



**Your Shore**

# Beach Rangers Evaluation

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<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/research/sig/>



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# Executive Summary

Your Shore Beach Rangers (YSBR) ran between 2016 and 2021. The project was coordinated by Cornwall Wildlife Trust (CWT) and Cornwall College, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund as part of the Our Bright Future programme. The project's overarching aims were to:

- i. Enable young people to gain new skills relevant to finding jobs, training and volunteering opportunities and/or starting entrepreneurial projects that contribute to the green economy.
- ii. Engage young people with their environment; inspiring and enabling action.
- iii. Inspire communities about the environment; stimulating action and community cohesion.
- iv. Achieve positive impacts on the marine environment.

A team of independent researchers from the University of Exeter's Social Innovation Group (part of the [Centre for Geography and Environmental Science](#) based at the University of Exeter's Penryn Campus) used a suite of methods (predominantly qualitative) to provide an in-depth evaluation of YSBR. This included drawing insights from:

- i. A range of feedback forms and feedback correspondence notes from students, schools and community groups that took part in YSBR's activities.
- ii. Reflecting on informal conversations with community groups and students at YSBR events (e.g. the annual conference).
- iii. The Beach Rangers Academy Programme passports used by programme participants to record their experiences.
- iv. Sixteen in-depth interviews conducted at the end of the project with individuals that YSBR had engaged.

The evaluation also examined descriptive quantitative data that was relevant to the project's aims. Specifically, the project engaged 5,000 participants aged under 11 years; 16,000 participants aged between 11 and 24 years and 13,500 participants aged above 24 years. A key strength of YSBR was the core project team's flexible and responsive approach to engagement. This allowed young people to shape their experiences of the project based around their needs, interests and aspirations. As such, the project created an opportunity for young adults to contribute to Cornwall's local economy through the time they dedicated to volunteering. Confidence building and the freedom to pursue activities of interest, particularly those that were relevant to marine conservation, were important in nurturing the continued engagement of young adults in the project. These facets also encouraged participant entrepreneurship. For example, a business was set-up to make jewellery from plastic that was recovered from beach cleans.

The activities that engaged students in an educational capacity, whether it was in schools, colleges, universities, home-schooling environments and out of school, provided learning opportunities for students outside of their structured learning commitments. Students that found their structured learning activities difficult showed appreciation for the opportunity to learn in different contexts. The teachers, school managers, tutors and lecturers particularly valued the teaching resources made available by YSBR for this reason.

## Engaging young people and equipping them with new skills!

The YSBR core team's flexible and driven engagement style supported project successes in engaging community groups too. Overall, seventeen community groups were engaged by the project. Five of these groups were formed as a result of YSBR's engagement activities. The groups valued YSBR's role as a communication facilitator between them, particularly via the project's social media presence and activity. Through this increased capacity for communication, groups reported that they were able to sync their activities and generate greater levels of interest in their activities. The formation of the Cornwall Plastic Pollution Coalition (CPPC), a collective of sixty individuals and groups, emerged from the desire for action that YSBR harnessed. CPPC's activities shaped positive marine environment impacts – particularly through the beach cleans that they organised, e.g., 80 tonnes of waste were removed from Cornwall's beaches as a result of these beach cleans in 2020. Moreover, the open and responsive communication practised by the YSBR project team also allowed for skills to be shared during the Covid-19 pandemic. This involved sharing digital expertise and skills for groups to run activities online wherever possible. The project's approach to skills sharing was not top-down, which also seemed to encourage activity and involvement, e.g. after a community group successfully organised a series of silent disco beach cleans, this idea was expanded by the YSBR project.

Key points of learning for the project include the establishment of specific roles and job titles (even if voluntary) for young adults within community groups to encourage their involvement. The creation of such roles can encourage young adults to become community group members from a skills and career development perspective. A three-tier approach to expand the inclusivity of such a project in the future is suggested, based on the evaluation findings, including steps to:

- i. Engage groups / individuals that understand the contexts of often under represented groups – including where learning is developed directly from the experiences of the individuals in an under represented group.**
- ii. Build relationships with individuals within a particular group.**
- iii. Adapt activities to involve the individuals in a particular group in a participatory manner.**

Overall, the community building aspect of YSBR and the project's flexibility in understanding and responding to individualised needs on a regular basis were key drivers for the YSBR project's success.

This report outlines the Your Shore Beach Rangers (YSBR) project's evaluation methods and the main highlights from the project's engagement activities with:

- i. Schools and schoolchildren.**
- ii. With their Beach Rangers Academy scheme participants.**
- iii. With community groups.**
- iv. The project's impact on the marine environment.**

Future considerations for widening participation and inclusion are covered in this report's conclusions.

# 1. YSBR Project Outline

The YSBR project, co-ordinated by Cornwall Wildlife Trust (CWT) in collaboration with Cornwall College Newquay and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund as part of the Our Bright Future programme aimed to promote local engagement with marine environments. The local engagement is based around sharing knowledge with young people related to the use and protection of marine environments. Additionally, YSBR looked to enhance community knowledge and action through a range of activities. Overall, four aims are outlined by the project. These are listed below:

- 1. Enable young people to gain new skills relevant to finding jobs, training and volunteering opportunities and/or starting entrepreneurial projects that contribute to the green economy.**
- 2. Engage young people with their environment; inspiring and enabling action.**
- 3. Inspire communities about the environment; stimulating action and community cohesion.**
- 4. Achieve positive impacts on the marine environment.**



## 2. Evaluation Methods

YSBR used a suite of methods to collect data relating to the four aims. The predominant approach for data collection was via feedback forms specifically designed for groups participating in an activity and/or workshop. Bespoke data collection methods were extremely important for the sessions conducted with schoolchildren. Clear language and short forms were used to encourage responses. Further, any general feedback sent by schools (for example, via email or a contribution to a press release about an activity, workshop or other event) was analysed for evaluation. Some data collection, via the use of paper forms, was hampered by outdoor activities (for all groups). Where this occurred, convenient alternative collective methods were used to gain feedback. Two effective methods deployed under such circumstances were:

- i. **To ask for feedback from the group collectively in a structured format. A group would be asked what they would like continued, what they would stop and whether they would like anything new added to a session if they were to take part in the session again, i.e. a 'stop, start, continue' structure.**
- ii. **A rating system using convenient materials would be put together (depending on the logistics and the setting of an activity). Using the rating system, participants could vote for their favourite part and/or activity of a session. Examples include, using buckets (labelled with a specific activity) and pebbles to identify a favourite activity, and using smiley face stickers to identify if the participants enjoyed specific activities.**

Such adaptive and flexible evaluation methods are useful for projects and initiatives involving a wide range of activities and participants with varied characteristics (Judge and Bauld, 2001). All schools, colleges, universities, and students (including those that were out of school and being home schooled) engaged by YSBR were part of the project's Beach Rangers Academy. Additionally, most students in these schools, colleges, and home schools opted into a Beach Rangers Academy scheme similar to the well-established Duke of Edinburgh Award<sup>1</sup>. YSBR tracked the progress of their Beach Rangers Academy scheme participants through a 'Beach Rangers Passport'. The passport enabled participants to record the type of volunteering they had taken on and the hours they spent volunteering. They could also record the skills they had spent time on developing and any marine environment-related events and/or training they had attended. The skills and activities that participants could get involved in could relate to their health and well-being too. Such activities were promoted through the project's healthy body, healthy mind culture. Essentially, the passport gave participants an opportunity to reflect

on their experiences relating to any of the events. Their reflections included how interacting with others at the events may have changed and/or developed their attitudes to the marine environment, and how this may shape the way they interact with the marine environment in the future (both informally and potentially in a professional capacity). Participants were also given the opportunity to opt-in to a short, semi-structured interview. The interviews provided in-depth insights into their experiences with the Beach Rangers Academy scheme. In so doing, they were able to allude to how they aimed to build on these experiences in the future.

## Joining our team of amazing people.

Semi-structured interviews were used with the community group members YSBR engaged through its activities. Please note, this group used '*before and after*' feedback forms to capture any feedback regarding the workshops they participated in. Feedback forms were mainly used to rate the content and delivery of the workshops, while ranking the effectiveness of the workshop relating to any specific development aims (for example, confidence in campaigning). Essentially, the interviews were designed to supplement the feedback forms by providing in-depth insights into a community group member's personal experiences with YSBR. Consequently, they were able to articulate how they felt the project would impact them personally, their group and the marine environment in the future as well as offering thoughts and suggestions for potential improvements to the YSBR project. Community group members also used social media, i.e. comments on YSBR posts and events, to leave feedback.

Finally, the Your Shore Conference (run annually since 2012) provided an opportunity to speak to participants that engaged with the project. Feedback forms were used at the conference to gain an overall understanding of what worked well and what could be improved. The conference attendees took part in '*speed-dating*' sessions where they could voice and note-down their key feedback points for the project in a '*quick-fire*' manner. Informal conversations with the conference attendees were reflected on by the YSBR delivery team members and the evaluation support team to gain any additional insights into the project. Reflections on informal discussions and observations during YSBR events and activities were a core component of the project. These reflections were discussed at project team meetings and used to develop the project wherever appropriate and possible.

Making sure we're  
having fun on the job!



Overall, the varied data generated by this evaluation was subjected to an inductive coding approach. Inductive coding approaches enable the data generated by a study to lead its findings. Thus, inductive coding contextualises insights within unique contexts (Elo and Kyngas, 2008). The array of activities that were assembled by YSBR and the project's responsive approach to engagement created a complex network of relationships and engagement. We present the key dynamics of these networks and relationships, and the engagement that was achieved through these networks and relationships in the evaluation findings.



# 3. Evaluation Findings

This section covers the evaluation's key findings relating to the schools, students, Beach Rangers Academy programme participants and community groups YSBR engaged. Further, this section is concluded by covering this evaluation's findings in relation to the impacts of YSBR on the marine environment. However, before presenting the findings described above, we outline the project's outreach to its key target groups in numbers:

- 17 community groups throughout Cornwall, UK, were engaged by YSBR. Five of these groups were established as a result of the project's activities.
- 1,000 workshops and activity sessions were conducted.
- The project engaged 5,000 participants aged under 11 years; 16,000 participants aged between 11 and 24 years and 13,500 participants aged above 24 years.
- Detailed evaluation interviews were conducted from across a range of different YSBR participants including: (3) YSBR Apprentices; (1) representatives from schools and colleges; (3) Beach Rangers Academy programme participants; and (8) managers/organisers/ coordinators of partnering marine groups. Relevant key themes from these interviews are presented throughout this report.



## 3.1. Schools, colleges and pupils

### Key Points

Practical sessions were appreciated and welcomed by schools, colleges and pupils.

Reducing plastic use / recycling and eating less meat were the two most common 'take-away' messages pupils listed.

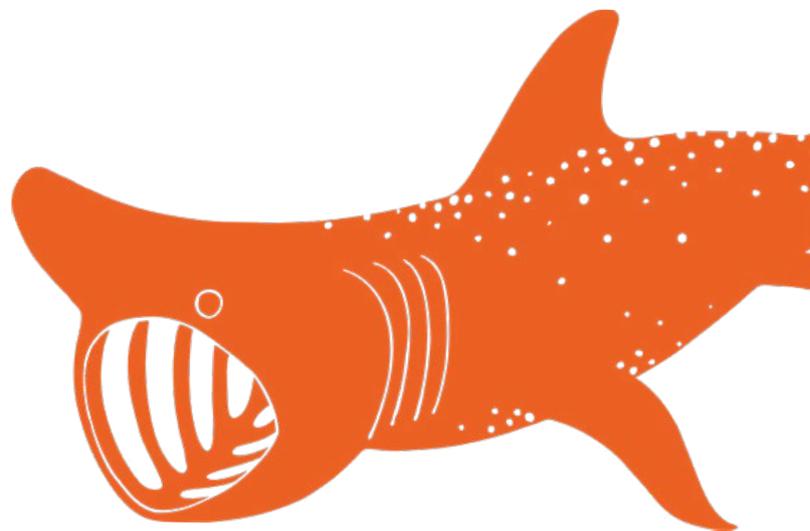
Sessions had more positive responses where a good rapport was apparent between YSBR staff, pupils and the schools and colleges.

Opportunities were presented to pupils to develop skills beyond YSBR. This included accreditation and/or certification from independent organisations, and membership to voluntary groups e.g. Marine Strandings Network and Worksafe Training Systems.

Social issues were reflected in pupil feedback, e.g. dealing with stress / anxiety and reducing time spent on social media.

Pupils with a deeper interest in the topics covered by the YSBR sessions, e.g. wildlife rescue and/or animal first aid, left more reflective feedback.

Pupils that were more reflective sought increased opportunities for more 'hands-on' sessions.



Two-hundred and sixty (260) feedback forms have been received from individual schoolchildren that participated in YSBR conducted activities. The activities organised included, but were not limited to, beach safety sessions, first aid, animal first aid, beach activity days (e.g. rock pooling and Zumba sessions), school visits (based around beach safety and being active in marine environments) and nutrition.

The feedback included in the forms highlight that YSBR's activities enabled schoolchildren to think of the marine environment as a place for calm and de-stressing. Further, the reduction of waste, particularly plastic use, and reverting to including less meat in their daily diets featured amongst the strong messages children identified and took away from the YSBR sessions. Below is a list of topics that pupils mentioned in their forms as the key skills and knowledges they had covered:

- **Beach / swimming safety**
- **Beach safety flag signals**
- **Beach cleaning**
- **Recycling / reducing plastic use**
- **Balanced diets (including eating less meat)**
- **Managing anger**
- **Managing stress**
- **Interview skills**



Significantly, some participants pursued aspects of the learning promoted by YSBR further and were certified for the skills that they developed in YSBR sessions by organisations beyond the project. For example, in 2020 the evaluation recorded 12 students that were given a certification for 'First Aid at Work' by WorkSafe (a UK-wide independent first-aid training organisation). This evidences that the skills promoted and encouraged by YSBR can be relevant to many areas of development for young people.

Further, the responses given by the children in the forms did extend beyond the generic views mentioned above. Links to current social debates, (e.g., plastic pollution, the climate crisis and impacts of social media on mental health), were apparent in some forms; particularly in those that were more reflective in their feedback. In sessions focussing on wellbeing, nutrition and first aid, the inclusion of talking about 'anxiety' was referred to as an area that could be given more time or incorporated into future sessions if it was not discussed at all. Such feedback forms also referred to the negative impact of social media on anxiety. Therefore, 'spending less time on social media' was included as a key learning point in some of the pupils' forms that reflected on anxiety. Time spent with friends and doing activities that they enjoyed (away from screen-time) were mentioned as activities they could plan into their routines to reduce the negative impacts of social media.

Additionally, the more reflective responses alluded to thinking about and caring for the environment and wildlife in general. The pupils that were more reflective about caring for wildlife in their feedback often mentioned that they would be interested in interacting with animals more regularly as part of their learning. For example, one pupil simply wrote,

***“More dogs to practice on”***

in the section of a feedback form asking what could be improved. This was in relation to a session on animal first aid.

Overall, the children found the active parts of the sessions ‘enjoyable’ and ‘fun’ when asked for feedback. Interestingly, a negative comment regarding YSBR beach safety sessions alluded to its irrelevance in relation to the knowledge needed for better attainment at school, i.e. exam performance and curricular attainment. There were no negative comments regarding any of the organisation and facilitation of the sessions. Some feedback form responses specifically mentioned the facilitators as a positive of the sessions. For example, the parent of a child that took part in YSBR sessions told us the following,

***“My son [Name] went along for a couple of days to see what it was like. He ended up doing 90% of the days, thoroughly enjoyed it normally he wouldn’t leave our side but he felt very comfortable with [YSBR Staff Member Name] particularly and went off did the activities and met back up with us at the end.”***

The quote above is in relation a child with autism. The project was able accommodate the needs of this particular child through building a relationship with facilitators that had worked in similar contexts before. The project’s proactivity in understanding individualised needs through good and open communication with schools, colleges and educational organisations enabled sessions to be adapted appropriately wherever possible and needed.

The testimonials from the schools focussed on being appreciative for the time given by the YSBR activity facilitators. Overall, the organisation and facilitation of the sessions were commended for their use of interactive and activity-based learning approaches. One testimonial from a school stated the following:

***“They loved how the trainers got everyone mixing so well in groups and helping and supporting and made everyone feel valued and safe and confident”.***

Additionally, the ‘hands-on’ and active sessions were referred to as a mechanism for building and strengthening friendship bonds between school children and maintaining interest around important subjects. For example, a testimonial from a sixth form college in relation to a session on nutrition stated:

***“What a brilliant session! Thank you so much. The students thoroughly enjoyed experimenting with the smoothies and the energy balls were a big hit! As you know, I will definitely be making a batch at the weekend. The conversations of trying new foods continued after you left and that has to be a positive result.”***

The quote above alludes to the value of external YSBR practitioners implementing practical activities into learning spaces that go beyond the normal daily routines of schools and colleges. The beneficial pedagogic value of the YSBR project, to facilitate pupils learning directly from real-world practitioners, was a sentiment that was strongly echoed by multiple institutions through comments such as this quote taken from the an evaluation interview,

***“...because they’ve been involved in this project, we’re putting it on a CV, and it’s giving them something to talk about. And this is what I want for my students to be involved in real life things so that they can actually talk about them, when they when they go to interviews.”***

The relationship and rapport built by the YSBR staff and the schools was strongly appreciated leading to YSBR sessions being viewed more enthusiastically and YSBR tasks were successfully adopted by young people and their teachers more freely. The following quote from a feedback email demonstrates this point:

***“Whilst you were not there to represent us, others there attending and delivering knew you were from the college and I think your performance showed you, and us, off in a good light. [Name] and I have been hosting the tutors and they were impressed by your attitude this weekend.”***

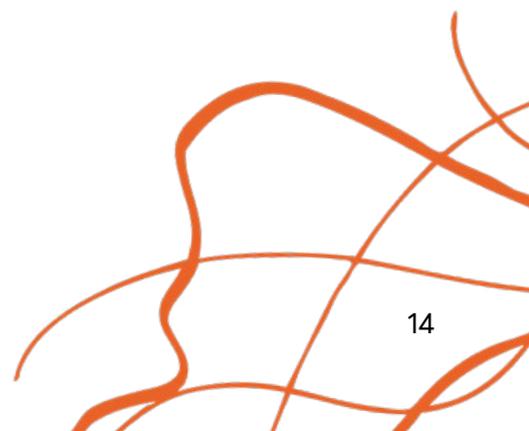
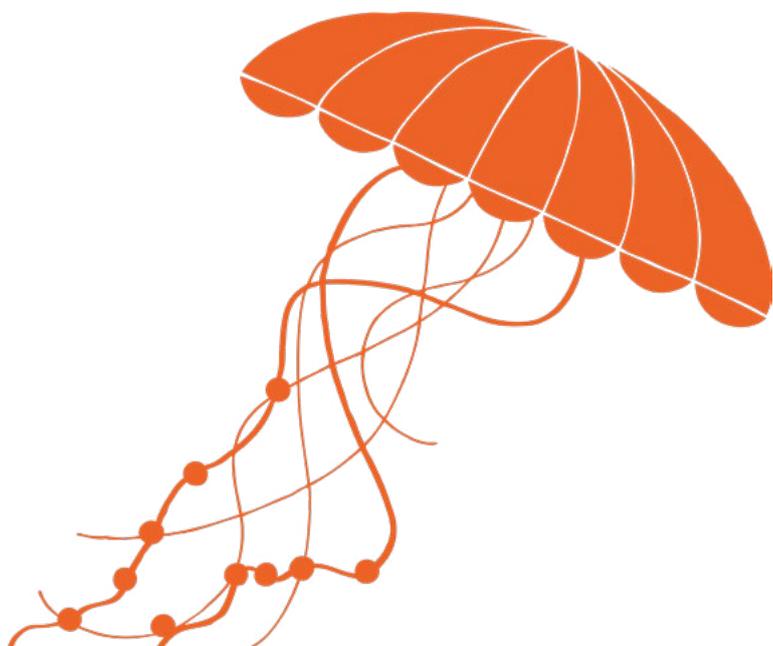
The project has provided support for educators by making teaching resources based on the sessions run in schools available for all. These resources are free of charge and can be accessed via the following link: [YSBR Educational Resources](#). These resources have had interest internationally and will be part of the project’s legacy beyond its funded period. As highlighted by this section, the sessions and activities conducted by the YSBR project predominantly provided an entry point for school-aged children to engage with the marine environment. Moreover, the activities and sessions provided an opportunity for children to engage in valuable life skills outside of their regular curriculum and day-to-day schooling. One teacher told us the following,

***“You can’t teach life from a worksheet... you’ve got to go out there and live it. So by giving them stuff to do, get them excited about stuff, I think it’s fantastic for them to then bring back and then they***

*can talk about it in their job interviews, write about it in their CV, it just makes it a lot easier for them."*

Such activities provide valuable enrichment for learners that find the structure of a traditional school day challenging (Eshach, 2006). This enrichment, particularly if facilitated in environments outside of a school's physical space, can provide wider opportunities for children to develop new interests (Ballantyne and Packer, 2006; Nadelson and Jordan, 2012).

Further, the Beach Rangers Academy programme that was facilitated by YSBR aimed to provide an opportunity for young people to develop and apply their skills in and about real-life situations. The evaluation's insights relating to this scheme is covered in the next sub-section.



## 3.2. Beach Rangers Academy Programme

### Key Points

Participants appreciated being able to pursue the programme around their other commitments and at their own pace.

The development of confidence and self-esteem were seen as key positives by participants.

Some participants alluded to the importance of having a structured approach to pursuing activities that they enjoyed and were interested in.

The minimum economic valuation (per person) of the Bronze Award participants' volunteering hours was £65.25 if under 18 years of age; £92.25 if between 18 and 20 years of age; £115.50 if 21 to 24 years of age and £123.15 if 25 years of age.

The minimum economic valuation (per person) of the Silver Award participants' volunteering hours was £174.00 if under 18 years of age; £246.00 if between 18 and 20 years of age; £308.00 if 21 to 24 years of age) and £328.40 if 25 years of age.

The minimum economic valuation (per person) of the Gold Award participants' volunteering hours was £348.00 if under 18 years of age; £492.00 if between 18 and 20 years of age; £616.00 if 21 to 24 years of age) and £656.80 if 25 years of age.

Participants excel in volunteering when their interests are harnessed in a supportive environment that considers their other commitments. Of note, one participant recorded 1072 volunteering hours!

The confidence instilled in participants fostered positive results in relation to entrepreneurship. A jewellery business based on using plastics from beach cleans was a highlight of the scheme.

Young people were given the opportunity to visit the House of Lords and advocate for increased support for passing legislature in support of the sustainability agenda to benefit the Cornish marine environment.

Forty-four (44) Beach Rangers Academy passports were received for analysis, offering an in-depth understanding into the experiences of the participants through the duration of the scheme. Activities undertaken by the participants included, but are not limited to, swimming, diving, running and horse riding. Hence, the scheme enabled participants to pursue interests in a range of physical activities and participants were encouraged to increase their levels of physical activity on a regular basis. Alongside these activities, the participants had the opportunity to participate in training sessions organised by the YSBR team. Similar to the schoolchildren's feedback on the educational sessions (covered in the previous section) the young adults expressed appreciation for the interactive format of the sessions they were offered. Further, the topics covered by the training, e.g. beach safety / first aid, snorkel instructor training, nutrition and career advice, were overall deemed as important subjects.

The skills developed and awareness gained from the training sessions did translate into some cases of success beyond the scheme as highlighted by this quote from an evaluation interview participant,

***"I've been really lucky in that I've done my outdoor first aid, I've done my marine mammal medic training, I've done my Orca training that has like, set me up with so many opportunities to get involved with external organisation. And none of those things I would have been able to do on my own without the support of the project."***

The participant passports showed that volunteering positions were translated into paid roles in some cases. The participants that were able to make this transition did mention the initial introduction to the charities, community groups and local businesses via Beach Rangers as an important mechanism in building positive relationships (socially and in a professional capacity). One participant told us that,

***"...after the apprenticeship, I managed to get a position at Natural England working on the Pacific oyster project, which was a funded project that's now ended and I have managed to get a permanent advisor position at Natural England."***

At this point, it is important to recognise the incremental changes individuals experienced due to self-reported boosts in confidence. A good example of this is provide by a YSBR Apprentice. During an evaluation interview, they explained that,

***"[Staff Name] from Our Bright Future helped me to, to get a position speaking at the 'Now for Nature' conference. It had some big names like Stephen Moss and Chris Packham speaking and yeah, I was actually able to speak. And they're the sort of experiences that stick out for me, because the Beach Rangers***

*project allowed me to like push myself in areas that I was really not confident in, I would never have imagined that I would be speaking to a 100 people at this conference in London with all these other like inspirational names."*

YSBR volunteering phases enabled participants to gain confidence and competence in their roles and activities when aiding charities, community groups and local businesses. A poignant example of this is provided by one participant that was able to gain confidence through their social interactions with other Beach Ranger Academy participants and the YSBR team. Although setting up and running a competition stand at a charity activity day does not have the same impact as transitioning into employment, the participant went on to mention they were able to have confidence in their skills and 'think out of the box', alluding to a change which was an important personal transition.

The point above was drawn out to demonstrate that the Beach Rangers Academy was impactful at an individual level as well as having wider social impacts. A pragmatic approach to capture the wider impacts of the scheme is to use the amount of volunteering that was facilitated. Participants offered 'free time' to charities, community groups and local businesses. As such, YSBR's Beach Rangers scheme made a significant contribution to local vitality through volunteering.

Of the forty-four passports analysed, twenty-three were for Bronze Awards. This meant the volunteers contributed a minimum of 15 hours of their time volunteering. A crude economic benefit analysis of these hours (using the United Kingdom's (UK's) minimum wage) suggests that Bronze Award participants contributed a minimum of £65.25 if they were under 18 years old; a minimum of £92.25 if they were aged 18-20 years old; a minimum of £115.50 if they were 21-25 years old and a minimum of £123.15 if they were 25 years of age.



Five of the passports (out of forty-four) that were analysed achieved a Silver Award. These participants contributed a minimum of 40 hours (including their Bronze Award volunteering hours) of time to volunteering. The remaining sixteen (out of forty-four) passports were for participants that achieved a Gold Award. These individuals contributed a minimum of 80 hours of time to volunteering (including their Bronze Award and Silver Award volunteering hours). Table 1 (below) outlines the monetary contribution these hours account for (using the UK's minimum wage):

	<b>Bronze Award</b>	<b>Silver Award</b>	<b>Gold Award</b>
<b>Minimum monetary contribution if aged under 18 years.</b>	£65.25 per person	£174.00 per person	£348.00 per person
<b>Minimum monetary contribution if aged 18-20 years.</b>	£92.25 per person	£246.00 per person	£492.00 per person
<b>Minimum monetary contribution if aged 21-25 years.</b>	£115.50 per person	£308.00 per person	£616.00 per person
<b>Minimum monetary contribution if aged 25 years.</b>	£123.15 per person	£328.40 per person	£656.80 per person

**Table 1. Monetary value of YSBR scheme participant volunteering hours**

The minimum contributions highlighted above are in relation to the minimum hours of volunteering participants had to undertake to receive the specified award they aimed for, i.e. Bronze Award, Silver Award or Gold Award. However, there was evidence of participants exceeding these hours. This was particularly apparent in relation to the Gold Award. For example, three of the passports we received greatly exceeded the minimum of 80 hours of volunteering. Their recorded hours were: 143 hours, 209 hours and 217 hours. Two other participants volunteered in summer-long (six weeks) programmes they found through the marine and wildlife networks they engaged with. Further, one participant especially excelled in volunteering and recorded 1072 hours of volunteering in their verified passport. The monetary equivalence of the volunteering undertaken by these six specific volunteers would be much higher than depicted in Table 1 (around thirteen times more in the case of the participant that recorded 1072 hours of volunteering).

Moreover, the empowerment and confidence given to young people through the scheme did translate into entrepreneurial success. YSBR’s support led to a group of young adults setting up a business that made jewellery from the plastic collected from Cornwall’s beaches. This business reported a profit of £600.00 in two months. This can be regarded as a testament to the flexibility and empowerment that the scheme promoted and enabled. New ideas and the freedom to explore them in a supportive environment are presented as key conditions for cultivating entrepreneurship that is responsive to a particular issue and/or community (De Lucia, 2016; Volkmann et al. 2019). The positive influence the scheme had on empowerment and confidence was also evident in this evaluation’s interview and observational data (from the project’s annual conferences). Individuals that had moved on to paid jobs mentioned that they can, and do, ‘challenge’ their employees and workplaces regarding sustainability if need be.

The Beach Ranger Academy Scheme’s participants also developed close links with community groups. In the next sub-section, we explore the influence of YSBR on the community groups it engaged.

### 3.3. Community groups

#### Key Points

17 groups engaged in YSBR; five of which were established through YSBR's links and support.

Groups appreciated the opportunity to link up with other small charities in the local area.

Some community groups shared data, resources and discussed how conservation activities could be better co-ordinated as a result of meeting through YSBR.

The contribution to scientific data by the community groups was a key positive and valued outcome of the project. This includes expanding the surveying and monitoring data housed by the Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS).

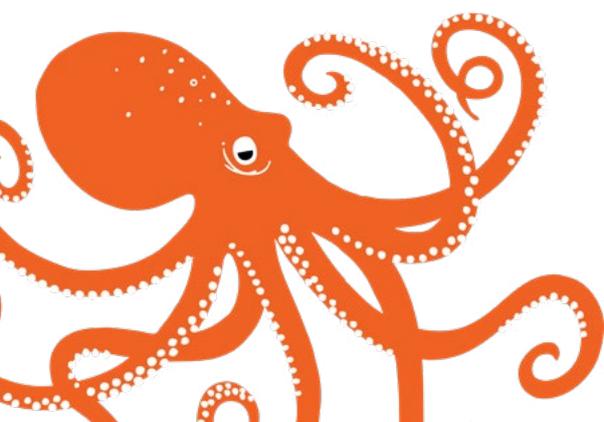
The annual conference acted as a key opportunity to network and meet others undertaking similar work.

Links to policy makers were valued and opportunities to speak to local / national government authorities should be increased where possible. Two key barriers to engaging policy makers was time and access (i.e. 'knowing who to contact' and building relevant contacts).

The engagement of younger people (under 25 years of age) remained a challenge for most community groups.

Younger people could be better engaged through giving them specific roles and experiences within a community group.

The positive relationships YSBR developed with the community groups were driven by a core team of individuals (internal to YSBR) that had a positive rapport amongst themselves and those that they engaged.



Community groups throughout Cornwall have interacted with YSBR (a map of the groups involved can be accessed using the following link: [The Your Shore Network](#)). The annual YSBR Conference provided these groups an opportunity to voice their feedback on the project, reflect on their activities and collectively scope the future of their activities. While some of the feedback they provided was practical, such as altering the positioning of the screen projectors and/or including more interactive workshops, many reflective comments were voiced too. Engaging young people in their activities has been a challenge for the groups. In 2018, only one community group had over 10 members that were between 16 and 25 years of age. The feedback from the 2018 conference cited that there was a need for innovative ways to engage young adults. This was certainly acted on. In 2020's conference two community groups mentioned the success of their,

## 'silent disco beach cleans'

– over 20 young adults attended their events. Additionally, the conferences provided community groups with an opportunity to share examples of practice and exchange solutions. This is particularly useful when two groups work in coastal locations that are adjacent or overlap. The 'silent disco beach cleans' can be used as an example here too. A community group cited transporting the equipment needed for these events as a challenge. However, another group had mitigated this challenge by building a secure beach hut to store equipment close to the site of the beach cleans. This is not possible for all of the sites and groups, but shows how shared solutions can be achieved wherever possible.

Alongside the practical ideas exchanged (as highlighted above), the community groups are given a platform to debate wider issues, e.g. climate change, through YSBR. This has been the case both at the conferences and via the social media links YSBR provides these groups (mainly Facebook pages, Twitter and Instagram). Community groups can use:

**#YourShore**

to discuss any current news and their activities. The use of social media allows community groups to project their messages and discussions further afield under a collective movement (i.e. via using the hashtag) and this has also been effective in raising awareness at a policy level. Social media campaigning was particularly effective when their discussions and activities appear alongside other pursuits YSBR was involved with, e.g. the Beach Rangers Academy representatives visit to the Houses of Parliament in 2019. Essentially, YSBR's links to policy makers and governmental organisations (local and national) were a positive, but many groups stated that they would appreciate increased involvement in policy circles. Overall, two key barriers to raising awareness at a policy level were cited by the community groups. Firstly, 'knowing who to contact' was not clear and, secondly, the difficulty of accessing relevant policy makers.

The increased ability to link-up and communicate allowed community groups to raise awareness and involvement in citizen science projects. The community groups reported involvement in an array of projects, including the Marine Strandings Network (see link [here](#)), Seaquest Southwest (see link [here](#)), Shoresearch (see link [here](#)) and Seasearch (see link [here](#)). Shoresearch and Seasearch projects operate on a national scale (UK-wide). Therefore, the widening of engagement and awareness regarding such schemes has helped expand Cornwall's capacity to contribute to national marine monitoring and surveying databases. Further, Seasearch involves experienced divers in species surveys. This has acted as added motivation for some community group members to improve their diving skills. As one member stated during the Your Shore Conference in 2021 this was, "just so they could be involved". A continued link to such projects and close contact with the knowledge and skills required to be involved in these projects (local and/or national) provide an important platform for engagement to translate into action (He et al. 2019; Hano et al. 2020).

## Increasing engagement and awareness.

Community groups reported positively on the networking opportunities provided through the Your Shore Beach Ranger project stating that the project had increased their links with local service providers such as Cornwall Council, the British International Freight Association (BIFA) and Clean Cornwall. Improved networking has led to a subsequent enhancement in the efficiency of advocacy campaigns such as those identified by the Cornish Plastic Pollution Coalition (CPPC). For example, one organiser said,

***"So basically, something happened, for example, a balloon release on a council beach, and instead of Newquay Marine Group emailing the council, going were not happy with that what happened, the CPPC would email the council and say, we're not happy with that and that email would have the logos of 35 groups and signatures."***

The CPPC, mentioned above, can be regarded as an important achievement for YSBR team. The coalition was facilitated through the groups and individuals that were engaged through this project. Currently, CPPC works with 60 groups (including the community groups engaged by YSBR) and individuals (these can be seen via the following link: [CPPC members](#)) to mobilise and facilitate activities to reduce pollution in Cornwall's marine environments.

Additionally, YSBR has endeavoured to improve skills at a community group level. Continued communication with the groups involved has allowed YSBR to improve and add to the skills development sessions they offer. This includes the introduction of 'consultation and campaigning' workshops. A small selection of feedback forms (n=4) demonstrated that those who are least confident around a specific area of development benefit most from the sessions (self-reported). Importantly, funding bid writing is repeatedly referred to as a skill community

groups desire to develop and would like more support. This resonates with many voluntary sector organisations, including the Cornwall Wildlife Trust (CWT) itself, and is an area of development to consider for any future activity related to mobilising the voluntary sector around environmental issues.

## Help us tackle environmental issues!

Importantly, the network of individuals and groups brought together by Your Shore were encouraged to self-reflect and think about improvements throughout their involvement in the project. A key strategy for testing in the future, which emerged from the community group feedback (most prominently at the Your Shore Conference in 2020), was the establishment of specific roles and 'volunteer titles' (similar to job titles) within voluntary sector organisations. In so doing, community groups could attract younger adults as they would offer a structured role to the young adults. Thus, providing them with a specialism they could list on their Curriculum Vitae to attract employers in the marine conservation and/or campaigning sector. It should be noted that the total amount of volunteer hours (as highlighted by the Cornwall Plastic Pollution Coalition (CPPC) report in 2018) mobilised by YSBR amassed to 48,066 hours. If the recognised method of aligning these hours with the UK's minimum wage is used, this provides an economic valuation of £376,357 for this time. This figure could be potentially enhanced by making such voluntary roles even more attractive to young adults (as outlined above).

Be part of a community  
you **love** and **help**  
make a difference!

The strong sense of community that has been achieved through YSBR was also evident in the project's final conference (2021). Members from the 17 community groups engaged by the project expressed their desire to continue collaborating after YSBR's funded period was over. All of the community groups involved in the project expressed that they would continue their activities and links with Cornwall Wildlife Trust, the schools, colleges and/or the other community groups in their local areas. Further, other projects that emerged as a result of individuals and groups engaged in YSBR collaborating will continue. A particularly interesting case was Cornwall Climate ([cornwallclimate.org](http://cornwallclimate.org)). They aim to engage members of the public with the climate crisis and how action can be facilitated through a succession of films. The films will be aired online throughout 2021. Therefore, YSBR's influence on campaigning and climate-related action did not remain bound within the project and its 5-year timeframe.

# Take action and help the **climate crisis!**

However, the promotion of action and engagement on the scale that YSBR achieved (i.e. across 17 communities throughout Cornwall) remains a challenge without the funding that was in place to co-ordinate and maintain this collaborative network of groups and individuals. The role of the specific individuals driving action is often overlooked in such evaluations. However, the presence of a core team of individuals that have good rapport with each other and the individuals that they engage has been recognised as a key feature for success in community-facing projects and initiatives (this includes projects and initiatives in relation to education, the environment and/or health) (Deslandes, 2006; Levine et al. 2015; Esmene et al. 2020). In YSBR's case, the key individuals included the Project Manager, the Youth Engagement Officer, the Community Engagement Officer, the Beach Ranger Academy Leader, the Beach Ranger Trainers and the project's apprentices.



## 3.4. Impact on the marine environment

### Key Points

A 2018 report showed 61.3 tonnes of waste had been removed from Cornwall's beaches as a result of YSBR-related activities.

The figure of waste removed from Cornwall's beaches rose to 80 tonnes in 2020.

Recycled waste from YSBR beach cleans varied between 33.3% and 80%.

YSBR mobilised more individuals to undertake key marine conservation activities, e.g. species monitoring and biological data collection.

YSBR's Beach Academy contributed directly to emergency responses (i.e. in relation beach strandings). This increased capacity in Cornwall in this area.

The Cornwall Plastic Pollution Coalition (CPPC), formed by a network of marine groups and individuals active in YSBR, were instrumental in organising events and monitoring their impacts.

Overall, 60 groups and individuals have been engaged by the coalition. These can be seen [here](#).



The main research and monitoring activity that captured YSBR's impact on the environment was the CPPC's 2018 impact report. Beach cleans, focussing on single-use plastics and large litter items were the main practical conservation activity in the marine and coastal environment supported by YSBR. The 2018 report highlighted that 61.3 tonnes of material was cleared from the beaches. An important factor influencing the success of these beach cleans has been the freedom that each community group has had in running the cleans. Some groups planned their events to take place more frequently with fewer volunteers involved with each beach clean. Others chose to run less frequent, larger events. This allowed groups to accommodate the needs of their volunteers. Importantly, recycling the collected waste was identified as a key priority and the volunteers were made aware of this shared target. The proportion of recycled waste varied from 33.3% to 80% across the beach cleans that were conducted.

At the YSBR Conference 2021, CPPC provided an update on the waste removed from Cornwall's beaches as a result of YSBR-led beach cleans. Overall, 80 tonnes of waste had been cleared from Cornwall's beaches in 2020. This is approximately a 30.5% increase on the last reported figure (61.3 tonnes). Once more, YSBR's key strength in linking motivated groups and individuals to sustain action is evident here. Discussions at the YSBR Conference 2021, showcased the open communication and teamwork that went into organising and facilitating the events that enabled the network to organise such effective beach cleans each year. These discussions focussed on the effective use of social media to engage existing and new members, and to promote public events (such as beach cleans) even at last minute. This dimension of the project is expanded further in the report's section on Covid-19 (Section 4.).

**In 2020 80 tonnes of waste was removed from Cornwall's beaches!**

Additionally, the understanding gained through YSBR (particularly through the mobilisation of community group volunteers) can be used to inform future policies around the marine environment. Species monitoring and biological data collection, including recording invasive species, is a key area where valuable data has been generated by various groups and organisations. This data can be used to inform policies around habitat loss / protection, wildlife protection and the removal of invasive species.

Further, the young adults (16-25 years of age) and the skills they developed through the Beach Rangers Academy created additional resources for responses to unpredictable marine environment issues, such as beach strandings. Individuals taking part in the Beach Rangers Programme were able to learn from highly qualified marine conservationists and put these skills to use when an emergency call was made to CWT. Their involvement in response work provided an added base of individuals that could act on a reported case at any given time.

Overall, in this section we have demonstrated the importance of communication and engagement in fostering direct action. The measurable impacts on the marine environment presented in this section were driven by the passionate outreach practised by the YSBR team

and, whenever relevant, by CPPC. The positive messaging and passion shown in their outreach work had an inspirational quality too. This inspirational quality is captured in the following evaluation interview quote:

***"I think the main influences of each project is education. It is kind of sparking that love, passion and connection in people across Cornwall and elsewhere to appreciate what's around them, because I think once you appreciate what is around you, you naturally want to protect it. So although I know the Beach Rangers Project does a lot of important hands-on practical work, I think the main achievement in my eyes is probably the amount of people that have been ignited to want to protect the beaches around them."***

YSBR was able to lead action at smaller scales too. The Cornwall-wide effort to impact the marine environment positively led to individuals and groups wanting to make changes ***"on their own doorstep"***, as one community group member said at the 2021 YSBR Conference. The impact the smaller-scale actions had for individuals in specific communities is also captured in the interview quote below:

***"So, there was a project called the Yellow Fish Project...and it was in my community. And we took primary school children in year three down to the beach, and litter pickers and then on the way back, every drain in our community that leads directly to the sea was spray painted with a yellow fish...So it was quite impactful for me to see those kids engaged with the environment and learn more about the beach and plastic pollution and how the drains in the town are all going directly to the sea so that they shouldn't be putting stuff down the drain that is potentially going straight into the sea."***

It is extremely difficult to demonstrate every incremental impact that was achieved in relation to each community and/or individual in an evaluation associated with a project like YSBR. However, this section has demonstrated YSBR's key drive to inspire and support positive action wherever action led to measurable impacts on the marine environment. The project's ethos to drive positive change through the relationships it was able to build acted as a strength in relation to its response to the Covid-19 pandemic too. Covid-19 acted as a significant disruption to the project. However, the project was able to adapt by maintaining a close-knit relationship with its members. YSBR's response to Covid-19 is covered in the next section.

## 4. Covid-19 Impact

### Key Points

Adaptations were made to run activities online and the close-knit YSBR team showed care for the community through their online outreach, e.g., Mental Health Awareness Month and through short social media clips from the project team.

Skills were shared with community groups to help individuals and other organisations transfer activities online wherever possible, e.g. 'How to Run Events Online' training.

Community group members and YSBR scheme participants cited the lack of in-person activity and interaction during the pandemic as a negative during their interviews.

YSBR's drive to continue activities did create volunteering and employment opportunities for some individuals.

Innovative ways to engage individuals and communities were shared across the project's members, e.g. ISpy July.

130 participants at the 2021 Your Shore Conference (run online) demonstrates that engagement was maintained during the pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted YSBR's activities in its final year. The project team were able to adapt some of their activities to continue engaging the network of individuals and community groups involved in YSBR. Resource restraints and the impact of the pandemic on the evaluation team meant that the evaluation strategy could not be adapted to gain feedback directly in relation to YSBR's adapted activities. However, the evaluation did document the key influences that the pandemic had on YSBR through its interviews and the dialogues the evaluation team were able to hold with the project's delivery team. This included the discussions that took place during the project's online conference in February 2021. The event itself was evidence that the project had maintained its engagement with its members throughout the pandemic; 130 individuals attended the online event.

## **We reached 130 attendees at our online event!**

The restructuring of the project's annual conference to run as a virtual event demonstrates YSBR's main response to the pandemic. Activities that could be conducted via virtual means were adapted to do so quite soon into the first national lockdown associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. The first national lockdown was announced in March 2020 and in April 2020 YSBR organised Shark Month. Shark Month consisted of a series of talks by experts, educational webinars and film showings regarding sharks. Further, an online festival, Sea You at the Sea, was organised for November 2020. These online events were a deliberate effort to capture the attention of school-aged children and young adults at a time of societal difficulty, with many school-aged children and young adults experiencing severe disruptions to their home lives, education and social activities (Van Lancker and Parolin, 2020). Although the impacts of YSBR's efforts to continue engaging school-aged children and young adults could not be directly observed by this evaluation, the benefits of creating a *'community of care'* has been documented by previous studies (Ellerbrock and Kiefer, 2010; Ellerbrock and Kiefer, 2013; Ruth and O'Connor, 2020). This ethos of outreach of care carried on through the pandemic. Events were hosted on YSBR's Facebook page during Mental Health Awareness Week in May 2020 and the project's Youth Engagement Officer and Community Engagement Officer posted a variety of short videos to reach out to YSBR's members.

## **Having someone to speak to during difficult times.**

Moreover, innovative ideas were offered and applied by community groups to keep the project's members engaged during the pandemic. An example of this is ISpy July, which ran in July 2020. A community group engaged children and young adults through an online game that involved searching for marine wildlife in a photographs and videos. This idea was

adopted by the YSBR team and the game was facilitated through YSBR's Facebook page. Yet, the individualised impacts of the pandemic should not be underestimated. The following two quotes from the project's evaluation interviews highlight the negative impact the restrictions around meeting and taking part in activities in-person had on YSBR participants:

***"It's been quite devastating. We've not been able to get involved this year. [name] and his sister were really hoping to be able to get involved this year, but obviously with COVID we haven't been able to."***

***"Now is challenging, because I want to continue with doing things but with the fact that we can't go out like we used to is frustrating."***

Importantly, YSBR stayed committed to their training and educational activities. The project's members contributed to a range of educational content, which was hosted on the project's social media pages. This included webinars from employability advisers, the Marine Strandings Network and marine science experts. Further, the sharing of learning and skills to help project members run online activities and maximise their outreach through social media was evident in YSBR's work during the pandemic. For example, the project hosted a 'Basics of Social Media' training session on their Facebook page in November 2020.

The individuals that organised and contributed online content for these materials were again part of the close-knit community YSBR had created through its activities. The project's proactivity in keeping events running created capacity for volunteering and employment opportunities itself. The following quote from an interview highlights the importance of creating such opportunities,

***"Otherwise, I mean, I would just have to, I think, be in an office to get work experience like that and during the pandemic, there was literally nothing anywhere I was so lucky to get this."***

Finally, the project's ability to inspire individuals continued through the pandemic. An example of this was the case of a primary school child that committed to conducting beach cleans while schools were closed due to the pandemic and during their school holidays. The documentation of why and how individuals are inspired to take such actions, particularly in societally difficult times (i.e. the pandemic) is difficult within the methodological possibilities of this evaluation. However, previous studies on youth engagement have shown the benefits of a close-knit team driving action and ensuring those that are engaged with a project are met with care and given the opportunity to shape activities to align with their contexts and needs (Rhodes, 2004; Fredericks, 2011; de Vreede et al. 2013). The flexibility offered to YSBR members and the passionate engagement showcased in this report were key features of the project and are expanded further in the evaluation's conclusions. The conclusions section follows this paragraph.

Inspiring individuals and helping to **build new skills.**



# 5. Conclusions

In this section, the insights outlined in this report will be presented in relation to YSBR's overarching aims. After covering the evaluation's findings in relation to the project's aims in the next sub-section, a further sub-section will outline considerations for the future. These considerations focus on widening participation and inclusivity.

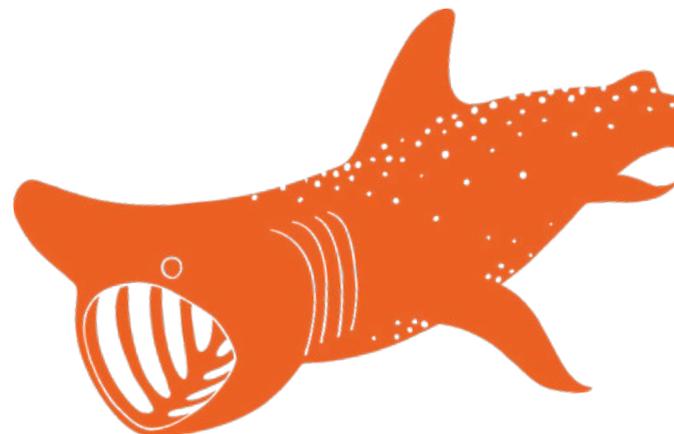
## 5.1. YSBR aims and evaluation conclusions

This sub-section presents this evaluation reports findings in relation to YSBR's aims. These are:

1. **Enable young people to gain new skills relevant to finding jobs, training and volunteering opportunities and/or starting entrepreneurial projects that contribute to the green economy.**
2. **Engage young people with their environment; inspiring and enabling action.**
3. **Inspire communities about the environment; stimulating action and community cohesion.**
4. **Achieve positive impacts on the marine environment**

The first of the two aims presented above are closely interlinked. Overall, YSBR was able to engage a high number of school-aged children and young adults, i.e. the project engaged 5,000 participants aged under 11 years; 16,000 participants aged between 11 and 24 years and 13,500 participants aged above 24 years. Sessions were facilitated for young adults around a wide range of educational topics and life skills, including and not limited to:

- **Beach / swimming safety**
- **Beach safety flag signals**
- **Beach cleaning**
- **Recycling / reducing plastic use**
- **Balanced diets (including eating less meat)**
- **Managing anger**
- **Managing stress**
- **Interview skills**



Importantly, YSBR did not confine their educational and capacity building skills to the duration of the project. As covered in Section 3.1, a series of resources for teachers and other educators to use are available for use free of charge.

The project's ethos to help children and young adults to shape their own experiences of the project acted as a key driver for meaningful engagement to take place for certain individuals. Although conducted in relation to a different subject matter (health), Spajic et al. 2019 outlines importance of facilitating meaningful connections in engaging younger adults. As such, the individuals that built a closer connection to the project got involved at a deeper level. For example, the individuals that went 'above and beyond' in the volunteering strand of the YSBR scheme and logged hours well beyond the required amount to gain an award (e.g. the participant that logged 1072 hours of volunteering when they only needed to carry out 80 hours for their Gold Award).

In direct reference to the project's first aim, the hours of volunteering amassed through the programme contributed to the green economy as time (as detailed by Table 1.). However, entrepreneurialism was demonstrated too. For example, the jewellery business that was formed by a group of young adults engaged by YSBR. The business made jewellery from the plastic recovered from local beach cleans and generated £600.00 profit in its first two months.

**£600.00 profit in the jewellery business, in just two months!**

The project's flexibility in allowing project members to shape project experiences was translated to YSBR's work with community groups. Overall, 17 community groups (five of which were formed as a result of the relationships created through YSBR) were engaged. The community groups involved were able to cultivate direct action through the communication and events that YSBR facilitated. Perhaps, the project's success in bringing people together is best demonstrated by a community group member saying, "we exist", when asked what the main benefits of YSBR were to their group. Further, YSBR's ability to bring individuals together and support their communication was a major component of the project's success in relation to positive impacts on the marine environment. The formation of Cornwall Plastic Pollution Coalition through the project's network acted as a key moment for local action. Through better communication (mainly via social media), beach cleans grew in popularity. The 80 tonnes of waste cleared from Cornwall's beaches in 2020 is testament to this. Additionally, community groups were encouraged to innovate and learning from these innovations were shared across the entire network wherever possible. For example, CWT itself adopted the silent disco beach cleans and helped widen the ISpy game (online) designed by a community group to engage children during the pandemic.

**Bringing people together and making their voice heard!**

The role of the core YSBR project team (the Project Manager, the Youth Engagement Officer, the Community Engagement Officer, the Beach Ranger Academy Leader, the Beach Ranger Trainers and the project's apprentices) in building positivity and showing care for the individuals and groups was cited as a key driver behind positive action at all levels of the project. This included the project's school and college engagements, YSBR programme participants and community groups engagements. The influence of the core team can be pitched as the key strength of YSBR and a point of consideration for future projects. Essentially, the maintenance of a close-knit team that communicate effectively and meaningfully (at an individual and community level) with its target audiences can foster positive action.

The implications of the learning presented above on widening participation and inclusivity in future projects is expanded on in the next sub-section.

**Continuing to communicate effectively and meaningfully.**

## **5.2. Considerations for the future**

Inclusivity is a common area for development for projects that aim to engage communities. YSBR were able to achieve inclusion where positive relationships were built, and the team members understood the contexts they were engaging. For example, the project's educational activities were able to extend to educational contexts including children with learning difficulties and autism. This was predominantly facilitated as individuals with an understanding of those contexts and how to involve the target audience in a participatory manner were engaged first. Learning difficulties can occur for a wide-range of reasons (e.g. cognitive and behavioural). Therefore, an understanding of what the exact individualised needs of the groups engaged are and adapting activities based on that is extremely important (Goodley, 1996; Boxall, 2002). Therefore, our recommendation is that traditionally underrepresented groups (often referred to as 'hard-to-reach') can be engaged in such projects in the future using a three-tier approach:

- 1. Engage groups / individuals that understand the contexts of a 'hard-to-reach' group.**
- 2. Build relationships with individuals within a particular group**
- 3. Adapt activities to involve the individuals in a particular group in a participatory manner.**

Interestingly, suggestions for future improvements to the YSBR project were difficult to unearth in the evaluation interviews. The predominant feedback in these interviews was overwhelmingly positive about YSBR's delivery. However, minor thematic areas to build on were put forward by some interviewees upon deeper reflection. Such suggestions centred on what providers might want to consider as a means of achieving broader participation amongst children and young adults with similar projects in the future.

The suggestions put forward by the interviewees echoed the three-tier approach to improving inclusivity that is outlined above. One participant articulated their thoughts on widening participation by saying,

***"...you want to try and engage the disengaged and a way that you're going to do that is by speaking to them on their level, like trying to engage them in stuff that they're already engaged in. Instead of like, having your typical like rock pooling and snorkelling events, you've got to like, reach out and try different things."***

Another suggestion was to include more young people in the YSBR network groups at an earlier stage. This increased involvement would illustrate to future youth participants that the face of the organisation represents them. It was felt that younger people are more likely to volunteer where they feel that other young people are already volunteering.

Moreover, it was suggested that future iterations of YSBR might benefit from consulting young people about what types of courses they are specifically interested in. This preliminary scoping of interest would ensure that the courses on offer by a future iteration of the project are bespoke to the interests of the target constituents. It is acknowledged that improving voluntary take-up from currently non-participating members of the youth community in Cornwall is a perennial problem for multiple engagement initiatives that target those communities.

Overall, project participants acknowledged that YSBR has performed extremely well in meeting participant needs for inclusion within the communities they engaged. Although, there is always a calculation to be made when developing a project such as YSBR between ensuring a broader engagement from across more diverse participant groups and a more bespoke range of niche challenges aimed at a specific demographic. It would be a significant loss to the project if alterations jeopardise some of the exceptional and subtle work that has been achieved through CWT's current approach to delivering the project, which appears almost unanimously to have allowed participants to develop or deepen a personal relationship with the marine environment. The project can point towards manifold examples of the ways in which it has achieved this in both micro and macro ways. For example, one participant stated,

***"I take delight in it now instead of being puzzled by it...because the group was formed because we've done the rock pooling, I can now sit by rock pool and wait for the prawns to come out and I sat with my hand in the pool and had a prawn stroke me. I like to stand on the shadow side of some of the big rocks we have on***

*the beach down here after the tide just left them and listen to the limpets going home rasping the rocks as they go...because I have a little bit more knowledge it has changed my whole experience of walking on the beach."*

While, another participant declared,

*"I'd never think that I would be the kind of person that could run an event, I loved helping at them, but I didn't feel like I could run one. Whereas now that just seems to be the thing that I always end up doing because I've had that experience, and I feel so comfortable doing it. So, things like public speaking and standing in front of a group of people. Stuff like that was really challenging, but it's given me so much more confidence."*

The community building benefits that are realised through achieving simultaneous engagement from a diverse demographic range of participants is an ongoing and lasting outcome from the YSBR project, as evidenced by this quote from a YSBR organiser,

*"We did a Beach Ranger project on the beach where the youngsters set up a store and they would talk to the public and it was very good for their confidence. Those students are still part of the group and that was four years ago. So they're our family, we keep an eye on everybody, there's a couple that haven't been great, we'll check in on them. Everyone kind of sees each other and I see like the older people on Facebook, who are like 50-60 years old, and all the students will wish them Happy Birthday when it's their birthday and vice versa. So, it really turned into this lovely group."*

The quote above acts as an appropriate closing statement for this evaluation. The community building aspect of YSBR and the project's flexibility in understanding and responding to individualised needs on a regular basis was YSBR's key driver for success.



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**Engage.**

**Inspire.**

**Protect.**

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