



# The Kent Estuary Youth Project

## 2024 Annual Report

**Acting Chair:** Greg Tagney **Treasurer:** Derek Ridgway,  
Hilary Fordham (Operations), Judith Rigg, Andrew Skinner (Safeguarding)  
and Paul Thompson (Finance)

**Youth Workers**

Emma Banks and Charlotte Boardman

**Administrator**

Rosie Brown

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KEY is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered number: 1162823  
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## **Introduction**

**KEY was established in 2015** to support young people of secondary school age in their physical personal, social and emotional development and in making informed choices. It was started by a group of people from local churches and is now overseen by a Board of Trustees. Its activities are youth led, with the needs of young people being at the heart of what KEY does.

We provide age-appropriate support in the relatively small village communities whose demographic focus tends to be on older people. Our activities are open to all young people, but with a particular focus on those who feel themselves to be vulnerable or disadvantaged and who face particular challenges.

## **KEY's activities during 2024**

### **Staff and Trustees Changes:**

We have seen a change in our staffing this year with one of our youth workers leaving and some of our more established bank workers and volunteers also moving on. As a result, we undertook a recruitment campaign and have been successful in recruiting a new youth support worker and a number of new bank workers and volunteers. This has enabled us to re-look at our provision and to change some of the clubs we have been providing; more detail is provided below.

We have also seen a further change in our Trustees, with two long serving Trustees reaching the end of their maximum terms and two further new Trustees joining the board. This has led to further changes in roles and responsibilities which have been distributed amongst the new members.

We have continued to tighten our governance procedures during the year, ensuring that Finance, Operations and Fundraising reports are provided to the Board on a regular basis.

### **Training**

We have taken advantage of the Better Tomorrows fund for training provided by the Cumbria Community Foundation and allocated via Cumbria Youth Alliance in 2024. We have provided training on managing behaviours, first aid and safeguarding, this has been open to all staff and volunteers. We have also undertaken smaller sessions on food hygiene, following the achievement of our 5\* food hygiene compliance and information governance following a change in our lead for this area of work.

We also undertook a strategic conversation with all our staff and volunteers in November to support the development of our planning for 2025 and enable staff who meet rarely due to the nature of our work to meet and form relationships.

### **Building Partnerships**

In 2024 we have started to build partnerships with a range of organisations. These have included Arnside Sailing Club who have supported us with summer activities, we have affiliated to Lancashire Boys and Girls Clubs which enables us to use facilities and access activities our young people would otherwise not have access to, and we started to discuss other support with Kendal and District Lions.

## The Clubs and Activities

1. **Arnside Youth Clubs** – with changes of staff in 2024 we had to temporarily suspend the senior club at Arnside. The number of young people were reducing so whilst a shame to do this we needed to consolidate our other clubs. We will be re-instating this in 2025. The junior youth club in Arnside has continued and is vibrant. Members of the club have told us:

*"KEY makes me feel like I have somewhere to go if I need someone to talk to"*  
*"KEY gives me a place to feel accepted as who I am"*

2. **Levens Youth Club** this club started in Autumn 2023 and due to changes of staffing had a change of lead in April 2024. The numbers have been low, partly due to the patterns of secondary school attendance from this village. As a result of low numbers, we recommenced a consultation with the young people on what they wanted to see as part of their club and invited the year 6 primary school young people to join earlier. Early signs suggest this has increased the numbers and we will continue this process in 2025. Despite the relatively small numbers those who have attended have enjoyed the sport and activities they have undertaken.
3. **Milnthorpe Youth Café** – we have had to move this Club twice during 2024, which has unfortunately affected attendance. Our main venue in Milnthorpe, M:Hub, unfortunately closed in the spring and we moved to a venue that had offered reasonable facilities to us, unfortunately, this did not work out and we have now moved this club to Christ the King Church Hall. This combined with the fact that we have reached a point of needing to consider how both the junior and senior clubs in Milnthorpe will work has led to us commencing a consultation process with young people in Milnthorpe regarding how these clubs should continue. Whilst this has started, we have continued to provide the junior club and the numbers are now increasing again. We also have increasing numbers of young people with divergent needs attending.
4. **Milnthorpe Senior club** during 2024 we have taken the opportunity to look at how this group is working, the age of some of the young people and how we are supporting them to move on. This together with the success of our Breaking the Mould programme (see below) has given us the opportunity to look at how we restructure the clubs in Milnthorpe. We commenced this process in 2024 and has resulted in us looking to develop a new intermediate group (14 – 16 yrs) and a Moving on Generation Group to support those young people over the age of 17yrs who appreciate more support.
5. **Storth Youth Club**, this group has continued to develop in 2024. The location of the club in the village hall next to the playing field is ideal for enabling the members to have outdoor activities when the weather allows. This club's members are very organised, and they have agreed to pay a fee each time they attend so they can pay for some of their own activities and trips.

**Breaking the Mould** was an initiative run by Lancaster CVS in conjunction with Cumbria Youth Alliance aimed at supporting young people between the ages of 16 and 24 yrs to develop independent living skills. We bid for funding and were successful in receiving funding for a 12-week programme. We ran the programme from March to July with 10 young people attending most of the sessions. The sessions covered budgeting, cooking, staying safe, developing CVs and interview skills. These are some of the quotes from the young people attended:

*'I have learnt about nutrition'*

*'What I've learnt is planning the future isn't scary.'*

*'Interviews are not as scary as I thought'*

As a result of the success of this programme we bid for further funding from Westmorland and Furness Council and started to develop a group to run over a 12-month period to continue to help those who require additional support to move on to the next stage of their lives.

### **Outdoor education**

We have tried to continue outdoor activities despite the poor weather in 2024!! We have supported the young people on two residentials, one as part of Breaking the Mould and the other at the end of the summer. The planning of the residential is undertaken by the young people making sure they use the skills they are learning at the Clubs.

The young people also apply for funding via the dream scheme to support funding of activities, trips or initiatives.

### **Community Involvement**

The young people have taken part in summer fetes in all our villages; helping to raise the profile of KEY and funds for various projects.

In Autumn half-term we undertook a light festival and with money obtained from the Milnthorpe Memorial Hall fund. We ran lantern making workshops in our clubs, and with the Brownies and at the primary school to bring all the young people across the area together to celebrate.

### **Holiday Activities with Food (HAF) programmes**

KEY ran Easter and Summer HAF programmes, with a range of activities at the base or outside. One of the highlights of this programme for two years has been the sailing programme at Killington Lake and the Family Day both undertaken in conjunction with the Arnside Sailing Club.

Due to the timing of Christmas holidays and the difficulty in fitting activities into the period we declined to apply for Christmas HAF funding but through funding raised in other ways a Christmas Trip to the Ice skating in Lancaster was offered to the young people.

We have developed a number of case studies from the summer programmes to showcase the development of the young people – below are some of the examples:

*J generally struggles with forming and maintain friendships day-to-day. We have seen him grow in confidence, self-esteem, and in developing relationships with his peers in just a few short weeks. When J started the HAF sessions at the beginning of the summer, he was a little shy as few of his regular friends attended initially. I have been really impressed with how he immediately got stuck into the activities despite this, warming up very quickly and showing great team spirit.*

*A has severe anxiety and her mum says she is generally very isolated. Since spending time at KEY, she has talked about “having friends” for the first time – mum says this is very unusual for her, and it’s one of the very rare times she’s seemed socially fulfilled. Widening her social circle seems to have helped her in the way she views herself and the way she connects with other people – this is something we have seen during our sessions, and her mum has seen it too.*

### **Looking to the future**

2025 marks KEYS 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and we intend to mark the year. The young people are planning events through the year and we will culminate with an event in October, the anniversary month to which we will invite current and former supporter and those who have benefited from the support of KEY.

We are continuing to build on our successful clubs, re-establishing the Arnside and Milnthorpe Seniors Groups. We will build further new relationships and continue to widen our offer to support the young people of the Kent Estuary.

## **FUNDING**

The funding we have received has enabled us to continue to provide all the clubs, social activities and holiday work via our youth workers and bank staff.

We do also have a very willing group of volunteers to step in at short notice to provide the necessary 'adults to young people' ratio and we continue to recruit to both the bank and to the volunteer group.

**Our overall costs now run at >£120K.**

All the fund raising is undertaken by the Trustees through grant application and other communications, and we continue to be incredibly grateful to all our funders.

### **2024 Funders include:**

Pure Leisure

Cumbria Community Foundation

Frieda Scott Trust

Francis C Scott Charitable Trust

Westmorland and Furness Council

Garfield Weston

Foyle Foundation

Lancaster CVS and Cumbria Youth Alliance (Breaking the Mould)

Carlisle Diocese

Cumbria Methodist District Fund

Maurice and Hilda Laing Trust

Police and Crime Commissioner

Milnthorpe Memorial Hall Fund

Lakeland Limited

Dallam Running Club

Dreamscheme

Brathay Trust

## KEY 2024 Data

Activity or Club	2024	2023
Arnside	33	40
Levens	4	6
Milnthorpe Youth Cafe	36	34
Milnthorpe Seniors	24	28
Storth	18	22
Dallam School Drop-in	35	29
Easter HAF	29	35
Summer HAF	48	45
Xmas Trip	23	N/A
Breaking the Mould	10	N/A
<b>Note some YP will attend more than one activity or club</b>		

In addition, 1:1 support has been given to three young people.

Gender Split - 60% Female and 40% Male

57 of the Young People have a declared SEND or health issue.



## **Chairman's remarks**

We have had another year of considerable change with the departure of two of our long serving Trustees following completion of their maximum service period and the recruitment of two very able replacements. This means we still need to recruit at least two more trustees to ensure the smooth running of all our activities and interactions with our local community. I am therefore continuing to hold the post of chairman.

The disruption caused by the relocation of the clubs in Milnthorpe has had a negative effect and the current facility is smaller than really needed so we are keeping an open mind to try and find more suitable premises.

In addition, we have had significant changes in our staffing which, while creating some further disruption to the young people attending the clubs, has resulted in us recruiting a new trainee youth worker (welcome Charlotte) and being able to maintain Terry on a bank staff basis to remain as the lead youth worker at the Moving on Gen Group.

So overall it has been a year of holding an ever-changing position to maintain our support in the most relevant way for our young people.

This coming year we are seeking to get both the senior club in Milnthorpe fully re-established and the Moving on Generation group (17 to 25 year olds) meeting in more suitable premises on a regular weekly basis.

So, a big thank you to all you wonderful volunteers, youth workers and trustees for keeping the whole process moving forward and continuing to accommodate the essential perpetual change that is inevitable when working with, and in the support of young people.

Also, a big vote of thanks to all our funders, and I know I can say on behalf of all involved that we are humbled by your amazingly generous support without which we would be unable to operate. We look forward to your continued support in both prayers and finance for what is looking to be a new beginning for KEY in this, our 10<sup>th</sup> year of operations.

May God bless you all

**Greg Tagney**  
**Acting Chairman**

**April 2025**