



Youth Outreach Services in Wroughton

17 October 2024

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Youth Activities Update

1. Please refer to the attached quarterly update from our providers SMASH Youth who are regularly engaging with over 20 young people, with 6 new starters in the last two weeks coming to our sessions in the library. We had large numbers of attendees at the outdoor sessions run at Maunsell Way during the summer months with the highest being 36 at the barbeque and this reflects that the activities and opportunities being offered to our young people are appealing. Our provision has now moved indoors to Wroughton Library which brings with it space challenges as our upper limit on numbers is 24 and we are keen to maintain the momentum and levels interaction we have so far achieved. The main hall of the Ellendune Community Centre is not available on Tuesday evenings and the stage area is not suitable for youth sessions.
2. Youth Services were historically provided by Swindon Borough Council but this has not been the case for many years. Provision of youth activities does not form part of Wroughton Parish Council's statutory obligations.

Supervision and Funding

3. SMASH have been able to subsidise our WPC youth offering over the last few months with some grant funding obtained by them for their organisation overall. We have regularly had the benefit of 3 youth workers supervising our sessions when we have only paid for two. SMASH are no longer in a position to offer us three youth workers when we are only paying for two.
4. The cost for a third youth worker from SMASH would be £223 per month and this would recur until the end of March 2025. The Service Level Agreement with SMASH would be reviewed in February/March in advance of the new financial year starting and budget provision for 2025/6 would need to be considered as part of the scheduled WPC discussions later this year.

Proposed Improvements

5. As the size of the current library brings with it a capacity limit of around 24 young people SMASH and the Community Projects Officer are recommending the introduction of two split, shorter youth sessions with each supervised by 3 youth workers. The proposed approach would double the current capacity to 46 young people.
6. Based on current attendees, most of the young people are in school years 8 and 9 (Secondary School, age 10-13). Splitting the attendees into age ranges would mean we could double the existing capacity within the same time window for our youth workers.

7. If WPC are in agreement, two sessions could be offered within the existing time window with ages 10-13 in the early session and ages 12-16 in the second session. Young people in school year 8 (age 12-13) could be offered a choice to attend either but not both sessions depending on their friendship groups.

How the improvements can be resourced

8. SMASH are currently recruiting and have two additional members of staff joining in November so this would cover the extra youth worker required by Wroughton. Paying for a third youth worker offers good value for money for Wroughton Parish Council allowing a doubling of current young person capacity. SMASH have agreed that they are happy and able to accommodate this proposed split session approach if funding for the third youth worker is agreed.
9. SMASH and Wroughton Parish Council continue to work collaboratively to explore grant opportunities, however these are often limited because local government are not able to apply. Previously SMASH have obtained a grant from the Wroughton Community Trust relating to staffing and equipment for WPC's youth offering and the another from the Wroughton Solar fund who paid for some other physical resources. Our understanding is that we would not be able to reapply to these this financial year because our youth offering is the same and does not constitute a new project. We have contacted Voluntary Action Swindon to see if any other grants are available.

Communications and information share

10. Should Wroughton Parish Council agree to funding the third youth worker and the split session offering, this will be advertised, in the first instance, via WPC's website and on our local social media groups. We will hold off from advertising individually to all parents via our school's network as some of the existing youth club attendees have already indicated that they would like to bring along friends but capacity has not allowed for this.

Recommendations

1. Wroughton Parish Council agree to funding for a third SMASH youth worker for the rest of financial year 2024/5, costing £1115.00
2. Wroughton Parish Council authorise the Community Projects Officer to liaise with SMASH youth to arrange two separate age-related youth sessions on Tuesday evenings in the Ellendune Community Centre.
3. Wroughton Parish Council agree to information relating to the revised youth sessions are posted to WPC website and local social media feeds.