



**Focus**  
ANNUAL REVIEW  
2017-18





## CEO's introduction

**We see potential in everyone who comes to Venture Trust. By seeing the person first, we have an opportunity to be alongside them, providing support, learning and development to help them make sense of who they are and what they want to achieve for the future.**

To achieve greater gains, we need to be bold - to tackle systemic issues in our society with a long term goal of fewer of our children and young people growing up in poverty, or experiencing disadvantage and inequality. For people already struggling with many and complex issues, we need to be compassionate, acknowledging that it takes time and they may have missed out on early opportunities - to feel respected, to be listened to and to feel that someone cared. All our work starts from a prerequisite of an individual wanting to change. We help people build the foundations to be able to take charge of their own life, acquiring the necessary resilience and skills to take responsibility, be ready to sustain employment and nurture positive relationships built on trust.

Strong relationships and partnerships are fundamental to how we work - it takes a shared endeavour and commitment to long term change and the benefits it brings to individuals, their families and our communities. We are hugely grateful to all our partners and supporters and look forward to working together proactively for people and for wider change. This year we will launch a new strategy for our future; setting our commitment to people to help them realise their potential for a healthy, happy and fulfilling life. Of course, it is actions we take that will help us achieve greater impact and we look forward to making our plans a reality.

I do hope you enjoy this summary of our work and are heartened by our focus for the future. For more brilliant stories of success, potential and change please visit our website. These stories give us hope.

Thank you for your support.

Amelia Morgan, CEO of Venture Trust



# Chair's remarks

As ever, the Board of Trustees value the commitment and dedication of staff in working with vulnerable people living in challenging situations and supporting them to make positive life changes. This work is undertaken with dedication and enthusiasm despite the challenging financial situation.

The impact of the work is illustrated in the very positive feedback we regularly receive from those who have been through our programme and evaluations of the effectiveness of the service provided. An endorsement of this is illustrated in the continued funding of our women's programme. We also acknowledge the considerable work undertaken by our central support staff at Venture Trust. This is as important to the future work of Venture Trust as that undertaken directly with service users.

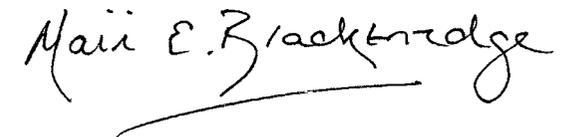
The work with Impetus continues apace - this has positively challenged Venture Trust's core thinking, ensuring that we consider how the strategy and structure of the charity is fit for the future. In that context, the CEO Amelia Morgan provides positive and enthusiastic leadership in driving the ambition of Venture Trust forward.

To all our partners and supporters I offer my thanks for the collaborative work we have undertaken to offer individuals the opportunity to realise their potential.

On a personal level this is my last year as Chair of the Board of Trustees as I am stepping down from the role of trustee. I have enjoyed my time with the charity and the many challenges that has brought it to this positive point in its development. I will miss my ongoing involvement but wish the charity all the best for the future. I believe it has an important role to play in working with those individuals who are amongst the most vulnerable and challenging in our communities but who, with the support of Venture Trust, can make positive changes for the future.

# Trustees Statement

These summarised financial statements incorporate all the operations of Venture Trust, and are intended to give the reader an assessment of the overall financial position but are not the statutory accounts. This information is taken from the audited financial accounts, upon which the auditors' opinion was unqualified. The full report and accounts were approved by the trustees on 4 September 2018 and have been submitted to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, the Registrar of Companies, and the Charity Commission. A copy is freely available from Venture Trust's website, on request from the Venture Trust office, or on the Charity Commission's website.



Signed on behalf of the Board



“I had hit rock bottom and couldn’t see a way out. When I completed the course I felt like a new person and knew that I wanted to work with vulnerable people suffering from homelessness or other social problems and that I could use my own experiences to help them.”

Living Wild participant

# In 2017-18 we said we would:

## **Be a leader in community justice provision**

Strategically, it remains our ambition that Venture Trust continues to demonstrate impact in effecting positive change for individuals involved in offending. We have actively engaged with national and targeted community planning partnership structures seeking to collaborate to shape services which are effective in tackling the underlying causes of offending. A three year evaluation of our Next Steps programme highlighted significant and sustained impact: over half of all women undertaking a Next Steps programme went on to reach a positive destination, and 8 out of 10 women showed increased employability skills and self-confidence. There was also evidence of a reduced likelihood of reoffending in two thirds of women who completed. This demonstrates our programmes make a significant contribution as part of a coherent range of local services for communities in reducing reoffending and the harm caused by offending.

## **Sustain and enhance provision for veterans**

Through our Positive Futures programme, we aim to reach veterans struggling with the transition to civilian life and pivotal to this is ensuring we continue to work collaboratively to with partner organisations and promoting the impact of the programme. For the veterans, we have invested in peer mentor training and facilitating one-to-one and peer group support which offers an opportunity for individuals to find new meaning through volunteering. Significant work has been undertaken to evaluate the programme's impact and we will publish the findings in autumn 2018. We were delighted to announce that we received significant LIBOR funding to extend the Positive Futures programme by a further three years which will mean we can support another 180 individuals struggling with the transition to civilian life.

## **Enhance our capability**

Over last year we undertook a fundamental review of our programme and 'what works' for people leading to refined and new content and enhancing our approach. We looked at who we work with, where we provide most benefit, and what we offer. This represents a significant transition for Venture Trust and is an exciting development to enhance long-term impact for people experiencing disadvantage and struggling with adversity in Scotland. A new role of Head of Programme Performance and Impact will develop our capability to drive and deliver greater impact in the work that we do. A new management information system and performance reporting tools will follow to help us keep on track and share findings.

# Memorable moments...

Presented our evaluation report for the Next Steps programme, and celebrated the achievements of vulnerable women who have gone on to turn their lives around.

We received LIBOR funding for our Positive Futures veterans programme, extending the provision for a further three years and allowing us to support hundreds more people in need.

Jim and Mark, two Positive Futures participants, completed their traineeships with Venture Trust and have gone on to live happier, more balanced lives.

We launched our new CashBack Change Cycle employability programme for disadvantaged young people.

We gained a new ambassador, former World Champion Mountain Biker, Lee Craigie.

## **Expand our employability, training and internship provision**

Helping people be ready for employment and to learn and embed crucial soft skills necessary for work is a feature of all our programme provision. A significant priority for 2017, and the future, was our CashBack Change Cycle employability programme which we launched in September 2017. Based around building and maintaining a bike, the programme offers young people a range of work-based experiences in workshop and outdoor settings, vocational skills and relevant qualifications, as well as deepening key transferable skills that are essential in all work environments. We also launched a Sustainable Growth Agreement with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) in May 2017, which presents an excellent opportunity to collaborate with an organisation committed to socio-economic and environmentally sustainable growth for Scotland. It also offers partnership opportunities with likeminded organisations to develop volunteering and traineeship opportunities to prepare individuals to enter and sustain employment.

## **Develop new business**

We have further diversified funding streams, and have strengthened partnerships with local authorities in order to influence future provision and policy. Venture Trust was appointed as a specialist partner within the Wise Group-led consortium, which won the West of Scotland Fair Start Scotland contract. We were selected as a provider of youth employability support within the Employability Fund administered by Skills Development Scotland. And Scotland's Life Changes Trust awarded us a three year grant to help us reach, support and involve more care experienced young people seeking to overcome life challenges and reach their undoubted potential.

## **Expand and fine tune the provision of our social enterprise**

In 2017-18, Venture Mòr consolidated and diversified its business activity. Hartfield House youth hostel continued to be busy, with increased numbers of people holidaying on the Applecross peninsula, capitalising on the draw of the North Coast 500, as well as marketing targeted to attract activity groups, weddings and retreats. Hartfield also developed local partnerships within the community, providing meeting space, living accommodation and fitness classes all vital to supporting a vibrant community. Capital work improvements will further benefit the hostel in the future. A Wilderness Therapy programme was launched for young people struggling with their mental health and wellbeing and the first programme ran in the Spring 2017. A further programme ran in Summer 2017 together with full marketing activity, and we plan to develop our provision to help young people more.

“I was a heroin addict for about ten years and in and out of the criminal justice system. My son went to stay with my mum because I wasn't looking after myself, and they thought I wasn't looking after him. My life has totally changed. I'm in a brilliant place with my son. I've got a fighting chance to get him home. I have my grandchildren on weekends. These are things that would never have happened before.”

Next Steps participant



“There have been dramatic and lasting life-changing outcomes. Clients are moving into employment, volunteering, education and training.”

Venture Trust referrer

# In 2018-19 we will:

## **Build on our strong position in community justice**

Operationally, we will look to maintain strong links and relationships with organisations under the evolving new community justice structure, as well as strengthening referral routes within local authority criminal justice teams to maximise the reach of our programmes. We will work to influence policy makers and decision makers through advocacy and communications activity driven by lived experience of our participants, impact reporting and evaluation findings specifically to target need/demand and tackling gaps in provision. We will use the findings and recommendations from the Next Steps evaluation report to inform the future development of the programme and to secure resources for future delivery.

## **Strengthen our provision for veterans**

We will look to raise the profile of our veteran programmes to ensure we reach more individuals struggling with the transition to civilian life. We will continue to focus on building links and relationships with organisations who work with veterans, and these will be key not only with regard to referring to Positive Futures but also in providing ongoing support as individuals reconnect with local services. We will endeavour to deliver a schedule of peer mentor training and facilitating one-to-one and peer group support mentoring. Positive Futures is a demonstration project, and as such there is a significant focus on reporting the 3 year findings to help inform a debate and action orientated to how we best support the small number of veterans that struggle with civilian life, which can happen at any stage post military service, and can have an enduring impact on esteem and wellbeing of individuals who have already given so much.

## **Broaden our employability, training and internship provision**

We will ensure that we are more effective in supporting disengaged young people to develop sustainable lifestyles and reach positive destinations in employment, education, training and volunteering. We will develop partnerships with businesses to enhance the quality of employability provision and development opportunities for participants coupled with offering high quality volunteering for employees. We will continue to develop our Reaching Higher and Venture Together pre-employability provision and traineeships and offer the SQA accredited Personal Development Award at Levels 3 and 4; for some participants this will be their first, ever qualification. We will continue to develop partnerships and strengthen our referral network for our CashBack Change Cycle employability programme. This will include building new links with job centres for direct referrals, and dedicated direct marketing.

“I have been so fortunate to have had this experience which has introduced me to many different skills. My confidence has grown in these months and I depart with self-belief and positive anticipation. Somebody else will now have the opportunity to experience this special traineeship. Thank You Venture Trust, I leave as a better person. I have real hope for the future and I am very, very grateful for the great time working alongside you all.”

Venture Trust participant  
and trainee

**Be more effective and resilient**

Venture Trust is seeking to improve its impact, effectiveness and align the necessary organisational expertise and capabilities required to do so. Working with Impetus-PEF, Venture Trust has begun implementing a number of changes including launching our refined programme of personal development support and learning to maximise success for individuals undertaking our programme; and, adjusting the geographical focus of our organisation to be highly visible in local communities to support people in need. The success and impact of Venture Trust's work relies heavily on the abilities, expertise and commitment of its staff. We launched and began implementation of a Developing People strategy and plan. Learning and development opportunities for staff included; workshops on equality and diversity, child protection training, Reality Therapy/Choice Theory - a cornerstone of our cognitive approach, full First Aid refresher training and mountain and paddling qualifications.

**Develop new business and income streams**

We will implement a voluntary fundraising strategy and enhance our capabilities to be proactive in targeting, securing and managing statutory contracts/commissioned based work. We will continue to grow our voluntary income streams including corporate, community, challenge events, and individual giving to complement existing grant and commission-based funding. Venture Trust will seek funding from additional sources with a view to delivering further Next Steps provision in-year. A priority is to secure funding to support young people, particularly those aged 16 plus who have been unemployed for 12 months or more and essentially missing from employment and all the benefits being in work offers. Venture Trust is an expertise partner within a multi-partner transnational research and development consortium created in response to a European funding opportunity entitled 'EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment'.

If confirmed, the project will pilot outdoor-centred youth employability programmes which unlock unemployed young people's talents and core life skills in Poland, Ireland and Spain. Venture Trust's role is focused on hosting study visits in Scotland and providing training to trainers in each country, as well as shadow delivery of outdoor programmes in each country. We will develop our partnership with the Wise Group-led consortium, as part of Fair Start Scotland, ensuring disadvantaged individuals have access to greater opportunities for training, work-based experience and employment.

**Expand our social enterprise**

We will grow Venture Mòr's contribution by developing therapeutic approaches to help children, young people and adults improve their mental health and wellbeing. We will invest in our burgeoning Wilderness Therapy programme, developing our marketing activity and online presence, and increasing our programmes to meet growing demand, which may also include an aftercare and support in schools. We aim to work towards establishing a base camp for wilderness therapy, and in time developing a therapeutic practice in Edinburgh.



Self-  
Worth

“It’s great to have a life back. To not feel hopeless or like you are nothing or useless. Venture Trust has helped me to become somebody again. It’s still a daily struggle at time but I now have the skills to deal with life. My family all want something to do with me. I’m re-building relationships that were broken. “The life that I have now is brilliant compared to what it was like. I thought I was a failure and that I was going to die in that horrible existence of addiction, prison, violence and fear.”

Living Wild participant

# What we will focus on

## Supporting people in need

We will endeavour to support hundreds of adults and young people struggling with disadvantage, specifically many and complex life circumstances, to make positive life changes and achieve readiness to sustain employment, education or training, through delivery of carefully designed community and wilderness-based personal development programmes.

## Prevention and rehabilitation

Strategically Venture Trust will prioritise prevention to minimise the harm for young people caused by offending and coming into contact with the justice system; our goal is to proactively focus on what works to divert young people away from offending.

## Getting into and staying in work

We aspire to support individuals who are struggling with a range of life circumstances, not currently engaging with mainstream support and out of work. We will maximise the opportunities to provide intensive support for individuals and to draw on learning from operating as a specialist provider to develop collaborations and co-delivery opportunities.

## Long-term wellbeing

An enduring benefit of Venture Trust's programmes is improved mental, emotional and physical wellbeing for individuals, and associated impact on acute public services. We will support individuals to tackle a range of complex issues such as social isolation, and the underlying causes of alcohol or drug misuse, so that they can move forward with a renewed sense of identity and purpose and be more able to sustain positive lifestyle changes.



# Fundraising and finance

## What we've raised

### What we've raised

Our income in 2017-18 was £2,931,058. The majority of our income comes from grants, with 49% (2017: 44%) from statutory bodies and 43% (2017: 50%) from the National Lottery, trusts and foundations.

For 2018-19 we anticipate Venture Mòr contributing more significantly, and we will continue working towards diversifying and stabilising our funding base by widening our network of supporters and voluntary donations.

## What we've spent it on

### What we've spent it on

We spent £1,489,534 on our outreach and community activities plus a further £1,145,281 on the delivery of personal development journeys in the wilderness. Continuing our commitment to reducing our costs, we reduced expenditure on travel and vehicle costs by reducing travel for staff meetings, leasing vehicles which are more energy efficient and cost less to maintain, and reviewing suppliers to maximise value for money.

## Our overall financial position

### Overall position

Net outgoing resources for the year amounted to £5,067 (2017: outgoing resources of £16,850). This includes a deficit on capital restricted funds of £32,296 (2017: deficit of £22,918), a surplus on revenue restricted funds of £16,172 and a surplus on unrestricted funds of £11,057 (2017: £6,068). Unrestricted reserves increased to £199,683.

**845** new referrals from 28 local authorities in Scotland.



**5,000**  
Meals cooked on expeditions



**2084**  
Nights under the stars and evening meals cooked on Trangias



**36**  
Number of wilderness journeys

**6144** lengths of Duns swimming pool swum by past Venture Trust participant Annabelle, to raise funds for Venture Trust – also the length of the River Tweed.



Number of people who passed the John Muir Award



**2018**  
**52**



**2018**  
**942**

Number of people we supported in the UK



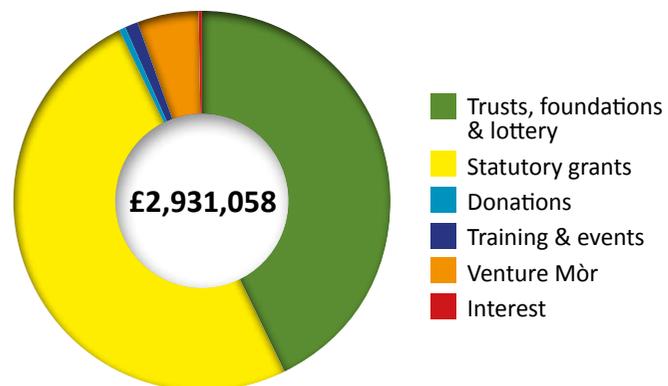
**2018**  
**207**

Number of people entering jobs, training or volunteering

**265** volunteer hours preparing applications to grant giving trusts and presenting Venture Trust's work to new audiences.



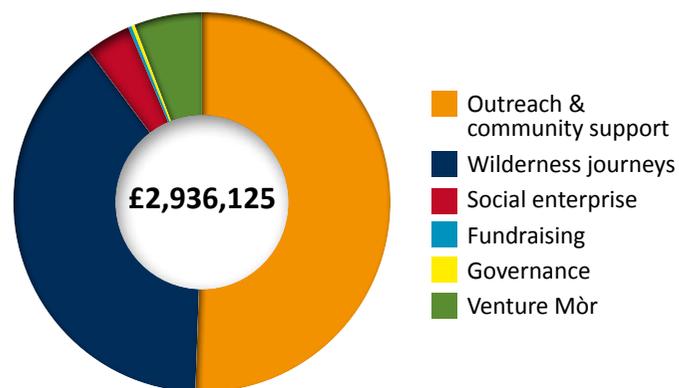
Income 2018



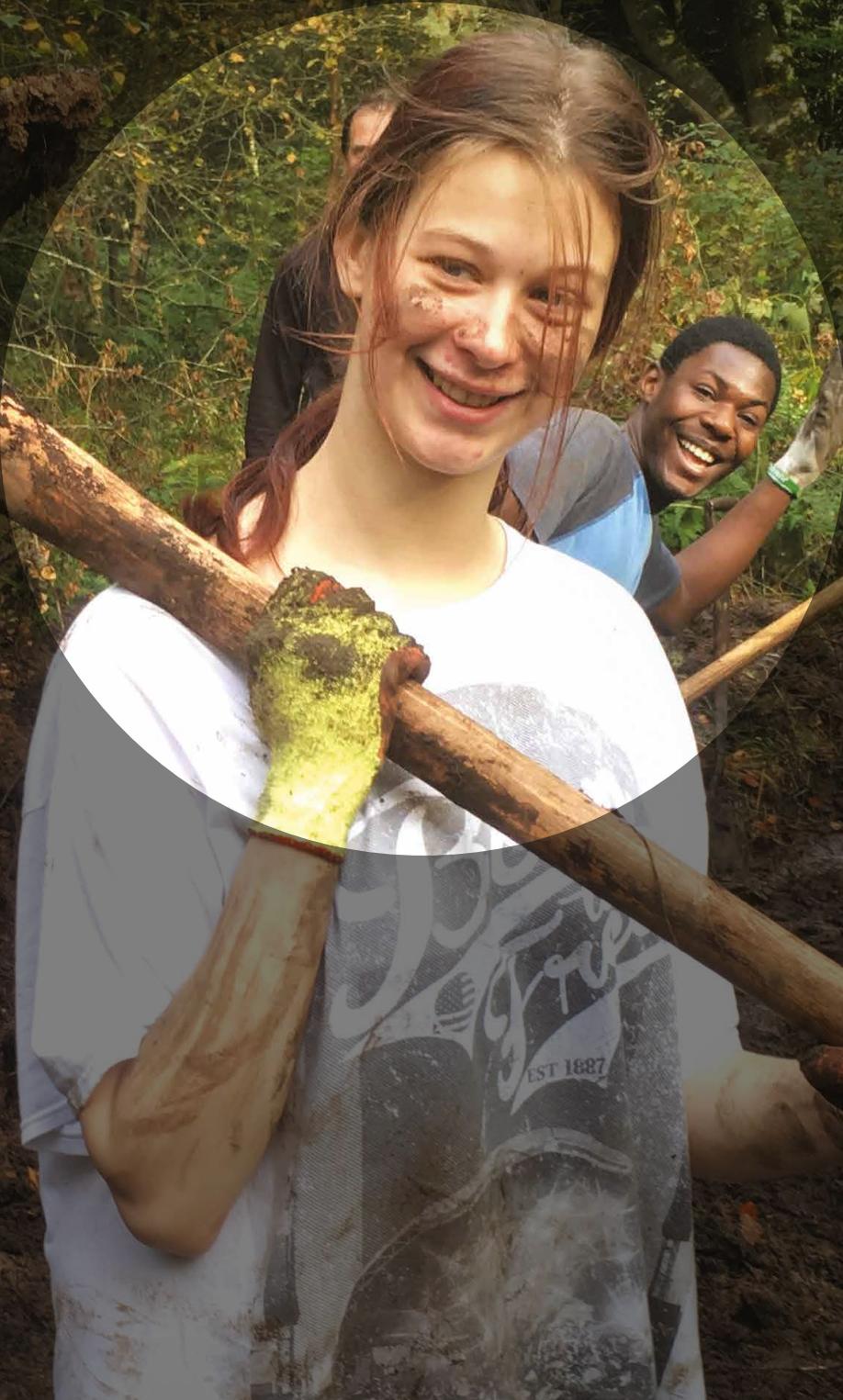
Financial figures 2018

Income	2018	2017
	£	£
Trufts, foundations & lottery	1,258,126	1,320,572
Statutory grants	1,464,418	1,160,161
Donations	17,073	30,042
Training & events, other income	31,085	16,691
Venture Mor Ltd trading income	160,334	133,788
Interest	22	143
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,931,058</b>	<b>2,661,397</b>

Expenditure 2018



Expenditure	2018	2017
Outreach & community support	1,489,534	1,352,374
Wilderness journeys	1,145,281	1,066,187
Social enterprise related costs	118,719	172,625
Fundraising	6,528	7,682
Governance	10,938	10,067
Venture Mor Ltd trading costs	165,125	69,312
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,936,125</b>	<b>2,678,247</b>



“Everything’s more positive, aye.  
I’m at college, I’ve got a job.  
My life’s changed for the better,  
I’m healthier, happier, thriving.  
I’ve got a career now,  
I can see a future.”

Next Steps participant

# Our supporters

Continued long-term support from Inspiring Scotland, the Scottish Government, the European Social Fund, the Big Lottery Fund and Impetus-PEF remains fundamental in enabling us to deliver effective programmes and achieve positive impact. Three-year funding from Cashback for Communities Scotland supports the Cashback Change Cycle employability programme.

Other vital support has come from trusts and foundations including Agnes Hunter Trust, Armed Forces Covenant Fund, Dr Guthrie's Association, The Cotton Trust, The Cross Trust, The Dulverton Trust, Forces in Mind Trust, The Gannochy Trust, Goldsmiths' Company Charity, Heathrow Community Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund, James Weir Foundation, Joseph Rank Trust, Life Changes Trust, The Mackintosh Foundation, Mrs E C Hendry Charitable Trust, The Nancie Massey Charitable Trust, Porticus UK, R J Larg Family Trust, Rank Foundation, Robert Barr Charitable Trust, The Robertson Trust, Scottish Children's Lottery, Souter Charitable Trust, Spirit of 2012 - Sporting Equality Fund, Tay Charitable Trust, Tillyloss Trust, Trades House of Glasgow, Warburtons Community Grants and WH Smith Group Charitable Trust.

Statutory and other partners including Edinburgh, Glasgow and East Lothian Councils, Skills Development Scotland (Employability Fund), also being part of the Shine Public Social Partnership.

We have been delighted that the following companies and community groups chose to support us this year, and special thanks go to Barclays Wealth, BVCA, Chester Caledonian Society, Cooperative, Craigie's Farm, Epping Forest Scottish Association, Exporta, Morningside Parish Church Monday Circle, Ratho Women's Institute, Rotary Club of Edinburgh, Rotary Club of Kirkcaldy, Sainsbury's, Soroptimist International of Kirkcaldy, South Leith Baptist Women's Group and West Middlesex Association of Caledonian Societies, for their donations, events, and in-kind support.

Sincere thanks to every single one of our individual supporters, including those who have walked, bungeed, swum and pedalled to raise money for us – you are vital to the work we do.

“Venture Trust helped me to learn that although alcohol took a lot from me it didn't mean my life was over and that I could recover and be a responsible and worthwhile person in society and for this I cannot thank them enough.”

Next Steps participant

# venturetrust

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The Venture Trust is a registered charity in Scotland (SC038932) and in England & Wales (285891)

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