



## **Tonbridge & Malling Youth Forum Online meeting 28 January 2021**

### **Attending**

10 Young People (Years 6 - 13)

Gemma Record (TMBC)

Karena Harmer (TMBC)

Toni Matthew (Youth Engagement Officer Kent Police)

### **Young people - update on current lockdown issues**

Overall a lot of young people were finding the 2nd lockdown worse than the first. Those who are an only child especially struggled. One who had started in year 7 had barely seen new class friends. Still a lot of stress over grades and not knowing how grades will be worked out.

The young people came up with 5 lockdown survival tips they feel help them get through each day

- Exercise regularly
- Keep hydrated
- Follow a routine
- Learn a new skill – try something new
- Check in with friends / family

**Action: GR to create advert for 5 top tips to go on website and social media**

### **KCC consultation**

#### **1. How have young people interacted with other young people since September?**

- Class group chat
- Meet for a Walks
- Facetiming during lessons,
- Social media via Messenger, WhatsApp, Discord and Facetime
- Even after seeing each other all day at school still facetime as they are used to doing this now
- Some found friendships groups had got smaller, but closer

## **2. How as agencies can we support young people to move from this lockdown and into a new normal? What strategies might be needed?**

-Don't aim for normal aim for better. If it has taught us anything it's that the mental health and support for children isn't there including talking about LGBT rights in school.

-Although a lot of things are better face to face some online sessions work very well and reach more people they might not usually reach. Aim for an integrated programme of both online and face to face.

-The school system is out of date. Schooling and exam grading don't work, lack of teachers being able to help. The system needs to move forward.

-It shows the current exam system doesn't work, where there is a single test for GCSE and A-levels. It would be better to Grade over a longer period of time, which goes towards your final grade. A balance of both would be best.

**Action: KH to feed back to KCC at the Young Peoples Partnership Conversation (YPPC)**

### **Dog waste poster for biodegradable bag**

At the previous meeting the forum suggested that more people should use bio-degradable dog poo bags to help the environment by cutting down on single use plastics. It was suggested that a poster be placed in our country parks. A draft poster had been created and the forum gave their comments for amendments.

**Action: GR to amend poster**

### **KCC Consultations – Post 16 transport policy 2021/22 online questionnaire**

Kent County Council (KCC) is currently consulting on the Post 16 Transport Policy 2021/22.

The consultation closes at 5pm on 5 March 2021.

**Action: Youth Forum to visit [www.kent.gov.uk/post16transport](http://www.kent.gov.uk/post16transport) to find out more and to participate in this consultation.**



## **Youth Forum – Draft Questions for Cabinet Members for next meeting**

The Forum worked to put together a range of questions for the Cabinet members meeting, looking at each of the portfolio areas:-

### **Councillor N Heslop – Leader and Economic Regeneration**

How is the Council supporting High Street Businesses and the Arts industry post COVID?

What policies does the Council have in place to support sustainable farming?

How is the Council managing it's assets to generate income?

What is being done to assist in the development of empty shops?

### **Councillor M Coffin – Deputy Leader and Finance, Innovation and Property**

How has the COVID pandemic affected Council finances and what is the long term impact?

How do you prioritise Budget allocation and which services are at risk of being cut? What funding is available to directly improve the lives of young people?

How is the Council improving it's digital service, whilst also addressing digital poverty?

### **Councillor M Rhodes – Community Services**

Once the lockdown restrictions have been lifted, how is the Council going to maximise the use of Tonbridge Castle and the Country Parks with regards to large gatherings?

What is the Council doing to support Mental Health and wellbeing in both the Young and Older generations?

How is the Council supporting it's Leisure facilities?

What improvements are being made to street lighting and bins in our open spaces?

How is the Council tackling the on-going flooding of the sportsground?

### **Councillor P Montague – Housing**

What plans does the Council have to increase affordable housing?

How are the Council supporting families affected by COVID with regards to rent freezes?

Are there any plans to expand facilities for families escaping domestic violence? How are young people who are forced to 'Sofa Surf' supported?

How are young people supported onto the property ladder?

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## **Councillor R Betts – Street Scene and Environmental Services**

What plans does the Council have to introduce electric charging points across the borough and into the more rural areas?

How is the Council improving air quality in built up areas and maintaining cleansing of Borough?

What is the Council doing to support Climate Change and how are you tackling single use plastics?

## **Councillor D Lettington – Strategic Planning and Infrastructure**

Where we are building more houses there doesn't seem to be improvements in the local infrastructure, how is this being combatted?

Are there plans to provide additional school places going forward?

## **Snodland Bike Pump track update**

Everything is proceeding well, one funding bid is in and 2<sup>nd</sup> funding bid deadline is 5<sup>th</sup> Feb. Subject to a successful funding bid contractors would be ready to start once final planning permission is given.

The pump track will be an open access, free to use facility for the community but will rely on volunteers and local clubs, schools and organisations to support its ongoing development. In addition to free, casual use there will be programmed coaching sessions, holiday courses and special events to raise awareness of the track and develop the riding skills of all ages.

There is already a Snodland Bike Club with a few young people expressing an interest in helping out with the project, but if anyone is interested in getting involved either in the track build, coaching and leadership, volunteering or in any aspect of the project, however small, they can contact [Beverley.emmerson@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:Beverley.emmerson@tmbc.gov.uk) or Stewart Vanns at Community Cycleworks at [stewart@communitycycleworks.co.uk](mailto:stewart@communitycycleworks.co.uk)

There is a similar pump track in Medway and an aerial view can be seen showing the approximate location and size of the track at the website: [www.pumptrack.com/track/velosolutions-pump-track-gillingham-kent-uk/](http://www.pumptrack.com/track/velosolutions-pump-track-gillingham-kent-uk/)

# TM YOUTH FORUM

## AOB

### **Drug Use**

A youth forum member suggested that drugs is becoming even more of a problem since the pandemic started, due to young people struggling with mental health and therefore turning to drugs.

Toni reassured the youth forum that they are out and about trying to engage with young people, but difficult during the lockdown. There are many Trusts around who have been helping out too. Toni reassured the young people if they come forward for help they will not be criminalised and that they are there to help and support.

Toni suggested an agency who can help those concerned called 'Addaction-We are with you' who work really closely with young people. For more information or to seek help go to [www.wearewithyou.org.uk/](http://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/)

**KH – to speak to KCC and also look to arrange an online session with a member of 'We are with you' to speak to young people.**

### Next meeting

The next Youth Forum will be held on:-

Date: Thursday 11 March

Time: 6pm

Online virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams