

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## YOUTH AND PLAY SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 23 JULY 2008

### REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

#### TITLE OF REPORT - HEAD OF YOUTH & PLAY SERVICE

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report informs the Committee of developments in the Youth & Play Service since the last meeting. The Committee is asked to note the report.

#### 1. Staff Movements

- 1.1. The untimely death of Bill Hawkins in May came as a severe blow to Youth & Play Service colleagues, young people, community members and agencies and organisations active in the Rock Ferry and Tranmere area. Bill will be remembered for his tireless work with and on behalf of young people and for his contribution to the development of outreach youth work in Wirral.
- 1.2. Ian McCabe, Neighbourhood Youth Worker, Deeside Young People's Project, has gained his B.A. (Hons) in Applied Social Sciences at John Moores University.

#### Area Team reports

#### 2. Birkenhead and Bebington Area

- 2.1. The period of this report has been one troubled with staff sickness and vacancies that have put the Units under pressure to deliver their normal programme. In some cases Units have had to close occasional sessions to ensure the maintenance of a safe environment. Despite these difficulties much work has been successfully completed.
- 2.2. Viking Youth Club are in the process of having their coffee bar area revamped which will further improve the delivery of their Creative Cookery project, which aims to inspire young people to cook and eat healthily. The Club has been busy within the local community having taken part in the Tranmere Show and Oxton Secret gardens. They also raised money for Club activities by doing a sponsored bag pack at Asda, in conjunction with Pensby Youth Club.
- 2.2. Bebington Youth Centre are working both inside and outside the Club on environmental issues and hope to launch a large programme of cleaning and improving their local environment to establish an area dedicated to wildlife adjacent to the Club building. They have been awarded their bronze Health Promoting Youth settings award.
- 2.3. Charing Cross Methodist Youth Centre have recently returned from a weekend at the National Methodist Youth conference in London where they met with many hundreds of young people from across the country. They are working on the Health Promoting Youth Settings award and a busy music project is developing aided by the construction of a stage area.
- 2.4. Youth achievement awards are high on the agenda at Eastham Youth Club and a small group are working on their second section. Funding has been secured to revamp the coffee bar area and the MCing project that involves the production of a CD is proving popular particularly with the young men.
- 2.5. Cavendish Youth Club has been enjoying the increased resources that their new "Club" provides, working across several floors has not proved to be as problematic as first anticipated and the young people now have access to computing and fitness facilities. Work that has recently been

undertaken by the young people includes sexual health workshops and a project to examine dreams and aspirations for the future.

- 2.6. Shaftesbury Youth Centre has been extremely busy over the last few months with the preparation of a dramatic piece on binge drinking and work on Healthy youth settings. In addition, the under 14's, 16's and 19's football teams are taking part in the northern five a side final in Blackburn.

### 3. **Wirral Youth Service Outreach Team.**

- 3.1. To ensure Wirral Youth Service Outreach Team (WYSOT) continues delivering a quality service to young people, staff have attended substance misuse awareness training, a regional guns and violence workshop and a Youth Task Force road show organised by the DCSF.
- 3.2. Since March the WYSOT has been busy undertaking street work and Kontakta Bus work in their neighbourhoods which has led to the participation of young people in a range of positive activities to develop their personal and social skills. The WYSOT continues to work with a range of agencies and organisations at a strategic level, for example, in Problem Solving Groups and in the delivery of services to young people such as holiday activity programmes.
- 3.3. Birkenhead Youth Action Project organised a series of Football Cage competitions in Peel Avenue and Bedford Road, targeting young people not in employment, education or training. To ensure the continuation of outreach work in Tranmere and Rock Ferry, as a temporary measure, the Neighbourhood Youth Worker for Wallasey is also overseeing the Birkenhead Youth Action Project. Work is being focused on the Parks and support is being given to the Community Seating Area that has been developed by and for young people with Youth Capital Funding (YCF).
- 3.4. The Deeside Young People's Project has supported the development of West Kirby Youth Club by introducing street groups to the unit. The project has a good working relationship with the Police, particularly through the joint delivery of successful school holiday activity programmes. Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award candidates from St Luke's Church are being supported in all aspects of their Award programme. The new Kontakta Bus, funded by the YCF, will be fully operational in the next few months.
- 3.5. The Beechwood/ Ballentyne based Fender Youth Action Project has been working with young people to address issues that not only affect them but also the wider community. Emphasis has been placed upon building their self-confidence by developing their literacy and numeracy using informal education methods. A young women's group is involved in planning a programme of culturally based activities.
- 3.6. The North End Young People's Project has successfully engaged with young people who frequented Birkenhead Park and were involved in alcohol misuse. These young people have been busy trying things new to them. Some took part in the coastal walk, some participated in dance workshops, others saw 'Dancing on Ice' at the Echo Area and another group went to a restaurant for a meal.
- 3.7. The Noctorum Young People's Project has continued with street work in Noctorum, Oxton and in the Arno. Links have been made with Noctorum Community Centre, which is used for activities to develop the young people's fitness. The young people have enjoyed a visit to Manley Mere and a Go-Karting session.
- 3.8. Supported by their parents, Unilever, the Police and the Fire Service, young people from South Wirral Young People's Project organised a clean up operation of the Eastham Skate Park and playground. The 'Mistakes and Bladdered' board game, which the young people developed with funding from the Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF) and the DAAT has now been distributed to schools, youth units and other agencies. The project has been successful in gaining Positive Activities for Young People funding for summer and half term activities, this project will have close links with the Extended Schools in the area.

3.9. Wallasey Young People's Project (WYPP) has used the Kontakta Bus as a weekly point of contact in Central Park. Over the last year, the bus has proved to be a good facility for the delivery of responsive workshops to address alcohol and substance misuse as well as relationship issues. The young people have enjoyed and benefited from mountain biking in Delamere Forest, an accredited climbing course at Awesome Walls and a four-day riding course. Twice weekly football coaching sessions at the community sports pitches at Weatherhead School have been well supported. WYPP successfully organised the annual sand sculpture competition, which was held at New Brighton and was attended by groups from throughout the Wirral.

#### 4. **Wallasey/ Deeside**

- 4.1. Leasowe Youth Club have four young men, who are preparing for a 12 week expedition to Malaysia in September. This has involved a five day residential, liaising with the Probation Service, employers and parents and planning fund raising events to cover the cost of vaccinations, kit and flights. A group from the club recently visited the Maritime/Slave Trade museum.
- 4.2. Fender Youth Club have been involved in a Virtual Baby Project, the young people taking part in these sessions have taken babies home 'to look after' for the weekend. The Job Club has been working alongside Connexions and Reach Out working with NEET young people in a drop in environment every Wednesday 1-3pm. Six young people have completed a ten-week NVQ in Confidence and Employability. The Motivate presentation evening was a success, the Mayor of Wirral attended along with representatives from Raleigh International and families and friends of the four young people involved. Alongside the Police, 12 young people took part in a discussion/group work session around knife, gun and related violent crime. Three young people are going on an international visit to the Azores in July.
- 4.3. Moreton Youth Club have just completed a sexual health project which ran for six weeks using money gained from Terrance Higgins Trust. Wallasey School will be using the youth club to run the Positive Activities for Young People programme over the summer holidays. The Club is currently working towards the Health Promoting Youth Unit award. The MC Project is using decks and their MCing skills to create their own sound and plan to use an empty space in Club for a MC room.
- 4.4. Seacombe Youth Project have just completed a funding application for more updated music equipment. Young people are currently involved with Hope 08 and Cultural Services in the design element of a project in the sports cage between Guinea Gap baths and Wallasey Town Hall.
- 4.5. St Mary's School Youth Club are in the expedition season for Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The Bronze group have been making their final preparations for expeditions in June. The Silver groups completed their second and final expedition in the Yorkshire Dales this month, with all 45 candidates completing. The Gold group are putting the finishing touches to the expedition route cards. The Tuesday special needs club attracts 70 young people each week, about 50 being young people with moderate or severe learning difficulties. The club is run with the help of 20 or so young people from the club.
- 4.6. Pensby Youth Club have started their member's committee meetings and are planning a community fun day with PCSO's. They have been holding table tennis and football competitions. A photographic development project is underway looking at the history of Pensby. MC/DJ workshops are proving to be popular, attracting new members to the club.
- 4.7. Greasby Youth Club have taken part in a series of workshops around sexual health, healthy eating, drug and alcohol misuse and bullying. They are pulling together the evidence for HPYU's Bronze Award. The Pavilion is used to for structured group work and for young people who don't want to access the youth club but just want to sit down and have discussions.

- 4.8. West Kirby Youth Club has opened their Multi Media room which is allowing young people to record their MCing, they are planning to use this new facility for internet use and film and music editing.

## **Curriculum Development Services**

### **5. Youth Engagement / Participation**

- 5.1. The Executive Youth Board has now been recruited. A total of 21 young people were recruited and the initial training with Elected Members took place on the 28 June and 5 July. A further meeting is planned for August.
- 5.2. The 2008/09 YOF/YCF Grant Panel was recruited at the same time as the Executive Youth Board. 21 young people were successful; they have now completed their training and have started the process of assessing funding applications. Potentially successful applicants will be giving presentations to the Grant Panel on the 22 and 23 July, with the money being issued in August.
- 5.3. The UKYP representatives continue to meet at a regional level, carrying forward their campaigns. All of the representatives attended their local Area Youth Forum in order to ensure that other young people are able to give their views. On 10 June, three of the representatives visited Government Office North West in Manchester, to meet with Nigel Burke, Deputy Regional Director - Children and Learners. The young people were asked questions regarding their campaigns on transport, age of adulthood, facilities for young people, health and university tuition fees. Two of the representatives will be attending UKYP National Sitting at Exeter University from the 19 to 22 July.
- 5.4. The last round of Youth Forums took place on the 22 May. Issues raised by the young people included Police and transport. The young people were also informed about opportunities available i.e. facilities for young people, funding (linked to Area Youth Forum Awards), opportunities for young people's engagement and My Place.
- 5.5. Following the Area Youth Forums, a young people's My Place meeting was held on the 28<sup>th</sup> May, where 26 young people were shown the results of existing consultations regarding improving places to go and things to do. These were taken from the Youth Voice Conference and Youth Parliament 2006, Youth Voice Conference 2007 and Youth Parliament 2007. The young people were asked if they agreed with what had been said previously and to add what they thought had been left out. From this meeting, a My Place reference group was established, four of whom presented the views of young people to a stakeholder event on the 19<sup>th</sup> June.

### **6. Wirral Youth Theatre/Youth Arts (WYT)**

- 6.1. WYT is now a centre for the Arts Council's Award Scheme. Currently nine young people have completed their portfolios and are due for moderation and 15 young people from Meadowside and Foxfield Schools are working to attain their qualification in September.
- 6.2. 'First Class Peer Education Theatre Outreach Company' is currently involved in devising and rehearsing several issue based commissioned/partnerships projects including:
  - 'Swings and Roundabouts' - This is a piece based on the consultation carried out with youth groups across Wirral which was funded by YOF. 'Swings and Roundabouts' is set in a park and explores issues around young people's risk taking behaviour and the consequences. A shortened version will be performed in four parks during the school holidays – to be a stimulus for youth workers to engage young people in informal education around alcohol and drug misuse, body image and peer pressure. A longer version will be toured around youth units in September. The PCT have funded the parks element of this project and also a performance at a teacher's conference in November with the view to schools booking the piece to tour schools in 2009.

- 'My Ideal Teacher' - Based on the results of an on-line pupil questionnaire and consultation carried out by a cross department working group, WYT peer educators will produce a DVD and supporting tool kit to be used in teacher training.

To meet the demand for such projects WYT recently held open auditions for young people aged 16–19 and have recruited 20 new young people to join the established company. These young people will receive training and support in order to deliver high quality theatre, develop DVD training resources and to co-facilitate workshops. The subject matter of all the projects is based on thorough research and consultation with young people and partner organisations.

- 6.3. In addition to an in house programme of dance workshops and projects, the dance team continue to deliver curriculum based dance with Sports Development in several schools. In partnership with Sports Development, WYT has produced dance standards linked to the curriculum and has facilitated a schools and community dance event at Wallasey Town Hall.
- 6.4. The Sound Steps Project, which is externally funded by the Youth Music Foundation, continues to offer a range of opportunities to budding young musicians and event organisers, i.e. weekly band skill workshops, vocal workshops and recording projects. Sound Steps has been awarded £33,000 over three years to manage a V volunteer programme in Wirral. The project has also provided the musical element of the 'Along The River' schools project culminating in a series of performances at St Mary's College in July.
- 6.5. Rehearsals are now in full flow for the 'FACES' project which is part of Wirral Culture For All celebrations involving all the art disciplines provided by WYT. Around 50 young people are involved in this original piece which is a multi-media theatre experience showing the heritage of the Wirral through the eyes of young people. The piece not only focuses on famous people and places but also tells the fascinating and enlightening tales of ordinary people. There will be three performances of the play on 26 July and each will begin at the Tram Museum and audiences will be transported by tram to Pacific Road where they will be taken on a journey through the 'untold history of Wirral'.
- 6.6. WYT is involved in the production of DVD and training packages, this work currently includes:
- A promotional DVD for Connexions to be used by personal advisors to help induct NEET young people on the Activity Agreement Pilot. Young people currently on the programme will produce the film which will involve them in gaining a range of skills including presenting, camera work, editing and sound track creation/recording.
  - 'Coming Out' DVD - training resource for schools. Working alongside Wirral Brook and Safeguarding Children Services, a group of young people are involved in all aspects of the production both in front and behind the camera.

## 7. **Response**

- 7.1 Response has recorded 1,037 attendances into the agency and has provided 2,840 young people with drug and alcohol brief interventions through street work, one to one and workshops/group work sessions. Including the preventing homelessness workshops (i.e. 346), a total of 4,223 young people have had contact with the Response service this quarter.
- 7.2. The Alcohol Intervention Programme (AIP) pilot is a new initiative which will be jointly delivered by the police and partners, commencing prior to the summer holiday period. AIP aims to develop existing good practice around alcohol related issues and young people by providing a seamless brief intervention and referral system for those young people who have misused alcohol and have come to the attention of the police either through arrest, anti social behaviour, warning etc. This project will help address alcohol related issues by involving parents and ensuring they also receive information about alcohol related issues. It is hoped that this pilot will prove to be successful in attempts to reduce alcohol related A&E admissions and to educate greater numbers of targeted individuals of the dangers of alcohol and where help is available.

- 7.4. A further 12 months DAAT funding has been secured to run the drug and alcohol teams. The outreach team have worked in a number of hot spot areas this quarter and have managed to engage harder to reach young people in activities that prevent them from developing their risk taking behaviour into a destructive downward spire. The team have also delivered many drug and alcohol education sessions in school and non school settings. The Tier 3 team is busy working at specialist levels with vulnerable at risk young people. Interface with the outreach team is important as young people identified on the street are able to be swiftly accessed into treatment.
- 7.5. The Response housing advice service continues to support a steady caseload of young people and the drop in advice sessions remain popular. Stop Gap is a new initiative due to be launched in September. There will be 6 rented properties, dispersed across Wirral. The beds will be aimed at vulnerable 16/17 year olds for whom existing young people's supported accommodation is unsuitable or unavailable. The project will also offer short term respite accommodation for young people struggling at home. Two full time staff has been recruited for Stop Gap and are awaiting start dates following CRB clearance.
- 7.6. Response staff continue to provide preventative work in schools. During this quarter 25 workshops and 'bite size' sessions were delivered to 346 teenagers in schools and other settings.
- 7.7. Issues presented by young people in Counselling have been varied and have included isolation due to being estranged from the family and living in hostel accommodation; coping with a parent who is struggling with an addiction or who has a mental health problem; relationship difficulties both at home and at school; bereavement of a close family member; past abuse; domestic violence; sexuality. Many young people present anger as a way of dealing with their issues and problems.

## 8. **Duke of Edinburgh's Award**

- 8.1 This summer has seen the successful completion of many Award expeditions at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. As always this is only made possible by the dedication and enthusiasm of staff and the enormous support from volunteers and parents.
- 8.2 A group of children in the care of the local authority are still working towards their Gold Award. Pending a successful bid to the Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF), they are planning to complete the residential section of their Award in the Czech Republic where they want to study social care. A smaller group are attempting their Bronze Award and plan to complete their expedition at the Oaklands Centre next year.
- 8.3. Interest in the Award from parent support groups is still strong and the service assists and advises these groups in a number of ways. There are currently six active groups within the borough comprising of about 45 young people.
- 8.4. Delivery of the Award in schools in conjunction with Merseyside Police is going well. This pilot project, currently being piloted in Rock Ferry High School, employs the services of an imbedded police officer, the D of E Award Officer, and a teacher from the school.
- 8.5. The Award Officer has recently visited Foxfield School and as a result is currently helping the staff to design an Award programme suitable for their pupils.
- 8.6. Following the end of this year's expedition season all expedition work is continuing to ensure staff are revalidated under the Awards new assessor accreditation scheme.

## 9. **International Work / Special Needs**

- 9.1. Bookings at Ivy Farm Bunkhouse are now picking up and the facility will shortly be advertised to schools. It is hoped that the final renovations will be finished before the end of the year. The

facility is used by many youth groups, including the uniformed sector, and does attract many repeat bookings. All of the incoming youth exchange groups stay at Ivy Farm.

- 9.2. This year's Special Needs Summer Programme is based around the Belvidere Centre and includes daytime provision as well as evening sessions. This year's programme has the theme of Healthy Lifestyles.
- 9.3. Hong Kong Youth Exchange – The incoming group, visiting at the end of July comprises of 20 young people plus two workers. A similar group of young people from Wirral will visit Hong Kong and China in September this year. Currently Wirral young people are busy hosting the Hong Kong group which includes catering, cleaning and programming, they are also charged with raising the necessary finance for this project.
- 9.4. A small group of young people are leaving on July 25th, for a 10 day study visit to Ponta Delgada in the Azores. They will be joined by groups from Spain, Estonia, Czech Republic and Poland as well as the Portuguese hosts. This project is mainly sponsored by the European Youth Fund with the shortfall made up by group fundraising. The theme for this project is "A healthy mind in a healthy body".
- 9.5. A new senior member training course will be starting early next year. Recruitment will take place during November and December 2008.

## 10. **Play Service**

- 10.1. Wirral Council's bid for its allocation of Big Lottery Children's Play programme funding (£881,208.66) over three years was submitted by final deadline on the 15th May 2008. The Wirral Play Partnership led on the development of the Wirral Play Strategy implementation plan and identified the portfolio of projects for BIG Lottery proposal.
- 10.2. The Wirral 'Play in the Peninsula' portfolio has four distinct projects identified through a comprehensive consultation and audit which was the basis for the Wirral Play Strategy and Implementation plan 2007- 2012.
- 10.3. The projects are *Community Play Rangers*, an outreach play project focusing on urban parks, play areas, open spaces, streets and children's informal play spaces. *Adventure and Nature Play*, the improvement of four equipped play areas to increase the range of play opportunities, which challenge and stimulate children's abilities and development. The *Play Practitioners project* will provide five supervised open access play sessions for children and young people aged 5 -13 years in identified areas of most need across Wirral. *Play for All*, an inclusive play project, will focus on engaging and providing play opportunities for vulnerable children and young people aged 5 -13 years.
- 10.4. The Wirral Play Strategy can now be viewed on-line on the Wirral website. The Wirral Play Partnership is progressing the implementation of the Play Strategy action plan 2007-2012. This includes:
  - Enabling children and young people to access play safely and to feel safer when they are at their play place through the presence of trained outreach play workers.
  - The opportunity for more informal play provision and challenging play areas.
  - Promoting positive attitudes to play and reducing the barriers that prevent children from taking part.
  - A more inclusive approach to play provision and better access for vulnerable children and young people.
  - The involvement of children and young people to be consulted on the design and delivery of play provision is also a key feature of the strategy.

- 10.5. Play Day 2008 - The themed event at Birkenhead Park on Wednesday 6th August links up with National Play Day 2008 - 'Give us a go!' It is anticipated over 1,000 children and families will attend the event organised in conjunction with Wirral Play Council. The Wirral Play Champion, Councillor Chris Meaden, will open the event. There will be a wide range of activities including wheeled activities, a climbing wall, skateboarding half-pipe, a mega slide, drum circle, the ever popular straw bales, circus skills, tug 'o' war, den-building, dream catchers, mini-raft building, Healthy Schools, mobile creche bus, Street Play, face painting and Give us a Go Talent Show.
- 10.7. The Play Day campaign calls for children to be allowed challenging and adventurous play opportunities and aims to shake off the 'cotton wool' culture that can limit children's play. All children need opportunities to take their own risks when playing; they need and want challenge, excitement and uncertainty in play. Through play, children can learn how to manage challenge and risk for themselves in everyday situations. Opportunities for children to take risks while playing are reducing, as increasingly health and safety considerations are impacting on children's play. Adults should provide for children and young people to have adventurous play opportunities.

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