

## 6 Monthly Update for Witney Town Council to cover Youth Work provided by Got2B September 2021 to Feb 2022

In September we continued our street based detached work at the Leys and also on Madley Park, Burwell Park area and Smiths Estate. Numbers of young people who engaged remained fairly consistent at around 40 per week. As the nights got darker and weather deteriorated, we saw a dramatic sudden drop in numbers from the start of October.

We were fortunate to be offered space at the High Street Methodist Church and the Coffee Shed and moved there mid-October. Sadly, our term at the Coffee Shed was cut short, attendance there was not very high, we think due to the fact that we had been engaging with the younger teens and the remoteness of the Coffee Shed after dark was a barrier. We continued at the Methodist Church for both Monday and Thursday sessions.

Numbers were still fairly low, but we were able to go out into town and 'round-up' young people – officially called outreach! We continued this mixed approach until Christmas.

In January as schools returned, we began a publicity push on social media, and had a presence outside the secondary schools to promote the drop-in sessions at High St. Engagement on the street was really positive and we began to see a regular group of young people although they were reluctant at first to go to the Church. We continued with street-based work and the media coverage and the first week of February we had 35 young people turn up to the open session. The following week we had 47 and the next session had 70. It had become clear that the room at the church was not the right place; there are too many interesting hideaways, staircases, side rooms and doors. We were unable to ensure the young people's safety in a public setting and we needed somewhere with some outdoor space to enable us to play games and sports.

We have now moved to West Witney Sports and Social Club. The young people have taken to the move well and the venue offers a grown-up feel whilst offering the space to run around and burn off energy.

From November we also started Jam Sesh. Working with Green Room Studios, 6 young people, most of whom we had met through detached work, formed a band. Supported by Got2B staff it has been wonderful to see them develop their skills and watch their self esteem grow. The staff member supporting them, was only with us on a 6-month contract through a Job Centre scheme and he left us in February. To mark this the band held a live gig for family, friends and The Mayor. The band are continuing and have been asked to be part of the Queens Jubilee celebrations.

In February half-term we ran a Jewellery making and sewing workshop from the Scout Hall in Marlborough Lane, which were both well attended. We also secured funding from Sanctuary Housing to run Jewellery making and DJing workshops at Ceewood Hall, free of charge to residents.

We plan to continue with our drop-in sessions at West Witney and look forward to warmer days to make full use of the outside space. We are also planning more workshops for the Easter holidays, focussing on Arts as we are planning an exhibition of Young Peoples work to be part of Oxfordshire Arts Week in May.

Thank you so much for your continuing support, not just monetarily but by your attendance at our events, sharing of social media and championing our work.

Madge Harley, Julie Edwards and the Got2B team.