

Annabel Baker

Age: 27

Location: Fife, Scotland



Image: Rural Youth Project

Main Challenges



Location limiting access to essential services



Digital connectivity



Awareness of the countryside

Rural Youth Project Involvement

Annabel attended the Ideas Festival in 2019 and has completed RYP facilitator training.

“It’s great that the Rural Youth Project can give young people the confidence that they need to join in on sessions such as the ones the project run and do something cool.”

- Annabel Baker

Background

Annabelle is an English lass that has lived in Scotland since the age of four. She studied Geography with Psychology at the University of Dundee and then went on to study Catchment Hydrology and Management. She was lucky enough to then get an internship at Perth College UHI as Project Coordinator on a renewables business network before moving to LANTRA Scotland.

Although not originally from a farming background, a core focus of Annabelle’s work is promoting rural and agricultural career opportunities to primary school children, through the LANTRA Champions Programme, aiming to inspire youngsters into this field. Annabelle also is involved in LANTRA’s skill matching service and is due to Covid-19, is looking to run a virtual careers event.

“I am passionate about showcasing that young people don’t have to be from farming backgrounds to join youth organisations such as Young Farmers.”

Annabelle finds herself lucky enough to live where there is a strong Young Farmers network and she is an active member of Bell Baxter Agricultural Discussion Society, which is part of the Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs.

“SAYFC gives young rural people great opportunities and I have held many office bearers positions, including Club Secretary, District Treasurer and Vice-Chair. I have also had the opportunity to represent Scotland at National level in Tug of War.”

Last year she was elected as club chairman for Bell Baxter JAC and plans to attend the European Youth Rally next year.



Image: Rural Youth Project

“I think the Rural Youth Project is very important for getting young people together. They provide an opportunity to speak to someone who may be going through similar situations or challenges.”

- Annabel Baker

Background

“A highlight from my year as Chairman, was seeing so many new young members join. We even won the National recruitment prize, which was great.”

Having moved from a city in England with a busy atmosphere, Annabelle has realised how lucky she is to now live in a peaceful and beautiful part of the rural world. Photography is a big passion of hers, particularly capturing scenic views.

Like everyone during lockdown, Annabelle has had to adapt to working from home life, which in fact has not been as difficult a challenge as she had imagined and allowed her to appreciate her rural surroundings more.

“Just up the road from us on the farm, there has been a lot more people walking. It has actually been quite nice to see people appreciating our countryside more.”

The new working from home routine, has also allowed Annabelle a chance to get more involved in farming. To help separate work and home life, she has made a conscious effort to make sure she is checking the sheep every morning and night.

She added: “I think Covid-19 has been a good chance to show that young people can successfully work from home. From January to March, we trialled it as a way of reducing CO2 emissions and it worked well. This will be especially helpful which is especially helpful to young people living and working in rural areas.”

Although Annabelle is glad to live in a rural area, she admits that it does come with its challenges.

“Technology is moving quick and fast, however rural areas are still affected with slow Wi-Fi connections, or sometimes no connection at all!

Everyone is being encouraged to “go green” and recycle more, something I am very passionate about; however, how can the government expect people to recycle in the rural communities with limited recycling facilities provided. These are two areas I feel strongly about and want to see change to help the rural community move forward”.

Solutions

1. Access to essential services: It's frustrating that small things such as access to recycling services and helping the environment from home are made difficult. Annabelle currently takes a trip to Newport to recycle her household items, to ensure she can still do her bit to help the environment. She would like to find out the reasons behind why this is an issue and how it can be resolved.

3. Digital connectivity: Many rural areas have very slow WI-FI connection or no connection at all, which is particularly frustrating during a time when many people are working from home. More access to high speed broadband would help rural areas.

2. Awareness of countryside: It is important to create an awareness of the countryside for people who don't live rurally and who may not appreciate what rural job opportunities are available.



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