

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Youth Services Working Group
Held Virtually on Microsoft Teams
At 3.30pm on Wednesday 15 September 2021**

PRESENT

Councillors P Moseley (Chair) and D Vasmer

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Tash Dews (Alternative Curriculum), Adam Purnell (Youth and Community Manager), Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk), Andy Watkin (Head of Resources - RFO), Michelle Farmer (Committee Clerk)

12/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors C Lemon and B Bentick.

**13/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY & NON-PECUNIARY) IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

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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14/21 MINUTES OF THE LAST WORKING GROUP MEETING

To approve the minutes of the Working Group meeting held on 14 July 2021 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Youth Working Group held on 14 July 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

15/21 YOUTH ACTIVITY DURING THE SUMMER TERM

The Youth and Community Manager reported that the following activity had taken place during the summer term:

- Grange Juniors – Monday – Year 6 only
- Music Project – Invite only – kept to a limit of 6 due to COVID restrictions
- Wednesday – Two sessions ran:
Grange Pre - Juniors at Grange for Years 3, 4 and 5 – This is a particularly busy session
Sundorne Juniors – Year 6+. Larger space meant more people could attend Sundorne
- Thursday – Monkmoor Juniors – Year 6 only

- Two football sessions ran at Monkmoor Recreation Ground and the Grange on a Tuesday between 5-6pm
- No longer running any sessions at the Hive

The Youth and Community Manager reported that clubs had re-opened in the summer term with limited numbers due to the COVID pandemic. The Grange Juniors session on a Monday had up to 15 young people present. As restrictions were in place and there were limited numbers that could attend there was a focus on providing a service for younger children in order to develop contacts for the future. Many of the previous attendees had left or would soon be leaving the service due to their age. All sessions provided were well attended.

The football sessions at Monkmoor and the Grange continued to run with both a sports specialist and a Youth Worker present. These sessions were also well attended as, as they are outside, there was no limit on the numbers. These sessions will be starting again at the end of September.

Youth staff have used the summer term to re-establish the youth clubs and slowly starting to build up interest for the future.

16/21 SUMMER HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

The Youth and Community Manager reported provided an update on Summer Holiday Activities. He informed the group that he will be attending three assemblies to publicise the services available at Belvidere School for Years 7, 8 and 9.

Youth Services had been successful in a bid to the HAF (Holiday Activity Fund) and therefore ran sessions at The Grange centre throughout the week for the first four weeks of the summer holidays. The funding allowed for the provision of food for those attending. The sessions were very well attended, some days being oversubscribed.

Trips were run every Friday during this period to The Great Escape (Ziplines/Assault Course), Ten Pin Bowling, Jump In and an Ice Skating rink.

A residential camp took place for some of the young people engaged in the Alternative Curriculum programme. A small group of eight young people were given access to the Longmynd Adventure Camp where a number of activities took place.

Two young people were also given the opportunity to attend a residential provided by the Outward-Bound Trust, funded by the Jeux Sans Frontiers Trust.

17/21 ALTERNATIVE CURRICUUM WORK

The Alternative Curriculum Officer provided an update on the Alternative Curriculum Project reporting that 48 young people had engaged with the service since it began in October 2019. The referrals confirmed for the start of September 2021 was 22. Of those who had participated with the alternative curriculum, the majority were making very good progress.

Currently they are running six half day sessions across the week. There is a larger demand for the service but, due to the intensive resource required, numbers are restricted. The sessions had started earlier that week and it had been a positive start.

All local Primary and Secondary schools have been contacted and invited to make referrals for any young people that they feel may be at risk of permanent exclusion or criminal exploitation. The Priory School are not referring as they provide their own on-site alternative provision.

Three anonymised case studies to demonstrate the success of the programme were also shared.

Councillor Vasmer commended the Alternative Curriculum programme stating it was a fantastic programme and thanked the Alternative Curriculum Officer for her hard work and commitment to the programme.

Councillor Moseley stated the case studies were an encouraging read and there had been positive feedback from the young people, parents, and school.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the contents of the report are noted.

18/21 PLANS FOR YOUTH ACTIVITY FOR THE AUTUMN

The Youth and Community Manager reported that the plans for the Autumn term are being put in place. Assemblies in some schools to promote the services available have been organised along with online advertising.

The Youth and Community Manager also reported that he would like to explore opportunities for young people in the town beyond the Youth Service. He is interested in working with a group of independent restaurant owners to put a training package in place.

The Youth and Community Manager also reported that there were some concerns about the recruitment of youth workers for the service as, over the past 18 months, some staff members have left. Along with the Deputy Town Clerk, he was currently exploring the staffing requirements of the service.

Councillor Vasmer commented on the independent consortium proposal raised by the Youth and Community Manager stating that he is wholly supportive of this and hope that Shrewsbury Town Council back this idea.

19/21 UPDATE ON THE YOUTH BUDGET

The Head of Resources provided a summary of the Youth budget stating the accounts are as end of August 2021 (month 5). He stated we are on par with the budget and there is nothing of concern.

Overall, there is a small positive variance for the period, the accounts show an overspend for wages and equipment due to the additional income received in grants from Shropshire Council and the music project. The wages variance would have been higher but there has been some temporary and permanent reduction in hours for some staff, which has helped generate a positive variance.

The grants typically make a small contribution in respect of rent, i.e the Grange Centre.

The Town Clerk asked if it would be possible to breakdown the accounts to make them easier to understand.

RECOMMENDATION:

It was agreed that the Head of Resources and the Deputy Town Clerk would work on these together.

20/21 FUTURE OF THE YOUTH SERVICE

The Youth and Community Manager reported that he will be moving on from his role once a suitable replacement is in place. The priority will be finding a person who has the correct skills and qualifications to complete this role.

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council was also exploring support for volunteering and apprenticeship opportunities and this should be done in conjunction with the Youth Service.

Councillor Vasmer stated that he was very proud of the Youth Services and praised the Youth and Community Manager's work.

21/21 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Youth Services Working Group is Thursday 18 November 2021.