BoA Youth Report October 2025

Summary

David Lloyd, our Youth Coordinator retired at the end of April and Amanda Wiffen has taken on this role. A new job title has been created to support the Youth Coordinator, Deputy Youth Coordinator. Abi Jackson was appointed in the role and started in May.

Since September new sessions have been set up to maximise staff hours and offer more youth service hours over each week.

Monday drop-in

A new Monday 3pm-6pm session aimed at 11+ year olds. Initially the intention was to offer focused sessions to appeal to young people who enjoy quieter activities. However, the young people have enjoyed the session to play pool, use the sports hall and generally socialise after school as no other groups use the centre at this time. We have had a mix of girls and boys 20/80 ratio.

Tuesday Club

The Tuesday 5pm-7pm session aimed at 8+ year olds is still very popular. Between 25-35 young people attend each week. The boy / girl ratio has evened out since September from 30/70 to 50/50.

The mix of sport, gaming and art/making and cooking offers some structure while many children enjoy the free play and the snacks and hot meals. Options include homemade pasta sauce, pizza breads, soups and rice that is made available through donation of surplus groceries from Sainsbury's.

We have had teen volunteers who have helped in the kitchen but since September they are no longer able to attend due to GCSE year workload. Therefore we sometimes have to reduce the use of the kitchen and food being offered due to the increase in children and ratios being more challenging.

Sessions continued through the summer holidays this year and although numbers fluctuated more than during term time, it was consistently well attended.

Donations for this session have increased from an average of £6 a session to £12 since September.

Thursday Teen Club

Thursday 3pm-8.30pm is split between two sessions. 3pm-6pm is held in the art room for free snacks and drinks, gaming, board games and socialising. This session is increasing in

numbers and young people stay for longer periods of time, playing games and chatting with staff. From 6pm to 8.30pm the session uses the whole building.

We have seen members from Tuesday start to transition over to the 11+ sessions, some still attending Tuesdays and others fully transitioned. Numbers continue to rise each week.

The young people now feel confident to ask for resources, such as sport equipment, pool table, table football, badminton, games, consoles, art supplies, food and drinks.

Christ Church Thursday after school drop-in

Thursday 3pm-4pm during term time a BoA Youth team member assists at the Christ Church drop-in session which allows the service to continue as it maintains their staff ratio for their risk assessment needs.

Summer Holiday Club

During August we offered 14 activity sessions at the youth centre. 3 sessions were run by the BoA Youth team, the other 11 were run by external providers.

13 were for children aged 7 and over and there was one session for 5 to 7 year olds. Activities included circus skills, magic, multi sports, dance parties, creative writing, clay decorations, crafts, cooking and outdoor fun.

Thanks to an Area Board grant, we were once again able to offer 50% of spaces as fully funded to children eligible for free school meals. The grant also enabled us to keep the general ticket prices low – either £10 or £15 per child, per session, with sessions lasting between 2 and 5 hours.

Approximately 130 children took part in at least one session with many attending 2 or more sessions. 11 families benefitted from the fully funded spaces.

21 parents responded to our feedback survey and we received an incredibly positive response with 100% of parents scoring the sessions either 4 (19%) or 5 (81%) out of 5.

100% of respondents said they thought the sessions were good value for money.

Many respondents said they would like to see more sessions offered in future.

Some comments from parents:

“Thanks so much for a lovely programme of clubs over the summer! As the mum of an ADHD'er who struggles with school holiday club, having these shorter and really fun clubs has been an absolute godsend. Really appreciate it!”

"My child loved all three of the sessions she attended. She's sometimes nervous for new clubs but was buzzing to go back each day!"

"The sessions were really excellent - my child enjoyed each one so much, they were fun, friendly and action-packed. There was a sense of achievement with each session - they boosted her confidence!"

"Great selection, excellent leaders and in a welcoming environment."

Youth Centre development and maintenance

The Centre is still in need of refurbishment, especially the floor in the lounge area and the kitchen is certainly showing its age. However, the building is well used and offers an excellent space for youth work as it is all on one level and includes a gaming room, craft area, kitchen, sports hall and greenspace/woodland.

Monthly maintenance meetings with Amanda, Chris Stringer, Kelvin and Roger are held to address jobs which need attention and ask for support for these jobs to be completed.

We have recently moved the office space around to create a new space for youth members if they need somewhere less busy or noisy to sit.

Once the old safe is removed from the office, we will be able to complete the space.

Budget

We have started to build up a small amount of money which has bought a light up football, pool cues, a garden hoe, clay, card games, crafting items as well as food, drinks, cleaning cloths etc.

Other BoA Youth activities and engagement

BoA Youth Radio show. West Wilts Radio has offered a weekly slot for a pre-recorded session. We are currently advertising for young people to come forward via social media and school newsletter. This is hoping to run on Thursdays.

School engagement has improved with positive links between a BoA Youth team member and St Laurence School. This has enabled posters to go up around the school advertising our sessions as well as in their newsletter.

Social Media – BoA Youth is now pinned on Google Maps. We have been sharing social groups in the local area – free art session in Trowbridge, Wiltshire Mind parenting group,

Trowbridge Teen Take Over, Romford Pie Factory Youth Centre Cycle visitors, Christ Church events.

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.

Wiltshire County Council Area Board

BoA Youth is part of the local network co-ordinated by Caroline Le Quesne. There has been one session to discuss an event between BoA Youth, Mighty Girls and other youth groups for this coming spring/summer.

The Area Board has recently funded outreach youth work which was carried out by Mighty Girls. BoA Youth will be looking at the findings from this work to see how we might be able to improve our offer to young people.

Family Hub

Kelly Martin, the Family Hub Navigator for BoA is now in post and meets at the Library on Wednesdays. We will continue to network with Kelly to provide a regular opportunity to identify families and children who can benefit from BoA Youth services. Kelly came to visit in August and came out to meet with young people at the Skate Park to ask what their needs are as part of the BoA Youth and Mighty Girls collaboration project.