



SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
5 OCTOBER 2020

Agenda No

12

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 to what we have been up to since the summer. As I am sure you can all appreciate it has been difficult to continue to engage with the numbers of young people that we have become used to working with across our open access provision due to COVID restrictions, and in many cases we have had to totally re-evaluate the way in which we work as youth workers. This has meant that we have had to try lots of different ideas to find out which are most suited to the needs and interests of our young people.

Given the increased risks that lockdowns and restrictions bring to our young people, we have made a decision as a staff team to make our most vulnerable young people a priority as we have seen many of them suffer in the current climate. Whilst we have not been able to deliver open access youth clubs, for a short time (before further restrictions came into place) we offered some specific activities in place of these sessions. In some cases these have been fairly well attended but are not necessarily appealing to the most vulnerable young people. However we have been able to offer more of these young people access to our Alternative curriculum and online cooking and craft activities which I will explain in more details later in this report.

Youth Endowment Funding

As you are aware we were successful in a COVID emergency funding bid to the Youth Endowment fund submitted back in the summer, which has now been released and projects are underway. The funding totalled £42,000 and was to be used to help to continue to work with the most vulnerable young people innovatively throughout the pandemic. It was specified in the criteria of the bid that our proposal must be a project that is able to continue to run for the 12 month period regardless of changes to COVID restrictions. The funding has allowed us to develop the following:

- Alternative Curriculum lead to be taken from 25 hours per week to full time, allowing us to offer another 2 full days of the programme and increase our numbers of participants by up to 16 more young people
- Costs of the extra staff needed to support the alternative curriculum additional sessions
- Costs of hiring The Grange for an extra two days per week
- Costs of an extra two detached sessions per week
- Costs of ingredients and resources for a weekly cooking and craft activity delivered via our YouTube channel for 30 families per week at £10 per family



- Staffing costs to plan, coordinate and deliver ingredients and materials to 30 families
- Cost of van hire for deliveries each week.

So far the project has been a great success, we are now at full capacity with the alternative curriculum and have 25 families taking part in the weekly YouTube activities which are delivered by me (Adam) doing the cooking and Tracy providing a craft activity. The online sessions are in real time, but pre-recorded and uploaded prior to the ingredients and materials being delivered on a Friday. Once families have their delivery, they then watch the tutorial and take part in making whatever we have set out for that week. So far we have cooked dishes such as, 'A big mac, but better' a Greggs style 'steak bake' and a 'KFC style Zinger burger as well as healthier options such as Moroccan meatballs and special fried rice. The Craft activities have included Halloween T-shirt making, a table top catapult and emoji stress balls. To view the videos, or perhaps even take part please search 'Young Shrewsbury' on Youtube to find our channel.

This element of the project has brought a great deal of value to the young people, their families and also to us as workers who have managed to maintain contact with our young people, and engage with them positively through these difficult times. We have also found that the weekly delivery has helped us to develop really positive relationships with the parents of young people (many of whom do not engage with any other services despite having enforced involvement for many such as social services and early help). Working alongside the food hub has also meant that we have supplemented each weekly delivery with extra everyday food items which have been really well received, and in many cases helped tackle food poverty which is a real problem as something as simple as not having enough to eat can have a huge impact on a young person's wellbeing.

Detached work

The additional youth endowment funding received has allowed us to increase our detached sessions, and we are currently out 4 nights per week and have been since the end of the first lockdown. Before the night had drawn in, youth team members were covering large areas of the town on bicycles and found that this was a really effective way of finding and engaging with young people. We have established sound relationships in hotspot areas such as Kynnerston Road and surrounding Grange area, Monkmoor, Ditherington and The Quarry. As the nights have drawn in as always it has become more difficult to engage with young people on detached, particularly since restrictions increased again but we are still making contact with some and will continue to go out whilst we are not able to open our youth clubs.

Youth Club Sessions

For a short period of time from September until mid-October we were able to open up our youth club sessions before the second lockdown came and forced us to close again. As we were restricted to a maximum of 15 people (space allowing within distancing) we were not able to offer open access youth clubs as we used to, but instead offered specific planned activities that young people had to pre book onto, to manage numbers and ensure we had a full record of attendees for track and trace. We also offered sports sessions such as boxing and football which were delivered



through Shrewsbury School of Boxing and Embrace Physical education, with a youth worker attached to each session. Some of these sessions were more popular than others, and so when we hopefully return to this model in January we will alter the programme to provide more of what is working in favour of removing the sessions that were not so popular. It's worth noting that the time spent away from delivering regular sessions will no doubt have an impact on our numbers when we return to full capacity, as many young people will have moved on and so it is likely that we will need to start over in a lot of senses and therefore a focus on the younger ones makes sense, whilst maintaining contact with the older ones through detached and organised sports activities.

Kynnerston Road Community Centre

As most of you will be aware, the community centre on Kynnerston Road has been stood empty for over two years now, and as a result has become victim to vandalism and the surrounding area of the building been associated with ASB and drug dealing. We are working with lots of young people in this area through Alternative curriculum and have been commissioned to work with some through schools and other alternative education packages that some individuals attend. This has meant that through delivering the food and craft activities to them and their families, and from regular detached sessions in the area we have developed really good relationships with parents and other community members, all of whom are really keen to see the centre re-open. After some discussion and an offer of support to get things off the ground we have now managed to empower a small group of residents to form a new committee and have had the last of the old committee transfer responsibility to them. Helena Williams from Early help, and one of our detached team staff has taken a place on that committee and we are now in a position where we are supporting the group to find the funding needed to get the building refurbished to a point that it can be operational once again.

Having this group of residents in place as the committee is key to the success of the centre, as they all live within eyeshot of it and are keen to take on the responsibility and ownership that it requires to be ran successfully once again. They have managed to secure some funding from Severnside to help replace the windows and have a new boiler fitted, but are now looking for some match funding. We as a Town Council are not offering any financial support as it stands, but are helping to steer the committee and providing support in writing applications for funding. We believe that should they be successful, this will be a huge boost to that community and will bring a lot of positives to the young people in the area. It is in desperate need of some youth provision and I envisage that if it is to re-open we will offer some activities from there once again. If councillors are able to offer any further help or support for this project then please contact me.