

---

## **Youth worker and founder of Steppers UK supported to develop outdoor leadership skills with funding from adventure grant.**

**21st August 2022**

*The Des Rubens and Bill Wallace grant is funding youth worker and Steppers UK founder, Cherelle Harding, to lead outdoor activities in the Peak District for participants from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority communities.*

Cherelle Harding, 32, is a full-time youth worker in Coventry and director of Steppers UK CIC. Steppers is an organisation promoting diversity within the outdoors, supporting Black, Asian & Ethnic Minority communities to build positive relationships with nature through outdoor activities. Cherelle started Steppers in July 2020 as a response to Covid-19 lockdown and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement.

With funding from the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace grant Cherelle is organising 'step and paint' activities in the Peak District for 25 members of Steppers UK. The purpose of the project is to highlight ways in which people can engage with nature through creativity and inspire more people from Black, Asian & Ethnic Minority communities to engage with the outdoors. Cherelle will work with qualified mountain guides to plan and lead the activities, an experience she hopes will develop her knowledge of the Peak District and skills in leading groups in wild places across the UK. Cherelle will share her experiences through Steppers UK and provide information for other people of colour wishing to travel to the Peak District National Park or similar wild places. Cherelle hopes the project will showcase the benefits of the outdoors, help normalise the visibility of Black & Brown faces within outdoor activities and encourage others to be adventurous and try something new.

On receiving the news of the grant offer Cherelle said: "I'm thrilled to have been chosen as a recipient of the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant. I aim to inspire others to appreciate the wild wonders of Great Britain. My mission is to learn more and upskill myself so that I can share it with my community and the work I'm doing with Steppers UK CIC to encourage more people from Black, Asian & ethnic minorities to participate in outdoor adventures."

Jenny Seaman of the John Muir Trust, who administers the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant said: "The Des Rubens Bill Wallace grant panel are delighted to be able to support Cherelle to further develop her outdoor leadership experience through the organisation of creative activities in the Peak District. The project will also provide individuals from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority communities the opportunity to experience wild places and engage with Steppers UK."

Cherelle Harding is one of eight successful applicants to the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant in 2022. This grant was established to give people the opportunity to seek out life-changing experiences in wild places in ways which will benefit both the person, and the wild places themselves.

---

Steppers UK CIC are on Twitter and Instagram @steppersuk. They can also be contacted via [Steppersuk@gmail.com](mailto:Steppersuk@gmail.com)

## **Editor's Notes**

### **About The John Muir Trust**

The John Muir Trust is a leading voice for the UK's wild places. Its stewardship of some of Britain's most iconic wild places, including Ben Nevis and Helvellyn, is guided by three freedoms; ensuring nature has the freedom to repair itself, people have the freedom to enjoy the benefits, and communities have the freedom to thrive. For 40 years, the Trust has advocated for the protection of wild places by evidencing their benefit to society. Driven by the belief that wild places are for everyone – it also provides opportunities for people from all walks of life to engage with nature through the John Muir environmental award scheme.

### **ABOUT THE DES RUBENS AND BILL WALLACE GRANT**

The grant commemorates two former Presidents of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, who each led inspiring and adventurous lives. It was set up to give others an opportunity to follow in their footsteps and experience wild places. Projects should be adventurous, have an educational or scientific component and benefit the wild places themselves. In the decade since its inception the grant has made over 60 awards to a wide variety of recipients.

Bill Wallace, died of heart failure in February 2007 while skiing in the Alps at the age of 73 with two artificial hips.

Des Rubens, was a popular teacher at Craigmoynton High School in Edinburgh was killed in June 2016 in an Alpine climbing accident at the age of 63.

Grants are for £200 to £2,000 and open to UK applicants of all ages. Closing date for applications is 15 January each year. Further details on how to apply: <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/whats-new/grants/des-rubens-and-bill-wallace-grant>

### **Contact**

Sophie Harrison, Media Communications Officer

t: 07864 671292

e: [sophie.harrison@johnmuirtrust.org](mailto:sophie.harrison@johnmuirtrust.org)

[www.johnmuirtrust.org](http://www.johnmuirtrust.org)

Please remember to attach a high-quality photograph (Ideally 3MB or above) with your press release draft, and include details of the photographer and a caption.