



HEREFORDSHIRE EXPEDITION GROUP TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FINANCIAL YEAR 24/25



INTRODUCTION

This year marked a powerful milestone for Herefordshire Expedition Group (HEG). After nearly a decade without an overseas expedition, 2024/25 was the year our revived charity took young people from Herefordshire back out into the world. Eleven young people and five volunteer leaders embarked on a three-week journey to Belize - a journey that challenged them, changed them and strengthened HEG's mission.

HEG exists to give any young person aged 16–18 in Herefordshire the chance to step beyond their everyday environment and experience something transformative. Young people today face rising mental health pressures, fewer enrichment opportunities and limited access to nature and adventure. The Belize expedition offered exactly what is most needed: challenge, connection, cultural exchange and the chance to make a meaningful contribution to communities and the environment.

This report tells the story of that journey. It reflects on what the expedition meant to the young people involved, how we delivered on our objectives, and what we learned as we look ahead to future expeditions.



OUR OBJECTIVES FOR 2024/25

1. **Support young people to complete their fundraising and ensure we had raised enough central funds for our expedition to Belize.**
2. **Support 11 young people to go on a trip of a lifetime to Belize ensuring it was engaging, adventurous and fun whilst making a positive contribution to local communities and the environment.**
3. **Support our young participants to develop life skills such as teamwork, communication and emotional resilience.**

HOW WE MET OUR OBJECTIVES

1. FUNDRAISING AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Fundraising was both a challenge and a triumph this year. Young people had less than a year to raise nearly £3000 each — a significant undertaking for teenagers juggling school, work and family commitments. Despite this, the 11 young people who ultimately joined the expedition worked incredibly hard to meet their targets.

They organised quizzes, bingo nights, a mini music festival, sponsored cycles and skydives, market stalls and raffles. Some hit their targets early, while others needed personalised support from leaders and “tribe” groups. Central fundraising also played a vital role, with grants from Herefordshire Freemasons, Daniel’s Gift and a series of group events covering running costs and unanticipated expenses.

This combined effort ensured that no young person at this point on the process was prevented from attending due to finances, and that HEG built a much-needed central fund to improve sustainability for future expeditions.

2. DELIVERING A LIFE-CHANGING EXPEDITION TO BELIZE

In July 2024, our team travelled to Belize for a three-week cultural, environmental and adventure-based programme curated by TIDE Tours. Despite changes caused by the rainy season, each week offered new experiences that pushed comfort zones, enabled learning and strengthened the group.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

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Young people worked on several conservation and community projects:

- Building a plant nursery for a local community
- Planting seeds and trees to support reforestation and tackle soil erosion
- Participating in a beach clean-up
- Supporting agroforestry work
- Visiting local schools, villages and cultural centres
- Playing sports with local children, building relationships through shared play

These projects gave participants firsthand experience of environmental stewardship and the power of grassroots community action.

CULTURAL IMMERSION

A major highlight was connecting with local guides, communities and families. Young people:

- Cooked Belizean dishes with local chefs
- Shared meals with their guide José and his family
- Learned traditional crafts
- Explored Mayan ruins and heard stories from local elders
- Observed wildlife in rainforest and marine environments

These experiences broadened horizons and reshaped perspectives on culture, resilience and global citizenship.

ADVENTURE AND CHALLENGE

The expedition was full of physical and emotional tests:

- Hiking through Cockscomb Basin rainforest
- Night walks in the jungle
- Snorkelling
- Cave exploration
- Swimming in waterfalls and rivers
- Long travel days in difficult heat and tropical weather

Not every planned challenge was possible — the three-day jungle trek had to be adapted due to intense rainfall — but young people still gained a significant sense of achievement.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICES



Instead of summarising impact, here are some of the young people's words:

"This was 100 percent the best experience I've ever been involved in... Every day felt different, activity-packed and meaningful. This trip sparked an urge to travel more and to give back."

"I've learnt so much about myself and built my confidence. I tried new foods, new experiences and it's something I will remember for the rest of my life."

"My biggest challenge was learning to be cooperative rather than independent... I learnt how to regulate myself and help others. The trip became defined by the people I went through it with."

"Seeing seven scarlet macaws fly overhead when we thought we'd missed them — that moment will stay with me forever."

These reflections highlight a journey far deeper than tourism - one of growth, courage and community.

3. DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS

The expedition, and the year leading up to it, offered countless opportunities for young people to develop skills for life:

- **Teamwork:** Through group activities, shared accommodation, cooking, fundraising and community projects.
- **Communication:** Working with peers, guides, community members and leaders.
- **Emotional resilience:** Coping with heat, tiredness, discomfort, conflict and the challenges of being far from home.
- **Leadership:** Young people took turns leading activities, managing group responsibilities and supporting others.
- **Independence:** Navigating new environments, managing kit, and adapting to different routines.

One young person wrote:

"Not having any privacy was hard... but I learnt social skills I never thought I'd have. I pushed myself outside my comfort zone and made great friends."

These are exactly the kinds of life lessons HEG exists to deliver.



SUMMARY

Herefordshire Expedition Group gives young people in one of England's most rural counties access to life-changing experiences they simply wouldn't otherwise have. With limited youth provision, rising mental health pressures and few opportunities beyond school and home, many young people in Herefordshire rarely get the chance to build confidence, independence or a sense of what the wider world offers. HEG changes that. Our expeditions and training programme give young people space to grow, connect and challenge themselves, while contributing to communities and environments overseas. The impact is profound: young people return more resilient, more optimistic and more capable of shaping their own futures. For many, it is a defining experience that builds skills and confidence that last well beyond the trip.





CHARITY ACCOUNTS 24/25

Start Date 06/04/2024

End Date 05/04/2025

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. The Board meets quarterly, and the operations team meets fortnightly.

HEG is supported by an additional seven volunteers who run the charity's day to day operations and support young participants. 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 £3,202.53

As this is the end of our expedition cycle, our surplus is lower than in FY 23/24, but this is to be expected and is not of concern as we have no ongoing committed costs at this time.

In fact, this level of surplus going into our 2027 expedition gives us a healthy buffer for future activities and means we are in a healthier financial position than we were prior to our 2024 expedition.

Category	Receipts	Payments
<i>Comms & Marketing</i>	£	£50.20
<i>Fundraising</i>	£16,767.14	£914.81
<i>Gift Aid</i>	£1236.25	£
<i>Grant</i>	£750.00	£
<i>Insurance</i>	£	£2149.66
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	£	£525.00
<i>Travel</i>	£3122.80	£53,199.46
Totals	£21,876.19	£56,839.13

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. Our current surplus will support us as we prepare for our 2027 expedition and begin fundraising again in earnest for future activity.

Reserves Policy

As 25/26 is not an expedition year for HEG, we do not need to hold reserves at this time as we have no ongoing committed costs.

Chair of Trustees on behalf of the trustees

Signed A.R Preedy

Name Andy Preedy

Date 18 December 2025

Independent examiner

Signed Carol Baggot

Name Carol Baggot

Date 18 December 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.

This year marked an extraordinary achievement for HEG. We not only re-established the organisation but delivered a transformative expedition that will stay with young people for the rest of their lives. The dedication of our volunteers, the resilience of our young people and the generosity of our supporters made all of this possible.

Our work is far from done. With the learning from Belize and renewed energy across the team, we are ready to build a stronger, more sustainable HEG - one that continues to give young people in Herefordshire life-changing opportunities for many years to come.

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

Andy Preedy
Chair & Trustee
Herefordshire Expedition Group

1 December 2025.