



HEREFORDSHIRE EXPEDITION GROUP TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FINANCIAL YEAR 23/24



WHAT IS HEREFORDSHIRE EXPEDITION GROUP?

Herefordshire Expedition Group (HEG) is a voluntary organisation dedicated to providing young people with a transformative and fulfilling experience in a challenging environment. Founded in 2005 by Giles Smith and Andy Preedy, inspired by their own expedition to Everest in 2004, HEG has been creating life-changing opportunities ever since.

In 2007, HEG organised its first expedition to coincide with the 50th Anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Sabah, Malaysia was selected as the destination due to its cultural diversity, challenging environment, and communities in need of support. This expedition marked the beginning of HEG's commitment to offering young people from all walks of life the chance to participate, regardless of their gender, social/economic background, cultural background, or religious affiliation.



WHAT IS HEG'S CHARITABLE PURPOSE?

HEG was set up to provide young people in Herefordshire life changing experiences in challenging environments. HEG operates on the core principle that any young person aged 16-18 living in Herefordshire can embark on an expedition. The group values teamwork, commitment, a willingness to get involved and dedication to personal growth and development.

The expedition itself encompasses four key elements: a physical challenge, a community project, a cultural experience, and a focus on conservation. These components combine to create a holistic and enriching journey, where participants can push their limits, make a positive impact, and gain a deeper understanding of the world around them and of themselves.

Charities like HEG are vital for young people today. Herefordshire, as a rural county, does not offer many enrichment opportunities for our young people and nationwide 1 billion pounds in government funding has been lost from the youth sector over the last decade. The pandemic has meant young people have lost out on opportunities that we took for granted and their confidence and mental health has suffered as a result with recent stats indicating that 1 in 6 young people now have a diagnosable mental health condition. Experiences like those that HEG provide are needed now more than ever.

WHO IS PART OF THE HEG TEAM?

HEG is run entirely by a small team of volunteers all who bring different skills and experience with them from their professional and personal lives. Both trustees and leaders are interviewed for positions and appointed based on previous experience, unique skills they can bring as well as passion and commitment. All volunteers have previous experience working with young people and are DBS checked.

Trustees:

Stu McFarlane – Chair and former expedition support

Andy Preedy – Trustee and Expedition Leader

Nick James Williams – Trustee and former expedition leader

Expedition Leaders:

Andy Preedy – Expedition Leader

Katie Jackson – Deputy Expedition Leader

Ellie Lown – Expedition Medic

Carrie Tomkins – Expedition Support

Craig Fletcher – Expedition Support



Home Support:

Jackie Jackson - Treasurer

Chelsea Jarret-Paterson - UK support team

Martin Lown - UK support team

WHAT WERE HEG'S 23/24 OBJECTIVES?

The objectives we set ourselves in financial year 23/24 were:

1. To re-establish a charity to sit alongside the HEG brand
2. Select a location for a 2024 expedition and an expedition provider
3. Recruit a team of 20 young people aged 15-17 who live or go to school in Herefordshire to go on expedition
4. Host two residentials and several team building activities to support the young people's personal development and build team relations
5. Support the young people to raise two thirds of the funds required for the trip and fundraise for HEG's running costs

How we met these objectives is outlined below.

CHARITY ACTIVITIES IN 23/24

1. RE-ESTABLISHING THE CHARITY

Prior to the 2024 expedition, HEG had not run an overseas expedition since 2014 and following this the charity was mothballed. Some previous volunteers came together in early 2023 to explore the idea of restarting the group and run an expedition in 2024. In March, a group of interested volunteers convened at the Aconbury centre. This initial group exceeded ten volunteers who all agreed to give their time to make the expedition happen.

Steps were taken to secure a new charity number for HEG, opening of a bank account, setting up Gift Aid and creating an email address. A website was set up to provide information for the general public, family, friends, sponsors and grant making bodies. The team developed policies on safety, safeguarding, bullying and harassment, transporting young people and mobile phone usage.

We also agreed roles within the team, a leader and deputy leader were established, alongside a medic and communications lead.

2. CHOOSING A LOCATION AND PROGRAMME

The group considered a variety of options for an expedition that would include the core elements of the HEG values: a physical challenge, a community project, a cultural experience and a focus on conservation. We also agreed that the trip should

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cost around £3000 and would last three weeks to capitalise on the challenge aspect of the trip and push young people outside of their comfort zone. We explored different providers including POD, World Challenge and Venture Force.

Ultimately the decision was made that having worked with POD previously in the 2014 Nepal expedition, and having had a positive experience, this would be the preferred “parent” organisation. Belize was then chosen by vote as the expedition location. Leaders decided this would be an appealing location that young people would have not have previously visited and were drawn to the inclusion of water and sea-based volunteering opportunities, alongside rainforest exploration.

3. RECRUITING YOUNG PEOPLE

To advertise the expedition, a poster and information book were developed and emailed to all schools. Posters were put up around Herefordshire and taken to some schools. We also promoted on our Facebook and Instagram channels. The team discussed doing school assemblies, but these weren’t taken forward due to tight timeframes, limited volunteer capacity and the main advertising period taking place over school holidays. The result was we did not get as many applications as previous expeditions. Around 40 young people expressed an interest, and all were invited to the selection day.

The selection day took place at Dinedor Outdoor Centre. Young people took part in a series of activities that considered things such as teambuilding and communication. There were outside practical tasks and sessions on cultural awareness and fundraising. The selection day ran very successfully but as we only had 24 attendees, we decided to invite them all to take part in the expedition.

4. TEAM BUILDING AND RESIDENTIALS

Part of the HEG ethos is running youth work activities in the run up to the expedition, to build individual skills and develop friendships and bonds amongst the expedition team. We aimed to put on a varied programme that gave young people the opportunity to develop relevant skills (e.g. bushcraft, first aid), work on their fitness ready for the trip and spend time socialising and having fun.

We ran two residentials, one in a Scout Hut near Ross-on-Wye including group cooking and teambuilding activities and one at Dinedor Outdoor Centre building egg launchers, shelters and stretchers and doing first aid training.

Teambuilding evenings and sessions included:

- Bushcraft day at Dinedor Outdoor Centre
- Make Your Own Pizza night



- Hike in the Malvern Hills
- Hike up Skirrid in the Black Mountains
- Craft night – wood whittling and making paracord bracelets
- Christmas fundraising market stall

All activities were supported by robust risk assessments and expert guidance and supervision from the volunteer team.

5. FUNDRAISING

Individual fundraising is the main source of our charity's income, with young people raising funds as part of their commitment to participating in a HEG expedition. We support young people to do this through one to one support and our 'tribe' system – small groups led by one leader. In the six months following selection, we unfortunately 'lost' a third of the young people who either felt the commitment of the expedition was too great or were unable to raise the funds, despite the support being given. This is something for the expedition team to reflect on going forward so that we continue to align with the ethos of HEG being for everyone. For those young people who did continue, they made good progress fundraising running quizzes, bingos, a mini music festival, sponsored cycles and skydives to name a few examples.

In addition to this, we also needed to raise funds for the charity's running costs such as insurance, activity costs, phone and website charges and marketing expenses. As it was the first year re-establishing the charity, we started without any core funding which was at times a challenge and meant we had to limit our paid for activities on residential and activity days. We were awarded an initial start-up grant from Hereford Outdoor Trust of £500 and received £500 from the Herefordshire Freemasons and £500 from Daniel's Gift which greatly supported running costs. We also did team fundraisers such as a Taskmaster night where funds went back to charity running costs.

We ended the year in a good financial position, albeit with little headroom as most of our income was ringfenced for expedition costs. We were pleased to reach our target of supporting the young participants to secure two thirds of the necessary funds for the expedition and cover our running costs and want to thank them for all their efforts fundraising in order for the expedition to go ahead.

CHARITY ACCOUNTS 23/24

Start Date 06/04/2023



End Date 05/04/2024

Structure, Governance and Management

HEG is a fully volunteer led organisation that consists of three trustees, one of whom is the expedition leader and manages the day to day running of the charity. Our trustees all have experience running previous expeditions and hold other trusteeships. HEG is supported by an additional seven volunteers who run the charity's day to day operations and support young participants. The Board meets quarterly, and the operations team meets fortnightly. Andy Preedy as a member of the board and the operations team keeps trustees abreast of matters as they arise.

Financial Review

HEG's statement of receipts and payments shows that at the end of the accounting year our account is in surplus of £38,138.71. As this is our first year in operation, this figure also represents our overall balance and is all unrestricted.

AS HEG operates on a two-year cycle with an expedition taking place on the second year, we would expect to be in this level of surplus at this point in time. Whilst these funds are all technically unrestricted, we do need to budget carefully for FY24/25 in order to cover costs associated with our expedition.

Category	Receipts	Payments
<i>Comms & Marketing</i>	£-	£120.00
<i>Fundraising</i>	£34,658.36	£146.00
<i>Gift Aid</i>	£4,782.88	£-
<i>Grant</i>	£1,500.00	£-
<i>Insurance</i>	£-	£360.02
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	£-	£54.76
<i>Travel</i>	£-	£2,121.75
Totals	£40,941.24	£2,802.53

Herefordshire Expedition Group holds a Treasurer's account for non-profit organisations with Lloyds Bank.

Going Concern

We are confident the charity is a going concern into the next financial year. This is because we have very low overheads as a volunteer led organisation and have raised a healthy surplus at this point in the calendar year to cover our programme costs going into FY 24/25.

Reserves Policy



HEG will hold enough reserves to cover the cost of an expedition place per participant on years prior to expedition plus up to an additional 25% of this total for charity operating costs.

On behalf of the trustees

Signed Andy Preedy

Name Andrew Preedy

Date 28/02/2025

Independent examiner

Signed C Baggot

Name Carol Baggot

Date 28/02/2025



CHAIR'S SUMMARY

"The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step", Chapter 64 of the Tao Te Ching ascribed to Laozi.

Herefordshire Expedition Group, as a registered organisation with the Charity Commission, was officially recognised in June 2023. The initial planning process for the Belize 2024 Expedition began in late January 2023 with the formation of the Expedition Leadership Team (ELT), under the guidance of Andy Preedy, who brought his wealth of previous expedition knowledge to the ELT.

The recruitment of young people to participate in the Belize 2024 Expedition took place in March 2023, with those who accepted the challenge beginning their fundraising in early to mid-May, ensuring they had secured at least 2/3rds of their necessary funds to go on the expedition, by March 2024. Unfortunately, for a few of the young people, the fundraising task proved to be too adventurous and resulted in them having to leave the expedition group, however their feedback was positive, with a couple indicating they would want to sign up in the future if they still were still eligible.

This year, Herefordshire Expedition Group, laid the groundwork for a challenging and exciting expedition in July 2024, supporting young people in Herefordshire to have life changing experiences that will give them skills that they will be able to use throughout their lives.

"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see" - Henry Thoreau, 1817 to 1862.

Stu McFarlane
Chair & Trustee
Herefordshire Expedition Group

21 April 2024.