

The background features a large, central purple triangle pointing upwards, set against a complex pattern of overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in various colors including green, yellow, blue, and purple. The text is centered over the purple triangle.

**Shepton Mallet Town  
Council**

**November 2020**

**REPORT**

## **YMCA BRUNEL GROUP SHEPTON MALLET YOUTH CLUB**

### **Report for Shepton Mallet Town Council**

**Department:** Youth and Community

**Dated:** January to November 2020

**Lead officer:** Mark Willcox with input from staff



YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and Spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian Values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

### **Our Youth Work at YMCA Brunel Group**

***YMCA Brunel Group delivers universal Youth Work for young people aged 10-19 (25 years additional needs). Operating in 9 youth clubs, project work across Mendip & South Somerset; Coleford, Frome, Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet, Street and Yeovil. We have worked with 1200+ young people over the past year.***

***YMCA Brunel Group service organisation are providing a service and activities for young people and their communities.***



## Summary of Current Situation and Virtual Development

On Wednesday 18th March we closed our Youth Clubs and changed to setting up virtual and online delivery due to the pandemic. In September we went back into physical youth clubs. Then in November due to the lockdown we have adapted the virtual youth provision to support young people in Shepton Mallet, Mendip and south Somerset with support sessions five nights a week to help them through lockdown and support through the pandemic.

Over the past year we have worked with 85 individual young people in Shepton Mallet. Before the pandemic the average size of the physical youth club was 24 young people.

Staff have worked hard over the pandemic to keep in contact with the young people from Shepton Mallet youth club, through phone calls, welfare checks, social media and virtual youth sessions. The average virtual youth session attendance were about 10 young people.

In September when schools returned, we worked towards physically reopening the youth club in Shepton Mallet. When according to government and National Youth Agency guidelines it was safe for young people to physically attend youth club in bubbles of 15 people including staff.

We started working on this as phased return. Unfortunately on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November the second UK lockdown began so we had to switch our service back to digital.

We are working with young people so that we constantly are adapting our programmes and activities to fit in with the needs of young people.

Since November Lockdown, YMCA Brunel now offer free and confidential support online or over the phone for young people aged 10-19. Professional youth workers who are experienced in supporting youth.

**YMCA BRUNEL GROUP**  
BATH / BRISTOL / WILTSHIRE  
MENDIP / SOUTH SOMERSET

**YMCA**  
**YOUTH WORKERS ONLINE**  
FOR 10-19 YR OLDS

To become a member of YMCA Brunel Group Online and Physical Youth Clubs & Support, ask your parent or guardian to complete an online application and consent form. Following the link to an online consent form. <https://forms.gle/AvNMEj3MqWZy3ruX5> or use the QR code

Our response to second lockdown:

Funded by Coleford Parish council and Coleford Hub management Committee, Frome Town Council, Glastonbury Town Council, Shepton Mallet Town Council, South Somerset District council, Street Parish Council, Yeovil Town Council, Garfield Weston, Elmgrant Trust.

YMCA Brunel has continued to support young people across Mendip and South Somerset by providing an essential service throughout the pandemic.

Over the past eight months of Covid-19 we have worked with young people and provided virtual youth clubs, 1-2-1 support, welfare checks, covid-19 advice, detached youth work and outreach and physical youth clubs.

Our youth clubs and youth work have now gone to 5 evenings a week to support young people through this second lockdown.

Youth Workers from our youth clubs are now working online in Coleford, Frome, Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet, Street and Yeovil. Supporting young people in all of our youth clubs and communities. Like our physical youth clubs this service will be providing youth work and is open to all young in those towns and villages and young people across Somerset aged 10-19 years.

**What the Youth Club support service is during this second lockdown:**

- We will provide group and individual support sessions for young people throughout the second lockdown by trained YMCA Brunel youth workers.
- We will provide online support for young people aged 10-19 years from 6.30pm to 9.00pm Monday to Friday during term time.
- It offers a service to all young people in all youth clubs 5 evenings a week. This is open to all young people in Mendip & south Somerset aged 10-19 years old.
- We will provide accessible youth work, information, advice and guidance to young people

- It is Young person centred, the young person's concerns and what they want to discuss are the central starting point for the support session.
- We will work safely with young people virtually, online and through their voluntary engagement
- We will be focusing on early intervention support where young people can self-refer and meet with a youth worker online or for a phone chat for 30mins.
- The aim is to help young people aged 10-19 orienteer and transition through the impact of the Covid-19 and the second lockdown, so that they adjust, adapt and thrive in their lives.
- The youth worker will be a source of support and help them navigate through the effects of the pandemic and second lockdown.
- The youth workers will primarily be listening with empathy, encouraging, professional befriending and helping the young person to develop insight through reflecting on their experience and also be a positive sounding board to them.
- Youth workers would provide a positive role model helping through this second lockdown. It will be youth work and not counselling. It is befriending, coaching and mentoring.
- We will Work and signpost to relevant agencies, signpost and report safeguarding concerns as appropriate. Young people with specialist needs will be signposted to organisations that provide specialist support if needed.

## **Mondays and Fridays include learning support sessions**

### **Learning support session:**

- Young people will have a safe space where they can share their concerns and worries with school e.g. worried they're behind, worried about what will happen this year, worried about upcoming exams.
- One of our youth workers is a qualified teacher and will be able to give learning support
- They will be able to explore how they can support themselves in the months ahead in their general study skills and learning tips to help them manage their workload
- Young people will be able to explore good mental health techniques that can help them when they're feeling anxious/stressed/overwhelmed – and remind them that it's totally ok to be feeling these things!
- Young people can also work on specific learning issues they have got e.g. if there's something they learnt in class that they don't understand, homework problems, exam topics they need to revise, topics they're behind on because of being off school due to Covid etc.
- GCSE/exam preparation. Yes, it's a long way ahead, but getting into good routines with revision tips now will help them manage their workload this year

## **Supporting Young people during the Pandemic**

### **March to September 2020**

We stopped face-to-face delivery in physical youth clubs.

We temporarily stopped delivering our physical youth clubs and young carers groups across Mendip and South Somerset

We supported young people remotely via phone calls, emails, social media and zoom. This includes 1:1 and group sessions.

We supported young carers and young people who are struggling due to the current crisis.

We created digital resources and purposeful activities to use in our youth clubs and young carers groups. These were co-created with young people so they shape the activities and what is being offered. We are also sharing our Youth Worker Online materials with other agencies so they can use them to support young people across Somerset. The Youth Worker Online materials encourage and help young people to foster healthy digital lifestyles and stay safe online.

We are promoting the importance of mental and physical well-being at this time.

We continue to care, safeguard and signpost young people in need or at risk to relevant agencies.

Over the summer period we delivered detached youth work in some of the areas in Mendip and South Somerset.

In March our adapted approach has involved youth workers contacting young people through email and phone calls. Then after Easter we started delivering virtual youth club sessions for each youth club using Zoom. Children and young people are still being contacted by youth workers via phone calls, emails and social media. Teams have been working on sessions and activities to deliver virtually. Sessions continued over the summer holidays and also included CV workshops and health and wellbeing sessions.

- Virtual Dens are digital youth clubs online: A safe way for young people to make new friends online, hangout and take part in fun activities over the summer. These sessions include; games, quizzes, and virtual holidays! Discussions, art, craft, music and lots of fun!
- Virtual Wellbeing sessions: A supportive place to connect with other young people who are going through similar experiences. Get support and encouragement from our friendly YMCA Brunel youth workers. This is an opportunity for young people to share their experiences and how they are coping with lockdown, social distancing, Covid-19 and other issues in general that they are concerned about and want to talk to a youth worker.
- Virtual CV Writing Training: Free CV writing training session, support and advice on how to create a CV that has impact! When young people sign up they will be sent a CV template in advance of the training session and then they can join the online workshop to work on their CV.



As well as the Zoom sessions we have been exploring other social media platforms like Discord to develop a more robust virtual youth club. Hopefully we can develop virtual youth clubs after the pandemic if there is a need.

In September the Government guidelines permitted schools to return, we worked hard to open the youth clubs to ensure they were Covid secure.

An unexpected outcome of the phone calls has been youth workers are building more positive connections with parents of the young people who attend the youth clubs. Parents have spoken to the youth workers, some just wanting to talk for reassurance and to talk to get support/advice about their child.

We are still doing all we can to help and support young people in Mendip and South Somerset.

The rationale for change is that due to the pandemic we have had to change our operations since March to digital youth work and supporting young people from Shepton Mallet through phone calls, emails, texts and social media. We also worked in partnership with Young Somerset delivering outreach in Frome linked with the police and delivering detached work in Yeovil.

We continued our virtual approach through the summer holidays to provide a service for young people especially during lockdown.

## **Shepton Mallet Youth Club Virtual sessions Report April to June 2020**

### **Overview:**

We are running online zoom sessions. The group is settling in well to meeting online rather than in person. Our numbers fluctuate between 2 to 6 young people attending each zoom session each week. There have been 39 welfare check contacts and zoom session attendances over the quarter.

The zoom sessions have been positive and young people have enjoyed taking part. One young person, aged 13, said it was the most she had spoken to anyone else since lockdown began and another young person, also aged 13, said it was the best thing she has done since lockdown.

We have also been supporting two young people (13 & 15 years old) whose parent has died during this time (signposting to other organisations). Their school said they will help support the students 'when the schools return' – not helpful as you can imagine, they need that support now!

Staff (old!) have found online sessions positive as they feel like they have got to know the young people better as they are more focused and not just talking and playing with their mates – they are taking part in more structured (all be it spontaneous) conversations. It has been positive for our staff team.

We began our pilot with Discord (online platform) in June, and this has been positive and should have a positive impact on Shepton Mallet Youth Club as well as the wider YMCA Brunel Group youth clubs in the long term if all goes well.

### **Young People's Involvement:**

We have asked young people for their feedback on how the online sessions are being run and how to develop them in future. An example of this is asking young people about various games we have ran with them to get their 'buy in' on our offer. Another example is asking young people for ideas on how to use the iTunes voucher we were given for the benefit of the club & they suggested having a draw with all names of the young people who attend for three sessions in a row.

### **Programme:**

- Coping with lockdown
- Mental health
- Stress relievers
- Study skills
- Grief
- Positive thinking
- Forward planning / Journaling



**Case Study:**

The father of two young people (siblings) died unexpectedly during the lockdown. We have supported them via phone, email and in the sessions that they have attended. We have also signposted them to other sources of support.

**Highs for this quarter April to June 2020:**

- Being given the go-ahead to trial Discord on behalf of the wider YMCA Brunel Group Youth Work team. We feel very lucky to have Mike working on our team as one of his real strengths is online techy stuff!
- Staff being pleasantly surprised about how well Zoom sessions have worked. There have been many positives to come from it, including getting to know some of the young people better and seeing a different side to them.



## **Shepton Mallet Youth Club Report January to March 2020**

*Shepton Mallet Youth Club Wednesday nights 7.00-9.00 pm. Term-time only.*

*Gail Norris is Team Leader. Youth workers are Mike Bell and Siobhan Goodwin. We also have a volunteer called Jade and a Peer Volunteer called Yuri.*

### **Overview:**

We have continued to build on retaining the young people who attend the club as well as encouraging them to bring their friends. Our numbers reflect that the young people are happy and enjoying what we provide as there are many who return week after week after week. The average weekly attendance this quarter has been 28 young people.

Young people continue to be involved in the club. Towards the end of each term we ask young people to give their views, thoughts and ideas for the coming term. We then build the new terms programme around their ideas making sure we include as many of their requests as possible. One of our young people is on the Somerset Youth Parliament so is able to pass on her thoughts to decision makers via that forum too. The youth work team is functioning well together as we discover each other's strengths and weaknesses and learn how to work as a new team.

### **Programme:**

We have continued to have one of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as a theme each week (this was the suggestion of our Peer Volunteer) as this has been well-received by the young people at the club.

We gave young people an outline of a body and asked them to write/draw some thoughts on it after discussing 'identity' and 'body image'. This was an interesting activity although it was sad to see that many of them wrote negative things about themselves on their outlines.

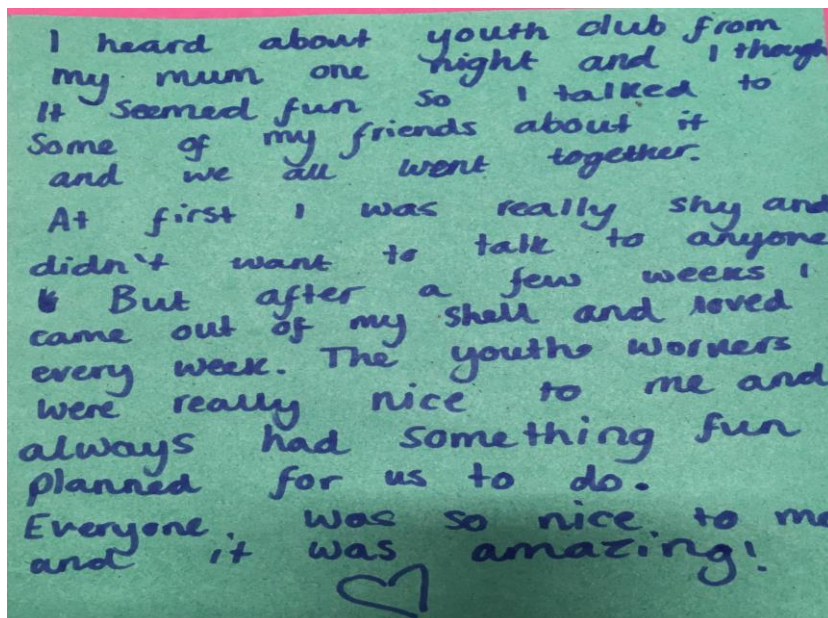
We have continued to offer some great craft activities each week and many of the young people enjoy trying new skills and taking home their finished products. We also have basic colouring available each week reflecting on the current 'craze' for adult colouring books as a form of de-stressing. We find that young people open up and talk to staff whilst they are participating in the crafts as it is an easy, calm and safe environment to talk in and does not require making eye contact as everyone is focusing on their craft.

For Chinese New Year we had some Chinese-themed activities and challenges for the young people to participate in. Some young people really got stuck in with our Chopstick Challenge, trying to beat their previous record and better their attempt. This was, as well

as, witnessing some very healthy sibling rivalry when some young people were determined to beat their family members who also attend the club!

One evening we had a finance-based activity which helped young people learn the basics of budgeting by having to plan a holiday. Although this was a 'dry' subject, it was very well received by the young people and most of them took part in it and had fun trying to work out what to do.

### Case Study:



I heard about youth club from my mum one night and I thought it seemed fun so I talked to some of my friends about it and we all went together.

At first I was really shy and didn't want to talk to anyone. But after a few weeks I came out of my shell and loved every week. The youth workers were really nice to me and always had something fun planned for us to do.

Everyone was so nice to me and it was amazing!

♡

### Highs for this quarter January – March 2020:

A real highlight for the staff team was an activity where all young people were given an envelope to write their names on. These were then left on the table and all of the young people were given slips of paper and were invited to write something positive about other individuals and then place it inside the appropriate envelope. Every single young person attending the club that evening took part willingly and the comments written were heart-warming (staff looked through the envelopes before they were sealed and distributed to check the comments were appropriate). The level of participation in this activity was truly encouraging.

**Projected Total Cost of Project: £11690**

	<b>Mths 1-7</b>	<b>Mths 8- 12</b>	<b>Projected 31/03/21</b>
<b>Income</b>	£3,791	£2,709	£6,500
<b>Salaries</b>	£3,890	£2,779	£6,669
<b>Overheads</b>	£80	£0	£80
<b>Management &amp; Admin</b>	£2,884	£2,060	£4,944
<b>Deficit</b>	<b>£3,063</b>	<b>-£2,130</b>	<b>-£5,193</b>

**Projected Total Cost of Project: £11690**

**Total Town Council £6500**

**YMCA Brunel deficit to run Shepton Mallet youth club £5193**

**We are planning for the future to support young people when we come out of lockdown and when eventually we return to the new normal.**

AGAIN, WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK SHEPTON MALLET TOWN COUNCIL FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT IN SUPPORTING LOCAL YOUNG PEOPLE AND YMCA BRUNEL GROUP SHEPTON MALLET YOUTH CLUB.