



**BOOTS &
BEARDS**

Playing our part to connect people and places

Boots & Beards Strategic Plan
2023 – 2026



Carron Valley, Stirling, 2020



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Boots & Beards is an organisation that is proud to welcome everyone with a specific focus on representing People of Colour. The terms minority ethnic, BAME and people of colour are interchangeable to represent someone who does not consider themselves to be white.

This strategy sets out a vision for Boots & Beards over the next three years, identifying the priorities that will guide our ambition and transformation.



Walk 8 - Loch Lomond and
Trossachs National Park
May 2022

Introduction

This strategy, *Playing our part to connect people and places – Boots & Beards Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026*, sets out a vision for Boots & Beards over the next three years, identifying the priorities that will guide our ambition and transformation.

Scotland is home to some of the finest outdoor landscapes in Europe, and coupled with excellent access legislation, residents and tourists have the opportunity to access most of the natural landscape for recreation. Post Covid-19, there has been a growing appreciation for the natural environment, growth of visits to the outdoors taken by adults in Scotland, including the rise in popularity of the staycation, and an increased awareness of the importance to preserve Scotland's natural environment for future generations.

Outdoor spaces are not equally accessible, used, or understood by people of different backgrounds in Scotland. Demographic research by Outward Bound found people from a minority ethnic background visit outdoor spaces less, and when they do it tends to be within 1-2 miles of their home, taking part in more urban outdoor activities such as park visits and street sports. Furthermore, research conducted by The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs [DEFRA] through their diversity review in 2020 found that although BME participants interviewed valued the natural environment, they often had negative perceptions of the social environment, expecting to feel excluded. The review found that a sense of acceptance (or non-acceptance) in wider society can have a disproportionate affect on people from a minority ethnic background's leisure time. Moreover, people feel they cannot engage with mainstream culture as their authentic selves they tend to limit contact with dominant groups and places where feeling like an outsider is amplified, and may raise concerns around safety. Practical concerns were identified such as travel distances to wild places, sleeping and eating provisions to cater for different cultures, religious preferences, and language barriers.

Co-founders of Boots & Beards, Naveed Bakhsh, Kashif Butt and Zain Sehgal identified the need for representation in the outdoor space to support participation from people of colour and after assessing the needs of the local community, created Boots & Beards.

Introduction

Through their cultural backgrounds, Boots & Beards understand the cultural and religious barriers faced by people of colour, and as a result are able to provide a range of outdoor, health and wellbeing activities tailored to their community. In addition to this, they are well placed to network with partners and bridge the integration gap between our communities and British society at large.

Boots & Beards is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, established in 2016, to help minority ethnic communities in Glasgow and across Scotland, connect with nature through walks, hiking and caring for the environment. They operate with a mix of grant aid, trading income, and event fundraising.

Boots & Beards vision is to create a better life for present and future generations. They aim to achieve this by working with communities to improve their health and wellbeing, widening access to the natural environment, and supporting people to reach their full potential. They provide communities with the ability to participate in physical activities, including hill walking, boot camp, badminton and fitness classes, alongside providing the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme for young people.

Over the next three years Boots & Beards endeavour to build upon their experience supporting individuals across Glasgow, to improve access to activities, address inequalities and affect positive change for service users and organisations across Scotland.

Through achieving these goals Boots & Beards will help more people experience and understand the value in outdoor spaces for improved physical and mental wellbeing including a reduction in stress and loneliness and improve self-esteem. B&B are committed to improve people's deeply rooted need to form and strengthen social relationships.

People from all ages, backgrounds and cultures will experience heightened connection with nature, encouraging a respect and willingness to protect nature. This coupled with support for participants to discover their infinite potential for personal development, will create the leaders of tomorrow, and better opportunities for all.



By increasing access to services as well as access to the outdoors, Boots & Beards are helping to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion for all. By empowering and supporting individuals, they are helping people to facilitate change and have a direct and positive impact on society, thereby creating a more resilient and stronger identity through their exposure to the outdoor community.

Working collaboratively with a network of minority ethnic, health and wellbeing, and outdoors groups across Scotland will allow Boots & Beards to create peer networks, enable and educate employers and support organisations to embed outdoor learning into their equality practices.

Boots & Beards hope to encourage all marginalised nationalities residing in Scotland to feel proud of Scotland as their home country and grant them an equal opportunity to have their say about the future of Scotland and its policies.



Umair Hakeem, 48
December 2020 Family Walk.
Featured in The Times Newspaper

Who We Are

Our Mission

Boots & Beards believe in uniting and motivating individuals to lead an active healthy lifestyle.

Our Vision

To create a better life for present and future generations.

Our Purpose

Boots & Beards works with communities to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals through the means of physical activity.

Our 3-Year Strategic Goals 2023-2026

1. Increase opportunities for people to participate, especially amongst people of colour.
2. Promote equity of access for the most marginalised and raise awareness for social inclusion through dedicated campaigns.
3. Provide the tools to encourage better health and wellbeing for people of colour.
4. Embrace nature to explore, educate and protect the environment.
5. To combat racism through fair representation, active outdoor participation and involvement.



Nav Bakhsh
Co-Founder - Programme Manager

Kash Butt
Co-Founder - Trustee

Zain Sehgal
Co-Founder - Project Lead

Goal 1

Increase opportunities for people to participate, especially among people of colour

Key Objectives

- Support and enable the community to access services and take positive ownership of their actions.
- Empower the community to share cohesive values and create a better future that provides opportunities for all.
- Connect young people with opportunities to make a positive impact on the issues they care about, improve life skills and enjoy a sense of purpose.
- Support people from all ages, abilities and backgrounds to gain outdoor experience and learn essential life skills to be stronger and more resilient.

Goal 1

Supporting Actions

1. Invest in policies, programmes and initiatives designed to encourage people to become more active. Develop our capacity to ensure access to a range of our services, through inclusive language, cultural sensitivity and relevance.
2. Support confidence, development and motivation building required to allow people to assert themselves in daily life, and increase awareness of relevant and essential services through referrals and signposting.
3. Increase the number and diversity of young people who can access our programmes and support them to discover their infinite potential for personal development, employment opportunities and improved mental health.
4. Encourage informal skill sharing, personal development and entrepreneurship through creation of a peer network. Inspire young people to become future leaders of tomorrow.

Outcomes

- The community is better engaged with the services and support available and are confident to access them.
- The community has increased their understanding of the need to be active and are working towards improving their health and wellbeing.
- The community acknowledges cultural differences and the need to become more inclusive.
- Through our work, we encourage people to participate in public life and encourage civic responsibility.

Goal 2

Promote equity of access for the most marginalised and raise awareness for social inclusion through dedicated campaigns



100th Walk Celebration,
Conic Hill, Loch Lomond
Aug 2021

Goal 2

Key Objectives

- Equip individuals in our community with a sense of belonging and shared connections with their Scottish Identity, whilst celebrating their unique heritage.
- Increase opportunities for people to develop essential skills, try new challenges and share in positive experiences that support fulfilment of potential.
- Be a force of change through our consultancy work and lead start-up organisations through a process of self-discovery.
- Build and develop our own community engagement through outreach work.
- Provide inspirational and positive representation for all members of our community.

Supporting Actions

1. Support people to explore Scotland's natural assets, foster a sense of ownership and reconcile all aspects of their identity through peer support. Boots & Beards will facilitate workshops in partnership with different outdoor and heritage organisations.
2. Respond to the needs of employers looking to recruit from a diverse base through advertising of job and training opportunities within the non-traditional sector, and within sectors that are underrepresented by people of colour.
3. Create and participate in media campaigns, guest speaking events, and develop a package of training and support for organisations to embed outdoor learning and personal development into their equality practice.
4. Transform lives of marginalised women and girls inspiring them to actively participate in the outdoors.

Goal 2

Outcomes

- Share our learning, elevate the voices of our community, and play our part in influencing positive change at a national level.
- We will work closely with key organisations who have similar initiatives in different sporting fields to view, learn and enhance on their learnings and maximise our focus.
- Continue to develop and deliver the Bonnie Boots programme and maximise equity of access in our community.
- Increased visible presence at the heart of the community supporting effective engagement. Our work meets the needs of people facing structural inequality and contributes to increased participation and empowerment.



Nadeem Hanif , 42
Archery Taster Session
December 2022

Goal 3

Provide the tools to encourage better health and wellbeing for people of colour



Maree Todd MSP

Minister for Public Health, Women's Health and Sport at the opening of Boots & Beards Community Hub. Other distinguished guests in attendance. December 2022

Goal 3

Key Objectives

- Strengthen alignment, leadership and collaboration to adopt best practices in community engagement.
- Build connections and create lasting partnerships with local Health and Wellbeing organisations, faith and other groups, taking a joined-up, holistic approach to addressing Health and Wellbeing in the community.
- Design our activities to promote social cohesion, inclusivity and participation, and give people from underrepresented groups the opportunities to learn new skills and enhance a sense of wellbeing.
- Create inclusive communities, both physical and virtual where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can incorporate physical activity into their lives, whilst improving their mental and spiritual wellbeing through intergenerational activities.
- Develop an inclusive and safe place for all members of the community, through peer support networks, celebrating common interests and promoting learning opportunities.

Goal 3

Supporting Actions

1. Strengthen diversity, employ a resilient team of dedicated colleagues and provide them necessary training to guide us through the challenges ahead.
2. Avail opportunities, attend integration meetings and conduct outreach work.
3. Promote digital minimalism by encouraging participants to limit using devices during activities, thus reducing social isolation, obtain clarity of mind and an enlightened soul for the whole family.
4. Address prolonged inactivity, exacerbated by the Covid 19 pandemic, through guided activities. Provide taster sessions for activities at different levels to support people into physical activity.
5. Provide effective tools for positive change to support the development and delivery of purposeful wellbeing activities and a platform where people can convey their needs and aspirations through community consultation.

Outcomes

- Improved health and establishment of peer support networks, through common interests and learning opportunities.
- The community has increased participation and their understanding of the need to be active and to improve their way of living.
- The community has greater ownership of their learning and are able to make better informed choices for their overall wellbeing.
- The creation of health & wellbeing ambassadors.

Goal 4

Embrace nature to explore, educate and protect the environment

Key Objectives

- Help connect more people to an outdoor mindset and instil a lifelong passion of discovering new experiences.
- Strive to maintain culture and work practices that preserve the environment by following the Scottish outdoor access code and promoting the need to maintain access, conservation and protection of the habitats.
- Strengthen our partnerships to achieve sustainable development goals while addressing emerging environmental issues.
- Actively identify opportunities to deliver carbon responsible social values and help minimise potential impacts on the climate.



Family event working in collaboration with RSPB at Loch Lomond Aug 2020

Goal 4

Supporting Actions

1. Seek to identify and educate people on the benefits of walking as an essential activity, from their early years and continuing into active ageing. We will promote and encourage family and intergenerational involvement by tailoring walks to participants fitness levels and abilities.
2. Increase knowledge of diverse habitats by learning from local rangers and volunteering with local conservation projects. We take ownership of the “leave no trace” outdoor ethics by implementing good habits of litter picking, respecting wildlife and retaining the natural order of forests.
3. Develop an energy efficiency policy, in line with the Just Transition Scottish Framework to reduce our carbon consumption and ensure that our building and work practices operate within an energy efficient framework.
4. Continue to create and facilitate avenues for joint climate commitments through bilateral cooperation and build upon the youth climate movement.

Outcomes

- Establishment of a pathway from recreation to conservation by volunteering to repair access, protect natural resources and keeping our outdoor spaces litter free.
- Increased awareness and participation from young people and their families to adopt a greener lifestyle. Creation of a positive legacy for being a responsible, proactive and progressive organisation by reducing our collective environmental footprint.
- Direct engagement of outdoor agencies with our community, gaining skills in the natural environment and participating in the outdoor activities.
- Supporting other organisations to establish themselves in their communities across Scotland.

Goal 5

To combat racism through fair representation, active outdoor participation and involvement



Walk 111 - Croy Hill
Historical Walk
July 2022

Goal 5

Key Objectives

- Promote outdoor activities and recreation that is inclusive.
- Combat discrimination based on race and ethnicity that can lead to damaged self-esteem, limited access to educational and economic opportunities, and decreased civic engagement.
- Facilitate collaboration between organisations and leaders to create a safe and anti-racist outdoor climate.
- Provide peer networks that allow our community to share discriminatory experiences and enhance their understanding of equality through relaxed discussions.

Supporting Actions

1. Advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in the outdoors industry. Support collective grassroots initiatives focused on creating more equitable access to the outdoors.
2. Facilitate activities for members of the community and stakeholders, focusing on tackling cultural barriers and how to break them down.
3. Offer a safe space where individuals, organisations and community leaders can identify experiences that amount to discrimination, increase awareness of rights and entitlements, and support attendees in asserting their right to live without prejudice.
4. Challenge stereotypes and champion cultural preservation by designing campaigns and advocacy programmes that celebrate differences, promote respect of diverse cultures and encourage leadership amongst people of colour.

Goal 5

Outcomes

- Creation of more equitable access to outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship opportunities.
- Our work meets the needs of people facing structural inequality to reduce racial disparities and contribute to higher participation and empowerment.
- Visible presence at the heart of the community supports increased engagement, reduces stereotypes and prejudices with better tolerance for cultural and religious differences.
- Greater investment in communities of colour and a focus on creating long-term, sustainable change.

Challenges and Opportunities

Boots & Beards, like many other charities in the UK rely on diverse sources of income to provide support for communities in need. Income and financial reserves are affected by the environment we operate in and several factors such as the cost-of-living crisis, ongoing effects of the pandemic or impacts of a potential recession.

We are constantly evolving to build resilience and look at different options to maintain operations. Here are some of the key considerations that contribute towards our financial stability. With new challenges on the horizon, we will need to find many opportunities to help us pave the way towards a brighter future.

Challenges

- ***Generating income:*** Boots & Beards have demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of previous challenges, repurposing ourselves to satisfy the dynamic needs within society. Research by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) looked into the charity landscape for 2022 from the perspective of 547 UK charity leaders. Of those, 58% said that generating income and finding financial stability was one of their top three challenges for the year ahead.
- ***Economic pressures on individual giving:*** Inflationary pressures are also eroding charitable giving. With less disposable income or food and fuel prices rising, charities are increasingly reliant on funding applications rather than donations to support their communities. These concerns are warranted as one in seven people said they intend to reduce their charity donations this year.
- ***Meeting increased demands:*** Many charities are running out of options to continually meet the high demand for their services. Only half (49%) of the charities surveyed in November 2022 felt confident that they have the funds to meet current service needs. Despite these financial struggles, the interest in Boots & Beards activities continues to rise.

Challenges and Opportunities

- *Reduced government funding:* Government funding for charities has been declining in recent years, as a result of austerity measures which have already resulted in many charities closing vital programmes. New research from NCVO's 2022 UK Civil Society Almanac reveals voluntary sector income from the government is at its lowest for 15 years.
- *Managing expenditures:* Boots & Beards is not alone in having to restrict their outgoings to stay afloat or avert a staffing crisis. The VSCE Sector Barometer shows that 36% of charities struggle to recruit the staff they need with one in four (27%) smaller charities having to reduce paid staff over winter months in 2022.

Opportunities

- ***Social interactions are back:*** The last few years of worldwide lockdown measures have truly taught us the importance of social interactions and the huge role healthy relationships play in your overall wellbeing. As many of us come back together, getting away from home and exploring new interests has never been so easy.
- ***Inclusive representation:*** Social movements are providing new opportunities for multicultural charities like Boots & Boots to mobilise support for equality, diversity and inclusion for all. Our positioning within the community gives us a unique prospective to understand complex challenges faced by the minority ethnic community. These can include easy to identify issues such as lack of employment, poverty, inequality and obesity but also include much harder to identify concerns such as anxiety, social isolation, racism and cultural bias.
- ***Collaborative partnerships:*** We regularly collaborate with key agencies and other community organisations in the sector to build great relationships and improve the quality of our services. Some of our collaborative partners include: BBC, Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park, Sport Scotland, RSPB, DofE, Glenmore Lodge, Sported and many more.
- ***Adapting to donor behaviour:*** We continue to invest in digital capacity to find the right balance between online and offline approaches to funding and engage supporters. While cash is still a popular way for people to donate, the pandemic seems to have accelerated digitisation of giving.



Adya Misra & Ammara Abid
A family event in collaboration with
People of Colour Paddle.
Pingston Watersport. April 2023

Future Plans

Supported by their five goals, Boots & Beards are laying the groundwork for the next phase of their evolution. Driven by their vision to create a better life for present and future generations, Boots & Beards will be working with communities to improve their health and wellbeing, widening access to the natural environment, and supporting people to reach their full potential.

As they move away from the disruption of the Covid 19 pandemic, Boots & Beards aim to lay foundations that guarantee strength and stability for the future. To further support achieving their objectives, they have drawn upon their strengths and capabilities to set ambitious aims for the future. These will allow the business to continue their development, support more people, and diversify income generation that will support the achievement of their social and environmental mission.

Over the next three years Boots & Beards aim to:

- Become an accredited outdoor training academy for people of colour and utilise their knowledge and learning of leadership skills and community engagement to support training of organisations and/or individuals across Scotland. This will facilitate more leaders from Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds in the outdoor environment and will in turn encourage participation from local communities, improving access to the outdoors, and improving mental and physical wellbeing for participants across Scotland.
- Become an established body representing other outdoor groups from the minority ethnic community. The creation of a network of like-minded associations across Scotland will foster and strengthen a sense of community, facilitate information sharing and provide a platform to affect positive change.

Future Plans

- Acquire premises where they can run outdoor training programmes and create a community hub for health-related activities and wellbeing programmes. This will be a space embedded in its community, and will allow a joined-up approach to addressing health and wellbeing in the community.
- Support Scottish businesses and organisations to become better employers in regard to equality, diversity and inclusion, resulting in increased opportunities, especially among underrepresented groups. Furthermore, they will provide organisations with the tools to encourage participation and improving health and wellbeing among minority ethnic communities and individuals.
- Work with leading Scottish sporting bodies to help give better access to sports for young people, influencing change and facilitating increased participation from minority ethnic communities in Scottish sports and physical activity.
- Move from a reliance on volunteers at the core to a more sustainable, social enterprise model. This will require investing in staff expertise, diversifying income streams and improving resources to maximise the educational benefits through workshops.



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**BONNIE
BOOTS**