



Youth Forum

Minutes of a meeting of the Youth Forum held at Guildhall on Thursday 7 April 2022 at 10.00 am.

1. Welcomes, Introductions and Apologies

Aimee welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Lia, a new representative from Bosworth College.

Present: Hannah (KC), Lia (BC), Honey Yakkub (NSB), Kayla (WPS), Tracy (NSG), Kamron (KC), Lochie (NSB), Michaela (WPS), Jessica (CC), Morcea (Adult chair), Aimee (Officer), Debs (Officer),
Guests: Leon (WNC Housing), Nick (WNC Housing), Robin (Hope Centre), Becky (NAYC).

Apologies from Cllr Baker, Cllr King, Sofia (CS), Oriana (NSG), Tabi (WPS), Lissy (NA), Ruva (NSB) and Nicole (CS).

2. Memorandum of Understanding

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Aimee read through actions from the last meeting.

New action plan updated following last meeting and shared with group.

All received Perspectives report.

Everyone has started conversations at school around Mental health and self harm for overview and scrutiny. No date provided for the virtual meeting – **Aimee to follow up.**

Hannah spoke to school about sex education and has seen the syllabus which looks much improved. **Aimee to continue to look for someone from Education to come and speak to Forum about this.**

Comms have suggested that instead of a Youth Social media account the Forum could host 'takeover days' of the Councils Instagram and Tik Tok accounts.

Confirmed Youth Day as a takeover day. Group happy with this outcome.

4. Homelessness in West Northants

Leon gave an overview of the Rough Sleeper service in the council. The team's aim is to relieve and prevent homelessness.

The forum asked a number of questions around how the team deal with people who are reluctant to engage; supporting without invading privacy; hidden homelessness; children; and the impact of both covid and the current economic situation on the service and those it supports.

The people they work with have a choice about their engagement and it is important not to take away their choice. Some are ready to change their lifestyles and others are not or need other support before they want to move on. Some feel most comfortable living on the streets and do not want to change. There are also some people who are housed but beg and might be thought to be homeless by the public.

When a person is housed the team continue to work with them and other agencies around a housing plan to help them sustain their tenancy.

Northampton is a generous place and 5 or 6 nights of the week charity and faith groups provide food to those on the street or in poverty (often includes those in the transitional period between moving homelessness and housed).

Covid had a really positive impact on homelessness service, particularly the 'Everyone In' campaign that provided the opportunity to get everyone off the streets to protect life during the pandemic.

Leon offered for a couple of young people to come out with them to look at some of the properties being renovated. Hannah and Jessica are interested. **Action: Aimee to put names forward to Leon and put in touch to arrange.**

5. Food Poverty and Sustainability

Robin is the CEO of the [Hope Centre](#), a not-for-profit anti-poverty charity which provides practical services to help people survive poverty and exclusion. Their aims include campaign for change in the industry (food and fuel poverty/sustainability), and feeding people.

Food banks did not exist in 2000 although there was food poverty previously. Soup kitchens have been around a long time for the most destitute, longer in USA due to no welfare system. The rise in food banks has been a result of increased food poverty and the 'eco-warrior' movement. Benefits and wages are not keeping pace with inflation and the provision of food banks/food aid is now built into the welfare system.

Covid has meant more are in poverty – lots of drive from people not working and wanting to provide. In Northampton food aid providers (food clubs serving 300 people + each week) got together to work together as a new alliance and pool efforts to centralise availability. [FAAWN](#) – food from gov dept. [DEFRA](#) and businesses and restaurants. HOPE stores food and distributes out to other banks, originally 6 but now 40+ covering West Northants. Community and geographic focus – for example, Hope raised money from trusts and foundations and gave to Black organisations to develop their own food aid which is more suitable or African communities.

3 x number of people accessing food aid during covid and Government added £20 top up for Universal Credit – this has now been reduced again. Fuel poverty is now a huge issue for people.

Hope and the alliance have written a letter to the Chancellor of Exchequer asking the Government to do more to help people.

Hope opportunities and offers:

[Hope young ambassadors programme](#)

[Hope allotment](#) grows vegetable in Kingsthorpe that is given out. Smaller scale projects elsewhere. Use projects to involve people with MH and isolated/widowed for their wellbeing.

Hope social media – [inc links to social media]

If you know someone in food need you can search [FAAWN](#).

Sustainable Food Place - [WNSFP](#) partnership; climate change, growing networks.

Q. Russia and Ukraine 30% of works wheat supply – not yet impacting but will very soon and will impact on prices in supermarket. Price increases are already being seen. Some African countries are entirely dependant on Ukraine for wheat supply whereas in the UK we do have our own supply also.

Q. Has the increase in minimum wage helped?

Statutory min wage is too low – living minimum wage is actually higher. Thousands are not even paid the minimum wage due to dubious work practices or modern slavery – some workplaces with higher potential for exploitation include eastern European workers in some car washers, cleaners working the nights often not paid enough. Not enough inspectors checking and bullying takes place to stop people from complaining. Some employers also house workers so often rent is deducted from their minimum wage. Robin gave example of P&O saga in the news recently - £15m delivered in furlough scheme but workers have recently been fired and rehired under worse terms. Other examples discussed; British Gas, and Weetabix locally. Find out more about the [Living wage foundation](#).

6. **Lunch break**

7. **WNC Youth Parliament**

Cllr Baker has sent her apologies as she is unwell. The forum split into two groups to come up with their initial ideas about how a WNC Youth Parliament could look like, any challenges and potential solutions:

- Involve youth outside of the forum through an online form/suggestion box for ideas and issues to be put forward.
- Opportunity for debates on important subjects
- Hybrid meetings
- Meetings in all three locations – could rotate or be separate groups
- Committee or mirror cabinet roles across the Youth Parliament
- 3 youth forums covering the 3 areas with an overarching group with members from each to bring things together across the West.
- Transport provision such as a free bus ticket for those attending
- Preconceived ideas about a youth parliament may impact uptake
- Shared online documents for collaborative work
- Funding for the youth parliament to encourage and enable engagement

8. **Youth Summit**

Becky from NAYC talked about the Youth Summit and the Youth Forums involvement in the past.

Opportunity for Youth Forum to lead a 60minute workshop or just be involved in the on the day delivery/other aspects of organising the event.

Youth members present agreed they would like to host a workshop. Themes shortlisted were Budgeting and finance; Mental Health and coping strategies; drug and alcohol; and Hate crime. The group voted to take forward a workshop on Hate Crime to deliver to peers at the conference.

Action: Aimee to arrange a session with partners in other organisations such as Police and NREC to learn more and plan the workshop.

Nicole attended NAYC emerging leaders day recently on behalf of the forum. Becky fed back that Nicole attended NAYC emerging leaders and was an excellent representative of the Forum. If anyone else would like to join they have a couple of catch up days in June before the second course date away session. **Action: Becky to send details for Aimee to share.**

9. International Youth Day Planning

Ideas mapped:

- Battle of the bands
- Ethnic food stalls
- Big outdoor activities – oversize outdoor games
- Scavenger hunt through the town
- Book Trade
- Outdoor screenings
- Showcase local young talent
- Mini sports tournaments
- Town centre or Park (Abington/Becket's/Racecourse)

Discussion re costs and providing free events for young people.

Action: Aimee to liaise with potential partners – BID, UON, Grosvenor, NSport etc and look at venue options as market square may be closed for regeneration.

10. Youth Forum Elections

Group agreed the fairest way to elect to the roles would be to Doodle poll availability for an online elections meeting.

Actions: Aimee to arrange Doodle Poll and send out details of the roles available.

Action: Forum members interested in one of the roles to send a couple of lines to say why they would like to be elected.

11. Items for Future Meetings

Youth Summit workshop planning
Virtual Elections meeting

12. **Date of Next Meeting/upcoming events**

Next Meeting tbc <https://doodle.com/meeting/participate/id/aOYMZBBd> to vote.

The Knife Angel is coming to Northampton on Saturday 30 May for two weeks. You can see it on All Saints plaza in the town centre.

Northampton Carnival – Saturday 11 June, Racecourse. Opportunity to survey young people.

Northampton Pride – Sunday 26 June, Town Centre.

The meeting closed at 3.15 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____