



IMPACT REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST JANUARY 2022

“The Wave Project provides therapeutic intervention in the least clinical way possible.”

*Dr Alex George,
UK Youth Mental Health Ambassador*



REPORT FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The UK was in the grip of the pandemic as we entered 2021, with a national lockdown impacting on families across the country. The impact on children's mental health was already starting to emerge, with spikes in reported symptoms of anxiety and depression among children from all ages and demographics.

The Wave Project saw the effect of this first hand with a big increase in referrals at the beginning of the year. It quickly became clear that we were at the front line of a national emergency, being one of the few children's services that was legally allowed to deliver during lockdowns. Our Wellbeing Catch-Up Sessions, delivered on the beach, benefited from an exemption in government lockdown regulations, and the Trustees recognised that we would have to do everything possible to reach as many children as we could. With support from the Board and in consultation with the staff team, I set new targets for reaching more children through our Surf Therapy, Beach School and Wellbeing Catch-up services in 2021. As ever, our amazing staff and volunteers rose to the challenge, and during the course of 2021, we more than doubled the number of young people we supported, reaching over 2,000 in total. I cannot praise highly enough the dedication of our people, whose commitment enabled all these children to escape the misery of lockdown, get outside with friends and begin their journey of recovery to better emotional wellbeing.



The impact of this work was reflected in our monitoring data, which showed statistically significant increases across eight foundational measures of wellbeing, including self-confidence, self-esteem, resilience and positive functioning. We know from experience what this means – that these 2,000-plus children would go on to be more resilient to challenges elsewhere in their lives; have better and stronger friendship groups, have higher self-worth and be more positive about their futures.

The downside was that, in order to respond quickly to the pandemic, the charity reported a net financial loss for the first time. We believe this was the right thing to do under the circumstances, but as we move into 2022, our challenge is to rebuild our reserves while continuing to provide a first-class service to as many children and young people as possible. The pandemic is not over and children are still feeling the effects. Our goal is to remain by their side for as long as they need us.

Joe Taylor
Founder and CEO

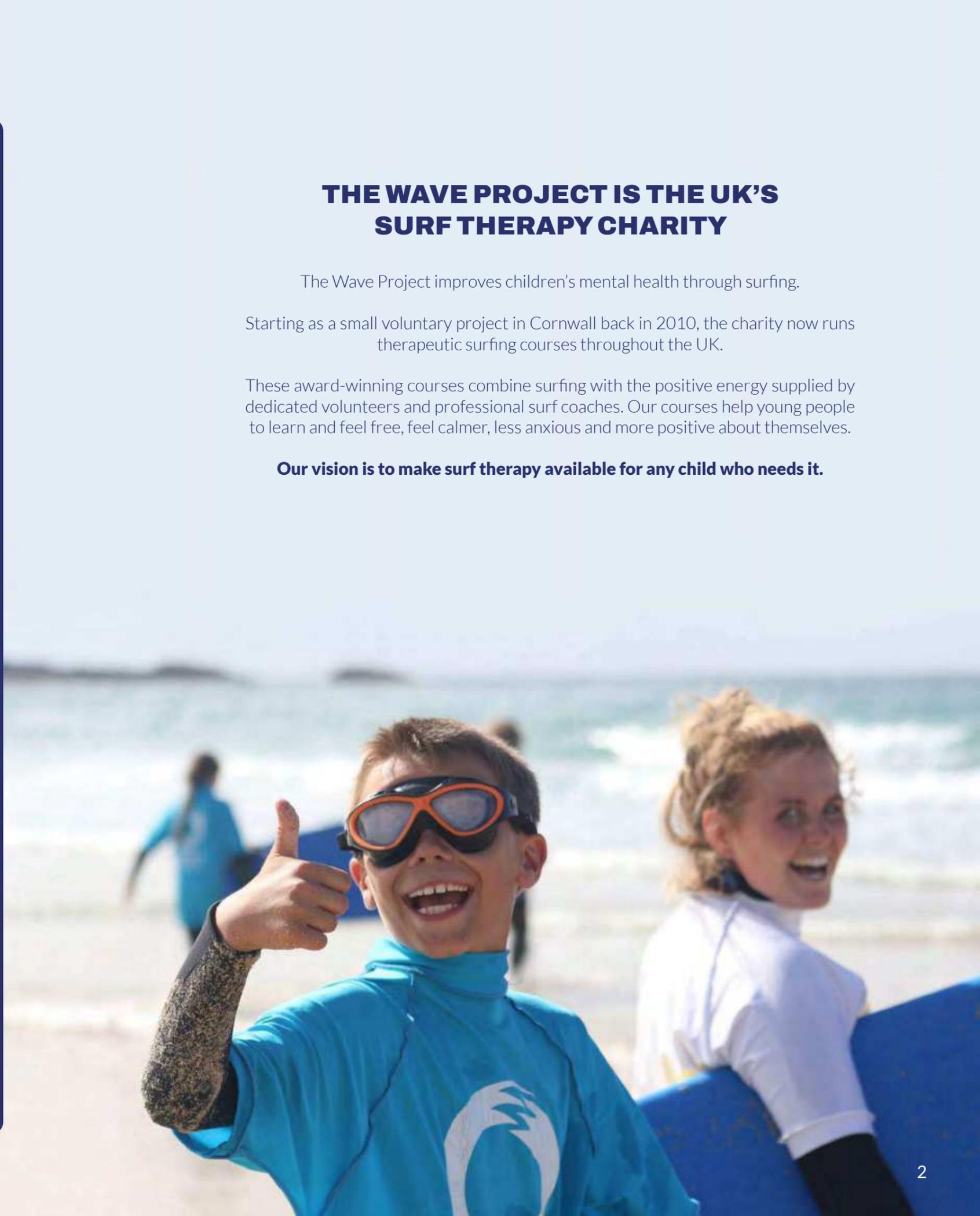
THE WAVE PROJECT IS THE UK'S SURF THERAPY CHARITY

The Wave Project improves children's mental health through surfing.

Starting as a small voluntary project in Cornwall back in 2010, the charity now runs therapeutic surfing courses throughout the UK.

These award-winning courses combine surfing with the positive energy supplied by dedicated volunteers and professional surf coaches. Our courses help young people to learn and feel free, feel calmer, less anxious and more positive about themselves.

Our vision is to make surf therapy available for any child who needs it.



COVID RESPONSE

The Wave Project was one of the few national UK charities that maintained a full service throughout the pandemic. As we entered 2021, the country was in its third lockdown, and the effects of this on young people were clear to see.



In the first half of the year, we supported 469 young people through our Wellbeing Catch-Up programme, offering 3 sessions of surf therapy and beach games to help children recover from the effects of Covid isolation. We also enabled siblings to join these sessions to provide a whole-family approach to each young person's recovery.

In total, our teams provided 4,597 hours of support to young people free of charge in this period. We recruited 9 new members of staff to help deliver this project, and recruited and trained over 100 new volunteers.

Feedback from these sessions was extremely positive, with parents reporting that children had become more confident and proud of their achievements.

"J engaged well in the session. He helped the others in the group. He is excited for next week's session. Both he and his brother had talked about the session and it's been really positive for the whole family."

"T was a little nervous at first but loved the session. He was struggling with home schooling and the time it was taking to do a short piece of work. But he came in beaming and excited for his second session and things really improved."

"E really enjoyed this week's session. She liked the new challenge. As the session went on, she challenged herself more and pushed herself out of her comfort zone. She really pushed her limits and expressed how much she enjoyed the session. Both her and [her brother] had talked about what they were going to be doing all week and its the only thing they have to look forward to due to lockdown."

This work was funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and facilitated through the national children's charity Barnardo's. Funding for the programme was discontinued in April 2021, but as a charity we continued to support the children who had taken part, many of whom joined our surf club and continue to take part in our sessions.

We are still making our way through the waiting list of children referred to us during the pandemic.

2021 IN STATS

2,206 YOUNG PEOPLE
took part in our courses

286 YOUNG PEOPLE REFERRED
through **NHS** social prescribing

469 YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESSED OUR SERVICES DURING LOCKDOWNS

1,208 SURF CLUB MEMBERS

1,630 TRAINED VOLUNTEERS

WE WORKED WITH
472
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
who referred young people to us

WE WELCOMED
30
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS
to the ISTO global conference on surf therapy

DYLAN'S RECOVERY

Lockdown was hard for 16-year-old Dylan. It left him struggling with low motivation and fatigue.

Our Wellbeing Catch-Up Course gave him something to look forward to and a reason to get outside.

After 3 sessions, he was getting up at 7am! His mum told us: "The Wave Project was a lifeline in lockdown."



AWARD WINNING SURF THERAPY

In 2021, we delivered our award winning surf therapy service to over 800 children and young people across the UK.

Our trained surf mentors worked 1:1 with the children, enabling them to grow in confidence and self belief over their 6 week course.

The change in their wellbeing was clear at the sessions, supported by data from our pre and post self-evaluation surveys.



CHANGES TO WELLBEING

(811 surf therapy students)*

11.63% INCREASE IN CALMNESS

12.2% INCREASE IN RESILIENCE

14.9% INCREASE IN CONFIDENCE

10.3% IMPROVEMENT IN FRIENDSHIPS

5.6% INCREASE IN SOCIAL TRUST

*This data is based on 811 pre and post surveys from students taking part in surf therapy courses in 2021. Participants recorded their wellbeing before and after a course based on a 5 point scale.

SURF CLUB

Our Surf Club provided ongoing support for 1,208 young people who completed a surf therapy course.



LONDON



ISLE OF WIGHT



PORTRUSH,
NORTHERN IRELAND



DUNBAR,
SCOTLAND

MY SURF THERAPY JOURNEY

By Iain Curtis

15-year old Iain struggled with isolation due to undiagnosed ADHD in his early years. Surf therapy helped him to build confidence and give back to others. Now he volunteers to help other young people.



I had a rough time during my early years of primary school because of undiagnosed ADHD which led to a lot of isolation. After diagnosis my ADHD nurse referred me to Wave Project and I started the Surf Therapy course in Spring 2019. I had already had a limited amount of surfing experience beforehand with a summer club, but the Dunbar team helped me so much.



When I started Surf Therapy I was warmly welcomed into this group of really kind good people. They didn't make me feel singled-out or uncomfortable. They really had a very good way of teaching and they helped both with surfing and having a chat with them, reducing that isolation.

Within the weeks of the course I had learned so much from the volunteers and instructors about surfing and myself, it massively boosted my confidence.

If I hadn't joined Wave Project I wouldn't have been as confident as a person and as happy as I am today.



I joined Surf Club in the summer of the same year after I did the six week Surf Therapy course, and I got to meet loads of people because I went regularly and the people surfing changed each session so I made a few friends younger and older than me.

Towards the end of 2021 I started my DofE bronze award and I decided to do Wave Project as my Volunteering section. I had already had thoughts of becoming a volunteer to give some help back to Wave Project for the help and support they had given me. My coordinator was more than pleased with me volunteering and immediately allowed me to become a volunteer. One of the instructors saw the change in me, and how that was helping the surfers to have someone closer to their own age as volunteers.

So nearly 3 years since I started Surf Therapy, I am loving volunteering for this charity which has given me so much, it is a privilege to give some of that back to the charity and the other surfers. I highly recommend this charity because they help so much and you can keep going back. And you don't know where life will take you...



SPECIALIST PROGRAMMES

BEACH SCHOOL

We partnered with over 30 schools across Cornwall to deliver our outdoor learning curriculum - Beach School.

Working mainly outside, on the beach and in the sea, pupils had the freedom to explore the curriculum away from the classroom.

We also worked on designs for our new beach school facility which we hope to take forward next year.



"The Wave Project helps struggling pupils re-engage with education."

- *The Times*

WAVE RANGERS

Funded by Sport England, Wave Rangers supported 265 young people in North Devon to be more active by caring for their local environment.

We are now working on a Wave Rangers curriculum that can be rolled out across schools in the UK.



ADAPTIVE SURFING

Inclusivity is at the heart of everything The Wave Project does. In 2021, we appointed a new Adaptive Surfing Lead and began working on our specialist adaptive surf hub in Croyde, North Devon.

Throughout the year we supported 150 people with disabilities to try surfing and trained over 100 volunteer mentors in disability surfing awareness.



CREATING CHANGE...

Our amazing volunteers



Supporting Adaptive Surfing

Our volunteers are critical to the success of our programmes. They are an intrinsic part of the 'therapy' for young people, helping them to build trust and develop friendships.

Not only do volunteers support the young people at sessions, they also help provide lifts and transport, take photos, raise awareness and support the charity through fundraising.

Giving time to bring joy to others

Pictured on the left is Si Bellamy, one of our amazing volunteers in Cornwall who supported Amy through her surf therapy course. Here's what Amy's mum had to say:

"The volunteers are absolutely amazing, and without Si, Amy's volunteer, this whole experience would not have been so successful.

"People with autism struggle with change and trusting new people, so by having the same volunteer each week we were able to have a smooth transition into the session, and Amy was able to build a bond of trust with him."

In 2021, our volunteers gave 29,160 hours of their time to support young people.



Building friendships



Creating a community for our young surfers

ACROSS THE UK

1,630 volunteer mentors supported our services across the UK.



KEY SUPPORTERS

Fundraisers

The money raised by our fundraisers goes a long way towards supporting our work. Whether it was a bake sale, hosting a quiz, having a birthday fundraiser or trekking the Himalayan mountains, every penny has helped and we are so grateful to everybody who has supported us in the past year.

Our fundraiser of the year was Brendan Prince (pictured below) who paddled the entire coast of the UK, aptly named 'The Long Paddle'.

Brendan completed the 4000km paddle setting three world records along the way! Raising money to go towards pioneering a new SUP Therapy programme we hope to launch soon.



We've had so many amazing supporters all over the UK this year and would love to thank each and every one of them. Here's just a few more examples of the wonderful activities that have been going on

Serena's Beach Cleans

"Hello, I am Serena, I am nine years old and I live in Exeter.

Every Sunday for six weeks I have gone surfing in Sidmouth with the Wave Project. It has been fun and I have enjoyed it. I have made friends and had lovely people helping me."

Serena is a former surf therapy student, who wanted to help protect the waters she loved, and took it upon herself to organise beach cleans in her local area.

Running 4 Waves

Luke, Callum & Amadeusz from Origin Coffee completed the 44 mile ultra marathon know as 'The Classic Quarter' from Lizard Point to Land's End in 12 hours and 4 minutes, raising £1,824 to allow more young people to access our programmes.



Corporate donations

We were delighted to work with some great businesses throughout 2021 - too many to name individually but a few highlights include:

- Launching our partnership with Pineapple Island who donate a % of their sales as well as stock
- Continuing our partnership with dryrobe who help fund our London project
- Working with Vans on their Vans Checkerboard Day raising £75,000.
- KP snacks, who supported us in developing our strategies and core management.



MAKING HEADLINES

In 2021 we had over 60 media impressions with a total reach of 247, 874, 053 people. Here are some of our key pieces of media coverage.

 <p>The Times 13th November Wave Project Beach School swaps whiteboards for surf boards</p>	 <p>Financial Times 31st October Surf esteem: how therapy started hitting the waves</p>	 <p>The Guardian 14th May Cornwall beach school aims to offer hope for Vulnerable Children</p>	 <p>Sky News 11th June G7 Coverage</p>
 <p>BBC Two 19th January Rick Stein's Cornwall</p>	 <p>Time Education Supplement 22nd May How beach school is helping vulnerable pupils to heal</p>	 <p>BBC Spotlight 21st May Radio Interview and video feature on Children In Need website</p>	 <p>The Independent 16th May How the Wave Project offers struggling teens a surfing lifeline.</p>

Paddle Out for mental health

In October we coordinated the first ever global paddle out for mental health, which took place across the world on World Mental Health Day.

Surfers across the world gathered in the water at dawn, and took part in a paddle out to show solidarity for those experiencing mental health issues.

More than 50 paddle outs happened worldwide with over 1,000 people taking part today to support.



"I SAW HIM SMILING IN WHAT FELT LIKE THE FIRST TIME IN 2 YEARS, STANDING ON A BOARD SURFING TOWARDS ME. I DON'T THINK HE'S FELT PURE JOY IN ALL THAT TIME. THE WORLD INSIDE HIS HEAD IS A PRETTY DARK PLACE. THIS GOT HIM BACK INTO A SIMPLE REALITY. IT'S PRICELESS."

- Parent of former surf therapy student

FINANCIAL REPORT

for the year ended 31 January 2022

	RESTRICTED FUNDS 2022 (£)	UNRESTRICTED FUNDS 2022 (£)	TOTAL FUNDS 2022 (£)	TOTAL FUNDS 2021 (£)
INCOME FROM:				
Donations and legacies	625,546	504,216	1,129,762	930,056
Charitable activities	1,000	232,636	233,636	243,623
Other trading activities	-	115,080	115,080	83,544
TOTAL INCOME	626,546	851,932	1,478,478	1,257,223
EXPENDITURE ON:				
Raising funds	-	62,802	62,802	37,391
Charitable activities	687,651	913,588	1,601,239	1,036,276
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	687,651	976,390	1,664,041	1,073,667
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	(61,105)	(124,458)	(185,563)	183,556
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Total fund brought forward	314,059	128,769	442,828	259,272
Net movement in funds	(61,105)	(124,458)	(185,563)	183,556
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	252,954	4,311	257,265	442,828

OUR MAIN FUNDERS

We are very grateful to all of the trusts, foundations and other grant making organisations for their support this year, including:

 <p>National Lottery Community Fund Supports project costs in Northern Ireland and the Isle of Wight</p>	 <p>BBC Children In Need Supports a social prescribing project across the South West of England</p>	 <p>Sport England Supports the Wave Rangers project in North Devon</p>	 <p>The Buffini Chao Foundation Provides funds for surf therapy in Cornwall</p>
 <p>The Robertson Trust Supports the project in Dunbar</p>	 <p>Raise Your Hands Supports core costs</p>	 <p>Foundation For Children Supports the project in Bristol</p>	 <p>The Tudor Trust towards management costs</p>

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



ISTO 2021

This year we were honoured to host the ISTO (International Surf Therapy Organisations) annual conference, bringing together surf therapy organisations and experts in children's mental health from all across the world to share their knowledge experiences and stories.

Due to covid restrictions and to reduce the spread, this was the first year where the conference was a hybrid event, meaning people could come to attend the event in Newquay or join us virtually from their own homes.

The 3 day event was a great success, with important topics surrounding surf therapy such as LGBTQ+ and transgender inclusion, equality, mental health and many other subjects being discussed.



SUMMER SURF CHALLENGE

Summer Surf Challenge is an annual celebration of inclusive surfing hosted at Watergate Bay, Newquay, offering young people with disabilities the opportunity to try surfing free of charge, supported by our specially trained adaptive surfing instructors and volunteers.

These young people receive a 30-minute surfing session with training instructors and volunteers and feel the benefits surfing has to their mental health.

In 2021 we had 105 young people registered to take part in the challenge, giving them a taste of the benefits surf therapy can bring.



ANNUAL AWARDS NIGHT

Our Annual Celebration is our biggest event of the year, showcasing the transformative impact surf therapy has on our children and young people.

The evening is all about our children and young people as well as our wonderful volunteers – without whom The Wave Project would simply not exist.

It is a chance to shine a light on their triumphs through a series of awards given on the night.

For many of the children and young people, it is like nothing they will have ever experienced before – a real once in a lifetime opportunity for them.

WHAT NEXT...



Next year we're looking forward to continuing to develop our Beach School project. The designs for this are now complete and despite some set backs we hope to be moving forward with it very soon. Once completed, this will be the first dedicated building of its type in the world, combining indoor and outdoor facilities to enable children to learn from nature and the sea.

Complimenting this is our fantastic Wave Rangers curriculum, which we hope to roll out through schools. This programme has been developed in partnership with Sport England, and enables children to enhance their learning by connecting with and improving their local environment.

“When I am surfing, it’s the most incredible thing. I feel like I am flying on top of the world and I just feel so good about myself. The Wave Project has allowed me to be happy in the water and helped me meet new people.

Surfing with them has made me feel more confident.”



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