

**Chairman's Report to the AGM October 2020  
(for the year 2019 to 2020)**

As for so many other organisations YET activities – in particular Forums and Evaluation/mentoring – were adversely affected over half the reporting period by Covid 19.

The pandemic had a profound impact on expeditions planned for 2020. The YET Grants scheme was undertaken in March, but subsequently the Committee established a list of 16 winning applicants who's respective expeditions were postponed to 2021 and who still planned to participate. A total of £4750 was allocated and this will be distributed once each awardee has, in early 2021, reconfirmed that their expedition is indeed going ahead with the individual's participation. These awards will be made in addition to deserving candidates from the 2021 Grants competition for new applicants. Whilst UK located expeditions have not been excluded in the past, the tendency has been to favour those destined for overseas. Indeed, a UK expedition of three youngsters was selected this year. However, as long as international travel remains uncertain we anticipate that a higher proportion of applications for UK expeditions will be forthcoming.

Evaluations were being undertaken at the normal rate until the Covid 19 struck in early 2020. It was immediately clear that providers would have to stop delivery and enter a state of hibernation or even closure of business. On behalf of Trustees Bob Schroter wrote in late January to all providers we worked with offering what help we might in their handling of the crisis. Further, we decided to put the evaluation schedule on hold for each organisation until such time as they restarted. However, by the shutdown we had completed, and been paid for, two full and three interim evaluations. Three further providers due to be assessed over this year are in limbo but remain in touch. One further provider and a research body are scheduled for the next couple of months, assuming lockdowns do not intervene.

The Trustees of a recently closed down regional expeditionary society chose to allocate the £10000 balance of its funds to the benefit of the YET. The latter's Trustees are currently considering how best to utilize this splendid donation in the longer term. However, given the uncertainty of income, certainly in the near future, it will provide a welcome reserve to fall back on should our finances significantly weaken.

Can I on behalf of you all thank Graham Derrick in his role as our External Relations member, supported by Bob Schroter, for the sterling work they did in conducting a survey of the impact of Covid 19 on UK expedition providers. It attracted a good response, and a submission to the Parliamentary Education Select Committee based on the survey report was accepted by the Committee and published on the latter's web-site (<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/203/education-committee/> ). It was also sent to several other relevant All Party Parliamentary Groups, the RGS, British Standards Institute and the Outdoor Council. I trust that you are all aware of this work through a letter Graham sent to all YET members; a letter which also invited recipients to support a petition (<http://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/330559> aimed to change the Dept of Education's guidance to allow for overnight educational visits.

The YET stand at RGS Explore 2019 was much enhanced over previous years due to a new pull-up banner and hand-out leaflets; albeit post-event reflections suggest that further presentational improvements should be made. The stand was run by Gemma Wardle and Luke Fairchild with support from Will Close-Ash. Their hard work attracted a number of seemingly encouraging conversations with visitors to the stand. However, despite following up on each one, disappointingly none responded to the follow up. Whilst it would have been our intention to attend Explore2020, that will not now be the case as the latter will be of limited scope and conducted on-line.

Turning to personnel matters, I am delighted to welcome Clive Burgess, to the YET Board of Trustees; his experience of running the Dorset Expeditionary Society will very much benefit YET. All congratulations to Bob Schroter on receiving the Stephenson Life Time Award. Also to Luke Fairchild, the Young Peoples Representative, who was selected for the Stephenson Annual Award for outstanding support of youth expeditioning. By 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020, Al Hakan will have relinquished his Membership Secretary role, a role to which he brought considerable imagination and energy; our thanks to Quincy Connell, who is also a member of the YET Grants Committee, for agreeing to take

over. Al has by no means left YET as he has agreed to put himself forward as a Trustee and currently stands as a co-opted Trustee. However, I am sorry to once again report that volunteers have still not emerged to lead the proposed Operations Committee and Ambassador scheme; the YET Trustees plan to review the justification for the former.

The plan for the RGS to absorb YET archival papers into the former's archives has made progress in that what and by whom the latter are held has been established. However, transfer of papers to the RGS is on hold due to Covid 19.

Whilst the future several months are likely to be pretty bleak for many organisations in terms of activity, particularly face-to-face, I hope you will not lose faith in the YET's aims. Your continuing support through such a period becomes even more vital by way of ensuring the future our common aim of encouraging and supporting young people to undertake adventurous activities and particularly expeditions, does not wither. I look forward hearing your thoughts on what our priorities should be in these somewhat unpredictable times to ensure YET continues to meet its aims.

WMN Cross  
(Chairman, the YET)

27 Sep 20