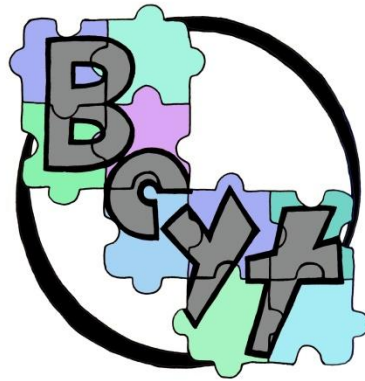




Berwickshire Christian Youth Trust (BCYT)

Trustees' Annual Report

1st July 2025 – 30th June 2026

Charity contact information

Berwickshire Christian Youth Trust

Scottish Charity Number: SCO26804Current Address

6A Market Square

Duns

TD11 3DB

Website: <https://bcytborders.org.uk>

Structure, governance and management

Type of governing document – Trust Deed

Trustee recruitment and appointment - By invitation and resolution passed by majority vote at a meeting of the trustees

Charity Trustees

1. Ishbel Dorward (Chair)
2. Dawn Holt
3. Anne Manley (Treasurer)
4. A. Susan Patterson (from 30.6.2026)

Management Committee –June 2026

1. Ross Aitken (Health and Safety Lead)
2. Ishbel Dorward
3. Rebecca Gilbert
4. Carrie Haddow (Child Protection Lead)
5. Dawn Holt (Co-chair)
6. Charles Holt (Co-chair)
7. Jonathan Idle (Scripture Union Scotland (SUS) East Team Regional Worker)
8. Marianne Kaarsgard
9. Anne Manley (Treasurer)
10. Pam Oswald
11. Mark Bruce (Youth worker) has also attended these meetings

Trustees and Management Committee Update

We welcome Susan Patteron who has joined our trustees. We continue to actively seek to recruit new members.

Youth Worker

Mark Bruce – full-time youth worker



Mark has had a busy and challenging year continuing work in our local schools as well as supporting local churches in activity days and holiday clubs. Visiting our local congregations continues to be a priority to raise the profile of BCYT this year and generate income.

We thank Mark for his enthusiasm, creativity and hard work throughout the year. We were very sorry to see Stuart leave us in the Summer of 2025 after 18 years of working with BCYT. He has been sorely missed by all those he came in contact with. This has led to a time of adjustment for Mark as he adapts to working on his own and prioritising his limited time.

As an Associate Trust with Scripture Union Scotland (SUS), we are grateful for the support and structure this provides, allowing Mark to access training, conferences, staff days and meetings as part of the East Team. He is currently supported by Jonathan Idle from SUS who acts as his line manager.

We also want to congratulate Mark and Sarah on the birth of their baby daughter, Olive, during the summer.

Objectives and activities

Charitable Purposes

Religious development:

- To spread the good news of Jesus Christ among young people in Berwickshire
- To employ a youth worker and part time children's worker/administrator
- To make direct contact with children and young people in schools and elsewhere
- To develop relationships with children and young people and their families
- To encourage leaders working with young people in the area-particularly in local churches
- To assist schools in providing religious education and observance

Introduction

Mark continues to divide his time between:

- 'In person' visits to local primary and secondary schools in the area delivering assemblies, classes in Religious and Moral Education (RME) and running and supporting Scripture Union (SU) groups
- Running and /or facilitating local church activity days, holiday clubs and weekends away
- Liaison and visits with our local congregations as we further develop partnerships in the area
- Sharing and being supported by SUS in their training g, and local ministry days

It continues to be a challenge as we look to the future to see how best we can use the resources and time available to balance these varying areas of outreach.

An introduction to the work of BCYT can be accessed at:

[What is BCYT? - YouTube](#)

Achievements and performance

This has been a very busy, productive, and successful year for all involved. School contacts and involvement have been continued in all our local primary schools as well as in one of our secondary schools. Successful holiday clubs, activity days and a weekend away have also been enjoyed by the young people.

The trustees have continued to review our policies. Our child protection and health and safety leads have also been busy getting to grips with recent changes in legislation relating to these areas.

Mark has attended “Local Ministry Days’ run by SUS which included teaching and lots of practical guidance. He was able to share about the work of BCYT and learn from the experience of other local trusts. He also had the opportunity to participate in the SUS staff retreat in November, attended the Associate Trusts Day Conference on behalf of the trustees and the East Team days. Mark also attended the Event Leader’s Conference in January along with his wife, Sarah

Schools Work

Religious Observance Events (ROE)

Known to most of us as assemblies, Mark has been delivering these in all our primary schools. Topics, have included celebrating Harvest, Christmas and Easter, including in each a shared health and wellbeing value as well as helping them develop an understanding of the Christian faith and worldview. He has also been involved in end of term services.



Scripture Union (SU) Groups

We now have SU groups established in 4 local primary schools – Ayton, Greenlaw, Reston and Chirnside all with good numbers and enthusiastic attendees. There is

also a group running in Eyemouth High School led by Carrie, Andy and Stuart Hadow. We are very thankful to local individuals and church members who have volunteered to run - or assist Mark in running these groups. We are always looking for other volunteers to become involved, and Mark is available to provide advice and support with teaching and activities plans. Please get in touch with us if this is something you'd like to explore further.

Religious and Moral Education Curriculum (RME)

Mark was able to collaborate with local churches and their leaders facilitating P7 students in Eyemouth to visit four local churches. They explored the commonalities, as well as the differences, in the way they worship, and the artefacts used in each setting.



Mark has also been invited to join schools in other activities and events in their school calendars. It is encouraging that schools see BCYT as part of their school communities. He and some of our volunteers have also been privileged to attend end of year leavers assemblies.

Explore Christmas and Easter

SUS have produced resources centred around these two major Christian festivals for use with primary school children. Both Easter and Christmas materials include three videos explaining the significance of these events as well as a range of activities to use alongside them eg quizzes crafts etc.

Christmas Explore was initially presented to the P5 class from Chirnside School who came to the Southview church building for the morning. Easter Explore was then used for two classes P5 and P6 from Chirnside School and P4-P7 in Greenlaw School. Activities have included making Christmas ornaments, bread plaiting, beaded crosses and decorating chocolate eggs to look like chicks!

These sessions were great fun for all involved and have been very well received by the pupils and staff involved. We are particularly grateful to all those who volunteered to lead small groups, without whom, this would have been impossible.



It's Your Move

Transition from primary to secondary school can be a difficult and challenging time for many young people. Mark has been able to visit every primary school in our area to give each child an 'It's Your Move' booklet as well as delivering a session (Changes, Challenges and Choices) which included showing a video and the ever-popular tie-tying lesson! These booklets are provided free of charge to every pupil in P7 courtesy of our local churches and BCYT. The sessions were well received, and thanks was received from several staff members for the input and support



High Schools

Mark continues as part of the chaplaincy team at Eyemouth High School delivering termly assemblies. Mark has also been able to support the SU group running in the high school. During the first few weeks of the new school year, he was able to catch up with some of the P7's (who had received the 'It's your Move' booklets) as they started their journey at secondary school. Mark also was present during the transition days when current P7's visit the high school.

Primary Weekend Away (29th May – 31st May 2026)



40 P5-7 children and 18 volunteers from across Berwickshire gathered at Scoughall for our largest ever primary school weekend. This included some of the children who had been attending our SU groups, holiday clubs and our local churches. For several, this was the first time they had been away from home. Varied activities included: using the boats on the river, beach activities included team challenges, exploring the adventure course, a range of crafts indoors, a movie on Friday and Saturday night as well as times of gathering to explore the Bible. The addition of some new pedal go-karts provided a welcome addition to the facilities. We were exploring the theme of 'Treasure' - we are God's treasure; he gave up so much for us and we can find great treasure in him.

We are very grateful to all those who volunteered to come along and cook, lead small groups, join in activities (including crawling through tunnels) and generally helped to make this a memorable weekend away for these youngsters.



Online materials and resources

All the materials that have been produced and used are available for schools and teachers to use in their classrooms to support RME. A list of resources has been previously sent to all schools with details of how they can access or receive what they may use. Our ever-expanding resources can be found on our website: <https://bcytborders.org.uk>

Work in Partnership with our local churches

Holiday clubs and Activity Days



Holiday Clubs (summer 2025)

At the beginning of the summer holidays Mark and a team from Southview Church ran three morning sessions for Chirnside's Holiday Club, a similar theme was explored for a 'one day' event in conjunction with Ayton and District Churches. This year's title was 'Play On' focussing on children in the Bible whose lives (both as children and adults) can teach us about trusting God, how God could use even the smallest of us, and the significance of God's Word in our lives. Characters looked at included Josiah, Miriam, Daniel and his friends and Jesus. A variety of

storytelling methods, quizzes, crafts as well as selection of toys and activities provided lots of fun.

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped during these weeks without whom the clubs would not be able to run. Thank you also to Sarah Bruce for all her hard work supporting Mark in organising the events and developing the materials.

Coldstream Church Activity Days (April 2026)

BCYT in partnership with Coldstream Parish Church welcomed all the pupils from Coldstream primary school to their church building, half on Tuesday morning and the other half on Wednesday morning, to learn about the people from the bible and how their stories shape Christian understanding now. This event is based on the 'Play On' material from the summer holiday clubs and activity days.

Thank you to all the church team who enabled the day to happen and who are keen to see other days to help reach into the community in Coldstream.

Duns Parish Church Activity Day (February 2026)

The team at Duns Parish Church, yet again, seized the opportunity presented by the in-service day at the end of the February half term holiday, to run another Activity Day. This was also based on the 'Play On' programme used in the summer holiday clubs with over 30 children attending.

We thank the Duns Team for making the day happen so smoothly, and for their invitation to us to front the event.

Priory Live (9th June 2026)

This annual event, undertaken by the parish of Coldingham in collaboration with BCYT, was held on June 9th June at Coldingham Priory. Children in P6, from the local area, come together to explore different aspects of monastic life including practical tasks such as bread-making and tile decorating as well as spiritual activities such as prayer, music and engaging with stories about Jesus. All the children started the day with a video introduction to the site and at some later point watched a drama presentation of the history of life in the Priory which also provided opportunities to convey the message that there is still a Christian community in this part of Berwickshire, following Jesus and serving the local community in a variety of ways.

Volunteers led these workshops or took on the roles of pilgrim guides to support the students and the school staff during the day.

The children had a great day and were engaged in all the activities that were on offer. Feedback from staff was very positive with one commenting that this was 'the best and most well organised event that the children had taken part in that year'



Home Together

Due to limited time and changing circumstances, we have made the decision to bring HT to an end. An endeavour set up to meet the challenges of COVID and to connect with families produced 30 *Home Together* episodes which can all be found on the BCYT YouTube channel

[youtube.com/@thebcyt](https://www.youtube.com/@thebcyt)

They can also be found along with all our current video resources via our website:

Home Together Live



We also had a Home Together Live event in November 2025 in Duns Parish Church with a mix of younger children, teenagers and adults attending. This was also accompanied by a shared meal which was enjoyed by all who attended. We looked at the theme of 'light in the darkness' as we prepared for the Christmas season.

Explore

This is our group for young people of high school age that meets fortnightly. Numbers of young people has varied from 4-10 from around the area. We had a slightly different format this year with our sessions starting with a shared meal and then followed by a time to explore some of the questions that the young folks had raised at the start of the year. We were very grateful to a number of visitors who came along to share their experiences with the teenagers. Topics have included: persecution, forgiveness and science and faith. Social activities have included our traditional Christmas meal and Summer BBQ. We were also able to take many of the group up to Edinburgh on three occasions to be part of Scripture Union Scotland's Magnitude Celebration. This has been a real encouragement for those attending.



Financial review

Summary

We finished this year with a surplus of £30 380.10

This is a result of a generous grant of £5000 from SUS, a legacy from a very loyal supporter of BCYT who died earlier in the year as well as increased giving by local congregations and supporters. We would like to thank all our supporters, local congregation and prayer partners. The generosity of all has been a wonderful answer to prayer and encouragement to all involved in BCYT.

Due to the uncertainty of our finances, in the previous two years, we had not felt it was appropriate, at that time, to look at replacing Stuart Otley, who retired last year. However, this year's surplus puts us in a much more stable position financially and allows us to start the process for reappointing a part time administrator/ children's worker to work alongside Mark.

Reserves Policy

We have a reserves policy in place to ensure transparency for donors and beneficiaries on how we are managing the organisation's funds and ensure that BCYT continues to be financially stable. This provides us with an opportunity to consider any risks to both income and expenditure and ensure that appropriate levels of reserves are available for the future. The following levels of reserves are set:

6 months of total expenditure

- due to uncertainty of future income streams this should be held to allow time to develop new sources of income and/or consider the future of the organisation's activities should donations reduce
- An additional 12 weeks of staff costs
 - to allow for redundancy payments should the financial difficulties not be overcome in the initial 6 months set out above

We continue to hold these reserves and looking to use the surplus generated this year for the employment of a new part time administrator /children's worker.

Donated Faculties and Services

All members of the trustees and management committee are volunteers.

The independent examiner's time and service are also given voluntarily

Future plans

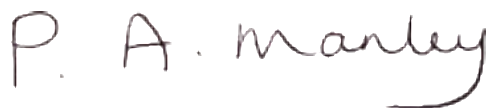
As mentioned above, our increased finances have meant we are now in a position financially to recruit a new administrator/children's worker. This has been a real answer to prayer. We look forward to all that the future holds and the plans that GOD has for us as an organisation. We are encouraged that despite all the challenges the last few years have brought, BCYT continues to thrive and grow in its work with schools, churches, and families.

Additional information

The trustees are grateful for all the support received from our staff, supporters, local congregations, volunteers, well-wishers, and SUS. We also give thanks to GOD for his generous provision and loving care for BCYT during this last year.

Declaration

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'P. A. Manley', written in a cursive style.

P. Anne Manley

Treasurer

7th July 2026