

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

November, December 2022 and January 2023

Monthly Headlines

November 2022

- Engaged with **246** young people in total
- **37** new young people attended for first time in November
- **13** volunteers supporting activities
- **3** young leaders supporting activities
- **49** sessions provided across the month

December 2022

- Engaged with **184** young people in total
- **16** new young people attended for first time in December
- **12** volunteers supporting activities
- **3** young leaders supporting activities
- **32** sessions provided across the month

January 2023

- Engaged with **221** young people in total
- **18** new young people attended for first time in January
- **12** volunteers supporting activities
- **2** young leaders supporting activities
- **46** sessions provided across the month

Staffing

Following on from Emma Whitbread's new role as a Youth Development Worker in Northstowe, and therefore reducing her working days in Cambourne, we have seen some new growth and development in the team. We spent time in December advertising and recruiting for two roles – a Youth Development Worker and a Youth Support Worker – and are pleased to have filled both of these.

Emma Slater has been working as part of the team in Cambourne for many years and most recently has been based here for two days a week as a Youth Support Worker, whilst also working with Romsey Mill's youth work team in Linton. From the beginning of January, Emma became a Youth Development Worker, taking on more responsibility within her work in Cambourne, and from February will be increasing her time in Cambourne to four days a week.

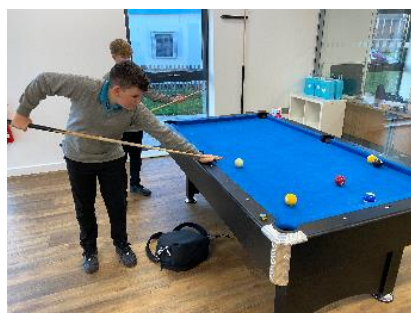
We're delighted also to have Fran Adaszkiwicz join the team as a Youth Support Worker. Fran has been volunteering with us over the past year, having completed her Level 2 Award in Youth Work Practice, and from the beginning of January is now working three days a week, across the community, schools and youth centre.

Overall we have been able to increase the staff team's time in Cambourne by just over 20%, thanks to the financial commitment and support from Romsey Mill and grant funding which CYP has been able to secure. This is part of our commitment to further enhancing the funding beyond that which is provided by Cambourne Town Council to support and extend the provision for young people in Cambourne, which is part of our Service Level Agreement.



Open Access Youth Clubs

Our programme of open access youth clubs has continued, with four groups running weekly which are open to any young people in Cambourne within different age group. We have seen a slight increase in numbers attending across the groups, with a total of 161 young people having attended across November to January (compared to 152 in the previous two months). The younger groups (for Year 7 and Year 8s) continue to be the busiest, with over 30 young people attending on most weeks.



The particular activities and games on offer at the groups are guided by the young people's suggestions, from Hama beads and canvas painting in the art room, to rocky road and millionaire's shortbread in the kitchen. There is always food available for young people, which is free of charge, and is usually either cheese and ham toasties or pasta with a variety of toppings. For some young people this will be a welcome snack after school, but for others this might be the only food that they will eat outside of school that day.

We've been pleased over the past few months to be working with the team from Bourn Windmill (part of Cambridge Past, Present and Future) as they approach the completion of the windmill's renovation work. They have been keen to engage with local young people to ensure that the information on display at the windmill is accessible and engaging for a younger audience; they've done this by coming along to a few of the open access youth clubs with several interactive activities, which have proved very popular by those attending. We are planning to take some young people across to the windmill during the Easter holidays for a visit and to continue to input into their publicity materials as they open back up to the public.



We also worked along with the South Cambs Community Safety Partnership to offer free bike safety checks to young people through a Dr Bike session in January. This was a response to the observation that many young people cycle around Cambourne but don't necessarily have bikes which are well maintained or with important safety features such as lights. We were pleased with the response to the session, although the short time that it took to become fully booked shows that there is perhaps a need for another session in the near future.

Music Groups

We are continuing to run two specific music sessions each week, one focussed on rapping skills and lyric writing and the other with a broader scope of musical interests. The numbers attending these sessions are relatively small, which allows us to have better engagement with them and help individuals to develop their music abilities. One of our volunteers has been able to set up a regular music opportunity in the studio as well during one of the open access sessions, which we hope will foster more interest in young people who might want to join with the smaller group sessions.

Football Group

Our football session on a Friday evening is another group which has grown over the past few months. A total of 53 young people have attended across the last three months, compared to 42 in the previous 2 months. As the numbers have grown, there has been increasing diversity in the age and abilities of the young people who come along to play, from those who are looking for a serious game to some who want to have a casual kick-about. We had already been splitting into two sessions most weeks in order to facilitate the different groups, but we are now in the position of needing to create a third group to manage this growth. The main challenges that we face in doing this are the limited space that is available on the 3G pitch and the need for more volunteers to help run the multiple sessions. We have been having conversations with Living Sport, a local charity which encourages people to be active, about partnering with their new initiative (the Youth Takeover) as a way of extending the opportunities that are available for young people to engage with football on a Friday evening, and we look forward to developing this partnership over the next few months.



Boxing

Our boxing group on a Thursday, supported by Icen Boxing Gym, has seen a steady number of young people attending. We have noticed an improvement in several of the young people's skills in recent months, as well as a stronger sense of belonging and community within the young people who come along. Part of the focus of this session is to support young people's mental health and wellbeing, and there has been space



within the sessions for participants to open up and share about how they are doing. One young person has started some additional one-to-one sessions with one of the instructors to receive some more specific support around the challenges he is facing.



In January, just before the school term started back, we took a few members of the boxing group on a trip. 3 young people enjoyed a session of ice skating in Cambridge, followed by a visit to McDonald's.

Wellbeing Café and Support Group

At the beginning of this year we made some changes to the way that the Wellbeing Café was working. The numbers of young people attending before Christmas made it challenging to provide the kind of support that was needed for young people who struggle in a busier or noisier setting, and we were also keen to have some more targeted intervention for young people who have particular struggles with their mental health and wellbeing.

The open café is still running but for the shorter time of one hour rather than an hour and a half. This has created a time slot in which we now run short courses in a wellbeing support group, each lasting for six weeks. Young people can self-refer to the support group or can be referred by someone else (e.g. parent, teacher, GP, other professionals) and the numbers are capped for each course to ensure that those attending can get the support that they need. The first course, which started in January, focussed on anxiety with the second course currently being planned to be based around self-esteem.

Friday Baking

Over the past few months we have been evaluating the baking session on a Friday, which offers an opportunity for young people to get involved in the kitchen in a more focussed way to the baking activities during the open access youth clubs. This group has been increasingly popular, which is encouraging to see, but there is a limit to the number of people who can have a meaningful engagement in the baking process given the facilities that we have available. As with our other youth sessions, we want to ensure that we are providing good youth work support alongside the particular activity on offer, and so we have been cutting down slightly on the numbers attending so that we can ensure that our focus remains on cultivating positive and meaningful relationships while we make cakes.



Detached Work

Our weekly detached sessions on a Thursday evening are a key opportunity to connect with young people who may not otherwise come along to the youth centre, although many of the young people we have been meeting recently do also attend our Friday evening sessions. It's important for us to have a presence in the community and for young people to know that youth workers are present and accessible should they want to come and have a chat with us.

Friday Evening Group

We have seen continued growth in the numbers of young people coming into the youth centre for our later Friday evening group, with an average of 42 attending each week. The session has been shared by word of mouth, which has led to a natural growth based around the friendships groups who have been coming along. During January and February we have had some focussed activities and games based around topics which young people were interested in discussing, particularly thinking about the influence of Andrew Tate and issues of misogyny, and the way that pornography can distort our understanding of relationships and sex. Linking in to some of this, we have been promoting the C-card scheme, which we run as a partner of the Terrance Higgins Trust, providing free condoms and chlamydia tests to young people along with sexual health advice. With most of the young people who attend this group being in the age range 15-17, it's a key group to be offering this support and guidance to, ensuring that they have somewhere they can access trusted information and advice in a way that is accessible.



Schools Work

We are really pleased to have been working to engage with three students who have not been accessing full-time education for a variety of different reasons. A key part of this work is building a relationship of trust with the young people in order to introduce Alternative Education, which can include accredited and non-accredited courses, enrichment experiences and tutoring. We are still working to establish a regular routine for these students, but would hope to then be able to expand on the current offer to Cambourne Village College and take referrals for a few more students.

Christmas and Winter Support

It was great to be able to host another Christmas meal for the young people who have been coming along to all of our different groups and activities, and this time to be able to use the new youth centre. 24 young people enjoyed a full Christmas dinner with all the trimmings, followed by a quiz hosted by one of our young leaders.

Alongside the festivities, we were also able to offer Christmas hampers and meal boxes to some of the families who we've



been alongside over the past year. Hampers were donated to us by Kingsgate Church and the meal boxes by Red Hen and the Cambridge Fruit Company, and were gratefully received by the families.

In addition to this support, our team in Cambourne (as part of Romsey Mill's Youth Development Team) are Trusted Partners of the County Council in relation to the Household Support Fund, meaning that we have been able to help vulnerable families experiencing immediate financial hardship to pay for food and household energy bills. We will continue to offer this support through the connections that we have with the young people and families we support while the Household Support Fund is in operation.

Safeguarding

An important part of our work, which is often unseen, is safeguarding young people. We work closely with our partners including local schools, Early Help Team, Social Care, Youth Offending and the South Cambs Problem Solving Group to plan and deliver interventions for young people who are at risk of harm. It is often the case that the relationships which we've built with young people over a period of time through our community youth work put us in a good position to respond to their needs in a crisis, get alongside them to advocate for them and help to guide them through the support that they may need. Over the past few months we have offered some specific support to young people who have been suicidal, in trouble with the police and at risk of exploitation.

Volunteers

We were part of the Town Council's Volunteer Fair in January, which was a good space to share the work that we do and the volunteering opportunities with the people who came along. We had some good conversations during the morning and have had one new volunteer who is about to start with us. We are always open to new volunteers getting involved and are currently looking particularly for volunteers who can help with the after school youth clubs (3.30-5.00pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays) or the football group or late youth club on a Friday evening.

Networking

It's important that our youth workers are connected in to local and national networks of youth work, to receive support and encouragement, share good practice, and contribute to the wider development of the youth work sector. We've recently been involved in a few particular events:

County Youth Conference – this took place in November and gathered together youth workers and organisations from across Cambridgeshire. It was organised by the Youth & Community Coordinator Team and provided some great training seminars, a thought-provoking keynote talk, and lots of connection with other organisations working to support young people in the local area.

South Cambs Youth Forum – this is a more regular, online forum specifically focussed around South Cambs. It offers a point of contact with our local Youth & Community Coordinator to discuss challenges that we are facing and support each other to find ways forward.

Thriving Minds Residential – this is a grant programme which CYP is part of for three years as recipients of funding to support out work around mental health and wellbeing. As part of the programme, we have access to a wide network of input to our work and this most recently took the form of a residential conference. There was a lot of input around the current landscape of young people’s mental health, navigating the systems of support that are available for young people and understanding some of the root causes of poor mental health.



Jonathan Buwert

Lead Youth Development Worker for Cambourne

16th February 2023