

Report to	Southern Wilts Area Board
Date of Meeting	10 th February 2022
Title of Report	Rural Youth Outreach Project - Update

Background

1. The Rural Youth Outreach Project (RYOP) started in August 2021, funded by area boards in Southern Wiltshire, Amesbury, Warminster, Tidworth and Pewsey, and delivered by two officers from Community First.
2. The targeted project outcomes are as follows:
 - Improved level of engagement with young people, targeting a reduction in isolation of young people in rural areas.
 - Identification of young people with issues around mental health, educational attainment and physical health issues and signposting to appropriate activities and support.
 - Increased and strengthened community led activity provision, with stronger communications channels between providers and partners across the communities.

Context

3. Section 507B of The Education Act 1996 requires Council's, so far as reasonably practicable, to secure for qualifying young persons (aged 13-19 in the local area (and up to 25 with SEND)) access to sufficient positive leisure-time activities which improve their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities. With an annual budget for positive activities for young people and enabling support from Wiltshire Council Children's Services, this responsibility has been delegated to Community Area Boards.
4. The Southern Wiltshire Area Board is devolved approximately £20k each year from Wiltshire Council's Department for Families & Children to carry out this requirement locally, to facilitate the community led delivery of positive activities and support for young people (see appendix 1 for our local youth network).
5. Wiltshire now, as developed and strengthened since 2014, has a varied community led offer, ranging from grass roots volunteer led activities to Wiltshire-grown, regional or national youth charities delivering the offer, supporting the work of specialist officers, including social workers, youth offending officers, and similar, to ensure the needs of young people are catered for.

6. The Community Engagement Managers in the more rural community areas in the south of the county, reflecting upon how the community led model has developed since 2014, concluded last year that there is a disparity between this offer when compared with more urban community areas, which meant that some young people in Southern Wiltshire, Amesbury, Warminster, Tidworth, and Pewsey were at risk of not engaging for a range of reasons in positive activities.
7. We have around 5000 young people living in Southern Wiltshire, and the majority are fortunate in being able to access positive activities from the community led offer, here and in neighbouring community areas, and indeed counties. Since starting the Rural Youth Outreach Project in August last year, we are steadily gathering data which suggests that a proportion are not able to take full advantage of the offer. We still need to properly quantify that proportion. In the meantime, from local anecdotal knowledge, the project has been targeting outreach in a range of villages in the Southern Wiltshire Community Area, to engage in conversation with young people and their families (see appendix 2).

Progress Update

8. Phase 1 (Aug – Dec 2021) of the RYOP was primarily about research (the conversations with young people, families and parish representatives). Phase 2 (Jan – July 2022) will primarily be about delivering on actions to address some of the issues unearthed in phase 1, but will also include much needed more research.
9. This work is substantial, and we always knew that 12 months would not be sufficient, and we are working up plans to source external funding with the hope of extending the project into Yr2 at least. We would also request that the area board consider earmarking its 2021/22 youth budget underspend for RYOP yr2.
10. The attached appendix 2 is ranked according to the tasks that RYOP has capacity to deliver in phase 2 – the top 3 in red are the ones it can support in phase 2. The area board is asked to note this ranking and to note that more work and funding will be needed in subsequent years in order to progress the other tasks listed.
11. As ever, no one size fits all, and so our response will need to be multi-faceted and we need to be invested in this for the long term. Phase 1 has confirmed are thoughts that those young people not currently engaging, are not, due to a range of issues: lack of transport, lack of funds, lack of parental capacity or support, lack of confidence and emotional maturity, SEND, a limited offer that appeals to a few, lack of local volunteers to support events/groups on the doorstep.
12. There is another key factor we would like to highlight from phase 1. In those community areas, towns and villages where young people are engaged and supported, a common feature is that there is a paid and trained Youth Officer

facilitating this, alongside volunteer support. RYOP is about reaching those young people that are seldom seen, heard or engaged for a range of reasons, one of those reasons is that young person's emotional and social ability to engage, fuelled by a range of factors. Schools have for a while now adapted their workforce to ensure they have specialist knowledge and resource in the school to support children and young people presenting with social and emotional strains. The workforce and offer amongst the voluntary and community sector is also developing to cater for this growing need, including in Southern Wiltshire, but currently we only have one trained Youth Worker supporting our community led offer, delivering 8 hours per month for Old Sarum Youth Club (funded mainly by the club's fundraising activities). The Youth Worker role is not only useful in providing that specialist resource for the young person struggling to engage, but also a resource to the parent tentatively looking to sign up to volunteer, and to the 16yo looking to take training to become a youth leader at his/her local youth club. Also, crucially the youth *outreach* worker role is lacking in this community area (the one that can be seen out in the recreation spaces and bus shelters, and other 'hang out spaces' where young people traditionally gather), and potentially the some of the issues of anti-social behaviour impacting Downton, Redlynch, Alderbury and other villages, could be helped by the more consistent presence of a youth outreach worker.

Recommendations

1. To agree the top three actions/neighbourhoods to prioritise in phase 2 (as in appendix 2)
2. To earmark the 2021/22 youth budget underspend for phase 2 work and potential year 2 RYOP
3. To earmark any remaining capital funds from the 2021/22 community area grants budget to fund new equipment needed for youth activities/clubs resulting from the RYOP.
4. To ask the CEM to research the following for future investment:
 - (a) The beginning of a new youth charity in Southern Wiltshire, or collaboration with nearby youth agencies that might be able to offer outreach youth worker resources to our villages
 - (b) The business case for a new youth worker for this community area

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***The Community Led Local Youth Network in the
Southern Wiltshire Community Area***

American Football Marauders (Laverstock)	Farley Junior Football Club
Alderbury Tennis Club	The Underground Studios
Alderbury Football Club	Project Spark
Alderbury Scouts and Guides	1st Laverstock Scouts
Bridge Youth Mentoring Project	Laverstock Explorer Scout Unit
Clarendon Juniors FC	23 Salisbury Scouts Old Sarum
Coombe Bissett & Homington Cricket Club	Army Cadets Old Sarum
Downton Tennis Club	
Downton Football Club	
Downton 4 Families	
1st Downton Scouts	
Hamptworth Croquet Club	
St Marks Church, Flipside Youth Group	
Old Sarum Youth Club	
Pheonix Stars Cheerleaders	
Riverbourne Community Farm	
Laverstock Sports & Social Club football activities	
Alabare Christian Care and Support	
Whiteparish Youth Club (not currently meeting)	
Whiteparish Church Youth Group	
Winterslow Youth Club (not currently meeting)	
Winterbourne Cricket Club	
New Bourne Players Youth Group	
Winterbourne Scouts and Guides	
Downton Baptist Church Youth Group	
1st Pitton & Farley Guides	
Bourne Valley Rangers	