

Report to	Melksham
Date of Meeting	05/06/2019
Title of Report	Community Youth Grants

1. Purpose of the report:

To ask Councillors to consider the following applications seeking funding from the Melksham Area Board.

Application	Grant Amount
Applicant: Youth Adventure Trust Project Title: Vulnerable Young People from Melksham 2019 Activity Days	£994.20

2. Main Considerations

Councillors will need to be satisfied that grants awarded in the 2019/20 year are made to projects that can realistically proceed within a year of the award being made.

Area Boards have authority to approve Area Grants under powers delegated to them by the Cabinet member for Communities, Campuses, Area Boards, Leisure, Libraries and Flooding. Under the Scheme of Delegation Area Boards must adhere to the Area Board Grants Guidance 2019/2020.

Community Youth Grants will contribute to the continuance and/or improvement of cultural, social and community activity and wellbeing in the community area, the extent and specifics of which will be dependent upon the individual project.

Community Youth Grants give all local community and voluntary groups, Town and Parish Councils an equal opportunity to receive funding towards community-based projects and schemes.

3. The applications

Applicant: Youth Adventure Trust Project Title: Vulnerable Young People from Melksham 2019 Activity Days	Amount Requested from Area Board: £994.20	
This application meets grant criteria 2019/20.		
Project Summary: We would value your support to help 6 young people from Melksham as they take part in their Activity Days on the programme. The Youth Adventure Trust gives vulnerable and disadvantaged young people aged 11-14 from Wiltshire and Swindon the opportunity to transform their lives by giving them access to adventure experiences which challenge them and enable them to learn in an outdoor environment. The programme lasts three academic years and allows these young people to experience success, learn to go beyond their own expectations and grow in confidence through a combination of three		

residential outdoor adventure camps, one Explore Day, three Activity Days and four Pathway Days.

The programme is designed to build their self-confidence and self-esteem and emphasises the importance of teamwork, communication, social skills and resilience. These important life skills are the building blocks that help them develop aspiration and grow into individuals who are able to unlock their potential and make a positive contribution to their local communities and society as a whole.

The young people who participate in the Youth Adventure Programme come to us from a variety of deprived backgrounds, but all are severely disadvantaged in terms of educational attainment, life skills and future prospects and are particularly prone to risks such as youth offending, substance misuse and other risky behaviour. We aim to help young people like these escape this cycle of disadvantage. We take them at a key transitional stage of their educational and social development, aged 11, and inspire them to learn and achieve.

There are many reasons why a young person might be referred to us:

- Being a victim of neglect or abuse
- Coming from a chaotic or challenging home life i.e. acrimonious divorce, parent in prison etc.
- Lack of attention at home manifesting in issues such as attention seeking/challenging behaviour or concerns for mental wellbeing
- Coming from a significantly disadvantaged family
- Having suffered a family bereavement
- Having a significantly unwell family member
- Is on a Child Protection Plan
- Is a Looked After Child (i.e. in the care of Social Services)
- Has a caring role for a family member in the home
- Has a medical condition which is impacting on their behaviour, mental wellbeing, confidence, resilience etc, such as on the Asperger's/Autism spectrum, ADHD, dyslexia.

However, this is not an exhaustive list and can't tell you the full picture. Looking beyond this list there is a personal story of a young person who needs a little support to really make a difference to their life.

Activity Days

The Activity Days are held in the winter months and crucially provide continuity throughout these months when the camps aren't running. The children catch up with others in their group and it enables the staff and volunteer mentors to re-engage with the children and monitor their development. They continue to complete their Personal Records of Achievement which they fill in throughout the three-year programme.

There are three Activity Days which are all completely free of charge to every young person who participates. They are provided with transport to the venue and have a fully trained activity provider in charge of the day's activity. The days include art, drama and music workshops held in Melksham youth centre and other local Wiltshire venues. Additionally, Woodland Survival and GPS Challenge.

Days are held in Savernake Forest in Marlborough and Brokerswood in Westbury. The GPS day has proved very popular and a successful way for the children to team build and communicate. It involves the young people taking part in hide and seek/ man hunt games and a 'Road to Survival' mission, where they use GPS tracking devices to locate each other. Using two Android apps (orienteeing and treasure hunt), players attempt to complete as many challenges as possible within a designated time frame. This game is a mixture of orienteeing, geocaching, treasure hunting and team building challenges. Teams use the orienteeing app

to find the locations and the treasure hunt app for instructions on how to complete each challenge, providing photo evidence and earning points.

Each child attends three Activity Days. All activities are designed to challenge the young people to reach personal goals, build confidence and self-esteem, and develop resilience and aspiration. We encourage resilience and give them practice in making appropriate decisions, setting personal goals, perseverance and overcoming obstacles. We have 240 disadvantaged young people participate on the programme every year and in the past 26 years we have helped over 3,900 vulnerable and disadvantaged young people across the whole programme. In 2019 we will be introducing a new stream of young people to participate on the programme allowing 280 children to benefit every year.

We would value your support for **6 young people taken from Melksham Oak school** to participate in their Activity Days.

Local Needs Addressed

Significant areas of Wiltshire are in the 5 most deprived in England. Chippenham Hardens suffers particular deprivation, along with Salisbury Bemerton, Devizes North, Amesbury East, Trowbridge Adcroft and Trowbridge Park. The deprivation in urban areas is clearly visible especially in the market towns. This contrasts sharply with the hidden deprivation in the county's rural areas where there are high levels of poverty and very limited access to transport and services. We take children from these areas. Some of the children we take do not even turn up to school a lot of the time and are increasingly disengaged with education, but they will make the effort to regularly attend our 3- year programme turning their lives around in the process and becoming more confident and aspirational.

Schools find it hard to offer their young people the sorts of opportunities we can due to cost and risk, but the Youth Adventure Trust is in a unique position being able to help disadvantaged children suffering from the effects of both rural and urban deprivation.

Disadvantaged young people are at particular risk of becoming NEETS (not in education, employment or training) and the employability of young people remains both a local and national priority. In Wiltshire the NEET figure is 4% with 4.9% destination unknown. Being NEET is associated with negative outcomes later in life, including unemployment, reduced earnings, poor health and depression. These outcomes have a cost for both the individual and the economy. The Princes Trust Macquarie Youth Index shows NEETS are significantly less happy across all areas of their lives with increased mental health problems due to unemployment. The Index reports that 37% of NEETS lack a sense of identity, 34% feel isolated all or most of the time and more than 1 in 4 claim they do not have a positive role model.

The Youth Adventure Programme is ideally placed to help deter our young people from becoming NEETS. Long term and early intervention are key to our success. Not only do we increase the young people's confidence and self-esteem and improve their communication and leadership skills, but we offer them alternative, positive pathways, working with positive role models and mentors, encouraging resilience and raising their aspiration. Our young people apply the skills the programme gives them within their school and home environments, enabling them to make constructive changes in their lives and aspire to a more optimistic future. Referral agencies tell us that we deliver life-changing results for many children who have not reached their full potential with other forms of intervention and support.

How many do we reach and who will benefit?

From 2019, we will be helping **280 young people per year** and for this programme we are asking for your help to fund **6 children from Melksham**. The main group of beneficiaries are the young people, with additional benefits also experienced by their families, communities and schools:

1) 280 young people per year benefit, with increases in self-confidence and self-esteem, improved behaviour at home and school, improved engagement at school and increased resilience and aspiration.

2) Families benefit, with improved communication and better behaviour at home, improving family cohesion.

3) Schools benefit with improved school work and behaviour. Teachers tell us that the improved behaviour of one participant impacts on their class at school, resulting in the behaviour of that whole class improving.

"It turned Daniel around from a boy at risk of permanent exclusion to a boy thoroughly engaged in his schoolwork who is now a pleasure to teach" (Headmaster, Kingsdown School, Warminster)

4) The lives and environments of local communities benefit, as the young people become more engaged and responsible, make better friendship choices and become less likely to become involved in petty crime and anti-social behaviour.

5) The programme benefits our volunteers, who derive satisfaction and personal growth from their time as mentors to the young people.

"I have no doubt if it wasn't for the YAT with the support, guidance, challenges and team work skills he has gained over the past 2 years, Paul would not have the confidence to make the choices he is now making. Paul has not only grown in confidence with the physical challenges in life but has turned around his life at school recently receiving an award for Resilience and Success"
(Parent)

Children living in poverty and those with complex needs are much more likely to develop mental illness and people living in a deprived community are 6 times more likely to have had no previous experience of outdoor activity than in more affluent wards. Additionally, early exposure to outdoor activities can make a lasting impression. More people who are introduced to outdoors activities as children and adolescents grow up to choose an active outdoors lifestyle. (*Sport England Getting Active Outdoors, 2015*).

We deliver a sustained, long-term impact and early intervention programme that is a valuable pathway process onto other youth organisations within Wiltshire and Swindon. Before joining the Youth Adventure Programme, many of our beneficiaries didn't have the confidence to join sports clubs, drama groups, cadets or the Duke of Edinburgh scheme for example. Our programme equips them with the skills and resilience they need to face their challenges in a much more positive way and to explore new possibilities and try new experiences in the form of complementary youth services within their communities and our new bursary scheme further enables this. So, although, we cannot help ALL the disadvantaged young people in Wiltshire, we are reaching a substantial proportion and providing them with the opportunities and skills they need to become engaged within their communities and society through a more intensive, integrated experience, as recommended by many highly respected research bodies.

Comments of Community Engagement Manager: This is an application to the youth revenue budget requesting a contribution of £994 towards total project costs of £ 13,256. No match funding is required.

Report Author:

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