

The Core Youth and Community Centre

Interim Youth Work Report – Saltash Town Council Youth Work Funding

May-August 2024

Introduction

- **Overview of the Centre:**

The Saltash Youth and Community Centre is dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment for young people. Our mission is to offer diverse activities and support services that empower youth and foster community engagement.

- **Purpose of the Report:**

This report highlights the key activities, achievements, and challenges faced by our organisation in the last quarter, emphasising our response to the growing needs of our community.

Summary

- **Summary of Achievements:**

This year has seen significant growth in the number of young people accessing our services, with our overall membership now exceeding 300. We have continued to support individuals with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), mental health issues, and complex home lives. Collaborative efforts with local partners like Safer Saltash and Groundwork have focused on preventative strategies and alternative education to reduce anti-social behaviour among young people.

- **Challenges and Opportunities:**

The growing demand for specialised support has presented both challenges and opportunities, prompting us to enhance our programs and form strategic partnerships to better meet the needs of our community.

Clubs & Activities

Climbing Club:

- *Age Group:* 5-18 years
- *Key Highlights:* This financial year saw the reopening of our climbing club. We recruited and trained two members of staff as instructors and launched two Wednesday afternoon climbing sessions, which are now fully booked with over 20 children and young people attending. We invested in new mats, a significant expenditure that has proven to be very worthwhile, ensuring the safety and quality of our sessions.

Boxing Club:

- *Age Group:* 10 years and over
- *Key Highlights:* Increased attendance and active participation in local and regional events, fostering discipline and confidence.

Grub Club (Cooking Programme):

- *Duration:* 10 weeks
- *Features:* Grub Club remains one of our most popular activities often oversubscribed and booked up well in advance. This year, we are excited to incorporate food grown in our garden into the cooking sessions. This addition not only enhances the program's educational value but also connects young people with the food production process.
- *Participant Experience:* Young people enjoy learning to bake and cook in a friendly and inclusive atmosphere. They have reported that the sessions offer a pleasant and supportive environment where they can chat, discuss their day, and feel valued. The communal aspect of the sessions contributes to a sense of belonging and camaraderie among participants.

Craft Club and Just Be You Project:

- *Collaboration with Arts Lab:* This year, our Craft Club and "Just Be You" group worked on an exciting project with Arts Lab. They focused on recycling second-hand clothes, transforming them into bespoke clothes or accessories. The project culminated in a photo shoot where participants took photos of themselves with their creations and organized an exhibition. Families were invited to see the impressive items the young people had crafted, celebrating creativity and sustainability.

LGBTQ+ Group:

- *Support Provided:* Friendship, support, advice
- *Impact:* Strong community bonds have been formed, offering a safe and welcoming environment for self-expression and support. Continued partnership with The Intercom Trust has enhanced our capacity to support this community effectively.

Open Access Youth Sessions:

- **Senior Club (Ages 13-18):**
 - *Activities:* Sports, gaming, free food, socializing
 - *Impact:* Growing numbers have benefited from these sessions, offering a crucial social outlet and support network.
- **Junior Club (School Years 7 & 8):**
 - *Activities:* Sports, gaming, free food, socializing
 - *Impact:* The junior youth club continues to grow in popularity, with over 120 young people becoming members this year alone. The club provides a structured and supportive space for younger adolescents to engage and develop essential social skills.

Alternative Education Program:

- **Partnership with Groundwork:**
 - *Funding:* Grant from the Levelling Up Fund
 - *Duration:* 18 months

- *Program Highlights:* This year marked the beginning of a significant partnership with Groundwork, aimed at offering an alternative education program to young people. Our youth work coordinator is serving as the program manager, helping to shape and implement the curriculum. This initiative provides tailored educational experiences to engage youth who may struggle with traditional education systems, focusing on practical skills and personal development.

One-on-One Support:

- **Youth Worker Support:**
 - *Services Offered:* Guidance, advice, personalized support
 - *Outcome:* Increased demand for individual support services, particularly for youth with SEND needs and mental health challenges. Our targeted youth workers have been instrumental in supporting the most at-risk young people, contributing to positive outcomes and improved well-being.

Youth Committee:

- *Composition:* 7 enthusiastic and active young people
- *Role:* The Youth Committee continues to play a vital role in shaping our services. They are involved in organizing and helping at fundraising events and actively promoting the services we offer. Their engagement ensures that our programs remain relevant and responsive to the needs of our peers, and their contributions are invaluable in driving the direction of our activities and initiatives.

New activities and Initiatives:

- **After-School Dungeons and Dragons Club:**
 - *Description:* We are excited to announce the introduction of an after-school Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) club, led by two of our dedicated volunteers. This club will offer a creative and engaging space for young people to explore storytelling, strategy, and teamwork through the popular role-playing game. We believe this initiative will not only provide a fun activity but also enhance social skills and encourage creative thinking among participants.
 - *Schedule:* The club is set to begin in the upcoming term, with sessions planned for after school hours to accommodate students' schedules.
- **Well-being Support Group:**
 - *Objective:* To address the growing need for mental health support, our Youth Committee have identified a need to offer a well being support group. These sessions will provide a dedicated space for young people to share their personal experiences on various issues, including mental health, friendship and family issues, school challenges and any other issues they feel they need to talk about.
 - *Assessment:* We will conduct a survey to ascertain the specific needs and preferences of our young people regarding these sessions.

Impact and Outcomes

- **Statistic:**

- *Total Number of young people attending:* Our centre has seen a 20% increase in youth attendance, with a notable rise in participants requiring additional support. Across all groups, we now have a membership exceeding 300 young people.
- *Engagement Levels:* Consistent attendance across all sessions, with many young people attending more than one club.
- *Skills Developed:* Participants have gained valuable skills in areas such as teamwork, resilience, social interaction and communication.

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- **Success Stories & testimonies:**

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The personal experiences of our young people reflect the success and impact of our programs. Here are a few testimonials that highlight the positive influence of The Core:

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- "The Core is my safe space. I could not put into one sentence what The Core means to me."
- "I feel heard here. I have grown in confidence since coming."
- "Free food! Socialising with my friends and playing sport where you don't feel judged."
- "Being part of the youth committee and helping to volunteer at events makes me feel like I'm part of something important."
- "It's my lifeline because it makes me go out of the house more and gives me confidence".
- Not worrying what people think".
- Always having someone to talk to".
- "Sports which everyone can join in with"

Partnership Work

Collaborative efforts and partnership working with Safer Saltash, Groundwork, Intercom Trust, Targeted Youth Workers, Early Help Hub, Saltash Youth Network, local schools, emergency services and health have reinforced community cohesion and joint working to ensure we can best support our young people of Saltash, providing preventative support, a wide range of activities and support & resources to families in need.

Financial Overview

- **Funding Sources:**

Continued reliance on grant funding, supplemented by income from hiring out rooms and community donations. Support from our town council has been a lifeline, ensuring the continuity of our youth work. Groundwork's 18-month funding for the alternative education program has been instrumental in allowing us to develop and expand this important initiative. This funding has also provided the full match funding to this grant.

- **Financial Challenges:**

Securing sufficient funding continues to be a significant challenge. Attracting and maintaining financial support for existing services is crucial to ensure the sustainability of our work. We are actively seeking new funding opportunities and building relationships with potential donors to address this on-going issue.

