



**OutdoorLads**

OutdoorLads Ltd.

Company Limited by Guarantee

Trustees' Annual Report

Registration Number: 06589498

Charity Registration Number: 1133121

# Introduction from the Chairman



The coronavirus global pandemic of 2020 and 2021 has created unprecedented challenges to us as individuals; to our employment, our communities, our country and the world we live in. OutdoorLads was not exempt from the impact COVID-19 had on the UK, and for the first time since the charity's conception in 2007, in March 2021 our event program was put on hold. At the time of writing this report, the UK is on the cusp of restrictions being lifted and OutdoorLads can start to look to the future.

The AGM and the annual report is our chance to reflect on how OutdoorLads has performed over the last 12 months; what have we achieved, what the challenges facing the charity are and what the opportunities for us looking to the future are. The annual report this year will focus on three key areas. Our events, our volunteers, our members. These three elements are critical to OutdoorLads. A single element cannot exist without the other two. In each section of the report, we will outline how we have done in that area over the last 12 months and what

we hope to achieve in the next 12 months.

I will begin the 2021 annual report with my reflections of the key challenge of the last year, the global pandemic.

The foundations of OutdoorLads are built on community and togetherness. The experiences, friendship, connectivity and enjoyment of OutdoorLads comes from bringing people together to have a great time. It is why after 15 years we are still here and we are still needed. I reflect on the cruel irony of the pandemic, that whilst lockdown and isolation were aimed, quite rightly, at keeping us safe from the virus, a by-product has been over a year of isolation and not being able to connect with our friends and loved ones. Another by-product of the virus for me is the absolute clarity that OutdoorLads is still needed today. The desire and readiness of our leaders to run over 560 #StayInMore events; start putting on Micro-events, then full day walks, climbs, camping and hostels is testimony to our volunteers and their commitment to the organisation; the demand for our events from our members since the restrictions have lifted has been enormous.

I will need to give a special mention to the staff team of OutdoorLads who throughout the pandemic have kept the charity going behind the scenes. Our team have moved both on and off the furlough scheme since March 2020 and have endured a very challenge period. Their hard work and continued Professionalism at a time of adversity is commendable and I give my thank to them for helping OutdoorLads come out the other side of the pandemic in one piece.

# Introduction from the Chairman

Since March 2020 and into 2021, the Trustees have managed the impact on OutdoorLads closely. Particular attention was put on our finances, as our major income generation sources could not run. A combination of tight financial management, identifying cost reduction strategies, and successfully managing our external suppliers were key contributors to mitigating the losses caused by the pandemic. However, what kept OutdoorLads going was our members. Though some OutdoorLads members did not renew their membership, the vast majority stayed with us. This membership income kept us going. For that, I am eternally grateful to everyone who renewed their membership. OutdoorLads is nothing without our members and the 12 months has been a case in point to that.

The global pandemic, however, has not been the only thing keeping us busy in the last 12 months. In the Summer and Autumn of 2020, OutdoorLads changed insurance providers. This change presented the organisation a number of logistical challenges from updating risk assessments, reconsidering the leader application system and ensuring we have the right level of expertise in the organisation. An extraordinary effort from a small group of individuals ensured we were ready for the implementation when our events schedule recommended in the Spring of 2021.

At the beginning of 2021, the attention of the Trustees turned to looking at life after lockdown. The Trustees

alongside our regional organisers identified three key aims of the organisation: Re-establish the event program, re-engagement with our members, run income generating BIG Events. These three themes have underpinned all of our activity to date in 2021 and remain our priorities for the remainder of this year.

Both 2020 and 2021 for many of us will be remembered as some of the most challenging times we've experienced. I think it has also shown the best of what OutdoorLads members, leaders and volunteers can do in the most challenging circumstances. On behalf of the Trustee Board of OutdoorLads I would like to give my thanks for the continued dedication of our members, volunteers, staff and supporters who kept OutdoorLads going through 2020 and 2021. Your support and passion for the charity continues to amaze me and gives us the best possible opportunity to continue our successes beyond this pandemic and into the future.



Best,

Matt Tennant  
Chairman

# Objectives & Activities

## The Charities objectives are:

To promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of the UK, in particular but not exclusively, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transgender communities, without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race, political, religious or other opinions, by associating together the residents of the area of benefit, the local and the public authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.

To promote equality and diversity and to eliminate discrimination in relation to gay, bisexual, transsexual, and transgender persons by advancing education and raising awareness of issues affecting said persons.

## The Mission of OutdoorLads

The get more Gay, Bi and Trans men into the Outdoors



# Our Events

## Activities to end March 2021

The Coronavirus pandemic has an unprecedented impact on OutdoorLads and our ability to run the charities events. In March 2020, the Trustees took the difficult decision to cancel and postpone all OutdoorLads events. The constantly changing landscape of restrictions has meant that OutdoorLads had to change our events frequently, and often at very short notice.

### March 2020

Since March 2020 OutdoorLads has run 561 online "Stay in More" events, including quizzes etc.

From June 2020 OutdoorLads was able to run Micro-events followed by increased day walks attendance.

OutdoorLads was not able to run BIG Spring Camp, Summer Camp, Halloween or the Christmas events program.

From August 2020 OutdoorLads was able to run a small number of camping events for a short period.

From December 2020 to March 2021 our entire event program was again postponed.

In April 2021, OutdoorLads restarted our Micro-events programme.

### April 2021

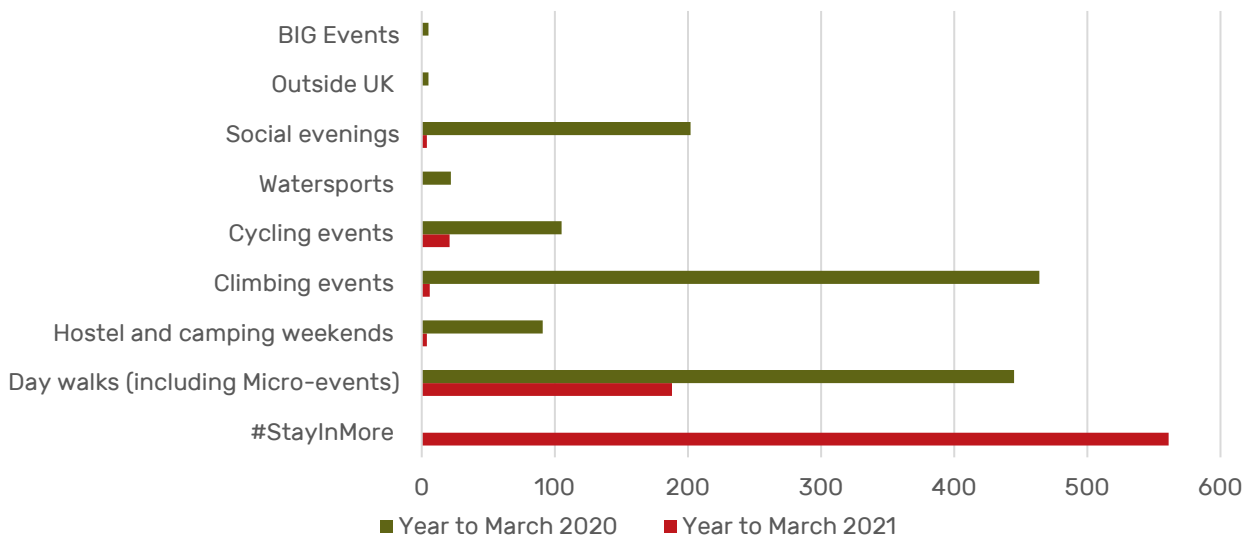
In May of 2021 OutdoorLads could commence camping events followed by hostels in the early summer of 2021.

# Our Events

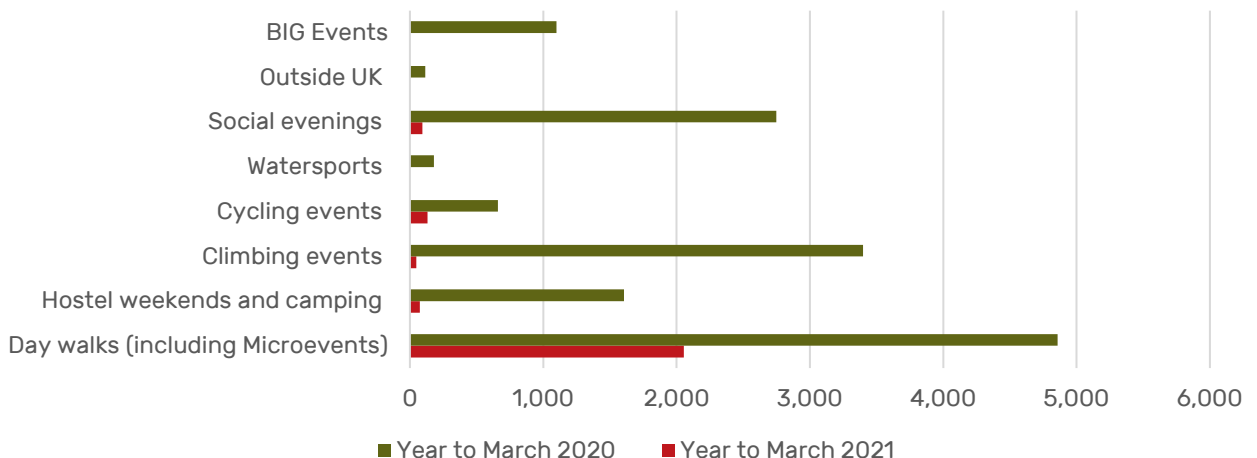
## Activities to end March 2021 (cont.)

We have been working closely with our event suppliers, YHA, National Trust and independents, to move bookings from 2020 into 2021 and 2022. We have been almost entirely successful in re-arranging events into 2021 and 2022 with no or little loss of deposit.

Activity types taking place in the past two financial years



Number of event places attended year ending March 2021



There were also 20,905 event places filed on #StayInMore events in year ending March 2021.



# Our Events

## Looking forward to '21/'22 events

### March 2021

Camping program re-started from May 2021.

Hostel program recommenced from 19th July 2021.

Our 15th Birthday Celebration event took place in August 2021 – our first BIG event since 2019!

BIG Summer Camp has also made a return in August 2021.

We have an active hostel programme for Autumn / Winter 2021 including our Christmas 2021 program.

### April 2022



# Our Volunteers

## Summary of key activity

Volunteers continue to make an invaluable contribution towards the life and work of OutdoorLads and support a wide range of activities behind the scenes, as well as face-to-face with members. Volunteers still run all OutdoorLads activities with the exception of some specialist sports where OutdoorLads does not have the required equipment/insurance/in-house trained expertise to run the event.

The number of volunteers in the year was 294, an increase of 10 from the figure reported last year, despite the effects of the pandemic. Recruiting and retaining leaders is crucial to the success of the group and numbers continue to see growth, with one Trustee specifically responsible for supporting our volunteers.



In September 2020 OutdoorLads changed our third-party liability insurance provider to Activities Industry Mutual. The change required OutdoorLads to review and implement several new policies including:

- Updated risk assessments for all event types
- New leader sign off process based on a 'log-book' of experience alongside assessment
- For certain events such as mountain walks, climbing and road cycling that have a NGB qualification, leader applications need to be reviewed by a peer who holds such a qualification.
- Launch of a new Volunteer Agreement that leaders needed have signed prior to leading an event.

We give our thanks to a number of individuals who helped develop these processes and procedures ahead of the relaunch of our events in March 2021. We extend our thanks to Nick Reid who serves as the technical advisor to the board on such matters.



# Our Volunteers

## New Leaders, Training, and Development

Despite OutdoorLads activity program being limited from March 2020 to March 2021, we received 56 new leader applications. 19 new leaders were approved (even during the pandemic).

In the lead up to restarting our events in the Spring of 2021, we ran four first aid courses to support leaders.

## Looking forward to '21 /'22 for our Leaders

- We need to continue to ensure the new insurance procedures are implemented and will conduct a 6-month review of progress in the Autumn of 2021.
- We will continue to adopt a leader- and member-centric approach to training requirements and up-skilling opportunities within the organization.
- We will continue building strategic training partners to ensure our leaders are provided with the best opportunities to up-skill and train.
- Subject to financial forecasting – agree an annual leader training spend and continue to seek further funding opportunities to support upskilling.
- Provide relevant and recommended First Aid training for leaders which is part of our new insurance requirements.
- We will invest in putting a number of cycling leaders through NGB qualifications so that OutdoorLads can run cycling through our own insurance arrangements. Currently cycling is being dealt with through our membership of Cycling UK.
- We are looking to run a number of leader development courses at our BIG Events, or through external training providers.



**I** developed a passion for walking which helped immensely during the lockdowns when I felt quite isolated and having done so much, I am now a Lowland and Hill Walk Leader. It's great to be able to give something back to this wonderful group.

Neil, Annual Member Survey '21

# Our Members

**Full Members: 1,212**  
**Concession Members: 66**  
**PAYG Members: 6,503**

**Joining OutdoorLads was one of the best things I ever did**  
 Annual Member Survey '21

- OutdoorLads membership remained strong through the pandemic. Though some members left, the majority renewed their membership. The ending of restrictions has seen a rise in new members joining alongside previous members returning to the group.
- Attendance at Prides due to the pandemic have been extremely limited.
- Each Spring, the Trustees considering whether a rise in membership fee with inflation should take place. In light of the suspension of the event program in 2020 and into 2021, the Trustee's took a decision not to raise the membership for 2020-21.

Percentage of Full Members who agree with the following statement:	July 2021	August 2020	August 2019
I feel more energised and positive after an OutdoorLads event.	78%	88%	78%
I have made new friends through OutdoorLads	70%	83%	80%
OutdoorLads provides positive role models for gay men.	75%	74%	74%
I am proud to be a member of OutdoorLads.	72%	79%	72%
I feel more part of a community.	66%	73%	72%
I feel less isolated.	63%	65%	66%
I have enjoyed 'giving something back' to the group.	48%	57%	53%
I feel excited to go on a OutdoorLads events after the restrictions have lifted	83%	N/A	N/A

## Looking forward to '21/'22 for our Members

- The Board will continue to develop strategies to recruit new members and retain members to the organisation.
- In 2022 we will look to have a renewed presence at various prides around the UK.
- We will engage with our wider membership in consultations on what the strategy and priorities of OutdoorLads should be coming out of the pandemic.
- We will continue to seek input from our members on how OutdoorLads can be representative of the Gay, Bi and Trans communities around the UK.

# Actions Update from 2020 AGM

## Insurance Implementation

In September 2020, OutdoorLads changed insurance providers. Our public liability insurance is now provided by Activities Industry Mutual (AIM). AIM are an insurance coöperate that offer specialist insurance to a range of activity providers. AIM's specialist knowledge of the outdoors sector makes them an excellent partner for OutdoorLads activity. The implementation of the new insurance arrangements required OutdoorLads to renew our risk assessments, develop a new process for leader sign-off and bring in some in-house expertise to help with leader approval. The Board of Trustees would like to extend our thanks to Nick Reid who took on the position of Technical Advisor to the Board.

## Price Review

Since the AGM in 2020, work has been taking place to build the foundations of a price review OutdoorLads for how OutdoorLads charges for membership and events. Dave Banks has been supporting the group by building a tool that allows the charity to calculate both an accurate profit and loss from the events we run, alongside factoring in staff and overheads costs. This tool will be of great assistance in helping to ensure that the charity is running events in a cost effective, but value for money basis for our members. The next stage of this project, taking into consideration other changes to our VAT position, to consider how events should be priced in the medium-long term.

## Equality and Diversity Group

An initial workshop was held and identified a number of actions to be undertaken. These included a Terms of Reference, training for the board to include unconscious bias and equalities, access to training for volunteers and a formalised group to work with the board and other sub-groups to address improvement to access, equality and inclusivity of our events. Whilst this work has had a number of delays related to resourcing, Covid-19 challenges and personal circumstances, a Terms of Reference has been drafted for approval by the Board and a number of training options identified. A new group will be formed following adoption of these to help advise the group on improvements to equality and diversity.

# Actions Update from 2020 AGM

## Operations Sub-Committee

The Operations Sub-Committee is a formal sub-committee of the Board of Trustees.

The Operations Sub-Group discusses policies and/or operational matters regarding the charity. During the period of March 2020-2021 the Sub-Group discussed the following business: Insurance Implementation, COVID-19 restrictions, forecast and budget, the reserves policy, annual membership price rise and leader credits.

## Communications and Marketing Sub-Committee

The Communications and Marketing sub-committee is a small team of expert volunteers that advise OutdoorLads on marketing strategies, PR, and GDPR. The group also provide expert technical advice to the office team. The group formed in June 2020, holding regular meetings with the three recurring objectives: membership retention, recruitment, and re-engagement of lapsed members. Moving on from the pandemic-related social restrictions, the group have now agreed to operate on an ad-hoc basis to provide expert support when needed, with quarterly meetings to review activities completed to date, set new strategic objectives, and offer advice and guidance to the office team.

## Equality and Diversity Group

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# Financial Review 2020 - 2021

## Overview

The financial year to the end of March 2021 may well have been OutdoorLads' most challenging. We started the financial year with free reserves at only 19% of our stated long-term target. Furthermore, income from events dramatically decreased. However, due to a number of positive external factors and actions taken by the Board and our staff, our financial position actually improved during the financial year.

The Board, supported by our staff, took action to decrease discretionary spending such as IT, training and rent. The charity also made the most of the UK Government's furlough scheme. Furloughed will continue to benefit OutdoorLads during the current financial year but it has obviously had an adverse financial impact on our staff.

The most important contribution to our financial health came from OutdoorLads' members. Although some members decided not to renew their annual membership, most stuck with us. Many members also decided to make charitable donations to OutdoorLads. The Board is incredibly grateful for this strong level of support from the members.

## Performance

Gross events income dropped 83% to £29,250

Income from membership fees increased by 9% to £64,206 helped by a different VAT treatment for part of the financial year.

Furlough grants totalled £24,279.

Net profit before depreciation and amortisation was £10,181 (versus a loss of £15,211 for FYE 2/20).

After depreciation and amortisation, a small loss of £7,018 was recorded (compared with a loss of £32,120 for FYE 3/20).



# Financial Review 2020 - 2021

## VAT

In May 2020, OutdoorLads made a VAT claim of **£106,645.63** related to the four years prior on the basis that the charity is primarily a sports club. However, in June 2020, our claim was rejected due to HMRC taking the view that OutdoorLads is a social club.

We immediately appealed but it took until May 2021 before we received a reply. Due to the nearly 1-year delay, HMRC decided to approve the requested refund but without fully considering the substance of our claim. A follow-up letter was received from HMRC in June 2021 which **confirmed** the refund but it also made clear that OutdoorLads should charge VAT in respect of events which focus more on the social side than on sports activities.

The Board and our staff are working through the implications of this feedback and are considering how best to minimise our VAT exposure. The Board will obviously make sure that the VAT refund, and any future VAT benefits, will be used to further OutdoorLads' aims for the **benefit the members**.

## Reserves Policy

OutdoorLads started the financial year with free reserves of only £13,244 compared with our target of £70,000. The position, however, improved and by the end of March 2021, our free reserve had increased to £22,209.

Following the receipt of the VAT refund, **OutdoorLads' free reserves are, as of September 2021, fully funded.**

## Looking Forward

Although the VAT refund has improved OutdoorLads' financial position, the charity continues to be adversely impacted by the pandemic. Only a very limited events programme was possible during the first quarter of FYE 3/22 and, as a result, Big Spring Camp (which, from a financial perspective, is our most important event), could not take place. For the full financial year, the number of paid-for events spaces will be materially lower compared with a typical year.

# Structure, Governance & Management

The trustees, who are also the directors of the charitable company, present their annual report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The Charity is commonly known as OutdoorLads.

The Board of Trustees is drawn from the membership and reports to the Annual General Meeting of OutdoorLads. In line with our Articles of Association, all Trustees are unpaid volunteers.

The Board has overall responsibility for the work of OutdoorLads, in particular, setting strategy, direction, and targets. The Board of Trustees delegates day-to-day management of the organisation to three staff. Events are managed by appointed volunteer leaders. Leaders are managed on a regional basis by Regional Coordinators, appointed by the Board of Trustees.



## Governing Document

The Charity, which is also a company limited by guarantee, is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association as amended 21 September 2019.

## Appointment of Directors and Trustees

The Board of Trustees has ten members at 31 March 2021, of these, three are office bearers; Chair, Vice-Chair, and Treasurer. The Company Secretary is a member of staff. Trustee appointments are for a term of three years. Co-opted Board members are subject to ratification by the membership at the following AGM to the co-option.

If required, Trustees receive external training in accordance with guidelines set down by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

# Structure, Governance & Management

## Trustees



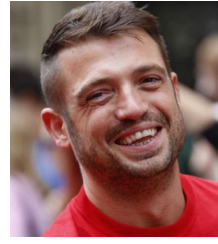
**Chairman**  
Matt Tennant



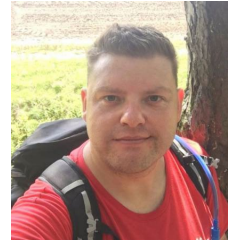
**Vice Chair**  
Danny  
McKeown-  
Henshall



**Treasurer**  
Niels Pederson  
(co-opted to  
Trustee Board  
8 April 2021)



Neil Sharp



Dan Barcroft



Danny  
Ballantyne



Fergus  
Brunning



Steven Allan



Simon  
Hawthorn



Gavin Bridge

Ted Youngman – Treasurer (resigned 4 May 2021)  
Jimmy Brash (Resigned 29 December 2020)

**Company Secretary** Liam Russell

**Independent Examiner** Sue Hutchinson FCCA

### Bankers

Charities Aid  
Foundation Bank  
(Account closed 27 April  
2021)  
25 Kings Hill Avenue  
Kings Hill  
West Malling  
ME19 4JQ

Aldermore Bank Plc  
1st Floor, Block B,  
Western House  
Lynch Wood  
Peterborough  
PE2 6FZ

Virgin Money  
48 – 50 Market Street  
Manchester  
M1 1PW

### Accountants

Beever and Struthers  
Chartered Accountants  
St George's House  
215-219 Chester Road  
Manchester  
M15 4JE

**Registered Office** Suite 440, Royal Exchange, Manchester, M2 7EP

# Structure, Governance & Management

## Risk Management

The Board have identified the major risks, both financial and other, facing the charity and have taken the appropriate action to mitigate those risks.

## Related Party Transactions

Details of related party transactions are set out in note 21 to the financial statements. The Trustees participate in the activities of OutdoorLads on the same terms and conditions as other members.

## Declarations of Conflict of Interest

The Board maintains its legal duty in managing conflicts of interest. These Conflicts are recorded in the organisational risk register and regularly reviewed. The Board maintains two 'active' conflicts of interest through Connected Individuals of Trustees: Steven Allan, and Dan Barcroft.

**Read the full annual report, including the  
draft Accounts 2020 – 2021**