

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting of the Youth Services Working Group Held at the Grange Youth Centre At 3.30pm on Thursday 19 January 2023

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) and Sally Nicholson (Mayoral Secretary)

21/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Helen Ball (Town Clerk) and Andy Watkin (Head of Resources)

22/22 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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23/22 MINUTES OF THE LAST WORKING GROUP MEETING

To approve the minutes of the Working Group meeting held on 17 November 2022 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Youth Working Group held on 17 November 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

24/22 UPDATE ON YOUTH ACTIVITY DURING THE AUTUMN TERM

The Youth and Community Manager updated the members on the autumn term activities. He advised that all clubs returned from the Christmas break. There had been a reduction in numbers towards Christmas and through the cold weather. This was compounded by a recent upsurge in gang activity in areas such as Sundorne with parents not wanting their young people out during the darker nights.

The Hive had done well with a great Christmas Pantomime which involved all the young people taking part in one form or another. The Youth and Community Manager advised that he was in discussions with the Hive to participate in a music project over the next few months. He will be meeting with musicians to see what their requirement would be and it is hoped the project can be delivered during current sessions at the Hive and the Grange.

The sessions at Monkmoor had improved following the two-week closure due to poor behaviour which had been dealt with and continued to be monitored. The young people had been encouraged to return their consent form which had made managing numbers easier advising that if no consent form is returned then there is no entry for that young person to the youth centres. He went on to advise that there were still 3 or 4 young people excluded.

Cllr Bentick asked if there was any remedial action taken with those that had been excluded. The Youth and Community Manager advised that he was unaware if schools were providing any remedial action once the student went back to school but added that any excluded young person was continued to be monitored by Shropshire Council Youth. The Youth and Community Manager went on to advise that he spoke to the parents with regards to why their child had been excluded. Concerns were raised about what happened to young people when excluded from youth sessions. It was agreed that there needs to be a youth strategy for the town which would include ensuring that young people with issues did not fall through the gaps. The Youth and Community Manager and Deputy Town Clerk would discuss this further with Shropshire Council.

Monkmoor football continues as normal and agreement had been made with some Shrewsbury Town footballers to attend occasionally.

The Grange is doing well with the two sessions. The Youth and Community Manager advised that he had attended the Grange Primary School, along with a member from Shropshire Council Youth, to promote sessions at the Grange. This had received a positive response.

The Youth and Community Manager advised that he had been in contact with Sacha Lee from Shropshire Cricket Board who was offering centre and street based cricket sessions for young people. This project had been a success in Telford. He is hoping for a face-to-face meeting with Sacha in the coming weeks with a view to sessions starting in April. The project would be funded but it required a suitable location. Cllr Bentick advised that Shrewsbury School had facilities that could be considered. Frankwell County Ground was also suggested along with MUGA.

The Youth and Community Manager advised that in the week leading to Christmas the HAF delivery provided four sessions in total. He went on to advise that numbers could be improved but the Youth Service was tied to what it could do under HAF. Discussion followed about opening up to all young people, but there was stigma surrounding free school meals which may be putting people off from attending thinking they may not be eligible or not wanting to be associated with those in receipt of free school meals.

Cllr Vasmer asked if it was thought we should not be involved with HAF. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that a different, self-funded, model to replace HAF was going to be investigated, seeking external organisations to be involved. Cllr Bentick asked about cost required. The Youth and Community Manager responded it cost £7,000 for four weeks. Cllr Bentick asked if it would just be over the summer holidays or could it include Easter and half terms. The Youth and Community Manager advised that there were restrictions with food under HAF with the young people not enjoying the food on offer. He wanted to energise the young people with allotment projects so they can grow and then cook and eat what they had grown.

25/22 ALTERNATIVE CURRICULUM

The Youth & Community Manager confirmed that there were currently 7 students from Shrewsbury Academy and 2 students from Mount Pleasant School. Cllr Bentick asked what happened to students when they finished on the Alternative Curriculum programme. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that students went back to main stream education with some students returning improved,

but unfortunately some had to return back to the Alternative Curriculum programme. She added that we don't currently receive feedback from the schools about the next steps for the young people but that this would be helpful and assist the programme being promoted positively. The Youth and Community Manager advised that we had a good model as most councils do not have a Youth Service. Cllr Lemon asked what was the incentive for schools to use the Alternative Curriculum programme. The Youth and Community Manager responded that it was important to schools as an OFSTED requirement to keep young people in education and advised the meeting of a particular case where it worked very well.

26/22 YOUTH COUNCIL

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that if members were happy with the Draft ToR, which had been circulated for their attention at the last meeting, then the ToR would be submitted to the Full Council Meeting scheduled for Monday 27 March 2023. It is hoped that the Youth Council would then be ready to start in September. There was discussion on age range of the members and it was agreed that all ages should be involved. There was further discussion on ensuring that a good mix of students were encouraged to get involved and not just students who were confident in expressing themselves. Those who were less confident in expressing themselves should also be encouraged to put themselves forward. This can be achieved by promoting the Youth Council to the various youth organisations such as Brownies/Guides; community groups along with the schools. Cllr Vasmer requested that the refugee students be included. Cllr Moseley asked about training for the students to which the Deputy Town Clerk advised that students would be mentored and receive all the help they required. The Youth and Community Manager said that it was important that we inspired those students who were not used to speaking up.

27/22 CATCHMENT AREA FOR YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Following discussion at the previous Youth Services Working Group about where students were coming from to attend the youth centres, a postcode search exercise was undertaken. The results were circulated to the members prior to this meeting and the results were also on display at this meeting. The results were taken from the postcodes submitted on each Young Persons consent form that had been returned to the Centres.

28/22 OTHER BUSINESS

The Youth and Community Manager advised the members about major building work taking place at Monkmoor Lodge this year. It is likely that the New Lodge would not be available after the half term break in the summer, ie week beginning 29 May 2023. There was discussion about temporary premises for the Monkmoor Lodge sessions and the following premises were mentioned for consideration – Monkmoor Primary School; Kingdom Hall; Crowmore Baptist Church; St Peters Church. The Youth and Community Manager advised that sufficient space for 30-40 young people would be required from 4:45pm until 8:15pm for the two sessions. Cllrs Moseley and Vasmer agreed to make enquiries.

28/22 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Youth Services Working Group is Thursday 23 March 2023.