



## Tonbridge & Malling Youth Forum Online meeting 11 March 2021

### Attending

10 Young People (Years 7 - 13)

Gemma Record (TMBC)

Karena Harmer (TMBC)

Toni Matthew (Youth Engagement Officer Kent Police)

### Young people's update on current lockdown issues

- Generally most stated they were happy to be back at school and it was going okay.
- Weald of Kent - 6<sup>th</sup> Form - A-levels — things still up in the air on how they are being tested. Waiting for teacher grades. All very confusing, no decisions have yet been made. It would be better if student bodies were involved in some decision making rather than leaving it to the schools.
- A Youth Forum member stated they had noticed lots of people breaking the lockdown rules, such as parents and children crowding in parks after school.
- Extending the school hours to catch up on missed school time was discussed. It was felt this would be a bad idea as could be exhausting for students. They would have to factor in an extra break making it an even longer day, and for those who travel longer distances would suffer most.
- It was felt there is a big divide between schools in how they were handling school work/exams etc which seems unfair. Also it was highlighted that everyone has different learning styles and online working doesn't suit everyone and could give them an unfair disadvantage.

### Climate Change Forum

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council are planning to put together a group to discuss its climate change strategy. The Youth forum were asked if anyone would be interested in becoming a rep to sit on this group in order for the young person's views to be heard.

Four young people put themselves forward, Izzy, Ashley, Shreya and Izzy.

***Action: Gemma to email further details and the meeting date once confirmed.***

# TM FORUM YOUTH

## **Youth Forum online meeting structure**

The Youth Forum suggested they are happy with the structure of the online meetings and having verbal discussions. Only use the message comments box sparingly.

Karena suggested that ideally it would be better if members of the Youth Forum led the meetings and perhaps for those who want to have a go take turns – Ashley to lead next meeting - agenda to be discussed with him beforehand.

***Action: Details of next agenda to be sent and discussed with Ashley prior to next meeting***

## **Youth Forum Debate Topic**

In a previous meeting the Youth Forum had come up with a list of topics they would like to debate at each meeting. The remaining topics are as follows: -

- List of things that should be taught in school
- Freedom of speech. Is it being stopped by monitoring of social media?
- How people could change the UK budget
- Yemen Crisis
- Privatisation of our NHS and education system

After a vote, it was decided the next debate topic would be **freedom of speech in relation to social media.**

***Action: Freedom of speech to be added to the next agenda for debate***

## **We are with you**

In previous meetings the issues of young people who are involved with drugs has been highlighted by the Youth Forum. This has been raised as an ongoing issue and has been suggested that it is worse since the pandemic started. In light of this, an online meeting has been arranged on **20 May at 6pm** with an agency called 'We are with you' who help people with drugs, alcohol or mental health issues. Any Youth Forum members who are interested, or know anyone themselves who may be struggling, this session may be useful to help you support them.

The Youth Forum suggested some topics that they would like the agency to cover such as:

- How they work and the services they offer?
- How to access the services?
- How to support a friend or family member who is struggling?
- The legality involved – people who are involved are usually afraid to seek help of fear of being criminalised.

For more details visit: [www.wearewithyou.org.uk/](http://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/)

***Action: Youth Forum members to let Gemma know if they would like to attend or if they have any friends that would like to come along. A reminder and invite will be sent out nearer the time.***

# TM FORUM YOUTH

## **Cabinet Members Meeting – update**

The Council's 6 Cabinet Members are due to meet the Youth Forum at a future meeting. At the last meeting the Youth Forum put together a list of topics they would like to discuss with each Cabinet Member for each of the areas that they cover. A list of the questions that the Youth Forum came up with will be sent separately for viewing. It has been suggested that the meeting be split into two separate meetings with 3 Cabinet Members attending each meeting to keep the meetings shorter.

***Action: Karena to arrange dates for this to take place with the Cabinet Members***

## **AOB**

**The BeYou Project** - supports LGBT+ young people in Kent (and is part of the charity Porchlight). They currently run virtual meetups.

For more information please visit:

[www.porchlight.org.uk/news/more-support-for-lgbt-young-people-in-kent](http://www.porchlight.org.uk/news/more-support-for-lgbt-young-people-in-kent)

**VRU** – Kent and Medway VRU work with young people aged 13-15 years on helping to make communities safer. They work with key agencies to deliver a reduction in violence across Kent & Medway using the Public Health approach.

If you would like to become a young VRU Champion or for more details please email:

[Violence.reduction.unit@kent.police.uk](mailto:Violence.reduction.unit@kent.police.uk)

**Kooth** – A free online counselling and emotional well-being support service providing young people aged 10-16 years (up to 17th birthday) in Kent with a safe and secure means of accessing support with their emotional health and wellbeing needs, from a professional team of qualified counsellors.

For more details please visit [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

## **Next meeting**

The next Youth Forum will be held on:-

Date: 29 April 2021

Time: 6pm

Online virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams