



## Agenda item: 7

<b>Committee</b>	Assets & Services
<b>Month</b>	March 2022
<b>Report Title</b>	Youth Budget
<b>Report Author</b>	Colette Kerr – Events & Activities Officer
<b>Attachments</b>	A) Youth Outreach Project 22/ 23 Budget request to SWTC B) Youth Outreach Project proposal to Saffron Walden Town Council

### Background Summary

The Town Clerk and the Events & Activities Officer met with Mike Hibbs and Simon Ede from the Youth Outreach Project (YOP) on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022. Discussions were had on youth work in Saffron Walden generically, and the youth consultation the Events & Activities Officer was about to embark upon – it is asking young people what type of youth services / provision they would like for the future and runs until 22<sup>nd</sup> April, the results of which will then be collated and analysed.

In our discussions, the YOP noted their lack of sustainable funding and that they did currently run the successful series of youth clubs in town. It was explained that Saffron Walden Town Council's (SWTC) desires to have a greater involvement in youth work in town, especially since the Events & Activities Officer is now in post. Her post is not to deliver youth work but to ensure that the current youth needs are met, hence the consultation. If SWTC are to deliver fully upon the outcomes of the consultation, it is important to have both visibility and influence on what and how youth services are delivered in Saffron Walden. This could be achieved if SWTC were to enter into a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the YOP; they would effectively deliver youth services according to SWTC's request which will be driven from the consultation.

### Financial Implication

SWTC has £20k pa allocated to youth activities, made up of £10k from Uttlesford District Council (UDC) and £10k from its own budget – neither sums are ever guaranteed and are subject to part of an overall budget consideration by both Councils. Historically, the £20k has been allocated to the same projects year on year (Writers Room and Joanna Eden singing sessions) – despite repeated requests to both grant applicants, neither have particularly looked at alternative forms of

funding. SWTC has willingly funded the projects, but has been disappointed with their inability to consider other, more sustainable forms of income to fund their projects.

In 2021, it was agreed that £10k of the £20k budget should be allocated to funding the Events and Activities Officer post, as part of that remit is to work with children and young people. We have already seen the benefit of the role with a range of half term activities being organised, work with Essex County Council (ECC) on funding for vulnerable families and currently work on a number of projects which are directly aimed at children, young people and families being implemented – included in this is the Platinum Jubilee events, as families are the primary target audience.

Extracting the funding for the Events and Activities Officer post, leaves £10k pa for youth activities. Historically the budget has been underspent and it is known that groups apply for this funding simply because they know it is available, rather than actually perhaps because it is needed - the validity of applications is not in question here, but simply noting that funding is allocated because it can be, rather than because it is needed.

### **Key Considerations**

If SWTC enters into a SLA with YOP, it will enable SWTC to steer, direct and influence the type of service that is being delivered for young people. Under the present system where we give a grant to YOP, the grant is spent and then a report to the Annual Parish Meeting is submitted. Whilst reviewing this process, and as a side-line, the idea of having an online newsletter would involve asking grant recipients to write a piece for inclusion about their grant; what it was used for and how it has helped their organisation.

The SLA will tie us into a contract with YOP in a positive way, as SWTC can help shape and deliver youth services in SW. However, there will be nothing left in the budget for any other youth activity (note comments above). The YOP asks for £16,913.38 (see attachment A), however SWTC will only be able to provide £10k from the budget. The YOP will be obliged either to seek 3rd party funding too or to reduce their budget spend, or additionally SWTC could source funding via other grant funding mechanisms.

The F & E Committee is reviewing the grants process and whilst ongoing, it has acknowledged the youth grant scheme, building this into its plan for allocating future funding. If SWTC is to progress with a SLA with YOP, the youth budget element will be spent, and the only funding available for all other applications will be that from the F & E grants budget. The grants review revealed that 80% of the grants requested were for the smaller grants budget which contrasted with the youth budget holding approximately 80% of the funding.

A more detailed investigation of Essex County Council's youth services spend for Uttlesford and specifically Saffron Walden's allocation would be beneficial in understanding what is available. More transparency would allow SWTC to enter into discussions regarding the possibility of receiving Saffron Walden's allocation direct

from ECC and thereby controlling youth funds to facilitate the towns' youth services in the future.

### **Officer Recommendation**

- a) To suggest an initial £5k is awarded to YOP to cover 6 months spend. During this time, the Town Clerk and Events & Activities Officer to review in further detail the attached documents, which appear to be very credible and are based on years of experience by YOP in delivering youth work. Clear objectives, outputs and outcomes would need to be established, and additionally, it is important to note that the needs may change according to the youth consultation findings.
- b) The Town Clerk and Events & Activities Officer to gather information and instigate discussions with ECC's Senior Youth and Community Commissioner (West Essex) to gain greater understanding of funding available to Saffron Walden.
- c) To seek formal approval from Council to enter into a SLA with YOP, subject to the finer details being reconciled, noting that SWTC can only commit to £10k and not the £17k requested. Starting at the end of the initial 6 month period, and with an agreed term of 3 years, YOP services to then be commissioned.
- d) The Grants Working Group, pending the outcome of (a) above, to note and communicate the impact of this on the funding availability for grants.