

Report to	Southern Wiltshire
Date of Meeting	28/11/2019
Title of Report	Community Youth Grants

1. Purpose of the report:

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

Application	Grant Amount
Applicant: The Bridge Youth Project Project Title: The Bridge Youth Project Mentoring Scheme	£3260.00

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: The Bridge Youth Project Project Title: The Bridge Youth Project Mentoring Scheme	Amount Requested from Area Board: £3260.00
This application meets grant criteria 2019/20.	
Project Summary: The mentoring scheme was set up to support vulnerable young people in secondary schools who need additional support by linking them with volunteers from the community. They meet with a volunteer mentor for an hour per fortnight over the course of an academic year. This is a safe space where they can discuss any issues that matter to them and have someone trustworthy who will listen to them and act as a positive role model. We help young people to set goals and to realise more of their potential. A full evaluation is undertaken.	

Please tell us WHO will benefit and HOW they will benefit from your project and benefit your local community:

1.The Bridge Mentoring Scheme matches students in 4 Salisbury-based secondary schools with a mentor from the local community. These are currently Wyvern College, St Edmunds Girls School, Sarum Academy and Trafalgar in Downton.

WyvernSt Eds receive the highest proportion of mentors within the scheme with 18 mentors out of a total of 39.

We are also delighted to say that having recently met with Stewart Roderick Head at Trafalgar School that the scheme is now live in the school and we are now in the process of recruiting mentors. The Deputy Head and Pastoral Lead Rachael Faulkner comments “As support from external agencies dwindles and schools are asked to take more responsibility for every aspect of a child’s life we at Trafalgar feel that many of our students would benefit hugely from supportive mentoring from people with no agenda who are motivated by the desire to help encourage and challenge students who may not have this support out of school”. She also says that “We are working with hugely reduced budgets in a society where resilience is at an all-time low and we need to partner with organisations such as The Bridge to enable us to move forward and to make our students the best possible versions of themselves.”

After receiving full training and induction mentors are matched with a mentee from one of the schools and they meet together fortnightly in school typically during a lesson time for an entire year. The mentor acts as a listening ear and positive role model enabling the mentee to unpack life build necessary skills and look towards the future. Over the last couple of years the issues that young people in school are facing have escalated and the schools know that these young people desperately need someone to talk to and a reliable consistent role-model to help them to grow and to learn coping strategies. The mentoring scheme is now a key part of the pastoral structure within WyvernSt Edmunds and our Mentoring Coordinator Kate Moody has an office base there.

Pupils can be referred by teaching staff but they are also able to self-refer should they wish to do so. Mentors and mentees can work through a range of issues ranging from difficult family relationships and bereavement to mental health issues and friendship struggles. However whilst there are often difficulties to work through in each young persons life the mentor is able to extol the positives that undoubtedly exist and speak encouragement and support. There is a significant demand for more mentors within WyvernSt Eds and a very obvious need at Trafalgar where the scheme is now active.

However we do not charge the schools a single penny for the scheme as budgets are often stretched. Therefore we do appeal to the South Wilts Area Board for support that will enable us to serve more young people within this catchment area.

We are pleased to include some recent quotes that demonstrate a need for the service locally. View from a tutor - St Edmunds- E. has become really confident this year to talk more about her Dads death and making people aware of support that students can get if they too have lost a parent. E. has talked about the project that

she is completing with her Mentor's support and has really appreciated the way her Mentor has allowed her to be independent with this. E. has shown a mature approach to her loss. View from a student- Year 8 female pupil- My sessions with my Mentor are the highlight of my week. She listens to me and encourages me. View from a mentor who is leaving due to getting a full-time job Thanks for the Mentoring opportunity. I will really miss it. I certainly learnt a lot about teenagers and about myself.

Schools are currently very stretched financially with central funding cuts having an impact. One teacher recently said to us There have been so many funding cuts over the years and the Bridge does an amazing job at supporting vulnerable children in my school.

Perhaps one of the biggest needs locally is the lack of generational integration. It is so unusual for two people of completely different ages and backgrounds to come together and many of the mentors talk about this as an amazing opportunity to give something back to the community and to show young people that there are people out there who care for them. A significant number of mentors are retired and it is vital that they are able to volunteer in worthwhile causes that really make a difference.

2.We ran a pilot scheme in the summer of 2015. This involved the voluntary participation of six young people from Wyvern College. These students were absolutely instrumental in helping us to establish the scheme and were particularly helpful in articulating the key priorities and the needs that existed amongst their peers. They told us about the need for a positive role model to talk to and a non-judgemental listening ear to share their concerns with on their journey through the year. Young people continue to be pivotal in shaping the mentoring scheme. This is evidenced through their ongoing feedback and evaluation. A Year 10 pupil says Mentoring is inspiring for you and for the person you are going to meet ...I have changed in myself cos I can speak more openly and I am more confident. I am telling my friends to get a mentor too. Some of the referrals come from students themselves having heard about the positive experience through a friend

3.To date over 55 young people have engaged with the scheme in 4 local secondary schools most of them having met with a mentor every fortnight for an entire year.

Currently 14 young people are being mentored within the South Wilts area board catchment. Statistics from the schools indicate that eight of these pupils live within the catchment area for the Board. However new mentees are continually coming on board throughout the academic year. Given the Laverstock schools catchment area and that of Trafalgar it is likely that the majority of these will live within the South Wilts boundary. This however cannot be predicted with any accuracy. However now that Trafalgar are an active partner we anticipate that numbers will close to double within this catchment area. We are very much aware of the potential for expansion by way of recruiting and training new volunteer mentors so that more young people can be supported.

In addition there is the possibility of extending the scheme into more secondary schools. Your funding would enable us to ensure that many more new young

people would benefit from this scheme and have a mentor in their lives to support them.

4. There is absolutely no charge to young people or their families to engage with the mentoring scheme. We are thrilled that for the cost of one part-time co-ordinator we are able to engage with so many young people who may otherwise not have individual support. It is so cost-effective. The mentoring scheme is also available and accessible to all young people. We welcome anyone who would benefit from a mentor.

We also make sure to promote this opportunity to teachers and staff and with pastoral teams. Often the Bridge Mentoring Scheme is part of the official pastoral care route within the schools.

5. All of the mentors are volunteers drawn from a wide range of local churches. Mentors are encouraged to come forward via publicity across all of our networks. It should be noted that whilst the Bridge Youth Project is a Christian organisation absolutely nothing about the mentoring scheme is about talking to young people about Christianity. It is simply about the resources of local churches making a difference in the lives of young people.

Report Author:

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