



SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
12 AUGUST 2026

Officer: Andy Hall – Youth and Community Manager

Million Hours Funding

Purpose of Report

This report provides an update on the Million Hours Programme

Million Hours Funding 2026

During the start of the project period, engagement activities have been carried out in the Quarry, the town centre, and Coton Hill. These sessions have focused on consulting with young people, gathering their views, and shaping the direction of the project.

I can report sustained engagement with large numbers of young people across the Quarry, Pride Hill, the Darwin Centre, bus and train stations, KFC and other town-centre locations. The clearest message is that young people want safe, welcoming and affordable places where they can spend time with friends, alongside a varied programme of sports, music, creative and social activities. Free or low-cost provision, food and drink, convenient town-centre locations and reliable communication through Instagram and TikTok are consistently important. Young people have responded positively when activities have been visible, well promoted and shaped by their ideas.

Key points from youth worker reports

- **Strong demand for accessible provision:** Young people repeatedly say there is little to do in central Shrewsbury, particularly after school, at weekends, in poor weather and during school holidays.
- **Relationships are developing:** Repeat encounters, recognition of youth workers / Rangers, and positive re-engagement indicate growing trust. Some young people are approaching workers directly for advice, practical help and updates.
- **The Quarry is a major social and activity hub:** It is widely used for meeting friends and informal sport. Young people want more equipment, organised sessions, seating, shelter, toilets, water and events there.
- **Town-centre hotspots remain important:** The Darwin Centre, Pride Hill, bus station, KFC and the Quarry are common gathering places, especially where young people can keep warm, use Wi-Fi, access food or wait for transport.
- **Targeted activities attract participation:** Football, multi-sport, gaming, pool, pizza, arts, beauty and wellbeing sessions have received positive feedback. Creative sessions at St Chad's generated repeat attendance and new friendships.

- **Free food and refreshments matter:** Young people frequently mention cost, and food is a significant incentive for attending and staying at activities.
- **Participation varies by timing and conditions:** Weather, exams, holidays, event clashes, location and late changes all affect footfall.

Key issues identified

- **Communication and promotion:** Young people overwhelmingly prefer Instagram and TikTok. QR cards and the council website alone may not be sufficient; some cards are lost, some phones cannot scan them.
- **Affordability and inclusion:** Many young people have little disposable income. Commercial cafés can feel expensive and young people may feel expected to leave after finishing a drink. Free provision, food, transport affordability and inclusive access are central concerns.
- **Facilities:** Recurring concerns include evening toilet access, poor toilet conditions, a lack of covered seating, insufficient picnic tables, no convenient drinking-water point, limited football equipment and run-down sports facilities.
- **Safety and safeguarding:** Reports record underage drinking, suspected exploitation and county-lines concerns, missing young people, bullying, self-harm and mental-health disclosures, unsafe river use, bike theft, antisocial behaviour and contact with risky adults.
- **Transport and getting home:** Young people report missed or unreliable buses, cost concerns and feeling unsafe during darker evenings.

What young people say they wanted - Safe, social and affordable spaces

- A youth café or “Nerdy Café” style venue in the town centre, open into the evening.
- Indoor and outdoor places to meet, talk, study, play games and relax without having to buy something.
- Pool, pizza and games nights; board games for some groups, with alternative low-pressure creative activities for others.
- Food, drinks, Wi-Fi, comfortable seating and a welcoming atmosphere.
- Spaces that feel safe, inclusive and suitable for young people with different interests and support needs.

Sports and outdoor activities

- Football tournaments, including the Quarry Cup, five-a-side games, goals and marked pitches.
- Swimming, improved pool activities, paddleboarding and safe water-based summer activities.
- Gaming bus, FIFA tournaments, driving simulators, large outdoor games and assault-course style activities.

- Better courts, skate facilities, picnic tables, covered areas, drinking water and maintained equipment.

Music, culture and creativity

- Under-18 music events, discos, raves and DJ nights, particularly house, techno, jungle, rap and hip-hop.
- Live music in the Quarry and bandstand, with opportunities for young DJs, bands and performers.
- Arts and crafts, gel printing, collage, drama, dance, sewing, barbering, photography, animation and film.
- Beauty, skincare, hair, nails, makeup, fashion and pamper workshops.
- Creative and wellbeing activities that help young people talk, build confidence and make friends.

Skills, support and opportunities

- Employment, apprenticeship, volunteering and careers events, including access to employers and public services.
- Cooking, wellbeing, women's health and practical life-skills workshops.
- More support for mental health, learning difficulties, bullying, relationships and transitions from school or care.
- Trusted adult mentors, including male role models where requested.
- Clear information about where to get help, delivered in a non-judgemental and youth-friendly way.

What appears to be working

- Visible detached Youth Workers/Rangers who return regularly, remember previous conversations and engage informally.
- Activities that directly reflect young people's requests, particularly pool and pizza, gaming, football, arts, beauty and free sport.
- Sessions with welcoming facilitators, practical activities and space for conversation.
- Partnerships with local venues, businesses and activity providers.
- Free access and refreshments.
- Face-to-face promotion when workers can give accurate dates, times and locations.
- Social media promotion, which reports suggest improved awareness and attendance at creative sessions.

Events and Activities currently provided include:

- GAMING BUS
- Hungry Guy – Sustainable cooking on a budget
- Sports in Quarry 4-7pm Monday – Friday

- THE HIVE:
Find your Sound Singer and Songwriting Workshop
Drawing Sessions at The Hive
DWTY LIFE - A Gratitude and Wellbeing Workshop
- ANDY MCKEOWN Animation and Film Workshop @ THE HIVE
- Drumming and Yoga in Quarry
- St Chads Wellbeing and Art Cafe 4-7pm every Tuesday
- LILY M Beauty Workshop 4-6pm – Wednesday
- HOCKEY 2-4pm bottom of Quarry
- Orly Rose Ariel Hoop and Circus Skills
- Yoga with Olesia

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report be noted.