



# Royal Wootton Basset – MAR-APR 2018

## TWO MONTHS SESSIONS:

05/03/18- 39 yp

12/03/18- 42 yp

19/03/18- 36 yp

26/03/18- 29 yp

09/04/18- 22 yp

16/04/18- 28 yp

23/04/18- 31 yp

30/04/18- 35 yp

## SUMMARY:

RWB continues to be busy, lots of young people and lots of differing issues specifically over the last month including; bereavement of significant family members, grief support and risk of homelessness/sofa surfing. We have focused on mental health issues for March and April, incorporating various discussions relating to stress, anxiety, depression, self-harm, irrational thoughts and fears. We have incorporated the subjects of unhealthy relationships and drug use and long term mental health effects or both of these in the sessions.

We have also used stones as art therapy to paint positive words and phrases. As part of these sessions young people who are still using cannabis have been able to talk to workers openly to gain support. Our team has set clear and coherent boundaries regarding consumption prior to our sessions and this has been adhered to.

One yp who has consistently attended the LYN meetings is being taken by a worker (along with peers of her choice) to the GCafé in Cheltenham to give a more real insight into how a commercial, youth café might work in her community.

Workers are managing the use of the hall with regards to keeping the members of the committee happy. As the lighter nights come the yp will no doubt spend more time in the garden so workers will attempt to keep noise levels down so not to cause distress to the residents. Other activities for March and April have included table tennis, Easter cooking, smoothie making and basic cooking, various games, henna and issue-based quizzes. We have had visits from Andy and Erin (new PCSO), which the yp in attendance positively engaged with.

## ISSUES COVERED:

Bereavement/Grief Support

Homelessness

Young people's mental health

Stress/anxiety/depression

Art therapy

Drugs/alcohol



# Lyneham – MAR-APR 2018

## TWO MONTHS SESSIONS:

09/03/18- 6 yp  
16/03/18 – 14 yp  
23/03/18 – 20 yp

06/04/18 – 4 yp  
13/04/18 – 10 yp  
20/04/18 – 16 yp  
27/04/18 – 18 yp

### SUMMARY:

We have moved! We are now using the Community Centre on the MOD site in Lyneham, in partnership with their Youth and Community worker, Amy. The site is open to the public from one side (outside of the base) and as such is a good link for MOD and non-MOD families.

The move has proved to be really positive for the young people of Lyneham as they now have use of a well facilitated designated youth space. The yp really like the room and we even have some young people from RWB making the effort to come over and attend (they are very jealous of the space!). We have had a couple of very quiet sessions but on the whole adequately attended, with a few new members joining and returning.

Over the last few months, like Bassett, we have focused on mental health in young people, running discussion sessions around different aspects of mental health. In Lyneham we have included some sexual health awareness within the session because of some of the issues that we have talked about. We have used the “beer goggles” for a session to focus on negative choices we might make under the influence of illegal substances or alcohol.

We again are facilitating a small art therapy project decorating stones with positive messages. Other activities have included a science evening funded by the REME, which most of the group took part in and enjoyed. We are not able to use the kitchen for cooking projects as its awaiting maintenance however this hasn't been an issue as the yp are able to use all the other equipment available.

So: a really positive move to the new building allowing workers to focus on the needs of the young people. A big thanks to Amy who has been really welcoming 😊

### ISSUES COVERED:

Sexual Health  
Mental Health  
Recruitment of young people  
Alcohol Awareness  
Science Evening



# CRICKLADE – FEB-APR 2018

## TWO MONTHS SESSIONS:

19/2/18 – 17 young people  
26/2/18 – 13 young people

5/3/18 – 9 young people  
12/3/18 – 11 young people  
19/3/18 – No session  
26/3/18 – 2 young people  
2/4/18 – 2 young people

23/4/18 – 7 young people  
30/4/18 – 3 young people  
7/5/18 – 4 young people  
14/5/18 – Trip to Extreme  
Trampoline

## ISSUES COVERED:

Drug and alcohol awareness  
Group boundaries/norms of  
behaviour  
Outdoor sports

### SUMMARY:

Cricklade Youth Club has been a “game of two halves” and would make an interesting case study for anyone trying to set up a youth club from scratch in an area.

Our staff did a great job making contact and building relationships with a very “tough” group in Cricklade. Aged 15-18 their behaviour is marked by a lack of activity in the day time and heavy Cannabis use. They followed our workers “inside” and attended sessions whilst the weather was bad. They were a handful – difficult but not impossible – and at one point we had some minor damage done to the building due to one of them acting stupidly (but not maliciously).

As a consequence of their behaviour we shut the session the following week...and since then have “lost” this first, big group. We still see them and have passing contact, but they do not come in to the building. And herein lies out dilemma all the time we use shared buildings!

The dilemma is that we are working with the “right” groups – young people who can be unpredictable, unruly and hard to manage. But we are working in community buildings where any damage is treated with outrage (and it really is *outrage* – the number of emails I received after this relatively small piece of damage was astounding, as was the criticism of our staff). So continually we have a choice to make: work with “easier” young people to protect the community assets or continue to work with “harder” groups of young people and risk the wrath of building managers.

We are building again, with a group of quite committed young people, whilst also keeping informal contact with the older group. Activities have included food tasting from around the world; work on group boundaries; outdoor sports; and this week we are taking a small group to Extreme Trampoline park (not least to share to parents/carers we are active in the local area).

## RWB and Cricklade Area Board: Strategic Considerations

With CMAS having worked in the area for over a year now, I will give some feedback on a more strategic theme, for consideration by the board, Town and Parish Councillors and Wiltshire County Council employees.

(As a disclaimer: as you will see as I outline my thoughts I propose an open and transparent tendering process for any pieces of work. To that end, this is not a pitch for CMAS to be commissioned more or for longer (although in all likelihood we would tender alongside others). See it more as a free bit of consultancy!!)

There are several issues that need to be discussed and, if possible, resolved in the RWB and Cricklade area, in relation to young people.

1. Buildings/facilities. This is the biggest single issue holding back good quality youth provision across the area. In Cricklade we have “lost” the group we were specifically asked to work with due to the pressures of a shared space. In RWB we really struggle for an appropriate space to use. In Lyneham we do, and the young people from other areas have been very jealous that they have this space to use. We are working with Purton Parish Council to find a space there to use. Sue Hughes from RWB TC visited several examples of youth and shared space in Gloucestershire this month.

**I would recommend that both RWB and Cricklade make it a priority to find a space that is primarily for use by young people.**

- a. In Cricklade the obvious space for this is the Old Youth Centre (OYC) (now part of the leisure centre). If the building was mine to manage I would move the café out of the Leisure Centre and in to the OYC. This would give more space for classes inside the main body of the Leisure Centre and would allow the OYC to be used as a community café in the day and morph in to a youth café/youth centre in the evening. This is a fairly well-established model and would improve the Leisure Centre’s income and capacity to deliver.
- b. In RWB some premises are necessary. We have attendance of up to (and over!) 40 young people and could deliver each night of the week if resources allowed. Again, I would look at setting up some shared-use building that generates revenue in the day time to help resources youth provision in the evening.

**As someone who works with young people I feel the “worm has turned” in the past 12 months.** Across all our projects (in multiple counties) attendance at youth clubs is rising, leaving us struggling to keep up with demand. The days of the narrative “youth centres are not necessary” have passed and I suggest that both County and Town/Parish Councils attend to this as a matter of priority. (A rural District Council in Gloucestershire is proposing a 1% increase on their part of Council Tax to spend on young people. I think this is a forward-thinking model and one that will undoubtedly save money in the mid and long term.)

2. Lack of certainty/clarity over funding needs to be resolved. CMAS is running three sessions per week across the RWB/Cricklade area. **Wiltshire is the only area cross four counties where we work without a contract and/or Service Level Agreement.** It puts us in a very precarious position, and as a social enterprise set up to work with young people that affects our work in three main areas:
  - a. It is hard to plan work with young people, based on relationships, when we have little security beyond a few months (and these months not agreed in writing)
  - b. It is hard to give our staff satisfactory employment when the funding for them is so precarious
  - c. It is hard (impossible!) to plan as a responsible social business when we are working without secure funding

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## **RWB and Cricklade Area Board: Strategic Considerations (continued)**

3. There is a lack of strategy for work with young people in the area. This makes sense in terms of the independent Towns and Parishes housed within the area that the Area Board covers. However, with a little bit of strategic or “joined up” thinking then provision could be improved for young people, and most likely money saved

My recommendations would be the following:

- The Area Board encourages Town and Parish Councils to become the commissioning bodies for work with young people. They are likely to know the need and making commissioned organisations directly answerable to them really works in Gloucestershire
- The Area Board supports Town and Parish Councils to develop open, transparent tendering processes and all Service Level Agreements needed to commission their own youth services
- Over time Town/Parish Councils become financially responsible for youth provision in their town/parish
- The Area Board uses funding to lever activity in strategic areas and to support this transition