

SALTASH YOUTH COUNCIL CELEBRATES ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

The first youth council in Cornwall and possibly nationally was officially launched in 1992.

The youth council was the brainchild of former Saltash Mayor, Sue Hooper during her year in office, 1991-1992.

Sue felt there was an overwhelming need for a central organisation to co-ordinate all the town's youth groups.

For that purpose, Sue called a meeting of every youth organisation and school in Saltash, and chaired regular meetings at the Saltash Guildhall for over a year until the eventual launch.

Virtually every youth group and schools representatives attended the meetings and as a result in 1992 the Saltash Town Youth Council was launched.

In addition, the youth council had the support of the Police, local school teachers, youth workers and youth leaders.

Mrs Hooper was confident at the time that the youth council which was an independent youth forum and not led or governed by local Council authorities, could lead to a wealth of knowledge and be able to co-operate and communicate and be of practical help to every youth and membership youth group.

The aims of the youth council is to provide better facilities and equipment for young people and to provide a focal point for youth organisations to share platforms to demonstrate their organisational work and for young individuals also to partake.

Further objectives are to engage with other organisations that have similar objectives within the community to demonstrate and advance their skills and aptitudes, and to act as a central youth reference point for availability of equipment, transport, events and projects, resources and venues.

Mrs Hooper launched the Saltash Town Youth Council with a donation of £1,000, which she had raised as Mayor at that time specifically.

The Saltash Town Youth Council is still one of the leading youth platforms in Saltash and has been a trail blazer over the past 30 years for other similar youth facilities wishing to be an independent forum for the benefit of youth generally.

The youth council meets quarterly and every member youth group has a voice on all matters raised at the meetings, including discussions on applications for funding, which is endorsed by an elected executive management committee.

The youth council receives annual grants from the Saltash Town Council to distribute to the youth groups as the Town Council felt that the strength and knowledge of the independent youth council was better informed of all the youth activities within Saltash.

Young people and group members applying for funding are encouraged to attend meetings to present their projects to the Youth Council; this gives young people a voice, and life experience in a variety of ways.

The Youth Council has organised various local youth events over the years, such as 'Mission Youth' at Saltmill and 'Youth Village' at the Saltash Mayfair, and over the years and in the past has organised school holiday projects such as sports and music and drama.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the Youth Council held awards events where young people who had excelled in their own youth groups and were recognised for their endeavours and presented with awards at special ceremonies.

Following its launch in 1992 the Saltash Town Youth Council won recognition from the Queen's 40th Anniversary Trust's Communication Challenge and received a bronze certificate and a highly commended award in the regional and England round and came within the top 40 in the country.

The award was presented at the Royal Festival Hall in London by Lord Younger of Prestwick. A deputation from the Saltash Town Youth Council representing all the people involved was there to receive the certificate.

There are still two co-founding members that still sit on the Saltash Youth Council, who have both given 30 years' service; Len Maddock representing the Saltash Scouts and Sue Hooper MBE the originator. Len has also been instrumental in the organising of the Mission Youth at Saltmill Park in the past. Sue and Len, both have seats on the Youth Council Executive Committee.

A spokesperson for the youth council said: "The Saltash Town Youth Council has evolved over the past 30 years, but has still maintained its identity, opportunities and resolve.

"It still strongly and resolutely maintains its early principles of supporting the youth of Saltash, and still boasts the majority of the original organisational membership.

"However, the youth council is mindful that there are other organisations within Saltash, that may not be aware of the forum, and we would so much like to touch base with them and invite them to join, as there are so many opportunities and facilities within the youth council to embrace and take advantage of.

"We invite any youth organisation that have not yet learned about the Saltash Town Youth Council, and would like to know more, and maybe join the forum, to contact

Steph Carter, who coordinates the membership communication network; please Email: cartersbvc@tiscali.co.uk – Also details of the youth council can be found on the Saltash Town Youth Council Facebook page.

“Details of the 30th Anniversary celebrations are still under discussion and will be released in early due course.”

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