

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Youth Service Delivery Committee Meeting held at Grange Youth Centre, Shrewsbury At 10.30 am on 28th November 2019

PRESENT

Councillors A Mosley (Chairman), G Burgess, I Jones, Mrs P Moseley, K Parry, A Phillips, & D Vasmer

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Adam Purnell (Youth & Community Development Officer), Natasha Dews (Youth Worker) and Heather Phillips (Administration Assistant)

APOLOGIES

Andy Watkin (Responsible Finance Officer)

05/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Councillor Mosley declared a non-pecuniary interest in Flaxivity as he was Chairman of the Friends of the Flaxmill at which the Town Council operates a youth session.

All present declared non-pecuniary interests as both Town & Unitary Councillors in any matters relating to agreements between both Councils.

06/19 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Youth Services Delivery Committee meeting held on 3rd July 2019 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Youth Services Delivery Committee meeting held on 3rd July 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

07/19 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

08/19 CLUB ACTIVITY

The Youth & Community Development Officer presented his report on youth club activity for the Summer Term 2019 as follows. Overall, there was a decrease in attendance at most clubs, which is usual in the summer due to the improved weather and other outside activities being available.

There had been an increase in numbers at Sundorne.

The use of the old Salop Glass site for Flaxivity will be finishing soon, therefore alternative provision, in terms of youth provision and a new location for the ramps, needs to be discussed at next meeting.

The Youth & Community Development Officer reported that senior school assemblies had been visited recently in order to promote the youth clubs, particularly to the lower year groups. He stressed that it was more important *who* attended the clubs rather than *how many* and was confident that they were working with the “right” young people at the clubs, particularly the seniors; some of whom are also being discussed at the Team Shrewsbury meetings in relation to anti-social behaviour.

There have been two significant success stories in relation to working with children who engage in anti-social behaviour in the wider community. The Youth & Community Development Officer provided details of those individuals and their activity.

The Youth & Community Development Officer is hoping to obtain another £30K in funding in order to carry on offering the music project to the young people who need it and to continue its positive and valuable work.

The Youth & Community Development Officer added that there are a significant number of children who are on the fringes that are getting into trouble. The Detached Team’s work is to build relationships with these children and signpost them to activities/services as necessary. However, safeguarding staff has to be taken into consideration when working in the community during the evening. It was noted that detached staff were offered drugs by people on motorbikes when they were working in the Kynaston Road Recreation Ground; Year 5 children were in the park.

09/19 DETACHED WORK

The Detached Team engaged with lots of young people during the summer. ‘Engagement’ in this context means conversations (no register or lists are kept). The outcome of these conversations is difficult to assess but there could be some records kept, for example, when a young person engages with the Team and then is signposted to an activity such as football or fishing. There were also lots of groups of young people who approached the Team for a chat during the recent Christmas Light Switch-On event.

It was important to stress that detached work could not be looked at in isolation as the aim was to encourage those they encountered into other youth activity including the open access session.

The Youth & Community Development Officer would be working with the Detached Team to re-evaluate the activities of the Team for the Winter months and to discuss the possibility of monitoring the effectiveness of the Team’s work. Other ideas to explore included using the Big Town Plan Unit in the shopping centre and borrowing the Donkey Support Vehicle. Areas to visit were suggested by the Committee, eg Castle Walk/Bridge, but safeguarding of the Team has to be taken into account. It was noted that some of the problems these children have go beyond the work of the youth service.

RESOLVED

That the Youth & Community Development Officer explores the possibility of monitoring the effectiveness of the work of the Detached Team.

10/19 HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

The Alton Towers trip cost much less than anticipated due to low uptake: money was saved on staffing and a self-drive minibus was used instead of coach hire. Only a handful of children attended the ice-skating activity during half-term. 10 girls attended the Girls' Day at The Grange. Approximately 25 attended the X-game event at the Flaxmill.

The camping residential trip was very successful: 12 children signed up and they were all keen to do it again. The Youth & Community Development Officer has asked the children to help raise the money in order to run another trip and one of the initiatives will involve a team of children running Dough & Oil on a Monday (when the restaurant is usually closed). The Rotary Club are organising a charity dinner. An NHS youth worker has also been in touch with the possibility of some further funding.

11/19 ADDITIONAL FUNDED PROJECTS

11.1 Reach Out to Music Project

This is continuing to engage the challenging young people for whom the project was intended. An extension bid has been applied for, which would allow the project to run for another 18 months.

11.2 Fishing Project

This was a success; 30 young people registered from Castlefields/Ditherington and it is hoped that it could be expanded to the Meole area in future.

11.3 5-a-side Sessions at Monkmoor Recreation Ground

These sessions have not proved that successful owing to it having been commissioned to a soccer company, and also due to the refurbishment at the Ground.

11.4 Family Cooking Sessions

These had been very successful but this year they were run through the Food Hub (the Marches Academy would not continue to fund) for 5 families. A community meal cooking activity is planned which will take place at The Grange for families engaged in the Early Help process.

12/19 AUTUMN TERM

The Youth & Community Development Officer reported that there are no changes to the plans for Autumn Term activity at the youth clubs.

The Committee was advised that the Boxing Club in Ditherington is looking for a new venue. It is a hugely valuable asset to the community owing to the fact that it can reach a significant number of teenagers, especially in this area which is a hotspot for exploitation. Ditherington Community Centre was suggested as it could fit a boxing ring and currently has few

bookings. The Youth & Community Development Officer hopes to engage an inspiring ex-drug addict turned professional boxer as part of the alternative curriculum.

13/19 ALTERNATIVE CURRICULUM – UPDATE

Natasha Dews was introduced to the Committee as the new Alternative Curriculum Youth Worker. From January she will be offering a 2-day alternative curriculum programme to schools for pupils who are on the brink of exclusion. Pastoral teams in schools have been contacted and the deadline for referrals is the end of next week. This service will be free to schools initially as the youth service has funding but will have to charge a fee to schools for this service in future. Currently, if a child has been excluded for more than five days then the school must find some provision for them. They are often referred to TMBSS at a cost to schools of in the region of £400 per week.

It is hoped that this project will prevent some exclusions, but it will also provide an opportunity for the Youth Service to engage with those children who are excluded. Children are vulnerable and when excluded run the risk of exploitation (eg county lines) when out of school and waiting for a new school placement; it is hoped that the youth team can act quickly enough in order to prevent the child's situation escalating. Councillor Jones enquired about police involvement. The Youth & Community Development Officer said that this project is about *intervention* and *prevention* and not when children are involved with criminal activity such as county lines; it is important in order to maintain positive relationships built with the children concerned that youth workers are not seen to be working with the police in this way.

Evidence of outcomes will be recorded and shared with Shropshire Council.

The Town Clerk said that this work should be held up as a national case study especially as all political parties have included promises to invest in youth services in their manifestoes.

The Chairman asked if parents or agencies could refer their children. The Youth & Community Development Officer replied that parental referral will not be encouraged but it could be advertised as a service in order to raise awareness. The Youth Service feeds into the Early Help process which in turn feeds into schools. Some primary schools are engaged with Early Help which means that intervention can take place for children at a very early stage.

In the Spring/Summer, outdoor activities will be advertised.

14/19 YOUTH CONSULTATION

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council responded to Shropshire Council's Youth Consultation. This is now complete, and due to go to Cabinet in mid-December with implementation by April 2020.

15/19 BUDGET

The details of the first six months of the Youth Budget were presented to the Committee.

It was noted that the income and corresponding expenditure regarding the music grant have skewed the budget but that another £10,190 is due from Shropshire Council which will fund the temporary post for the alternative curriculum for probably most of 2020/21 but not the 2021/22 budget.

Wages have deviated from budget as non-budgeted activities were undertaken during holidays. Also, whenever there is a change to service, there are more costs eg running two sessions at Monkmoor increases staff costs and materials considerably.