

SITUATION UPDATE

While half of the world pauses and the other half are out on the front line during the current pandemic, I wanted to contact you all to give a quick rundown of the last month and also to mention what our plans are moving forward.

As we moved into March, the Bell Baxter team had one last training session to complete at school and were looking forward to undertaking the final outdoor endurance session at West Sands beach, St Andrews. The kids were more than ready and everyone was planning what they would have to pack in their bags for the expedition. We were of course aware of the developing situation with the Covid-19 virus and we were keeping up to date with Government advice. I was also consulting with our expedition Doctor and our friends in Greenland. In advance of the Government announcement, I made the decision to postpone this years expedition. While we are, so far, aware that children and teenagers are mostly unaffected by this virus, there was just no way we could ever take the chance of introducing it to the population in Greenland who are a very fragile community.

I informed the school of our decision and had a very difficult group call with the kids. There was of course deep disappointment in the room and I could hear a few tears initially, but the kids made me so proud as usual as they all committed as a team to continue to undertake their training. They exhibited such mature attitudes and their resilience and caring natures shone through as they vowed to support each other.

As you can imagine, all funding activities have currently stopped. All dinners and events we had planned over the next few months have been cancelled. For a charity, this is devastating for us. At this time, we are very grateful for the continual financial contributions from our funders and supporters. Now is the time we are most in need of support from our Patrons. Our current ability to fundraise has been greatly thwarted and this will eventually affect our plans for the future. We are hoping to avoid any uncertainty and hope you, as Patrons, will continue to support us at this difficult time.

I want to send all of our best wishes from myself and the Polar Academy team to you, your friends and family and I hope you all remain in good health.

Craig

TEAM WORK

Molly T was needing a little lift after her penultimate insanity training session and her team mates Sophie, Eve and Molly P were happy to assist!





ENDURANCE

Even though all the kids knew there would be no expedition this year, every one of them turned up to the St Andrews day training. The parental support was also absolutely incredible and a bbq station was even set up on the beach for feeding the hungry and tired masses.

On the day, the kids knuckled down to hours of tyre hauling over the soft sands, which is no mean feat as the sand slowly saps your energy. They had a short stint of climbing the sand dunes and transferring they tyres as a team from the bottom to the top avoiding any tyre contacting the sand. This activity was all about communication and team work.

After the dune climb, the kids faced the freezing cold challenge of pulling their tyres through the sea. Again they met this challenge head on and I think they even enjoyed it!

The final challenge for the day was having the kids get into groups and pull the Polar Academy Truck. I hope you enjoy seeing some of the photos taken on the day.



TRAVELING SUPPORT

It was a joy, and testament to the collective affection past participants have for the Polar Academy, that we had a representative of every team turn up from every single year from inception in 2014 to 2019. I am always so proud to see what amazing young people our Alumni are turning into and I'm very grateful they want to continue to support the next generation of young explorers.



Reps from St James's Place undertook the Patrons challenge and did a great job keeping up with the kids!



Family and friends cheered on the Bell Baxter team from on top of the sand dunes.



The smallest supporters had a go at pulling the truck. Everyone is part of the Polar Academy family!

TEAM BELL BAXTER 2021

