

Report on Cambourne Youth Partnership's Activities for Cambourne Town Council Leisure & Amenities Committee

September and October 2022

Monthly Headlines

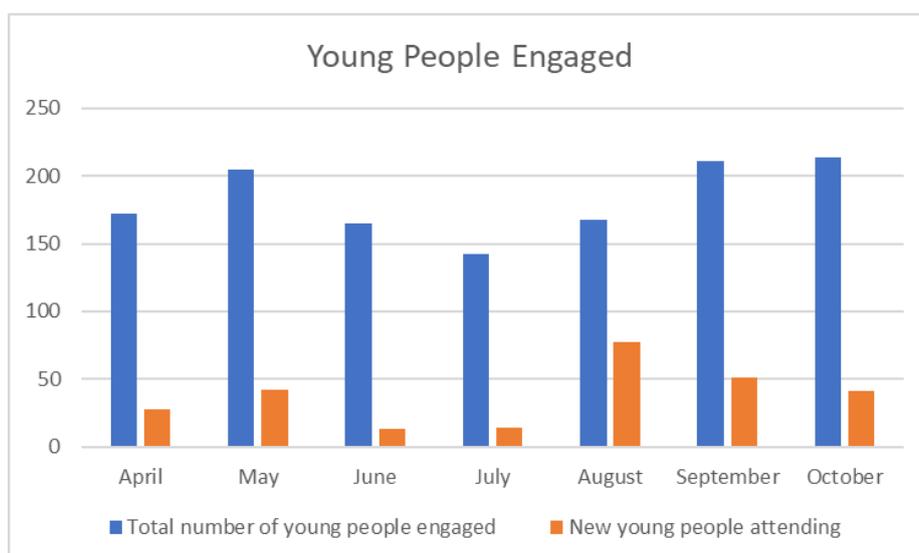
September 2022

- Engaged with **211** young people in total
- **51** new young people attended for first time in September
- **12** volunteers supporting activities
- **4** young leaders supporting activities
- **47** sessions provided across the month

October 2022

- Engaged with **214** young people in total
- **41** new young people attended for first time in October
- **12** volunteers supporting activities
- **4** young leaders supporting activities
- **37** sessions provided across the month

Attendance Figures from April to October 2022



Open Access Youth Clubs

We restarted our weekly open access youth clubs at the start of the new school year in September. We tried to maintain as much as possible young people continuing to come to groups at the same time as they had been previously, while factoring in the change in school year. We have continued to run 4 youth clubs each week, for Year 7, Year 8, Year 9-10 and Year 11+.

These groups have taken on a very different feel with us having moved across to the new Soul building. We have been able to make use of the extensive facilities throughout the building, including a dedicated art and craft room, music studio and kitchen. The large hall has allowed us to set up table tennis, which has proven very popular, as well as space for board games.



We have seen a substantial increase in the number of young people attending the open access groups, with a total of 152 young people having come in across September and October. The Year 8 group on a Thursday tends to be the busiest one, with an average of 30 young people each week.

Music Groups

Our Thursday evening music sessions have continued, working towards recording songs which can be added to our YouTube channel. Some of the time has been spent adjusting to the new studio space, which is not yet finalised, but being in the new building has also brought a new and unexpected opportunity. We've been able to experiment with different sounds that can be created in a kitchen environment, such as running water, wooden spoons and a salt shaker, and we're working on creating a song which uses these percussive sounds in place of a drum kit.



We've also been able to start up a second music session each week, funded partly through the Police and Crime Commissioner's Youth Fund. This funding was applied for in partnership with the South Cambs Community Safety Partnership to enhance the work being done through our Friday evening project, providing positive alternative activities for young people who may be drawn into anti-social behaviour. It has already engaged with 12 young people, who are working with rapper J4 to write lyrics expressing how they feel and their life experiences.

Football Group

Our football group has started back well, with a good mixture of young people returning from last term as well as quite a few new starters. We've had a total of 42 different young people involved in September and October and most weeks will split into 2 groups to balance out the wide range of ages and abilities. The young people are looking forward to the World Cup and are planning to get together to watch some of the games.

Boxing

After a few months when our boxing group had not been running regularly, we've been able to start it back and it has grown significantly. Having space at the new youth centre to run the sessions has made it a lot more accessible for young people, and we've continued our relationship with Icen Gym whose boxing instructors come over to Cambourne to lead the project.

We've had 17 young people engage with boxing during September and October, with most of them having not tried boxing before. A few of them have enjoyed it so much that they now attend additional boxing sessions at the gym in Hardwick. We've had a particular focus on mental health through these sessions, offering a space for young people who might need support in building their confidence or improving their body image. We've been delighted to have one of the young people who was involved last year stepping up to being a young leader and helping to lead the sessions along with the coaches.



Wellbeing Café

The Youth Wellbeing Café has continued to be open weekly as a partnership between Cambourne Youth Partnership, Romsey Mill and Cambourne Church. Since the summer there have been quite a few new young people attending, with 48 young people altogether having been part of group across September and October. The increase in numbers has presented a challenge about how to balance responding to the growing needs of young people while maintaining a space that is accessible for all young people, particularly those who may have anxiety or struggle with busy and noisy environments. Social anxiety has been one of the particular topics that has come up regularly in recent months, with a lot of openness from young people to have conversations about their mental health and wellbeing. The team are currently exploring various options to increase the capacity of the group without losing the ability to support individual young people during the sessions.



Friday Baking

The baking session on a Friday is another group which has benefitted significantly from the new Soul building. Having a large kitchen, with lots of surface space and a good variety of appliances, has enabled this group to grow, with 17 young people having taken part across September and October. Each week the young people suggest recipes to try out, with the caramel shortbread having been a particular highlight.



Detached Work

Detached youth work is an important way to meet with young people who may not otherwise engage with building-based activities or who spend a lot of time out and about around Cambourne. Our detached work had been less regular over previous months due to the number of regular groups running across the week and the need to manage the capacity of the team and volunteers to sustain these groups. However, the funding that we received from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has enabled us to put some additional resources into the detached sessions and we have restarted regular, weekly detached work.



Friday Evening Group

On a Friday evening, the youth centre is a hive of activity, with an average of 30 young people accessing our late evening youth club. We've been exploring with the young people different activities they would like to engage in while at the youth centre, and this has led to an increase in what is on offer. The funding we've received from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has enabled us to run drop-in boxing sessions during the group, with several young people getting involved in this. We have also started to explore a new partnership with Hope Against Poverty to give more opportunity for young people to cook during the Friday evening sessions. This would have several advantages, including being able to offer a hot meal to all of the young people who attend as well as teaching valuable cooking skills.

We know from the local Police force that anti-social behaviour in Cambourne was generally reduced over the summer holidays and we continue to focus on providing a positive space for young people to be on Friday evenings. One of the girls who is with us most weeks said *"Friday evenings at the youth club is the highlight of my week."*

Schools Work

Since the start of the new term we have been having conversations with Cambourne Village College about working together to support students through Alternative Education. This can benefit young people who struggle to be in school due to anxiety or other mental health challenges, or where their behaviour prevents them from being fully educated in the school environment.

One of the difficulties in committing to this programme has been the restrictions on our access to the youth centre during school hours, which we had hoped would be an available venue for these sessions. We're looking forward to continuing discussions with the Town Council to work out a suitable way forward.

Community 1:1 Support

We have continued to be available to young people who would like more support outside of the regular groups through 1:1 sessions. Throughout September and October we have been able to offer 2 young people weekly meetings to support their emotional wellbeing and work through specific challenges they have been facing around education, friendships and mental health. This work has also been impacted by the lack of access to the new Soul building, with sessions either being squeezed in around the youth club times or needing to be held outdoors depending on the weather. We are hoping that some flexibility in the approach to using space in the youth centre may enable this kind of support to be more easily given to young people, as has been possibly previously.

October Half Term

During the October half term week we didn't run our regular programme but instead invited young people to attend two separate events that were taking place locally. One of them was a music event called Amp, run by Romsey Mill, which was a great opportunity to hear performances by up-and-coming artist, and the second was a Creative Youth Festival run by Wysing Arts Centre, with activities such as ceramics, augmented reality and make up sessions. Some of our youth workers attended these events and, although there were only a few young people from Cambourne who participated, it was a good opportunity to help them engage and explore their interests. The music event has inspired some of our young people to work on their songs in the hope of being able to perform next year.



Volunteers and Young Leaders

We continue to have a fantastic team of young leaders and volunteers who give so much of their time, energy and love to the young people through all of the groups and activities at the youth centre. We started the term with a volunteer social, enjoying some silly games and team building exercises, as well as some more serious planning time as we reflected back on the past year and looked ahead to this year's plans.

We have lost a few volunteers since the last academic year due to various other commitments that people have and so we are looking for more people to join the team of volunteer youth leaders. Particularly as we manage activities in a bigger building and have more opportunities for different roles within the youth clubs (e.g. cooking, baking, music, games, crafts, registration), we would be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to get involved.



Staffing

We are pleased for Emma Whitbread, who has been working full-time in Cambourne, as she steps up to a new 3 day-a-week role within Romsey Mill's work, leading a new area of youth work in Northstowe. We know that Emma will be taking a lot of her own experiences of Cambourne into this new, growing town and, although we will be sad not to have her fully in Cambourne, we're pleased that she will continue to be involved here for 2 days each week. Over the next few months we will be looking to recruit another youth worker to the team to fill this time.

Disability

Some of the core values of youth work are equality, diversity and inclusion, and we've been spending time recently as a team considering how we ensure that our youth work opportunities are accessible to all young people. We've particularly been thinking about how to ensure that young people with disabilities are able to access youth activities and whether we should be focussing on running separate sessions for young people with disabilities or ensuring that all young people, regardless of ability or disability, can access existing provision equally. We've started having conversations with young people, parents and volunteers to think through these questions but we know that there is more work to be done. We would be keen to speak to anyone in Cambourne who has a view on how youth services can be made more accessible and available to disabled young people.

Old Soul Building

A considerable amount of time during the past few months has been given to clearing out the old Soul building, moving some equipment across to the new building and arranging for other items to either go to a charity shop or the tip. The process has revealed many memories of the years of activities which have taken place in the old Soul building and we hope that some of this will be able to be preserved for future generations to look back on. We're particularly grateful to the Cambourne Youth Partnership trustees for their practical support in organising the clearing of the building. We look forward to the new area of outside space which will be created once the building is removed and the opportunity for young people to be involved in designing this.



Training

Our team of youth workers continue to engage in professional development through training opportunities, both in-house and externally. Over the past couple of months, the whole team has renewed their Prevent training, being reminded about the risks of radicalisation and how to play their part in safeguarding young people from these risks. Some of the team have also taken part in training sessions based around 'Including Autistic Young People in Youth Work' and 'Working with Young Parents', both of which have offered important understanding and skills in specific areas of our work.

Jonathan Buwert

Lead Youth Development Worker for Cambourne

17th November 2022