



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

A471

Rural Area Working Party 21 January 2010

St Edmundsbury's Rural Youth Work Programme

SUMMARY

This report provides the Working Party with an update about the various activities, events and projects which have been delivered for young people over the past twelve months which form part of St Edmundsbury's Rural Youth Work Programme. It also provides an evaluation of the rural youth work project, 'WOS UP' which is now in its second year.

The Council is committed to improving the quality of life of young people within the community and to promoting the involvement of young people. The Youth and Community Development Officer will give a short presentation at the meeting reporting on all the rural youth projects that have been happening and will outline the future plan for the Rural Youth Work Programme.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to provide Councillors with information about the Rural Youth Work Programme and outline the future programme for members of the working party.

The range of activities which form part of the programme throughout the year make a significant contribution to the Council's corporate priorities, in particular around improving the wellbeing of the community. Councillors are invited to make comments and suggestions as to how the programme of activities could be improved in the future and provide feedback about the activities of the past twelve months.

Contact Details

Chairman

Jim Thorndyke
01359 250271
Jim.thorndyke@stedsbc.gov.uk

Youth and Community Development Officer

Simon Pickering
01284 757077
simon.pickering@stedsbc.gov.uk

St Edmundsbury's Rural Youth Work Programme

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council works in partnership to deliver a wide range of youth work activities throughout the year. The purpose of this report is to update the Working party on the work which has been completed in the last twelve months as a part of the Rural Youth Work Programme.

2. Partnership working

- 2.1 A key part of the Rural Youth Work Programme's success is working with existing groups, partner organisations and members of the community to offer a wide range of activities and projects to young people.
- 2.2 St Edmundsbury works with a number of organisations to develop projects which improve the quality of life for young people in the more rural areas. Projects are usually delivered with smaller groups of young people to tackle specific issues. Often projects can help to address anti-social behaviour and promote community safety, health improvement and skills development.

3. Involvement and consultation

- 3.1 All of the projects that make up the Rural Youth Work Programme have been developed through consultation with young people individually or as a group. We have therefore tried not to limit the range of activities and projects on offer to young people in the rural areas.
- 3.2 The 2008 Place Survey (and its 2006 equivalent) showed that 'Activities for Young People' was the service area that most St Edmundsbury residents felt needed improving. Very nearly half (48%) of respondents chose this as one of their five priorities, placing it some 8% ahead of the second priority for improvement (Road and Pavement Repairs). Of interest to the Working Party, this is a Borough-wide finding, with respondents in 7 of the 18 rural wards ranking activities for young people as their top priority for improvement. It is against this background of a widely recognised need to provide such activities that the Council runs its Rural Youth Work Programme.

4. Rural Youth Work Programme Projects

- 4.1 In 2009 we continued to fund the 'Wos Up' Project and we also began to roll out the other 'spin off' activities linked to the Rural Action Plan. These new ways of working are still developing. We are seeking to develop and expand this work further in the next few years dependant on availability of funding.

4.2 Kedington Street Art Project

The Street Art Project was a direct outcome of the 'Wos Up' youth workers building excellent relationships with young people in the village. The young people, with support from the 'Wos Up' youth workers and Kedington Parish Council, worked with a Street Artist from an organisation based in Norwich called Creative Space to design and re-paint the youth shelter in Kedington. This has created significant improvements in the relationship between young people and the community. It has also given the young people an improved sense of ownership and belonging. This project involved 10 young people. Since this project has happened there has been a reduction in damage and anti-social behaviour in the village.

4.3 'Go with the Flow' Youth Bus

This project was delivered by Suffolk Youth and Connexions and was funded by St Edmundsbury. The 'Go with the Flow' Bus is run by Suffolk Acre and works in the east of the county. The bus visited the villages of Barningham, Ixworth and Stanton over three days in the summer holidays and provided a wide range of activities including a Café, Group Work sessions looking at a range of topics relating to young people and games consoles. The project was staffed by youth workers from Suffolk Youth and Connexions. The project was attended by 60 young people.

4.4 Clare Youth Club – Bike Maintenance Sessions

After consultation with young people at Clare Youth Club, St Edmundsbury funded a bike maintenance course. The young people were delighted that the consultation turned into a really enjoyable project. The course ran over 7 sessions and encouraged the young people to use their bikes more and keep them roadworthy. This was a small project that worked with ten young people. We hope that this kind of project can be repeated in other parts of the Borough.

4.5 Transport for central activities

St Edmundsbury worked with local organised groups of young people to arrange free transport to the more central activities such as the Skate JAM. We worked in partnership with the Explore Card, Suffolk County Council Transport and Suffolk Youth and Connexions Service. We would like to offer an increased number of opportunities such as this, but it is essential that this is done through existing youth groups and organisations to ensure Health and Safety and Safeguarding Policies are implemented. The offer was taken up by 8 young people.

4.6 CB9 Media Hub VJ Tour

A mobile media tour around the rural areas was undertaken by the CB9 Media Hub Youth Project, based at Haverhill Arts Centre. The tour promoted the youth music nights which have been set up at the Arts Centre. The tour visited Kedington, Stoke-by-Clare and Clare and displayed short films and created new content for the Youth Music Nights. This was led by a group of 6 young people and engaged with 20 young people in the villages it visited.

4.7 The above activities engaged with 114 young people aged 13-19 years old.

5. **Wos Up Project 2009**

5.1 'Wos Up' Mobile Youth Provision

'Wos Up' is the name of a mobile detached youth work provision which is delivered in rural areas. Run in partnership with SCA (Supporting Contemporary Adolescence) a 'Warrior' 4x4 vehicle carrying sports equipment, a tuck shop, DJ equipment and a mobile media suite visited a number of villages and has proved popular with young people.

5.2 Communication and Publicity

The Youth and Community Development Officer worked on improving the Communications Strategy to ensure that the project ran more smoothly. This included the creation of a distribution list which includes all the key local stakeholders in each village. There were also features in the press and in Community Spirit.

5.3 Development

Rural youth work takes time to develop and for projects to reach their full potential. The 'Wos Up' in 2009 has developed greatly and the quality of delivery has been improved. The project visited five villages on a weekly basis between April and September. During September and October the project was working in Wickhambrook as a direct response to young people's interest and an increase in incidents of anti-social behaviour amongst young people.

5.4 Mobile Media Suite

St Edmundsbury invested in a mobile media suite consisting of 3 Apple Mac Laptops and 2 high quality video cameras which are part of the equipment on offer to young people. This allows them to have access to the internet (depending on the coverage in the rural areas). The media suite also enables young people to use music, video and photo production software which is too costly to be purchased individually. This has allowed young people to complete homework and create videos of the activities which are on offer. The equipment is used on other projects and by other groups of young people whilst 'Wos Up' is not operating.

5.5 Villages covered

In 2009 the project worked weekly in the six villages; Barrow, Barningham, Ixworth, Kedington, Stanton and Wickhambrook. This is an increase on the previous year, when the project was delivered in just four villages.

5.6 Statistics

The 'Wos Up' project in 2009 engaged with 924 young people aged 12 – 19 primarily. This figure is the number of contacts, not the number of individual young people attending. This is compared to 378 young people in 2008. We hope that in the third year of operation these numbers will increase again due to the natural progression which is found in a lot of projects which run over an extended period. The increase is partly due to the project starting earlier in the year and the increased number of sessions.

| Village | Total Number of Young People |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Barrow | 185 |
| Barningham | 235 |
| Ixworth | 103 |
| Kedington | 98 |
| Stanton | 272 |
| Wickhambrook | 31 |
| Total: | 924 |

6. Rural Youth Work Programme Budget

6.1 The Rural Youth Work Programme is funded from a budget retained following the disposal of the mobile skate park in 2008. The current budget is £10,600 per year.

6.2 The Rural Youth Work Programme engaged with 1038 young people which equates to £10.20 per young person attending.

| Project | Expenditure |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 'Wos Up' Project | £8020 |
| Kedington Street Art Project | £1040 |
| Go With The Flow Bus Project | £600 |
| Clare Bike Maintenance Project | £530 |
| Transport to Skate JAM | £200 |
| Publicity costs | £200 |
| Total: | £10,590 |

7. Future Plans

Although there are aspects of the project which could be improved, overall the participation rates and feedback from young people suggest it has been very successful. We hope to continue and develop the Rural Youth Work Programme in 2010, building on the learning and partnership working from the last two years. Some of the areas we hope to work on are:-

- (i) to continue to fund the 'Wos Up' Mobile Provision. We hope to increase the number of evenings the project operates from two to three. This will need to be funded by re-prioritising existing budgets;
- (ii) to ensure that the recording of statistics is based on the number of different young people attending the 'Wos Up' Project, as well as keeping overall attendance figures;
- (iii) to continue to work with and consult with young people and develop other activities in the rural areas of St Edmundsbury;
- (iv) to continue to work with partners to develop innovative rural projects;
- (v) to aim to develop better partnership working by keeping in contact with relevant local organisations, for example Parish Councils, the Safer Neighbourhood Team and local existing youth organisations or clubs in the villages where the projects are taking place.
- (vi) to review which villages and locations the project would work best in. The Youth and Community Development Officer is in contact with various Parish Councils to explore possibilities of the 'Wos Up' Project working in the locality. Other villages are welcome to contact the Borough Council to discuss attendance in their area or at summer events.