

## **SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Meeting of the Youth Services Working Group Held at the Grange Youth Centre At 3.30pm on Thursday 17 November 2022**

#### **PRESENT**

Councillors P Moseley (Chair), B Bentick, C Lemon, and D Vasmer.

#### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Andy Hall (Youth and Community Manager), Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk), Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Michelle Farmer (Committee Clerk), Sally Nicholson (Mayoral Secretary) and Fleur Joyce and Casper Macindoe (from the Street Allotments Project)

#### **10/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Roberts

#### **11/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY & NON-PECUNIARY) IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

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| Shropshire Councillors | Those twin-hatted members declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council. |
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#### **12/22 MINUTES OF THE LAST WORKING GROUP MEETING**

To approve the minutes of the Working Group meeting held on 14 July 2022 were submitted as circulated and read.

Cllr Bentick referred to item 05/22 of the Minutes of the Last Working Group Meeting and asked if any HAF funds had been directed to South Shrewsbury. The Deputy Town Clerk advised there had been very limited funds this year but that the Youth and Community Manager would say more on this later in the meeting.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the Youth Working Group held on 14 July 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.**

#### **13/22 UPDATE ON YOUTH ACTIVITY DURING THE AUTUMN TERM**

The Youth and Community Manager updated the group on the autumn term activities. Both groups at The Grange Youth Club had been busy with numbers after the summer break and reported no issues. He went on to advise that the regular Sports worker had left due to her full-time job commitments, confirming a replacement had been found.

The new group at the Hive (from Meole and Priory schools) was developing well and was attracting young people keen on media, music and drama with a Christmas Panto being planned.

Cllr Moseley asked if there was any interest from other areas. The Youth and Community Manager advised they were targeting the South of the town but all young people could attend with all the information available on the Shrewsbury Town Council Website. He also confirmed the Consent Form now asks for the year group and the schools they attend. The Deputy Town Clerk suggested we complete a postcode search to see where the young people are attending from.

The Youth and Community Manager advised numbers were up at Monkmoor Football and that he had reduced the Embrace staff by one. However, Monkmoor Jnrs numbers were still low after the summer break. He intended to visit Belvidere and Crowmoor schools to promote the session.

With regard to Monkmoor Snrs, the Youth and Community Manager advised this club had been challenging at times. A busy session which recently had some issues with behaviour of a few young people which was being dealt with and parents had been notified. The session had been closed temporarily but plans were in place to re-open. Numbers may be limited as there was a duty of care to all who attended. The Youth and Community Manager advised the possible cause of deterioration and behavioural problems could be linked to missing out on social skills during the pandemic lockdown.

Cllr Bentick asked what remedial action was being taken to address the behavioural problems. The Youth and Community Manager advised that as it was not a big centre, he was thinking of reducing entry to 30 students on a first come first served basis. He also advised any overspill of young people would be signposted as necessary to other organisations and added everything possible was being done within resources.

Cllr Moseley asked if students could pre-book to attend. The Youth and Community Manager responded that it was more manageable on a first come first served basis saying that he knew who the disruptive students were and was therefore able to manage the situation.

Cllr Bentick responded saying that the disruptive students needed more provision and should be registered. The Town Clerk advised that there were limited resources and that they could not be responsible for everyone.

The Youth and Community Manager advised that Shropshire Council Youth Workers were picking up youngsters and collaborating with them to avoid county lines issues.

The Youth and Community Manager advised the Upton Road Play area at Belvidere School was under consultation. A board had been set up to see what the students would prefer. The information would then be sent to the Head of Operations. Communication was ongoing with the students regarding this initiative. He also advised that the Kynaston Road play area and bike track was also under consultation.

## **14/22 STREET ALLOTMENT PROJECT**

Fleur Joyce and Casper Macindoe from the Street Allotment Project (SAP) attended the meeting to give an overview of their proposed project for a Community Allotment at the Grange Youth Centre. They advised the Working Group that they had outside gardens currently at the following locations: Belle Vue; Abbey Pub; Monkmoor Pub and Bell Lane. They were now looking at the patch of ground outside the Grange Youth Centre and wanted to call it the Grange Kitchen Garden.

Each of their plots were unique to where they are located. As the Grange Youth Centre has a Kitchen this location was ideal for growing vegetables using the phrase 'Plot to Plate'.

The Youth Services Working Group were advised that SAP sites increased biodiversity. They planted native grasses and they cared for the soil by using carbon woodchip. They work to a seven year rotation plan, avoiding toxins and commented that no plastic was used on any sites. The projects were fully organic and their aim was to encourage the community to see the results from start to finish.

They advised they had volunteers available and they had the seeds ready for planting in Spring 2023. They would like to start preparing the ground with cardboard and woodchip as soon as possible. The Deputy Town Clerk asked how deep they intended to dig as investigations may need to take place before hand to see what pipes were below the soil level. Fleur advised that they go no lower than six inches and added soil levels are likely to rise over time.

Cllr Bentick asked if there would be any enclosures or raised beds. Fleur advised they would use woodchip paths around the plot. She also advised that they had applied for a grant with Veolia, they had all the tools they required, and they would install water butts along with a lockable garden shed.

The Town Clerk advised them about possible grants available from Shrewsbury in Bloom and the Shropshire Horticultural Society.

Cllr Moseley asked if any sessions at the Grange would be held to use the produce grown. Fleur responded that the produce could be used all year round and the experience of growing and cooking could be life enhancing for youngsters. She gave an example of a DofE student who was unsure at the start of the project but very much enjoyed the sessions, becoming extremely enthusiastic leading him to want to go to Horticultural College.

Cllr Vasmer advised that good work had been done on the Monkmoor site and asked if there were any plans to use the students from the Grange Youth Centre to be involved to which The Youth and Community Manager advised yes.

Fleur advised she was enthusiastic with the students being involved but they would need to be keen students as the volunteers did not have the time to 'police' them. Volunteers were not trained or qualified in mental health wellbeing but very much supported keen and enthusiastic students to join in.

The Town clerk advised them on Governance and a licence to operate. Noting SAP's seven year rotation plan, she advised there may not be a long term plan for the sites and asked if they had any discussions with other sites for longer life

Fleur advised about the right to grow initiative which allowed access to public land and advised they were always looking for other plots. They understood the possible temporary use of land and were happy and would work with it, advising they would set up elsewhere if necessary.

The Town Clerk advised of possible land within the Town Council, advising there were open spaces available that would work well and that she could arrange for the Head of Operations to organise site visits for them.

Cllr Moseley asked if any SAP gardens had experienced any vandalism to which Casper advised none.

## **15/22 ALTERNATIVE CURRICULUM**

The Youth & Community Manager confirmed that there were two students on the Monday morning session and 3 students in the afternoon. On Wednesday there were 2 students but that this would finish at the end of the current Term. Thursday morning sessions currently have 5 young people. He also advised that the schools they were working with were happy with the service provided. He continued that they were providing a service and were running at cost.

Regarding the Holiday Activity Fund, the Youth & Community Manager reported that reduced funding for 2022 had made provision challenging and that the booking system attracted youngsters from elsewhere. He stated that having scrapped the electronic booking system, they were now booking students on themselves. The current Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) activities are only offered in the North of the town but other providers offer provision elsewhere meaning there was a good spread of activities for all.

The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the funding had been cut but expectations of what could be delivered were raised. The question was asked if HAF was right and beneficial for the Youth Services in the future and that they possibly needed to consider alternatives. It was suggested that the Working Group would look at this within the next couple of months.

The Youth & Community Manager advised that Tash Dews had now left her role within the Alternative Curriculum due to personal circumstances. There was no replacement at the present time.

## **16/22 YOUTH COUNCIL**

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that draft TORs had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting to consider the set up of a Youth Council. Comments on the TORs were to be sent back to the Deputy Town Clerk by January 2023 before being submitted to Full Council. She explained that the Youth Council would work alongside the Youth Services Working Group. The Town Clerk advised that she would speak with other town Clerks to see how they had set up their Youth Councils. The Deputy Town Clerk advised of possible funding from the Princes Trust and the Town Clerk suggested speaking with National Youth.

The Youth and Community Manager advised that Shropshire Youth Association do a similar project called Youth Parliament.

## **17/22 YOUTH STRATEGY**

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the development of a Youth Strategy would become part of the Town Council Visioning Exercises to discuss future plans and the benefits to the coverage of Shrewsbury.

## **18/22 YOUTH SERVICES BUDGET**

In the absence of the Head of Resources, the Deputy Town Clerk advised the Working Group that he had provided a summary of the Youth Budget and the Year to Date position at Month 7 (October 2022), and for the 4 month period up to 31st October 2022.

His summary advised there were 2 cost centres, one for youth clubs and other works be it grants or Alternative Curriculum. Both for the 4 months period were showing a small surplus in part due to

lower activity during the summer when the youth clubs were closed and receiving a HAF grant to cover sessions provided in other activities and no Alternative Curriculum work

These positive variances feed into a Year to Date positive variance but he advised that this would be eroded by the new pay scales to a breakeven position next meeting, but all was on track.

The Youth and Community Manager was familiar with the service now and a budget for 23/24 needs to be worked up.

#### **19/22 OTHER QUESTIONS**

At the close of the meeting Cllr Moseley asked if there was any other business. Cllr Bentick mentioned the South Shrewsbury youth partnership. He suggested a pan Shrewsbury partnership to ensure all were working in unison. The Deputy Town Clerk asked that Cllr Bentick submit a paper to the next meeting so that requirements could be understood and discussed by the group.

#### **20/22 NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Youth Services Working Group is Thursday 19 January 2023.