



**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Agenda No

10

Officer: Adam Purnell – Youth and Community Manager

Young Shrewsbury Project Update

Purpose of Report

To inform members on the current position regarding the activities undertaken by Young Shrewsbury.

Update

This report provides an update as what's been happening in Young Shrewsbury since the last report in January. There has not been a great deal of change in this time, until the 8th April when the NYA updated their recommendations for youth activity and announced that we will be able to start to reopen our open access youth club sessions once again. This comes with great relief for both staff and young people who have become increasingly frustrated and isolated during this lockdown, but after what seems like the longest winter ever light seems to be emerging at the end of the tunnel.

One big change is that we will no longer be restricted on numbers that can attend our sessions, as it was previously a maximum of 15 people allowed which meant that we had to put a booking system in place for young people to attend. This presented us with a few issues, not only was it a lot of work uploading all of our sessions to Eventbrite but it also presented some challenges for young people who could not access the internet to book on. This restriction has now been removed and instead it is up to the discretion of youth workers to decide of safe numbers that they can work with in their settings. This is a relief as a huge barrier has been removed, but we now have the challenge of starting to rebuild our numbers of members who attend youth sessions. In many ways we feel we will be starting from scratch again, as lots of the young people who attended sessions have not got to the age that they are leaving school in May and will be moving on. Therefore our plan is to focus on encouraging pupils in year 6, who are about to start secondary schools in September to attend our youth clubs. We know from experience that if we work with young people from these earlier years that we have a better chance of building a positive relationship with them that continues into their later years, and they then continue to attend our activities throughout the times in their lives when most big changes happen and they are most likely to need support. Our old Monkmoor cohort are a prime example of this.

We do not intend to stop working with our older groups if they wish to engage with us, but we will do this through detached working and by providing outdoor activity such as funding time on sports pitches and offering activities such as boxing, fishing and dance that will be led by qualified sport staff and supported by youth workers. We saw that this model worked well in the Autumn term, and so will look into the options and roll out a programme for when young people return to school after the Easter holidays, and look to schools to promote our offer.

Youth Endowment Funding

This project continues to deliver its online workshops via YouTube during the Easter holidays after securing some additional funding from Shropshire Council that is specifically for funding food and activities for young people during the school holidays. Our YEF funding was for term time delivery only, and so the has bridged that gap. We have begun to involve local businesses in this project, and have local Independent restaurants CSON's and Dough and Oil both providing at home cook along ingredients backed up with



instructional videos to be uploaded to our Youtube Channel. This has meant that many young people who may not be fortunate enough to have the chance to eat out in a nice restaurant, have had that experience delivered to their own homes. Furthermore, they have had a direct introduction to the chefs who run these restaurants, and we hope that this will be the start of working more closely with them on face to face projects as Coronavirus restrictions relax. This all links into our vision for involving young people with more of what is happening in the town as a part of the Big Town Plan.

Detached work

We have continued to deliver our detached sessions which have been hit and miss depending on the weather. We have started to work more closely with the new detached team provided by Shropshire council and are excited to see how we can develop a working relationship as they establish to provide young people with a more robust offer in the town. Sian Makin is the lead worker for the central area, and whilst they are recruiting her team she has been offering her time working alongside our team to gain a better knowledge of the areas of focus and understanding what it is we offer. Her role will be key in signposting young people to our new activity programme and rebuilding our open access provision.

Youth Voice

I recently took part in a discussion with Friends of the Flaxmill to look at how we can get young people's input into what happens when the site opens next spring. We have agreed that this will become a focus for some of our alternative curriculum young people next term. Amanda and I are also booked onto a workshop in May that looks at how to involve young people more in local council decision making, and will be looking to develop this area of work further as restrictions relax.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) The report be noted.