



Youth Forum

Minutes of a meeting of the Youth Forum held at on Wednesday 10 April 2024 at 10.00 am.

1. **Welcomes, Introductions and Apologies 10am**

Guests: Alexa and Jane (Planning Policy Team, WNC)
Officers: Aimee and Jamie (WNC), Morcea (Adult co-chair)

Young People: Bella (Guilsborough), Saskia (Caroline Chisholm), Ella (NIA), Mudi (NIA), Sarah (NA), Maame (NSG), Mihir (NSB), Florence (Sponne), Zanzi (Duston), Skye (NA), Kyla (NIA)

Apologies: Cllr David Smith, Cllr Fiona Baker, Ramla, Haroon, Saoirse, Marion, Claudine

2. **Actions from the last meeting 10.05**

Sex Education Guidance: Aimee made the changes to the flyer as directed by forum members and shared the amended version in the Whatsapp group. The flyer was approved and has been shared to Education who will be circulating it to schools. Well done everyone for your hard work!

Vaping: Public Health would like to come back and feedback on their plan and get the forum involved in their projects.

3. **Items coming to Cabinet 10.10**

The group were shown the items coming to cabinet on 16 April and the recommendations. Some of the group live in areas that flood so may choose to read more about the Flood Management byelaws.

Find the agenda and documents [here](#) if you are interested.

4. **West Northants Local Plan 10.30am**

Jane and Alexa gave an overview of the Local plan and the 'vision' for West Northants – slides attached to minutes.

Asked what young people like/dislike/would change about the spaces they live in, go to school in or where they see their friends:

Transport and Roads

- Congestion / poor parking around schools

- Buses infrequent and expensive to use; the app is not always accurate; can take you far out of your way due to long routes
- Badly placed crossings (NIA) and regular accidents outside schools feel unsafe.
- Potholes are really bad across WN

Social spaces and amenities:

- Young people often prevented from accessing or using spaces with friends (Weston Favell, shops, Costa, McDonalds) or are followed by security.
- Like having corner shops locally and cafes
- No youth spaces to just hang out (indoor)
- Some good basketball courts, skateparks etc

Environment:

- Overflowing bin issues and litter thrown in green/wooded spaces
- Like the parks and green spaces but not suitable social space year round due to British weather and need shelter and seating for young people
- Parks and green spaces are only options in the day time due to lighting
- Being near cycle paths is a positive

Open Space Project:

Jane gave an overview of the Open space project – looking at what accessible open space we have (that people can get to and use).

Where large housing developments are being built conditions can be built in for them to provide green space/parks, where smaller developments are involved, they can ask for money that the council can spend to improve existing local spaces.

Asked if they use Libraries – open at odd times that aren't helpful or don't know where they are.

What would you like to see in town?

- Activity spaces; arcade, games space, pottery painting/crafts, kids play for teenagers, Vue is more affordable, Boost also expensive.
- Shopping: Mix of high street chains and boutique - Zara, Cute Vintage shops, sustainable and affordable clothing shops (examples given Cambridge and Market Harborough cater well to young people)
- Social/Food: Cafes attached to other things/activity spaces

Actions: AL/JW discuss/share with BID and Economy team.

If you have any comments you would like to feed back on the Local Plan, you can do so as an individual, as a group (say from their school/class) or we can collate comments on your behalf and submit it as a Youth Forum representation. Any comments can be submitted via:

Citizen Space: [Have your say on West Northamptonshire's new draft Local Plan - West Northamptonshire Council - Citizen Space](#) (note that you can pick and choose which questions to answer)

or by emailing: localplan@westnorthants.gov.uk

The Local Plan can be read in full via this page, which also contains links to various policies maps covering West Northants:

[New Local Plan for West Northamptonshire | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#)

5. **Action Plan and Events 11.20am**

Group reviewed the action plan.

Morcea shared with group, 30 years since the Tutsi Genocide in Rwanda. Something for us to consider for HMD in January.

Updated added after meeting:

UK Youth Parliament update

The British Youth Council (BYC) has made the difficult decision to close and began the process of liquidation from 21st March 2024. The BYC delivers the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) programme, funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The government is committed to the UKYP and to ensuring that it continues to both represent and amplify the voices of young people.

The government is working alongside UKYP delivery partners to understand the implications of BYC's closure for programme delivery, and to explore options for the ongoing delivery of the UKYP programme. The government is aware that the BYC also supported local councils with their own youth voice activities, and that councils are key partners in the delivery of the UKYP and hold a close relationship with young people.

DCMS is encouraging councils to share any concerns they have about the UKYP programme.

6. **Lunch break 12pm**

7. **Youth Independent Advisory Group with Northants Police 12.30pm**

The forum welcomed Inspector Nicola Davis-Lyons and Sgt Rod Williams from Northants Police.

Aim is to set up a Youth Independent Advisory Group for the Police through the forum. This means being a 'critical friend' to help the Police understand what they are doing well and where they could improve.

Morcea explained that she chairs the Adult IAG and what it does.

The group agreed some ground rules for the IAG:

- Respect each others views – leave any differences at the door
- Listen to each other
- Confidentiality – aim not to discuss personal details but agree to keep this in the room

Knife Crime week of action is coming up. Young people asked about their understanding and experience of knife crime. The group discussed the topic and gave feedback on why people carry knives and their concerns:

- Young people carry them to look cool; they think the lifestyle of having a knife is more glamorous.
- Young people tend not to want to use them and only have them show off to their friends.
- Social media can be used to peacock knives. For example, arguments online can see photos included to enhance the argument and threat.
- Schools don't deal with the issues.
- Younger people are now carrying knives.
- Social media needs more filters and parental blocks.
- Knives being sold on videos on social media; hidden knives especially.
- People are hiding knives in other items such as combs and jewellery.
- Regarding knife arches in schools, they don't work as well as you think as they seem too forced, too graphic and scary. People who have knives just end up hiding them around school.
- Workshops are better to get through to young people compared to assemblies.

Police shared key stats of knife related crime so far this year. Numbers included-

- 170 knife related incidents in Northampton
- 33 possession of knife
- 25 use of a knife
- 87 threats of use if knife

Members were asked if these figures are higher and lower than what they expected; the overall answer was that members found the figure was higher than they expected.

Members asked if there's a legal limit to the number of knives someone can own in their house? The police informed members there isn't a limit, plus it's not something that could be tracked.

An incentive was pointed out by a member whereby if a young person had a knife, should they hand it in, they get rewards with a voucher, new trainer etc.

What the police are doing-

1. Op sceptre-national
2. Engagement with school
3. Weapon sweeps
4. Arrests of those wanted for crime.
5. Knife amnesties
6. Training for pubs/clubs
7. Knife purchases-undercover under 18s to see if shop keepers will sell to them
8. Zero tolerance

8. **Welcoming Spaces 2.15pm**

Emma Parry was welcomed to the forum to talk about 'Welcoming spaces'.

The welcoming spaces began in response to the cost-of-living crisis. WNC now have 105 spaces across the West, including community halls, libraries etc. These are available for people to use as a warm trusted space.

Feedback of how it could be better advertised, plus made more appealing to young people-

- Send info to schools to share around to young people. Poster in schools
- Depending on the athletics; it needs to look nice and seem welcoming from the inside and outside.
- Have an array of activities and promote them better; promote the fun things more for young people.
- Posters-QR codes won work in school as we are not allowed phones in schools. Use more photos and less words to catch the eye. Show someone doing homework or the VR activity.
- The area must have comfortable settings (sofas)
- Run events from there (like a launch) to get people through the door to find out what's available.
- Vending machines/cheap snack offer
- Family events like a film night
- Game nights (computer or board games)
- Advertise at events like the fare, or at places where young people go to

Action: Emma to share the slides for the forum members.

9. **Date of Next Meeting**

The meeting finished at 3pm.

Next meeting will take place on Wednesday 8 May, 4.30 – 6.30pm

The meeting closed at 3pm

Chair: _____ A Luck _____