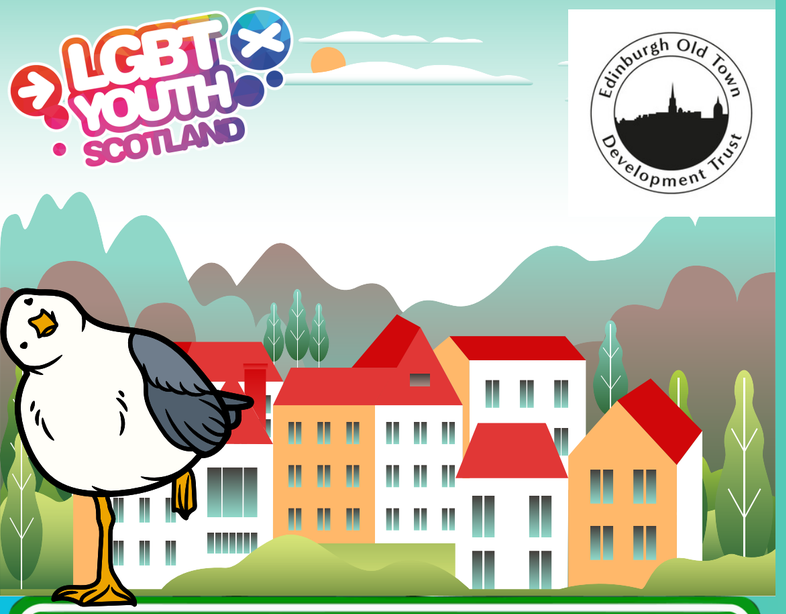

Urban Nature
Project
LGBT YOUTH SCOTLAND

Working with The Crannie



LGBT Youth Scotland's Edinburgh Team is based at the Crannie Community Hub, part of the Edinburgh Old Town Development Trust

LGBTYS partnered with the Crannie (EOTDT) as part of both their community gardening project, and their climate summer series project, co-arranging trips and workshops to places like the Salisbury Centre, West Port garden, and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, breaking barriers for LGBTQ+ young people to participate in community urban gardening and foraging, as well as other outdoors activities.



Wider impact on the Edinburgh local community

EOTDT provides opportunities for people living in Edinburgh Old Town to get involved in free and accessible art and wellbeing activities, as well as building partnerships and networks around the area. EOTDT runs the Crannie Community Hub as a welcoming space for residents to access activities and meet in the centre of the Old Town.

They have been leading community gardening projects since 2025, getting local people involved in existing and developing community gardens, volunteering with other residents, and arranging workshops and trips.

The Urban Nature project is designed to actively involve LGBTQ+ young people, increasing their access to and understanding of green spaces around the city centre. By creating welcoming opportunities to spend time in nature, the project supports their health and wellbeing while also fostering positive intergenerational relationships within the wider community.

Delivery

Together we are exploring Nature’s wonders throughout the different seasons and engaging with community projects to learn more about our urban natural environment. Our project includes:



Regular trips to local community gardens, crops and woodlands.



Seasonal foraging, crafting and cooking youth work sessions led by local experts

We are creating new opportunities for young LGBTQ+ people aged 16-25 to access urban outdoors spaces, connect with the wider community and learn gardening and foraging skills in their local area.

Outcomes:

1.1 LGBTQ+ YP can make more informed choices about their physical and mental health: young people are learning and enjoying the benefits of accessing natural spaces, gentle exercise inclusive of a range of abilities, and planting, growing and foraging their own seasonal herbs and vegetables.

2.2 LGBTQ+ YP make more friends and develop a larger network of support: young people are connecting with others who share similar interests.

6.1 LGBTQ+ YP feel more empowered to act on issues that matter to them: young people are looking after the environment and the green spaces around them, improving their mental and physical health and learning to grow their own food, reducing their reliance on supermarket food and accessing healthier, seasonal and locally grown produce.

7.1 LGBTQ+ YP have more opportunities to try new things: young people are learning new gardening and foraging skills, as well as crafting skills from local herbs and plants.



Botanical Gardens Spring Trip















We took 7 young people aged 16-25 to visit the Edinburgh Botanical Gardens. Almost none of them had ever been to the Gardens before.

We booked a tour in advance

Our tour guide did a fantastic job of taking us out on a walk around the gardens and we learnt so much from him, from different types of plants, to seeds, how they're categorised scientifically, the history of the Botanical Gardens, and so much more.



Our tour guide also showed us how to take professional looking pictures of plants and flowers, and gave us a black and a white thick piece of paper to put on the background, that helps reflect the light and block the background.

We learnt about different filters available on any smart phone, and the young people had a lot of fun taking pictures of flowers, bees, squirrels and various birds. We had originally scheduled the tour until 4pm, but were happy to stay on for longer as we were having a great time



It was a great day out, young people bonded and had a lot of fun together. We had a couple of people who have only recently joined groups, and one young person who'd taken a long break for College, and this was a great opportunity for them to (re)connect with their peers. Young people had a laugh, enjoyed the outdoors, and learnt so much from our wonderful guide.



West Port Community Gardens Summer Trip



We got an introduction to the West Port Community Gardens, with a brief chat about its history and purpose, which added a lot to our experience as it gave us some context. We learnt about the community organising to look after this garden in the heart of the city centre, and then we were given a tour around it and information about the different areas and the plants they grow.



It was very inspiring to meet members of the community organising and managing their own crops, and taking part this.

Then, people had a choice of activity: doing some gardening, or 'sense mapping' the gardens, where people went around the gardens creating a sensory map of their choice. Most young people chose gardening, and they had a few options, such as weeding, cutting the grass with the mower, watering, and shearing off some overgrown plants.

Everyone had a really good time, and young people enjoyed getting hands on with gardening, learning some new gardening skills with the help of the wonderful volunteers at West Port. One young person found a coin dated the year the Gardens were founded!





Salisbury Centre Autumn Trip



A spiritual and creative community hub in Edinburgh, offering a range of events and affordable therapies in a historic Georgian mansion.

The centre provides workshops, courses, lectures, and regular events covering a wide range of topics, including meditation, creative pursuits, and psychological well-being.

There was a range of activities to choose from, and some young people got involved in an insect/bug survey, recording and monitoring pollinator species and learning more about them. Others engaged with the composting work, learning about the soil and compost cycle and doing some physical work. It was a lovely evening and we all enjoyed trying some of the food that's grown there (so tasty!), spending time together and learning more about gardening and growing crops.









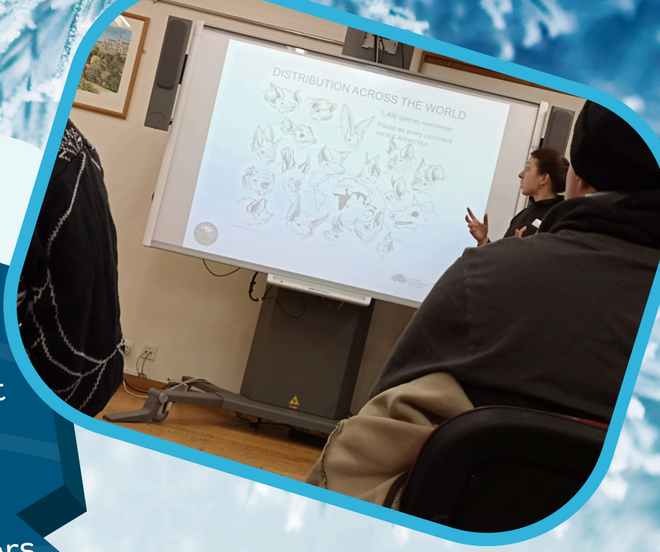

Winter Bat Walk
with
Historic Environment
Scotland

Jo(hanna) the Ranger for Holyrood Park gave us a talk on bats which was really interesting - we learned that we would be able to detent pipistrelle and Dauberon's bats, and possibly brown log-eared bats on our walk, but they were starting to roost. Their hibernation goes all the way through to March during which time the bats only elevate their temperature by 3 or 4 degrees to preserve energy.



We talked about threats to bats, including habitat loss, predation (cats) and climate change, and also that you must not disturb or move an injured bat - always call a ranger.

We were all excited to be taking along ultrasonic bat detectors, so we could maybe hear them - then walked as a group as the drizzle began and the dark really set in. There was lots of chatter as we moved around the loch trying to detect the sounds of bats.







Feedback

Young people said that they'd been having a tough time and had been anxious, and these opportunities were helpful to bring down their anxiety, feel productive, and do some gentle exercise.

Young people said they value opportunities to do some gardening. Most reported having no access to a garden or outdoors spaces. They felt more confident and relaxed, learnt new skills, and enjoyed spending time with other young people.

Young people had new experiences and learnt new skills, such as gardening, foraging, using devices to listen to bats and learning about animal behaviour and ecosystems.

EOTDT was delighted to be involved in the project, and hopes to take learning forward into 2026, planning further workshops and activities in greenspaces around the city centre!

Moving Forward

Marine conservation

We've loved the success of the Urban Nature Project and now want to expand our work to include Marine Conservation.

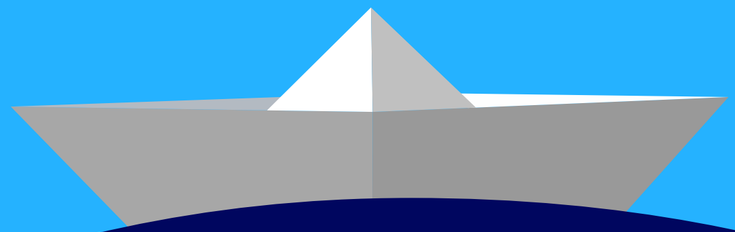
This new phase will create meaningful opportunities for young people to get actively involved in protecting our oceans and coastal environments. Through hands-on activities and learning experiences, participants will develop valuable skills and deepen their knowledge about marine life and ecosystems

We are seeking funding opportunities to be able to organise:

A Beach Clean

Young LGBTQ+ will have a direct positive impact on a local beach through a litter picking day, improving their mental health, reducing eco-anxiety, and connecting with local volunteering opportunities to tackle pollution.

A Boat Trip



Young LGBTQ+ people will learn more about strategies and opportunities to monitor and protect marine wildlife, including birds and sea mammals. They will have access to new experiences, like sailing and watching wildlife in its natural environment. They will learn new skills and open up educational and work/volunteering opportunities, as well as connections with their local community.



Thank you to all the young people, staff, volunteers and funders who made this project possible!

SUPPORTED BY EDINBVRGH THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

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LGBT YOUTH SCOTLAND

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