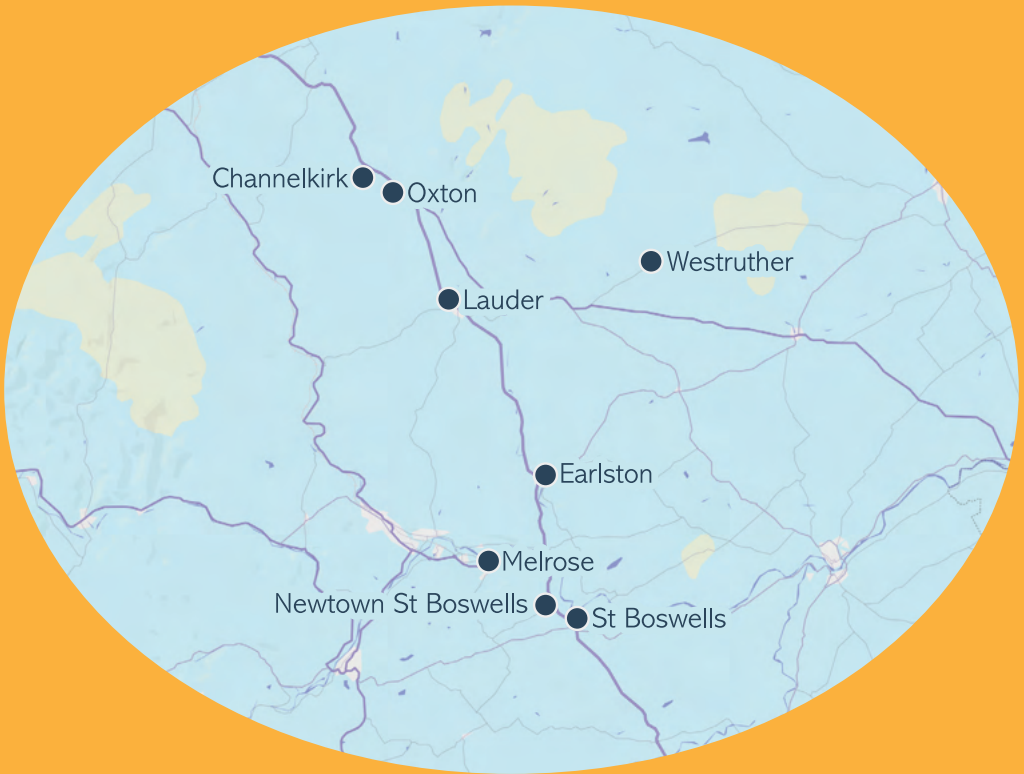
Overview

Beyond Earlston (BE) is a Scottish Borders youth work charity providing activities for young people aged 11–18, from P7 to S6, across the Earlston High School catchment area, regardless of gender or ability. While we do not currently have a fixed base, we work closely with Earlston High School and a wide range of partners to offer a strong, varied programme for our young members. We are agile, forward-thinking and creative, with a ‘can do’ approach and a commitment to sustainability, keeping young people at the centre of everything we do.

This report shares our achievements from the past year and recognises the dedication of our young people, staff and volunteers, whose contributions help Beyond Earlston continue to grow and thrive.



Beyond Earlston covers a large, rural catchment area of over 240 square miles representing the towns and villages across the region. The area includes 7 primary schools feeding into Earlston High School. The current High School roll totals 1075 pupils.



There are 2328 young people aged 11 to 18 in the Eildon East locality. This includes individuals who are enrolled in local schools, those who have left school, homeschooled students, young people in supported education rather than in mainstream settings, as well as those who receive their education outside of the area.

Over the year we have delivered activities in locations around the area with most concentrated in Earlston, Melrose and Newtown St Boswells. However we are always looking at opportunities to deliver activities to the wider rural communities.

Reflections on the year...

As the year closes, I have reflected on leading Beyond Earlston alongside the Board. We have continued to grow while maintaining our place in the Scottish Borders voluntary sector. Working with the six other Locality Leads and many inspiring projects has strengthened the opportunities we can offer our young members. Our growth was also supported by two strategy away days, where Trustees and staff shaped a shared vision for the future and helped turn exciting ideas into action.

Our five guiding principles - BE Bold, BE Aware, BE Healthy, BE Involved and BE Green - shape our work and support our strategic plan. We look forward to continuing this journey with our new Youth Committee and the young people who join our groups and activities each week.

Our partnerships continue to grow, with ongoing conversations involving Earlston In Bloom, Community Learning and Development, Birkhill, Works+, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Edinburgh University. Support from the Hugo Burge Foundation enabled metal embossing and printing workshops, and we continue to strengthen that relationship. Our links with Borders College are also developing,

bringing more opportunities to use their resources and welcome students who can share their skills. As we do not have a fixed base, we are grateful to Newtown St Boswells Community Centre, the Trinity Centre in Melrose and Earlston High School for providing spaces for our work, and to Earlston Scout Group for hiring us their bus for trips.



Fundraising is a key part of my role as Manager, ensuring we can cover staff salaries, resources and weekly snacks for each group. The Board has supported this by strengthening our identity, helping us showcase our work and build relationships that encourage donations.



I would like to thank all funders and donors who supported us this year, enabling us to continue our core work while developing new ideas. In no particular order, our thanks go to SBC through the CYPLG and holiday provision budgets; SBCAN; the Robertson Trust; Cash for Kids; Borders Youth LAG; Edinburgh University; Mainhouse Charitable Trust; Southern Uplands Partnership; Borders Competitions; and the parents and carers who donated or supported fundraising stalls. We are also grateful to the Youth Facilities Fund for the grant that allowed us to buy our new electric vehicle. It will soon be out in the community, helping us restart Car in the Community and continue reaching young people where they are.

Finally, I would like to thank the Board, small in number but mighty in support, for their guidance and encouragement this year. I am also grateful to our staff team, who consistently go above and beyond to provide activities and support for young people. Thank you, too, to you, the reader, whether you are already a friend or donor of Beyond Earlston or may become one in the future. We look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

- Susan Law, Manager, Beyond Earlston

Our Key Objectives:

- Provide (or assist in providing) opportunities for young people to participate and develop their skills and knowledge in activities to become active citizens within their communities where they play; work and live without distinction as to race; ethnicity; gender; sexual orientation; ability; faith; political and religious belief.
- Improve the lives and opportunities for in leisure and recreational opportunities for children and young people within the Earlston High School Catchment.
- Support the young people who participate in project activities to have a voice in decision making and the development of their community.

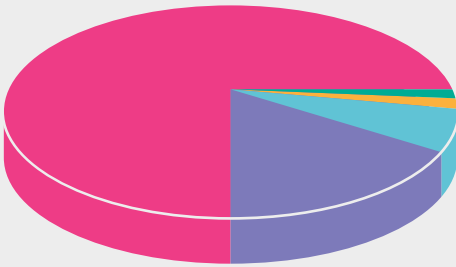


Key Achievements 2025 -26

Activity and Membership

- Increase in membership from 140 last year to 156
- Drop-in sessions attended by 30 – 50 young people
- 12 young people regularly attend craft group

Number of Attendances by young people to our sessions 2025-26 (Totals)



Trinity Centre in Melrose	- 1316
Earlston High School	- 281
Newtown St Boswells	- 109
Rowlands and Wooplaw Woods	- 26
Birkhill House	- 24

Holiday activity provision in Spring, Easter, Summer, and Autumn has included -

- **Speedboat Trip**
- **Segway at the Kelpies**
- **Youth Work Games**
- **We Nearly Stayed at the Beach Until Midnight**
- **Ryze**
- **Fishing**
- **Crafting Visits**
- **Bubble Football**
- **Edinburgh Combat**
- **Kayaking**

Our holiday activities during
**Spring break, Easter,
Summer and October**
totalled

£12,135

(double what we spent last
year)

enabling over

100

young people the
opportunity to
participate



in a total of

27

planned activities
averaging

£449

per trip

4 successful Christmas fayres raising funds and awareness of ourselves to new members and parents

2 of our team attended the Youth Work Games run by YouthScotland with four young people to learn games and activities

Input at fortnightly localities managers meetings throughout the year sharing information, funding opportunities and working in partnership to ensure more quality youth work opportunities across the Borders

Staff and volunteers

- 7 members of staff working between 3 and 21 hours providing 6 sessions of youth work per week for between 12 – 45 young people per session
- 4 Trustees and one Volunteer
- Developed strategic plan with priorities for the next 3-4 years

Training and Development

- Achieved the Creating Hope Award: 3 members of staff trained in suicide prevention

The Cedar training was fantastic. Tied in with my trauma training and learned lots about domestic abuse and therapeutic work in a group setting.

- Staff comment

- Attended 6 online sessions sharing practice of youth work in schools led by YouthLink Scotland with practitioners from across Scotland
- Training attended on eating disorders, AI and management, neglect toolkit training
- Attendance at the SCVO the Gathering event in Edinburgh

Going Forward-

Our Vision

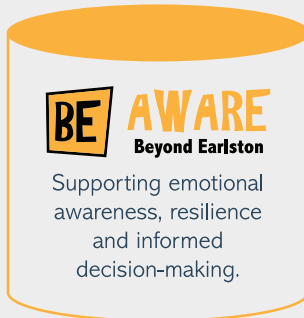
To develop a community where all young people have the confidence, opportunities and support to broaden their horizons and achieve their potential.

Our Mission

To support young people across our communities to grow in confidence, develop skills and build positive relationships through inclusive youth work opportunities, partnerships and safe spaces that promote wellbeing and participation.

Our Guiding Principles

We work to 5 core pillars in all we do from planning through delivery to evaluation.



Wellbeing underpins all pillars
and is embedded across all activity.

Our Priorities

1

Growing Quality Participation Across the Catchment Area

To increase the number and diversity of young people engaging in Beyond Earlston services.

2

Supporting Youth Wellbeing

To improve young people's physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

3

Securing Sustainable Funding

To ensure long-term financial sustainability and organisational growth.

4

Our People (Governance, Staff & Systems)

To strengthen organisational capacity, governance and team wellbeing.

All underpinned by staff and volunteers who are compassionate, inclusive and engaged



Be Bold

This hashtag promotes our holiday programmes and activities beyond our main programme. We aim to build local partnerships and spend within our community. We offer varied activities, from laser tag, water sports and fishing to arts and crafts.

This year's activities included a speedboat trip at Eyemouth, Segway at the Kelpies, Ryze and the always-popular Edinburgh Combat.

We also shared trips with Rowlands Youth Group in Selkirk, including horse riding and Bubble football with G10 Sports in Hawick. This reduced costs and helped young people from both groups meet and make friends.

Thank you for taking both boys away today - they loved it and can't wait till next time.

Thanks for taking *Jenny horse riding today - it has done her confidence the world of good to be in a safe environment and spend time with other her age and of course the horses!

You do a great job organising and planning the trips – you all do a great job (clapping hands emoji)

I would never have been able to afford to take all of our family to Blackpool so thanks for taking *David, he had the time of his life.

- Comments from Parents

*To protect identity - not person's real name.



I love all of the trips; I love the beach trip where everyone goes.

Paddleboarding was great and Anna tried it too.

We would like to expand our local connections with the tennis, in bloom, bowling, fishing groups. Some of you we have already spoken to and if you think that having us along for a few sessions - introducing the young people as potential members of the future – please get in contact.

- Comments from Young People

*To protect identity - not person's real name.

Be Green

This year, BE Green focused on our craft group using reused and recyclable materials to create new items, including bags from old jeans, bird feeders and bug hotels from milk cartons, fidget toys from fabric and ribbons, and paper stars from old maps for decorations and jewellery.



Staff shared favourite crafts, with Susan leading wet and dry felting, Morgan teaching friendship bracelets and Nicole showing book making. Young people improved their sewing skills, grew in confidence and supported others. One young person went on to sell handmade scrunchies, bags and bracelets at a local community fayre.



A major BE Green achievement this year was our new fully electric people carrier, funded by the Scottish Borders Facilities Fund, which seats up to nine people including the driver.



Be Healthy

This pillar supports all our work by promoting healthy relationships, active bodies through outdoor activities, and positive minds through conversations and workshops on feelings and ways to support ourselves and others.

Our twice-weekly groups and holiday provision offer healthy snack and activity options. Drop-in groups in Newtown St Boswells and Trinity Church, Melrose often spend time outdoors playing rounders and other games. We have begun conversations with LIVE Borders and will develop this further next year.



Our successful outdoor group has used Wooplaw Woods to play, build dens and make eco-friendly decorations. Cooking outdoors remains the highlight, with young people making baked potatoes, soup, toasties, baked bananas with chocolate and s'mores on the fire.

Mental health matters to everyone and achieving the Creating Hope Champions Award was a joint effort by staff, trustees and young people. Nearly all staff are trauma-informed practitioners and regularly update their suicide prevention and positive mental health training.

Be Aware

To raise awareness of Beyond Earlston's work, we held our first World Café event, inviting young people, parents and partners to share what we do well, where we could improve and what else we might offer. We were encouraged by the feedback and will act on as many suggestions as possible.



This year, we attended the Borders College Open Day to showcase our work and promote student placement opportunities. We spoke with many visitors and stallholders, helping raise awareness of what we do.

We also attended several fayres, including events at Newtown St Boswells Community Wing, Melrose, Earlston and St Boswells Primary Schools, where we painted over 100 faces and ran a tombola. At Earlston High School Community Fayre, we sold items made by our craft group and made new connections for future sessions and workshops.



After the Easter break, our Transitions Project visited all seven feeder primary schools to introduce pupils to Beyond Earlston and explain how to get involved. Anna led the project this year, presenting with two young members about who we are, what we do and how to join. Pupils received goodie bags as reminders, and membership rose significantly, with many new members continuing through the year and beyond.

To broaden young people's awareness of key issues, we created displays for Pride, UNCRC and children's rights, and Mental Health Week. These highlighted important dates and celebrated topics affecting young people and the wider community.

Be Involved

This year, a young person completed a Duke of Edinburgh placement with us, gaining valuable team experience. This supports our commitment to developing our own youth work team, building on last year's recruitment of a former young member who has since moved into a staff role.

Partnerships remain central to our work, helping us strengthen community links and create local opportunities for young people to get involved and try new things. We continue to work closely with our Community Learning and Development (CLD) worker, who delivered a Duke of Edinburgh taster session during the summer and continues to share further opportunities.

Our partnership with the Hugo Burge Foundation enabled young people to join two workshops with resident artists at Marchmont House, near Greenlaw. We returned later in the year for two Youth Scotland-led strategy away days, bringing the Board and staff team together to develop our strategic and operational plans.

Our YouthBorders affiliation strengthens our work through access to PVG checks, as well as online and in-person staff training. It also enables our manager to represent Beyond Earlston on the Child Poverty Action Group, helping ensure our voice and those of other voluntary sector organisations are heard.

A chance meeting with a Borders College staff member has led to valuable new links. He introduced us to colleagues to explore delivering youth work in college spaces, using College resources and working with tutors to support student placements.

Stepping Stones

Stepping Stones is a Scottish Borders-wide project, with a dedicated worker based in each locality. Now in its seventh year, the project is funded by the National Lottery.

Our lead worker meets weekly with young people in school and with parents at home, supporting them with a range of issues including peer relationships, friendships, rebuilding family relationships, returning to school, bereavement, self-harm, referrals to other agencies, parent support and signposting.

This support is not time limited and continues for as long as both parties feel it is needed. As a result, young people often return for further support, seeing Nicole as a trusted adult who can help them navigate life's challenges.

I want to let you know that the school have organised for my daughter to return in August and she will be joining S2 mainstream classes. She wants to try, just three mornings a week and the school have agreed. I'm very nervous about it but since going to the Tuesday group she has grown in confidence and feels she can cope better in the classroom. She is going into school this Wednesday to join an Art lesson so she can meet her class and have a trial. We don't know yet how things will work out but hopefully she can slowly attend school more often. Thank you so much for helping her. She has really enjoyed the past few months she is much happier now; life is getting more exciting. I really appreciate all your kindness.

The full Stepping Stones report which covers the whole of the Scottish Borders can be found at www.youthborders.org.uk

If you or someone you know could benefit from the one-to-one support, please contact us through our website or find Nicole in room 110 in the language corridor.

Our Stepping Stones project continues to be a success in Year 8. The project allows us to continue our work alongside young people to provide information and financial support, guidance and additional referrals to other organisations facilitating the best outcomes for young people in our catchment. We are also in very early stages of partnership work with the Earlston High School Cluster, working predominantly with identified pupils in the Primary 7 class in Newtown St Boswells Primary School and we look forward to reporting back on success and outcomes next year.



Cosy Café continues every lunchtime Tuesday to Thursday where we provide a safe space for young people to meet, speak to Lauren who is there each session, have a quiet space to chill and eat lunch. There are normally around 15 young people attending each day.

If it wasn't for cosy café I'd just be standing outside on my own.



Income and Expenditure

Income from grants and fundraising:

£126,261

Expenditure to deliver activities and meet our objectives:

£144,319

The Board of Trustees acknowledges the deficit which was due to late receipt for staff costs and for holiday programmes. We have funding in place moving forward into the next financial year to address this and will monitor moving forward.

Donations and sponsorships

£50

will pay for snacks for a week for **80** young people or one use hire of the minibus



£500

will pay for one trip during school holidays or **10** sessions of youth worker time to deliver face to face sessions

£1 000

will pay for hall rental for one group per week for **40** weeks



Staff Team and Board of Trustees



I'm Susan, Manager of Beyond Earlston for the past 14 years.

My role is varied, from applying for funding and speaking with partners, schools and parents, to supporting team development, working on strategy with Board members and helping at evening groups.

The best part of my job is the variety that each day brings and my never ending to do list, which is always heading towards the next new idea.

Staff Team

The staff team are our greatest asset. They bring care, creativity and commitment to everything they do, putting in the planning, energy and encouragement needed to deliver our weekly groups and holiday programmes. Their dedication helps create safe, welcoming spaces where young people can try new things, build confidence and feel supported throughout the year.



From the left – Anna Marie, Lauren, Hannah, Lucy, Susan and Morgan





Board of Trustees

From the Left – Fiona Henry, Lynne Gibson (Chair), Susan Law, Clare de Bolle and Lorna Hunter

Our Board of Trustees are a small team who work largely behind the scenes, providing invaluable support to the Manager and the wider organisation. Their advice, guidance and encouragement help us make thoughtful decisions, broaden our horizons and plan confidently for the future. In all they do, they bring careful oversight, maintaining financial probity and strong governance while keeping the best interests of Beyond Earlston and our young people at the heart of every decision.



And finally... a message from our Chair

As Chair of Beyond Earlston, this is a particularly significant report for me, as it will be my last as Chair following eight years on the Board. Over that time, I have had the privilege of seeing the organisation grow, develop and expand its reach across our catchment area. It has been rewarding to work alongside a committed Board of Trustees and a highly skilled staff team, and to see Beyond Earlston strengthen its position within the Borders' voluntary sector while continuing to deliver high-quality youth work that makes a meaningful difference in the lives of young people.

Our strategic planning away days with Trustees and staff helped us reflect, plan and agree shared priorities for the Beyond Earlston Strategy 2026–2030. These days helped strengthen our focus and cohesion, giving me confidence in the future as I step aside after my time on the Board to make space for new ideas.

Young people grow in confidence as they try new things, build relationships and trust their own abilities. With supportive staff, they develop resilience, improve their wellbeing and learn to look after themselves physically, emotionally and socially. Through conversations, group activities and shared experiences, they strengthen communication, organisation and planning skills, while decision-making opportunities help them consider choices, consequences and values.





As Beyond Earlston looks to the future, we remain guided by the belief that every young person deserves to feel seen, supported and inspired. Our strategic opportunities reflect our commitment to widening access, strengthening connections and creating meaningful opportunities across our communities.

One of the most exciting developments is the BE Mobile Youth Work Bus. Now secured, it will help us reach young people in smaller and rural communities where opportunities can feel limited. More than transport, the bus represents connection, presence and possibility, bringing safe spaces, trusted adults and new experiences directly to young people who may otherwise miss out.

As I stand down after eight years on the Board, I am proud to leave Beyond Earlston with a clear shared purpose for the years ahead. Shaped by our vision, mission, pillars and priorities, our strategy is youth-led, rooted in community and grounded in wellbeing, participation and connection, informed by trustees, staff, volunteers, partners and, most importantly, young people.

- Lynne Gibson, Chair, Beyond Earlston

If you're interested in keeping up to date and see what's happening at Beyond Earlston - receive our regular newsletter.



Beyond Earlston Supporter Form



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Contact Info



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