

# ANNUAL REPORT

The 2025 annual report of the  
Dunbar Area Christian Youth Project

2025

Heart  
DACYP

Dunbar Area Christian  
Youth Project



## Background

The Dunbar Area Christian Youth Project was created in 2005 by a cross denominational group of Christians with the aim of bridging the gap between the local church and young people in the Dunbar Community.

Richard Taylor was appointed as a full-time Youth Worker who successfully established work in schools, the local community and alongside local church. More than 40 volunteers support DACYP through face to face youth work, or behind the scenes as a Management Committee, Trustees and fundraisers. We also employ Alison Murray as a part-time Administrator.

## THE CHAIR'S REMARKS



In this our 20th year, DACYP has continued to thrive and build upon the many and various aspects of work to which God calls us. Within schools and in the local community, young people have encountered Christian love and support through our staff and our volunteers; because we understand each person to be a precious child of God, we hope that the love we mirror into their lives will help each young person to know themselves affirmed, precious and valued as they are.

We celebrated 20 years of this unremitting love and service in September but we are not resting on our laurels : our hopes and plans continue to grow and widen, under God's guiding hand and trusting in His provision.

My personal thanks go to Richard and Alison, to all our volunteers, donors and prayer supporters. Each and every one instruments of God's work through DACYP, each and every one appreciated and valued by us all.

**Rev Anne Harvey,  
Chair of DACYP Management Committee**

## Our aims

Through the use of an employed Youth Worker and with the help of volunteers from the local Christian community, the aims of Dunbar Area Christian Youth Project include;

- Responding to the identified needs of young people in the schools and community by demonstrating Christian love and compassion in practical ways and offering pastoral support where needed
- Enabling young people to explore the good news of the Christian faith, supporting them in the development of their personal beliefs, nurturing the faith of young Christians, and encouraging the acquisition of positive life skills.



***Paul Beautyman of Youth Work Journeys provides DACYP with training and mentoring support.***

DACYP's 20th anniversary is a significant celebration. As I work around the country with Youth Work Journeys I see the benefit of long-term committed Christian youth work that is rooted into the lives of young people, churches, schools and communities.

Through DACYP's volunteers and under the inspired leadership of Richard Taylor, it is great to hear of young peoples' lives being transformed as they work through issues such as mental health, finding meaning in life, exploring Christian faith and discovering new skills and confidence. I am excited to see how DACYP will grow into the future and I am certain that it will continue to flourish.

***Paul Beautyman,  
Youth Work Journeys***

***Photo (right): In February, Paul facilitated a 'Vision Day' for local people involved in children's and youth work in local churches. It was an inspirational day.***



# YOUTH WORKER'S REPORT



**Richard Taylor,  
Youth Worker**

I am delighted to write the annual report on the work of DACYP for the 20<sup>th</sup> time! In 2005 when the project was launched and I started the role as Youth Worker, I don't think any of us had imagined what would happen in the next 20 years. We give thanks to God, and to his people who have pursued the vision and persevered when the odds were stacked against them. It really is a significant milestone, and I want to express my thanks to all of you who have enabled all of our work to happen.

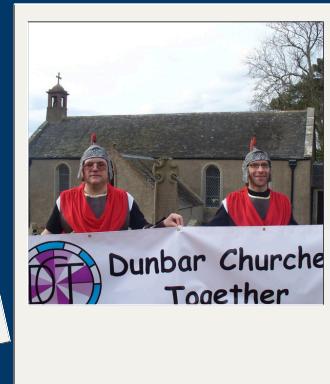
DACYP connects people with Christians, and their faith in many ways. In doing so they get to see the authenticity of Christianity, not just the talk or the misconceptions. They see it in the volunteers who are helping their classroom, or being a listening ear at the various groups we run. They see it as they learn cookery skills at Life Bites, or when they see faces light up on Life Walks at the sight of nature's wonders. They hear it when they are encouraged, valued, loved and cared for, and comforted with gentle words. Words that are backed by actions. True faith indeed.

**THE CHALLENGES** - 2024/5 presented some difficult challenges, not least when two of our Trustees were slain with health issues. The Christian community was united in prayer for them, and I was touched by the concern shown by the young people. Like the rest of us, they rejoiced when saw them back in action at school and Harbour Lights.

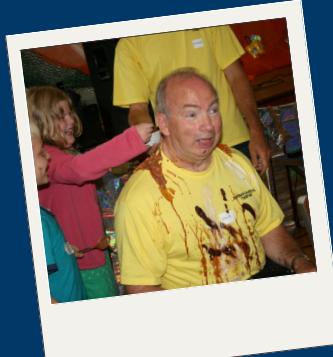


**Photo: COVID led to outdoor holiday clubs in the woods**

I have never felt so unequipped and scared as I did walking through the doors of grammar school the morning after 3 of its pupils were killed in a road accident in 2013. Out of that darkness came light too, in the form of Seasons for Growth. A programme that continues to help folk through the pain of loss. It's an indicator of how DACYP has been able to be flexible and responsive to the needs presented to them.



## 20 YEARS - PHOTO MEMORIES



**Photos: 1) Mentoring group 2) Holy Ghost Walk 3) Pre-baldy days! 4) Collecting an RME award at the General Assembly 5) Ryan 6) Holiday club**

In the 20 years, the challenges have come and gone, and each time we seem to have got stronger. COVID-19 had initially threatened DACYP's future. But instead, it opened up new areas of work relating to mental health, and restructuring our summer activities. Check-in groups, Life Bites, Life Walks, outdoor holiday clubs, the Lad's group and more are the fruits of that dark season.

**WHAT'S NEXT?** - As I look at what lies ahead, I can see more opportunities for DACYP to continue being relevant, useful and able to serve God in the local community. Council budgets cuts have stripped away vital resources in schools. As we've already seen, DACYP can play a small part in filling some of the gaps left behind.

Churches are experiencing huge restructuring, but within that we are seeing young people finding faith. I anticipate we might find a role in working with churches to help nurture that faith. Working out how we do it is part of the fun. Come with us on that adventure!

**Richard Taylor  
Youth Worker**

# WORKING WITH CHURCHES

Although DACYP is independent and not affiliated to any single church or denomination, it is only able to function through the involvement of people from all the different churches in the Dunbar cluster. Likewise, some of the churches have built their partnerships with DACYP into their plans and we have been able to work together

Recent changes in local churches impacted on DACYP. We have seen Rev Diana Hall (Photo) move to Leith from St Anne's. She had been an effective go-between the church, schools and the wider community. She is greatly missed at Harbour Lights, but we look forward to the arrival of Rev Harriet Johnston in 2026, and the opportunity to continue working with St Anne's.



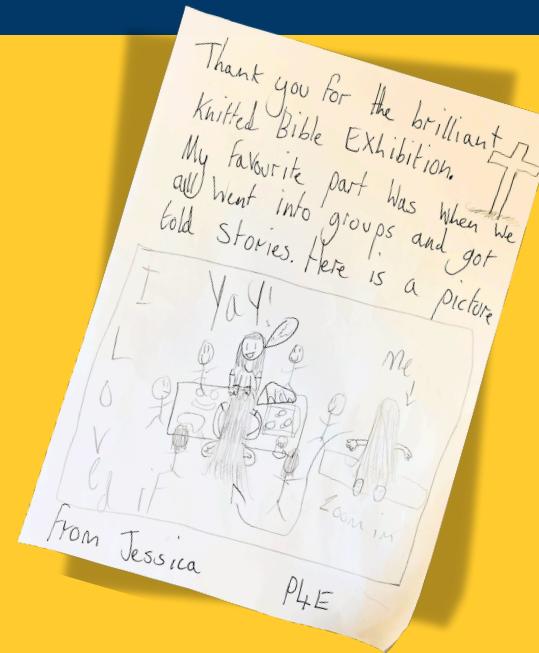
We know that when there are vacancies at churches, it puts greater demands on congregations. In turn, DACYP's pool of volunteers becomes stretched, but has remained faithful in service. Belhaven and Spott Churches have continued to provide volunteer support throughout their 4 years of vacancy. It demonstrates how well we are integrated into churches, mutually supporting each other and belonging. We are part of the body, not an add on. And after a long wait, the Rev Alastair Stark has begun his ministry at Belhaven and Spott Church and has already been scooped up to help with RME classes at the primary school.



Photo: Harriet & Alastair. 2 new willing participants for Grill a Minister?

The Knitted Bible Project was a fantastic collaboration of the churches that brought a wonderful display of knitted Bible stories to Dunbar. Hundreds of folk came to visit it and we were delighted to organise the Primary 4 visits as part of their RME lessons. Their feedback was excellent, and the adults involved came away inspired by the response of the children, and from being part of an ecumenical team.

Our Youth Worker took up the invitation of several churches to speak to their congregations about our work. From that we have seen our volunteers base swell, and it has introduced us to new supporters and young people. These are exciting times for the local churches, and as always, we extend the invitation for them to partner with us in the future.



# VOLUNTEERS

**'She's really kind and caring.'**

P5 Pupil



As a small charity, DACYP only employs 2 members of staff. They share just a fraction of the work though, as the many of the background operations and the face to face youth work is delivered by volunteers. Volunteers are mainly recruited through our connections with local churches. Those without that connection, have shown that they are sympathetic to the Christian ethos of DACYP when they signed up to volunteer. For some, volunteering is a way of articulating their Christian faith in a practical way.

2025 we have seen the volunteer base grow, and have welcomed new volunteers. It has enabled us to expand our services to schools by putting more folk into classrooms. We have also been able to run our out of school activities too, such as Life Bites, Life Walks and Harbour Lights. We always have room for more volunteers!

## RUTH SHARES HER EXPERIENCE AS A VOLUNTEER

When I moved to Dunbar and heard about all the good things that DACYP is doing I was delighted to be able to join in its service to the community by volunteering in school. This is my third year at the Lochend Primary School. I go in on a Friday morning and support children who would benefit from some one to one help with the work they are doing that morning. I also do any photocopying, laminating etc - practical tasks that are very time consuming for the class teacher. One of the joys is getting to know the children in the class and they are always happy to greet you when they see you out and about. I've enjoyed being invited to assemblies and although I'm only in school one morning a week, I am made to feel very much a part of the school.

**'She's interested in what we are doing.'**  
P5 Pupil

**Mrs Laird with Ruth**



## SCHOOL REPORT CARD

Student Name: Ruth Archer  
School Year: Primary 5

### TEACHER FEEDBACK

Ruth is amazing. Turns her hand to anything and is worth her weight in gold!  
Mrs Laird

### PUPIL FEEDBACK

- 'She's really kind and caring and helps us a lot with our work'
- 'she's interested in what we are doing'
- 'she's great at putting our art work on the wall neatly'
- 'Ruth helps me with my quizzes'



## SCHOOLS WORK - RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION (RME)

DACYP has continued to support and contribute to the delivery of the Primary RME curriculum for Primary 6 -7, and also Primary 4. This work is mostly delivered through our Youth Worker in various lessons throughout the year. This includes working with pupils to prepare lesson content, such as Vox pops. As well as class based workshops, DACYP has also been able to take classes on visits to St Anne's Church, where local clergy have also had an input.



The input to RME is curriculum led and adheres to the professional boundaries of a school environment. Through it DACYP is able to teach what is important to Christians, such as their practices and traditions. These sessions can offer the children time to wonder and reflect, to question and to consider. Many children will have little knowledge of the Bible, or confuse Biblical teaching with something else, and are therefore enlightened.

**Photo (Above):** Local Ministers at Grill a Minister

**Photo (left):**

The Oasis reunion of 2025 made the headlines and it created an opportunity to have our own Wonder Wall. This display was managed by a group of pupils who posed a different question for folk to consider each month.

### Subjects covered include:

61 X  
RME CLASSES

- Faith
- Christmas & Easter
- Parable of the Wise & Foolish Builders
- Christian ceremonies
- Fears
- Kindness

## OTHER PRIMARY AGE WORK

### PASTORAL

We have provided ongoing pastoral support through 2 x weekly **check-in groups** that have helped support Primary 6 & 7's. Additional groups will commence soon. We have also provided one-to-one support as, and when it has been required. This has now extended to **West Barns Primary School**.



**Seasons for Growth** is a programme to help children deal with loss and unwanted changes. We have run 2 groups, which have proved to be hugely beneficial to the children and families involved.

### P7 TRANSITION

Our team have supported the Primary 7's in their transition to high school, through visits, workshops and school camp.

### ROAD SAFETY FILM

The Junior Road Safety Officers worked with Richard to make a short film promoting road safety. It won a local film competition.



### PARENTS NIGHT

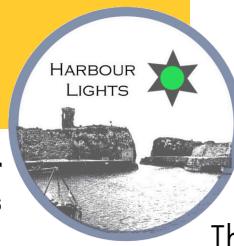
We served home baking and tea and coffee to staff during their long and busy parents nights.

### SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

We have facilitated safeguarding training for volunteers in the school.

# HARBOUR LIGHTS YOUTH GROUP

Harbour Lights is a youth group for P7+ people that meets in St Anne's Church on Fridays, 3.30-5pm  
Here is typical session.



East Lothian Council schools are closed on Friday afternoons, leaving some young people at a loose-end. Over the years, Harbour Lights has become a familiar place for those young people to drop by. And even though it is often teenage lads attending, famed for their high energy and volume levels. Harbour Lights is usually remarkably 'chilled'.

On arrival they are likely to be greeted by Corky, a rescue greyhound who will be on the scrounge for a bite to eat! Lois, his owner, steps in and will befriend them and sit down for a game of cards. They are not sure if she is hustling them, using the excuse of being an octogenarian to pretend she doesn't know the rules. The young people try to explain them, and they have a lot of fun trying.

The pool table occupies the nave, where some serious, and not so serious competitions get underway. Diana, the Minister is unrepentant for beating most of the young people at pool. But they enjoy the challenge, and older ones thrive from teaching the younger ones how to play.

*"The Minister is unrepentant for beating most of the young people at pool"*

There is no rhyme nor reason to who walks through the door. Some weeks just two or three, others many more. Some find a quiet corner such as the pulpit or the chapel, where they can be alone but within site of everyone else. Others enjoy the board games and the conversation with our volunteers. You can cover a lot over a game of Exploding Kittens and chess. It is a space to offload without having to look at anyone, and the young people are pastorally supported in a gentle way.

Even though it is based in a church, the discussions about the Christian faith are not a given. However, there are precious times where the conversation begins to cover these things. It might be in the context of loss, relationships or our futures. It has been a privilege to be part of them. For most of the young people, this is the only church they will have had a regular connection with.



There was a wonderful moment where a young person was sat reading a Bible. His mum called him, suspicious that he was up to no good. 'Where are you?', son replies 'I'm in a church.' Mum, 'what are you doing there?'. Son, 'I'm reading the Bible!' Who knows what she thought next, but it was a moment that captured the natural engagement with faith that Harbour Lights nurtures.

There's always food, and at Christmas the group prepared and ate a meal together, pulling crackers and telling terrible jokes.(See photo below)

Over the year we have seen some regulars reach 18 years old and move into employment and further education. They have moved on, but they have been replaced with other young people that we have been in contact with through schools work. And it was a fond farewell to Diana Hall, who now can be a pool shark in her new home of Leith! Haste ye back!



# DUNBAR GRAMMAR SCHOOL

DACYP has continued to work alongside Dunbar Grammar School offering pastoral support to pupils through the Lad's and Girl's groups, and through individual support. Additionally we have supported the Primary 7 Transition programme that aims to smooth the transition from primary school to high school.

*"DACP has been a consistent and positive presence in our school, offering a range of support that complements our pastoral care and enhances the experiences of our pupils"*

John Johnstone, Head Teacher, Dunbar Grammar School

## THE LAD'S GROUP

Our peer-to-peer mental health group for lads has continued to be a great success. Due to timetabling conflicts, the number attending has dropped. Those who do, use it as their weekly check-in and as a place to offload. The group has enabled the participants to recognise when someone needs help, or what to do if they find themselves feeling low. As one said, **'Being heard halves the problem.'**

These life skills extend to their families, colleagues and team mates. They went on to say, **'It makes you happier knowing you can get stuff off your chest. You can bond with people.'** Throughout the year the group have been able to rally around their friends in need.

The group has attracted the interest of other schools, and saw some of their staff come to learn more about it. They were also invited to speak at the Head Teacher's business leaders breakfast.

**Here's what the lads say about the group:**

**'putting feelings into words is very helpful'**

**'It's a calm place to be, and it's part of my routine'**

**'If you're not feeling your best you have a place to talk, and nobody will judge you.'**

## THE GIRL'S GROUP

For a temporary period, we were able to support a girl's mental health group. As with the lad's group, the girls were able to speak openly and support each other's mental health wellbeing. Due to changes in staffing at the school, the group has temporarily been unable to continue. However, we are working towards restarting it.



## S3 BATTLEFIELDS TRIP

Our Youth Worker accompanied S3 pupils on their trip to Belgium and France, where they visited some of the battlefield sites, memorials and cemeteries of World War 1. It was an emotionally charged trip that confronted people with some of the harsh truths about war. Themes of loss, sacrifice and suffering ran through the visit, as did questions about where God was in these events. As in 2024, some of the boys from the Lad's Group took part in



the Menin Gate Last Post Ceremony. They laid an Andy's Man Club wreath to acknowledge the damaging impact war has on mental health.

## THE CUP OF KINDNESS AWARD

The Cup of Kindness Award is presented to a young person who has demonstrated actions that are fitting with the teachings of Jesus. The command to 'love our neighbour' and to 'treat others as you would want to be treated.' The nominations, some 70+, came from young people. A panel representing DACYP, 4 churches, including an S6 pupil, decided on a winner. It was a difficult task as many of the nominees fitted the bill. However, it was Eva McCandlish who shone through for her friendship to others and generous service to others in the community.

On receiving the award she said, **'I am absolutely honoured to have been chosen to win the award, and I'm very thankful and proud.'**

DACYP's connection with Eva spans back years. She was a regular at our summer holiday clubs. She recalls them, **'I have fond memories of the holiday clubs. I think they were really beneficial and good fun. All of the people I met there were absolutely lovely.'**



**Photos:** Eva in 2025 and in 2017 at the Pyramid Rock holiday club

## SCRIPTURE UNION HOLIDAY AT SCOUGHALL

*"They're a bunch of weirdos!"*



Just over eight miles away from Dunbar, tucked away by Peffer Sands, is the Scripture Union campsite. It is here that DACYP has been sending small groups of young people for memorable, Christian holidays.

Our Youth Worker accompanied the group, who joined around 50 other young people from across Scotland. These camps are run by volunteers, who give their all to ensure every person is cared for, valued and given a great holiday. Underpinning this is their Christian faith.

Our Dunbar group did not have a church background. The Christian teaching was new for some of them, and their responses varied from friendly hostility, ***'They're a bunch of weirdos!'***, to wanting to find out more. We are delighted to see two of the group getting keyed into local churches on their return. The cost of the holidays was subsidised through donations, making them more affordable.



## ANDY'S MAN CLUB



DACYP continues to support and promote the men's mental health charity, Andy's Man Club (AMC). The Dunbar group is one of 325 groups in the UK that attract upwards of 6500 men each week.

The group is able to extend our reach to young, adult men, to male family members and friends. Our Youth Worker has reconnected with young people known to him through school. He believes that, although not a faith group, AMC mirrors Christian values, placing great value on life. He says

***'male suicide is the biggest killer of men under 54 in the UK. This is a real opportunity to bring those figures down. Just in our local group, lives have been saved. But it weighs heavy on me that so many are lost. We can't talk about religion at AMC, that's a rule! But each week I see it bringing hope, life, peace and value to men, just like Jesus did.'***



*Photo: The Lothians Speak Their Name Quilt exhibition at St Anne's Church. Each panel represents a life lost to suicide.*

*Photo: Richard ran several ultramarathons to raise awareness of AMC*

*Credit: @chris\_candid\_camera*

# THE BIG QUESTIONS



"No one could make up a story and then half the world would believe it, so he is definitely real"

✓ If God was real Why are so many bad things happening!



"I normally believe in science. There is no proof that god exists and no proof he doesn't"



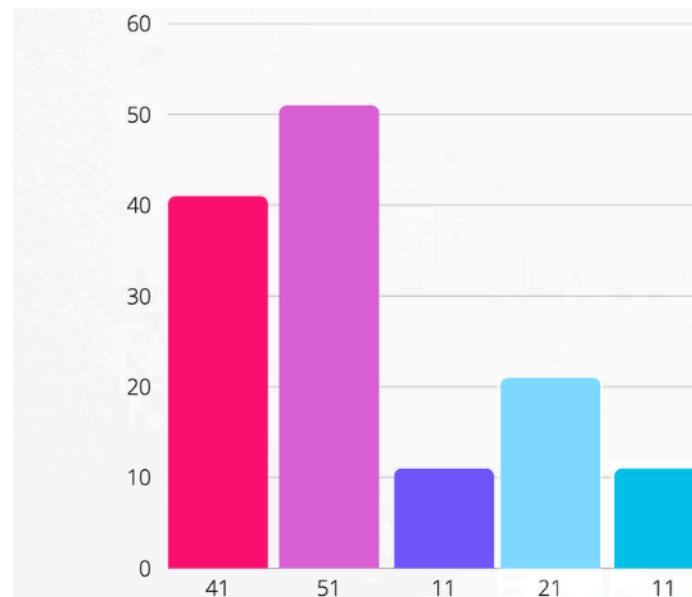
As part of the RME Curriculum, DACYP works with Primary 7's on a series of lessons called 'The Big Questions'. They are designed to encourage the children to reflect on their own beliefs and consider why others might have different beliefs to their own. It includes a survey about how much they believe in God, and why. Below are some of the findings and ideas shared by the children.

"God just doesn't seem possible whereas nature you can sense as it's been there from the start. Other than that, I believe we are born with the skills necessary for life, hope, love, trust and happiness."

Can you see God? NO! Can you touch God? NO! Can you hear God? NO! There's no proof of God

"Just because I don't believe in God, it doesn't mean he doesn't exist"

The Big Questions has engaged children in some excellent debates and reflections over the years and the findings from the survey offer a useful insight to young people's ideas about God. On the surface these might seem quite innocent. But as we dig deeper we learn that these are formed from significant life events such as loss, or various personal blessings. They largely welcome the opportunity to talk about them.



## NO BELIEF

Certain God does not exist

## SOME BELIEF

Doubtful but could not rule out God's existence

## UNSURE

Cannot be certain either way

## SUBSTANTIAL BELIEF

Strong beliefs

## CERTAIN BELIEF

100% certain God is real

# The Big Questions

# LIFE WALKS & LIFE BITES

## Summer walking & cookery programme



On the **Life Walks** we explored woodlands, the coast and WWII archaeology. We took time to wonder and observe the natural landscape. We focussed on God's creation and how we are made in his image. By chance, two of our volunteers were a geologist and a palaeontologist, adding even more insight to the things we discovered.

## 20th year Anniversary Album

Here are a few more photos from over the 20 years of DACYP. It's a snapshot of the many things that have happened, and the changes that have come. The town's population has grown, the churches have seen at least 12 different Ministers come and go between them,. In the Dunbar cluster of schools we have seen 14 different Head Teachers since 2005.

### **Photo (Top):** Supporting Primary 5 trips to York in 2016

- Primary 7's & the Bishop of Edinburgh at the opening of the Peace Pole at St Annes
- **(Bottom):** Harbour Lights are regulars at the St Anne's Crib Service. (Right) Fit for King Holiday Club



**The late Helen Gillanders, former Head Teacher at Dunbar Primary School and a huge supporter of DACYP died in 2025**

"Our grant income continues to be below our target level however, our donation income increased" -

Donate here



Results for the Financial Year to 31 August 2025

The result for the year just ended was a deficit of £8,600 (2024: deficit of £9,945) which has again been met from reserves. Our grant income continues to be below our target level however, our donation income increased as we signed up new donors during the year. We are grateful to all our donors - The Paristamen Charity, The Baird Trust and many individuals as well as the Dunbar & East Linton Area Partnership for their grant towards our summer activities (Life Bites & Walks and SU camps). Our Fundraising Sub Group will be busy again with grant applications in the current year - crucial to our survival.

The regular donations from members of the local Christian community continue to be the mainstay of our funding and the Trustees and Management Committee are very grateful to all supporters for their continued financial support. A very big thank you to our new donors who signed up to support the project as part of our 20:20 campaign.

13 brand new donors so far! If you would like to donate (regularly or with a one off donation) please ask for a pledge card from one of our Trustees, a member of the Management Committee, Richard or Alison. Alternatively, use the QR code opposite, Statutory accounts with full details of all income and expenditure are available from the Treasurer - [fionafleming559@gmail.com](mailto:fionafleming559@gmail.com)

	%	2025	2024	%
		£	£	
<b>Income</b>				
Individuals*	74%	28,017	24,333	71%
Grants	24%	8,953	9,364	27%
Other	2%	874	707	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>37,844</b>	<b>34,404</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
		46,444	44,349	
<b>(Deficit)</b>		<b>(8,600)</b>	<b>(9,945)</b>	

\*including via local organisations

## DACYP TEAM & THEIR ROLES

**Trustees:** Nick Archer (Chair), Neil Black, Moira Cockburn, Tim Greene, Alan Willoughby

**Management Committee:** Anne Harvey (Chair), Fiona Fleming (Treasurer), Dorothy Hilsley (Safeguarding), Jodie Boardman, Suzie Fletcher, Fionna Payton, Bill Stevenson

**Employees:** Richard Taylor (Youth Worker), Alison Murray (Administrator)

**Primary School Team:** Ruth Archer, Wendy Badger, Anne Marie Clay, Alison Crowhurst, Lois D'Esterre, Peter Davey, Gillian Denolm, Alan Dickerson, Fiona Fleming, Dorothy Hilsley, Ben Johnson, Jan Johnson, Julie Mackenzie, Chris McArthur, Fionna Payton, Gillian Rae, Jo Ramage, Moira Thompson

**Life Bites Team:** Nick Archer, Ruth Archer, Jodie Boardman, Bronwyn Brodie, Anne Marie Clay, Alan Dickerson, Fiona Fleming, Hazel Gray, Anne Harvey, Dorothy Hilsley, Keith & Mariella Mills, Diana Mackie, Fionna Payton, Jo Ramage

**Life Walks Team:** Nick Archer, Neil Black, Jodie Boardman, Fiona Fleming, Tim Greene, Gill Harley, Ben Johnson, Mike Ling, Diana Mackie

**Lad's Group:** Darren Kifara, David Campbell, Nick Archer, Malcolm Payton, Bill Stevenson, Neil Black

**Harbour Lights Team:** Lois D'Esterre, Fiona Fleming, Diana Hall, Malcolm Payton, Gill Harley, Nick Archer, Neil Black

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