

## **"CashBack for Communities" and Ocean Youth Trust Scotland partner up for young people in Fife**

**For Immediate Release: 05 June 2015**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of May, nine Activity Agreement participants from Fife Council were given the opportunity to take part in an Ocean Youth Trust Scotland voyage funded with money from CashBack for Communities.

Whilst on board, the group found themselves fully responsible for sailing the Alba Venturer including all the elements of day to day life on board the yacht, including cleaning and cooking.

While reflecting, the young people expressed vividly the impact this experience has had on their lives. This is a sample of their statements:

*"Everyone worked really hard and had a great time"*

*"One of the greatest experiences of my life"*

*"I have gained the ability to speak more openly in a group"*

*"I have gained a better way of thinking of solutions to problems"*

*"I gained confidence on boats and being around new people"*

Geoff Nicholson, Senior Youth Worker on board said, "It was obviously a massively positive experience for many of the young people on board. It was amazing to see young people who were largely strangers being placed into an environment they were alien to, and flourishing. By the end of the week the boat staff, CLD staff and young people were one well-functioning and highly motivated team. The young people all seem to have learned and achieved lots, both academically and personally. The young people all earned their awards and overcame challenges, and fear! Members of the group have intimated that this was one of the greatest and most memorable experiences of their lives!"

All members of the crew received the Royal Yachting Association's Start Yachting Level 1 Award, the SQA's Level 3 Speaking and Listening qualification and are working towards receiving their Youth Achievement Award as well. Several of the young people have also put themselves forward to be Ocean Youth Trust Scotland volunteers and are looking forward to taking part in training to be staff members on future voyages.

Ocean Youth Trust Scotland (OYT Scotland), Scotland's leading sail training organisation, is transforming more than 480 young people's lives over two years thanks to a £375,000 award from the "CashBack for Communities" scheme - the Scottish Government's proceeds of crime fund.

The participants from disadvantaged backgrounds across Scotland will take part in 5-day long sea voyages in some of the world's best sailing waters. During the voyage, the novice sailors will gain nationally accredited qualifications, improve their communication and problem-solving skills.

**Nick Fleming, Chief Executive of OYT Scotland** said: "Our voyages offer young people a truly unique and life changing opportunity. Over the course of a very intense week, living

together in close proximity, they not only learn to sail, they learn leadership skills and how to work effectively as a team.

"This second group have been a clear example of all that this programme aims to achieve in every participant. Our sea-staff, comprising both professionals and volunteers, understand how to get the best from each individual. This results in young people often being able to achieve things they never imagined they were capable of and changing their outlook on what the future could hold".

**Justice Secretary Michael Matheson** said: "Investing in our young people is always money well spent and I am delighted that the Scottish Government's Cashback for Communities programme is providing this valuable funding for worthy projects across Scotland.

"This Government is committed to ensuring young people reach their full potential. The vast majority of them are a credit to society but we want to prevent the small minority getting involved in crime or antisocial behaviour in the first place.

"Scotland's unique CashBack for Communities programme invests monies seized from criminals back into our communities. Since 2008, we've committed £75 million community initiatives right across the country, improving lives and helping Scotland prosper."

Over the past 50 years, Greenock-based OYT Scotland has grown to become one of the leading sail training charities in the world. With two sail training vessels, Alba Explorer and Alba Venturer, OYT Scotland completed 57 voyages with 569 young people in 2014.

For more information about OYT Scotland go to [www.oytscotland.org.uk](http://www.oytscotland.org.uk)

For more information on the Scottish Government's CashBack for Communities scheme go to [www.cashbackforcommunities.org](http://www.cashbackforcommunities.org)

**Ends.**

### **OYT Scotland**

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### **Notes to Editors**

- The Scottish Government's CashBack for Communities programme uses the ill-gotten gains of crime, recovered through the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and invests them back into communities across Scotland.
- Projects range from diversionary sporting activity to long-term potentially life-changing intervention projects, which aim to turn an individual's life around and provide them the opportunity of a positive destination such as employment, education or volunteering.
- Since 2008 the Scottish Government has committed £75 million to CashBack/Community Initiatives, funding community activities and facilities largely, but not exclusively, for young people.