



Tonbridge & Malling Youth Forum Online meeting 12 November 2020

Attending

10 Young People (Years 6 - 13)
Gemma Record (TMBC)
Karena Harmer (TMBC)
Toni Matthew (Youth Engagement Officer Kent Police)
Alison Hawkett (KCC Youth Service)
Toni Sullivan – (The Ember Trust)

Apologies

Alicia and Shreya

Covid-19 update

The Youth Forum gave an update on how they are finding the second lockdown and how they are getting on. A few said they were coping okay and are getting used to it all now. Others in year 13 were struggling to find paid work and dealing with stress of exams that were on hold. They were frustrated at the uncertainty of their exams and schools as a precaution are doing regular mini tests which is increasing the workloads.

Plastic Dog Waste bags

At the last meeting a youth forum member raised the issue of people using single use plastic dog waste bags. The Environmental Projects Coordinator, Tamsin spoke to the Youth Forum. She highlighted that the council stocks 'recycled' single use plastic dog waste bags, but this was only because the biodegradable version does not last very long (only about 3 months) so could biodegrade before use. However we should all certainly encourage the general public to use the biodegradable version.

'Stick and flick' was suggested as an even more environmentally friendly way when out in the country side, but officially this is still classed as littering.

A youth forum member highlighted they felt there was a lack of dog bins and bins in general.

The topic led to other waste issues and how there is a lack of recycling bins in some schools. Tamsin highlighted there is a scheme where schools can get funds back for recycling so should be in all schools interest to do this.

Single use masks are also causing quite a problem at the moment and are ending up on beaches

Action: Promote via posters the biodegradable dog waste bags in country parks



Young people's safe spaces

KCC are working on a project to provide a safe places for young people. The primary focus is to create safe spaces within the community where young people can gain access to support, information and help.

They are looking to call it 'Safety Pin' - To pin point access for information & Support. Safety Pin - holding things together

The forum were asked some questions to help understand how young people would like to get information and how the community could help young people feel safer? The forum suggested the following:

- More Lighting
- More police patrolling
- More youth opportunities, i.e. sporting activities and youth hubs
- Shops that participate to ensure they are open late as some close early
- Would rather speak to a real person than scan a code at a shop to get help
- Young people would need to feel that the person they go to they can be trusted and is non-bias. Staff would need to be appropriately trained i.e. safeguarding.

KH highlighted the Youth Forum had already started a similar scheme before lockdown called 'Safe Havens' and that (TOFS) the old fire station in Tonbridge had been identified as the first Safe Haven venue. Further work on the scheme was due to take place once Covid-19 restrictions were reduced.

Action: Share Youth Forum's Safe Haven scheme details with Alison from KCC to see if they can add to the scheme.

The Ember Trust Project

Toni from the Ember Trust joined the meeting to speak to the forum and gain their thoughts about plans to build an indoor skate park with gym facilities in Tonbridge. Facilities would also include a covered basketball court, an art studio space and a cafe with community area, pool table etc. Affordable nutritional food would also be available onsite. They want to serve the young people of Tonbridge with this incredible space and run youth support groups from within the space along with mentoring and study groups. Staff would be fully trained to work with young people.

Toni highlighted that they are still in the very early stages and still seeking funding for the project, but were looking to be within walking distance of Tonbridge station – The mini garage on Vale Road is the desired location however it is very expensive.

The facility would run on a membership setup and be cashless with wrist bands or cards which can be uploaded with credit by parents.

TM FORUM YOUTH

Basic membership - £10 a year
Skateboarding £10 for 2 hours and Gym session £5

£40 a year membership –
Skateboarding £6 for 2 hours (cheapest in whole country) and gym session £3

Bursary funds for vulnerable users would also be sought, and also for additional training and educational programmes.

The youth forum had the following comments on the project below:

- Good idea, lots of people who bmx and skate, likely to be popular.
- The size could be a factor, needs to be a decent size skate park and gym. The bigger it is the more it will appeal.
- Would need to make it welcoming for everyone.

Action: GR to pass on Toni's email to the Sports Development Officer/Stuart. Toni to keep youth forum up to date with any further progress on the project.

AOB

Pump track in Snodland – funding and plans are going well.
If any young people are interested in helping with the design or want to get involved please let us know.

Community Support Officers - Toni Matthew wanted to remind the young people that each area has a Police Community Support Officer if they needed someone to turn to and that they work closely with KCC and other agencies to work on any issues raised.

Stop and Search – Toni Matthew highlighted that nobody should be stopped and searched for no good reason. If you are stopped and searched you should always receive a receipt of when and why you were searched. If any young person is stopped and searched and this does not happen please report this.

KCC Youth programmes – Alison informed the forum that they had ongoing programmes available.

Action: Alison to send youth programme to Gemma – to be put on social media, website and possibly billboards?

Next meeting

The next Youth Forum will be held on:-

Date: **To Be Confirmed**

Time: **To be confirmed**

Online virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams