



Bidford-on-Avon Youth Club Report 2012-2013

In June of 2012 Bidford Youth Club was in a very sorry state. The building was looking very shabby and run down; we had low attendance, low staff morale and no money.

In fact we thought that by the end of July 2013 we would be announcing that the youth club would close its doors, after over forty years on its current site.

However, twelve months later and the story could not be more different. In June of 2012 we approached Bidford Youth Action for help and were given a grant that enabled us to start a refurbishment programme at the youth club.

An article was written for the BIG newspaper and the community of Bidford and local area, swung into action. Over the next few months we received donations from Bidford Parochial Charities, Bidford Community Group, Bidford Community Choir, Bidford Christmas Lights and Bidford Parish Council. We also received help in the form of building materials, paint, flooring, tiles, blinds, kitchen units etc., from members of the community and also local businesses and shops.

The members, youth workers and young leaders of the youth club along with members of the local community spent many hours, days and weeks working at the youth club. We had a constant flow of people bringing in drinks, refreshments, biscuits and cakes for everyone. People would just call in saying they had a spare hour and what could they do to help. Special thanks to members of Bidford Community Group and The Jolly Tea Pot for publicising the project and for their very practical support.

This is a list of what was achieved:

- complete re-decoration of the youth club building, inside and out
- the grounds of the youth club tidied up and a basket ball net installed

- rotten window frames replaced
- broken and cracked windows replaced
- kitchen completely gutted and a new kitchen installed, decorated and new flooring. Also a local retired plumber/electrician helped us to install a hot water system in the kitchen. We were also given a new cooker for the kitchen and a small chest freezer
- new blinds on the windows
- a small ramp installed by the rear fire door
- new flooring and storage in the toilets and shower rooms
- storage spaces all sorted and cleared out
- new carpet tiles laid in the main area
- donation of a new pool table, office chairs and scanner/printer/photocopier
- a soft seating area for computer games with donated floor cushions and bean bags
- office completely refurbished and new carpet tiles laid

During this period we have developed a Facebook page, which originally was used to show people how the refurbishment was progressing and giving appeals for the materials and help needed. Now we use it to show what activities are going on at the youth club and to communicate with our members/parents and the community.

In September 2012 we re-opened after the summer break with most of the work done and held an Open Day at the end of the month. We publicised this in the local schools and also invited everyone who had helped, volunteered, donated etc., to show everyone what had been done and to say thank you. Budgens very kindly sponsored the day and donated food for a buffet. We had a fabulous day with over 120 people coming along.

We are planning another Open Day with a provisional date of 28th September 2013. We also plan to run some fundraising stalls at the same time, to raise much needed funds for the youth club.

After the Open Day, attendance at the Junior Club on a Wednesday night increased quite dramatically. We now have almost 100 members with an average attendance of 35-45 on a

Wednesday night, with our highest attendance being 56 young people.

The Junior Club is for young people aged 9-13 and is very programme based. Activities include sports, arts and crafts, issue-based activities, quizzes, outdoor activities, cooking and trips out.

The youth club also has various items of equipment including a pool table, table tennis table, table football, computer games consoles, IT suite with internet access, board games and sports equipment, which young people can use as well as any planned activities.

As we have the benefit of a new kitchen, we have developed a youth café style evening, running two or three times a term, which has proved very popular with our members.

With financial support from Bidford Parish Council and support from Targeted Youth Support in Stratford, we held some taster sessions and meetings with young people with the intention of re-starting a senior section at the youth club. This commenced in November 2012 on a Monday evening 8.00 p.m. – 10.00 p.m. We have around 20 members with an average attendance of 10-12. The group call themselves Overs (as they are over 13). The group do not have a planned programme, choosing a more informal and relaxed approach, but activities have included trips to laser quest, youth café nights, cupcake decorating, pizza making, pancake making, arts and crafts.

During the latter part of 2012 and early 2013, both Juniors and Overs were involved in choosing a new name for the youth club building, which is The Shack. We also had a competition to design a new logo for The Shack, which can be seen on our Facebook page.

We have also recruited a number of new youth workers/young leaders for the Junior Club and one of the members from Overs has expressed interest in volunteering at Junior Club from September 2013.

We are in the process of updating DBS (CRB) checks for our youth workers/young leaders through Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs.

WAYC is now our main contact for youth service support as there is now no county youth service in Warwickshire, which has fallen victim to local authority spending cuts. What remains of the youth service is now called Targeted Youth Support, but does not now have any regular contact with youth clubs.

We have been involved in a number of community events during the last year, where we were able to do some fundraising as well, including Buy in Bidford and Bidford Primary School Fete.

St. John Ambulance cadets and adult division now use the youth club as their base and meet at the youth club on a Thursday evening.

Budgens have again supported the Youth Club by nominating us as one of their charities for the community token collection from January-June 2013. We have recently been presented with a cheque for £401.11, which has been given specifically to purchase a new table football and also some giant outdoor games.

We continue to explore opportunities to be involved in the local community and to also undertake some fundraising activities. The youth club needs around £5,000.00 a year to run the youth club, so we continue to identify sources of funding/grants that we can apply for.

Unfortunately we have also had a few not so good events to report. We have had two break-ins at the club, both of which happened within a week of each other. Nothing was stolen on either occasion, but unfortunately resulted in us having to pay to replace broken panes of glass.

Also, one of the very tall trees in the garage compound next to the youth club came down in gale force winds in May 2013. It landed on top of the canoe store and our games equipment store, causing over £3,000.00 worth of damage. If the tree had fallen a

few inches either way, it could have landed on one of the houses next to the club, or indeed on the main youth club building. A claim for this is being dealt with by our insurance company.

Our goals for the next couple of years include:

- continuing to develop the Junior and Overs Clubs
- holding another Open Day at the youth club
- fundraising activities
- involvement in community events
- re-establish the youth club management committee
- refurbishment of the computer equipment/it suite
- consultation with our members, youth workers and the community on 'where next?'

Diane Bennett
Worker-in-Charge
Bidford-on-Avon Youth Club
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