



Summary

BoA Youth has now been directly managed by the town council since April. As was hoped, BoA Youth has become more integrated into the wider services offered by the council with a new drop-in opening in St Margaret's Hall on Thursday afternoon from 1.30-4pm. This complements a similar drop-in at Christ Church that runs from 3-4pm. These two sessions are in addition to the Tuesday and Thursday evening clubs based at the Youth & Community Centre.

8-12 Tuesday Club 5-7pm

The Tuesday Club continues to be popular, with around 25 children attending each time. The session runs for 2 hours. The mix of sport, gaming and art/making offers some structure while many children enjoy the free play and the snacks and food that is made available through donation of surplus groceries from Sainsbury's. Sessions continued through the summer holidays this year and although numbers fluctuated more than during term time, it was consistently well attended.

Thursday Teen Club 6-8.30pm

The numbers attending on a Thursday have increased and young people value the open and relaxed approach we take. Thursday evening is now clearly fixed as a time when the centre is available as a space for teenagers. The sessions ran through the summer and this has helped to build participation.

St Margaret's Hall Thursday drop-in 1.30pm-4pm

We are running a trial of using the old council chamber at St Margaret's Hall for a new drop-in for 8-16 year olds. The earlier start time of 1.30pm aims to appeal parents/carers of homeschooled children or those attending alternative provisions.

The first two weeks have been very successful with many children stopping off

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on their way home from school. We will also be using the session as a way of promoting the Tuesday and Thursday evening clubs and starting conversations with young people about potential activities that could run during the Thursday evening sessions.

Christ Church Thursday after school drop-in 3pm-4pm

Christ Church numbers started low and have gradually built up to around 30 young people with about 10 staying to join in table tennis, games and crafts.

Christ Church are waiting for a grants decision in November that they hope will mean they can proceed with the creation of a community space, removing pews to make room for a kitchen and office in the front of the church. The Thursday drop-in, and the offer of biscuits and juice after school the rest of the week has encouraged students from St Laurence and Christ Church Primary to visit the church.

Once this building work has been completed, there will be a much greater potential to offer after school activities including homework club, cooking and art/making or gaming. Town Wardens will be helping to move a refurbished table football table into the space soon.

Summer Holiday Activities

This August we ran 9 morning sessions of subsidised activities for 7-13 year olds at the youth centre and St Margaret's Hall. BoA Youth and other council staff worked alongside external providers to deliver a range of activities- magic, cheerleading, crafting, beatboxing, circus skills, football, outdoor adventures and baking.

We received incredibly positive feedback – the children enjoyed themselves and parents/carers felt that the sessions were good value for money and offered something different/interesting for their children to do. Several comments requested that we offer more of the same next year and would also welcome similar activities during other half terms and holidays.

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Centre development and maintenance

The youth centre has now been decorated. Walls inside have been painted and doors and metal work outside. Electrical sockets have been improved, including mobile phone charging ports.

The woodland area behind the centre has been cleared to encourage young people to use it as an outdoor adventure space. It is being monitored and potential hazards identified and removed, including a dead tree that fell recently. The area presents a challenge as it includes a steep slope, tree roots and brambles but the young people enjoy exploring it, particularly the large tree on the left-hand side.

Networking

Swindon and Wiltshire Youth Work Network

BoA Youth is part of the SWYWN managed by Wiltshire Community Foundation in Devizes. Most meetings are held online and the network offers a regular opportunity to share information and to learn together. The latest session was on Suicide Prevention with a talk from the Papyrus Charity.

Wiltshire County Council Area Board

BoA Youth is part of the local network co-ordinated by Caroline Le Quesne. This has now met three times and has led to the link with the Family Hub. The most recent meeting explored a shared approach to canvas views of BoA young people and the decision to focus on the 11-18 age range.

Family Hub

The Family Hub Navigator for BoA is due to be in post in October. We will be networking with this worker to provide a regular opportunity to identify families and children who can benefit from BoA Youth services. They will be holding

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regular sessions in the library but we hope they will also join us at a Thursday session at St Margaret's Hall at some point.

U3A

U3A has been in contact with their membership and we are looking forward to building inter-generational links with individuals as they come forward.

Mighty Girls

BoA Youth meets regularly with Mighty Girls to share information and discuss working together on projects.

On Your Mind

BoA Youth has been approached by the Wiltshire based www.onyourmind.org.uk to encourage partnership work. This is still at an early stage but it offers a way of signposting young people if they need support for their mental health.

Events

Play Day 7th August

BoA Youth contributed to the Play Day event in Poulton Park when the new play area was officially opened after being refurbished. The event attracted people from outside of BoA and enabled BoA Youth to raise its profile.

Skate Jam 7th September

BoA Youth was due to contribute to an event at the skate park but heavy rain meant that it had to be postponed.