

# President

Katie Fortune

Hello all!

I am thrilled to announce my candidacy for the role of President of the Edinburgh University Neurodivergent Society. As a neurodivergent individual myself, I understand the challenges and obstacles that many of us face every day, and I am eager to use my experiences to help make a positive impact within our community.

My name is Katie Fortune and I study Chinese, currently in my third year of university studying abroad in Taiwan. I found the first two years of university to be very difficult, I struggled with the change of learning structure from high school, finding it especially difficult to join societies online, make new friends and create my own self-motivated routine. My grades fell alongside my mental health, I didn't understand why my brain couldn't work like everyone else's. It wasn't until I was diagnosed with ASD in December of 2021 that things started making sense. As a late diagnosed neurodivergent, I was lost in all the misrepresentations and misinformation that was spread about ASD, and even after diagnosis suffered with imposter syndrome and doubts about my diagnosis due to ableist stereotypes. It wasn't until the student disability service recommended me to the AS discord that I really felt I wasn't alone. Through the weekly AS meetings I was able to ask questions, allowing me to access tools, resources and people I wouldn't have been able to without.

I wish to give back to the EUNS and repay how much they assisted me by helping others in the same way. I want to provide an open, safe environment for all the neurodivergent community to learn from each-other in a world that wasn't built for them. To give newly diagnosed people the opportunity to better understand themselves and their diagnosis. I firmly believe that our society has the potential to become an invaluable resource for neurodivergent students at the University of Edinburgh. By fostering a supportive and inclusive environment, we can work together to overcome the stigmatization and discrimination that often come with being neurodivergent. We must strive to create a society where every member feels valued, heard, and respected.

If elected as President, I will work tirelessly to ensure that the Neurodivergent Society continues to provide meaningful support and advocacy for neurodivergent students. I will listen to the needs and concerns of our members, and will actively seek out new and innovative ideas to enhance our society's mission. This includes organizing events and workshops to raise awareness about neurodiversity, helping understand the availability academic resources and accommodations that our university offered, and creating a safe space for members to connect and socialize. I would achieve this by introducing a special interest night, where people introduce their most recent fixation or long standing interest to the group in the form of a PowerPoint, accompanied with the consumption of safe-food snacks and drinks. I would also implement a session where all would share their stims and fidgets allowing us to learn and share coping mechanisms. Furthermore, I would also arrange sensory friendly trips, such as Deep Sea world or Edinburgh zoo, with the encouragement of bringing ear defenders, noise cancelling headphones and fidget toys without any fear of judgement. I would also communicate with sites before visiting to ask for

the least busy times during the week to ensure there are no crowds to navigate to allow full enjoyment of the experience, as well as the most neurodivergent friendly ways of traveling. I am confident that together, we can achieve great things as a society. I am honoured to be considered for this position, and I look forward to the opportunity to serve as the President of the EUNS.

## Treasurer

Stephen Tolley

Hello there, I'm Stephen (He/They), I'm a physics student with Autism, ADHD and a mild case of Tourette's. I've been Treasurer since the inception of the society and I'm happy to continue doing so.. I still feel quite new to the Neurodiversity community, but I've found that I really enjoy communicating with people who are also neuro diverse and I hope I can give support to others in the society where I can. Part of the role of Treasurer is making sure that the financial situation of the society allows for accessibility and inclusion of its members can occur seamlessly (in a financial sense).

I'm hoping that I can continue to help the society make the socials even more fun and engaging with the research into different assets and locations that may be available. I also hope that I can continue to help the society in other ways outside of the role of Treasurer, whether that's in just supporting other projects or events, or being in more of a director role. I hope I can continue helping the society in any way I can, and I hope it gets better from here.

## Secretary

Hi, my name is Maddy (she/they) and I am a 2nd year Environmental Geoscience student. I am interested in the position of secretary on the Neurodiverse Society committee. I believe the society is really important for providing neurodiverse students with a community for socialising and connecting with others. University can be a challenging time for anyone, but especially for neurodiverse students, so the society's role in providing a safe space and community is essential. I was not diagnosed with autism until the end of my first year of university and have found adapting to university life and fitting in with peers challenging. Joining the society was very helpful for me because it provided a space to connect with other students. I would like to give back to the society and help with running it to help continue to provide that to other students.

As a person who is organised and pays attention to details, I think I would be a good fit for the role of secretary. I have prior experience in a similar position; I was the secretary for my school's Environment Group, and was responsible for tasks such as taking notes for meetings and keeping track of the group's administration.

## Events Organiser

No nominations

## Vice President

Graye Moore

I'm Graye! I'll be running for the position of Vice-President

I believe I'd be a good candidate for this role as I'm always willing to help people as well as assist with making the society a safer place for the people in it. I have experience with being committee and helping with events as I used to be Social Secretary for another society and know how things are done

I've been part of the neurodivergent community from a young age and feel pretty at home with the people in it, so being able to help out and where I can with this society would be great!

I'm also pretty flexible as I'm available most of the time, so whenever the president is absent I am more than happy to step in.

I know it's a little short but I hope you consider me as your vice president!

Heather Wheadon

I have experience on exec committees (outgoing JazzSoc secretary, incoming president) and thus have experience leading a new society with multiple regular events. I am also project lead for my national project on neurodiversity in clinical professions which includes a conference, e-learning along with other resources so I would love to get some more experience of nurturing an ND community through EUNDS.

As I'm currently in 4 societies (and will be already leading 1 next year) I would appreciate potentially running for VP or potentially secretary as they overlap most with my experience so would be easiest for me.

## Wellbeing Officer

Maya Cohen

I am running to be one of Neurodiversity Society's wellbeing officers. I feel that I would excel in this role given my academic and personal experiences. I am an alumni of Edinburgh University - I graduated in 2021 with a Bachelor's degree in social work.

My degree has given me a robust set of skills in working with people of diverse backgrounds and with varying support needs. Furthermore, my degree has afforded me a profound understanding of the supports and services available in Edinburgh and around Scotland for students and neurodivergent people. Finally, my degree has given me significant experience of facilitating group activities, as well as collecting feedback from service users to ensure all activities continue to run smoothly and are accessible, inclusive, and enjoyable.

My own personal experiences have further informed my decision to run for this role. Being a late-diagnosed Autistic person, I struggled for a long time to access support that accommodated and met my needs. It wasn't until university that I realised I might be Autistic, and then was signposted to important services and groups where I could meet and interact with other neurodivergent people. One of those groups was the Autistic Students Group, which later formed this society.

I would love to give back to this society that has given me an accepting and open community and supported me to be who I am. If re-elected, I would provide consistent and continuous opportunities for members to give both formal and informal feedback regarding socials and other society activities. By implementing this continuous monitoring, and by attending socials regularly as a friendly face for members to have a chat with, I want to help make this a great year for Neurodiversity Society. Thanks for your time and I look forward to hopefully representing you on your committee again!

## Activism and Outreach Officer

Caleb Sansom

Hi I'm Caleb (they/them), I'm autistic, ADHD, with other funky stuff. I was the activism and outreach officer for this past term and I would like to put forward to continue my role. Accessibility, inclusion and education are key interests of mine relating to neurodiversity and disability. I have enjoyed every moment of the work I have done in my role as activism and outreach officer. I spoke with Pleasance gym on accessibility for autistic and other neurodivergent students, attended the Psychiatry Society's conference on neurodiversity and gave a talk, and helped make contacts at The Donaldson Trust, which is a group dedicated to providing services to neurodivergent and learning disabled people of all ages. I would like to continue with things similar to these, like building contacts and relationships with services to help neurodivergent students and others, and continue to help places be as inclusive and accessible for us as possible. I would very much look forward to whatever comes.

## Social Media Officer

Cristina Samuel

I have served on the EUNDS committee over the last academic year, I have loved being a part of a society that helps ND people build connections, but I would love to be elected as

Social Media Officer next, to help increase engagement with the society and also experience a new role.

The EUNDS society is so important, and ND students deserve communities and spaces that are accessible and social. I was previously a Wellbeing Officer, and I applied for that role because, being an LGBT+ WOC from a disadvantaged background, who grew up in a predominantly white estate, means that I always felt different. I only received formal diagnoses of my ADHD and Autism when I came to university, and then I felt *even more* different. However, the UofE ND community was the most welcoming and accepting community that I'd ever had the privilege to be a part of. The AS Group and EUNDS discord servers allowed me to feel validated, seen and understood in ways that I hadn't experienced before. I wanted to contribute to the effort of providing other ND students with the same experience, and felt that due to my background, the best way for me to do so would be as a Wellbeing Officer because I have a passion for inclusivity, acceptance and representation. I still want the same things, but would love to contribute to inclusivity, acceptance, community and representation both within the society and within the wider student community, as Social Media Officer.


Social media is a powerful tool and I would love to expand the society's use of social media in order to further help achieve the society's aims as set out in the constitution. I would love to collaborate with the Activism Officer to help transform the society's social media into a source of validation for Neurodivergent students, and education and acceptance of Neurodiversity. I recently took the lead in writing a statement included in an open letter to the University, regarding the attendance of a controversial guest speaker who made false and misleading claims about autism. The statement was posted to social media and gained a lot of traction. It was empowering to be able to use social media in a way that (hopefully) educates people outside of the ND community about what autism is and how autism myths are harmful, and I would love to develop this type of use of social media from within and for the society.

Yuyi He

My name is Yuyi and I am running for your social media officer. I am a first-year student in philosophy and psychology, and I am actually autistic. None of you besides Holly and Caleb know me already, and I just met the two of them at a conference two days ago, but I thought "it's been a hard year trying to fit into neurotypical societies, I guess time to get involved in a group where I actually belong". : )

As a previous art student, graphic design is something I've been doing for more than 5 years at school and with different organizations. I will show you some of my designs here. I also have some committee experience, believe it or not, as I've been the first-year rep for PhilSoc this year. I am also pretty knowledgeable about neurodiversity and mental health as a psychology student, and I look forward to participating in and helping organize future events with other committee members!

Some examples:




# SOCIAL NETWORK PROGRAM


for Adolescents on the Autism Spectrum

**Interested? Email Us!**  
[annabeth.aylward@awc.org.za](mailto:annabeth.aylward@awc.org.za)

- Connect with others on Zoom
- Chat in WhatsApp groups
- Meet in-person whenever circumstances allow



# BEAVER COMPUTING CHALLENGE (BCC)



The BCC is an online contest held annually in November by the University of Waterloo. With a focus on computational and logical thinking, it presents problems in computer science and mathematics. The three levels are: grade 5/6, grade 7/8, and grade 9/10.

## NEED HELP?

Check out our 1:1 coding mentorship program! Link in description below.

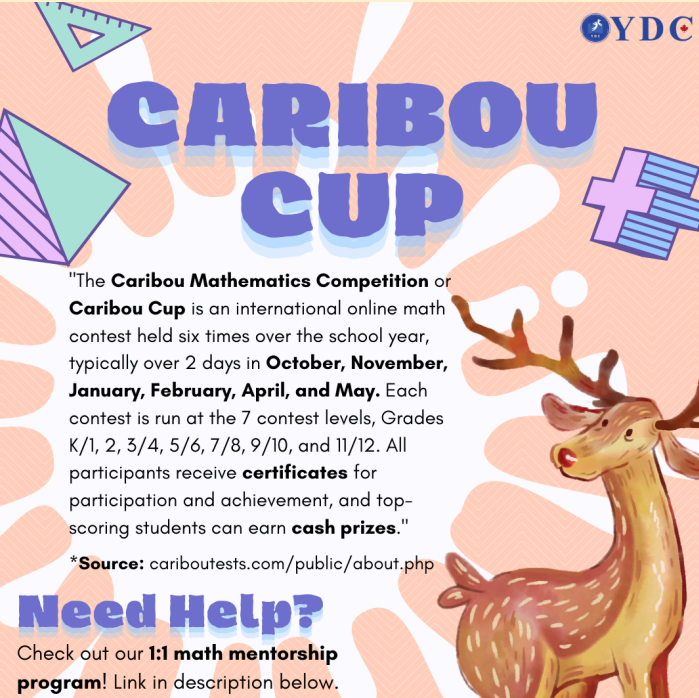
# CARIBOU CUP

"The **Caribou Mathematics Competition** or **Caribou Cup** is an international online math contest held six times over the school year, typically over 2 days in **October, November, January, February, April, and May**. Each contest is run at the 7 contest levels, Grades K/1, 2, 3/4, 5/6, 7/8, 9/10, and 11/12. All participants receive **certificates** for participation and achievement, and top-scoring students can earn **cash prizes**."

\*Source: [cariboutests.com/public/about.php](http://cariboutests.com/public/about.php)

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# HOW TO COMMUNICATE RESPECTFULLY WITH A DISABLED PERSON

**AVOID**

- Slow
- Retardation
- High/low functioning
- The handicapped, disabled, crippled, invalid
- Afflicted by, suffers from, victim of
- Wheelchair-bound
- Mentally defective, retarded, subnormal
- Spastic
- Able-bodied
- Mental patient, insane
- Deaf and dumb, deaf mute
- The blind
- An epileptic, diabetic, depressive
- Dwarf/midget
- Fits, spells, attacks

**USE**

- Intellectual difficulties
- Cognitive impairments
- Support need level
- Disabled people
- Has (name of condition)
- Wheelchair user
- With one or multiple learning disabilities
- Person with cerebral palsy
- Non-disabled
- Person with a mental health condition
- Deaf, user of sign language, person with a hearing impairment
- Blind/partially-sighted people, people with visual impairments
- Person with epilepsy/diabetes/depression
- Person with restricted growth/short stature
- Seizures

autism WESTERN CAPE

## Advisory Council Board

Holly Rankin

Hi! I've been the president for the last couple years and whilst I'm stepping down from that role, I would still like to support the new committee with learning how the society works and what we have learned so far. I would hope that with my help, the new committee will be able to run more effectively next year.