

STEWKLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - FINAL REPORT TO STEERING GROUP

FROM YOUTH WORKING GROUP

1 **INTRODUCTION**

The YOUTH Working Group consists of two members, both of whom live within the village and have been regularly involved in working with young people over the last ten years. Their involvement has been both professional and voluntary and included the following organisations that work with / benefit young people in Stewkley: Youth Club, Scouts (all ages), St Michael's school, Football club, Cricket club and Tennis club. For the purpose of this report Youth refers to any young person aged between 11 and 19.

2 **TOPICS/AIMS**

Our aim was to investigate Youth services that are available within the parish and to principally identify:

- How existing provision could be strengthened to ensure it continues to benefit young people, is able to cater for a wider / more diverse group of young people and/or is meeting the needs of young people;
- Any additional services that are "in demand" by youth and could be included in the Neighbourhood Plan as development objectives.

3 **METHODOLOGY**

The following methods were used to collect data and/information in support of the Topics/Aims outlined above:

1. Neighbourhood Plan survey
2. Village survey event
3. Specific surveys for specific groups (eg: Scouts, Brownies, Youth Club)

The specific surveys (point 3) focused on four questions so as not to duplicate what was already identified in points 1 and 2:

- Would you like to strengthen your group in any way?
- What key hurdles does your group face?
- If money was not a factor, are there any changes you would make, or activities you would add/start?
- What three things would make a difference to your group?

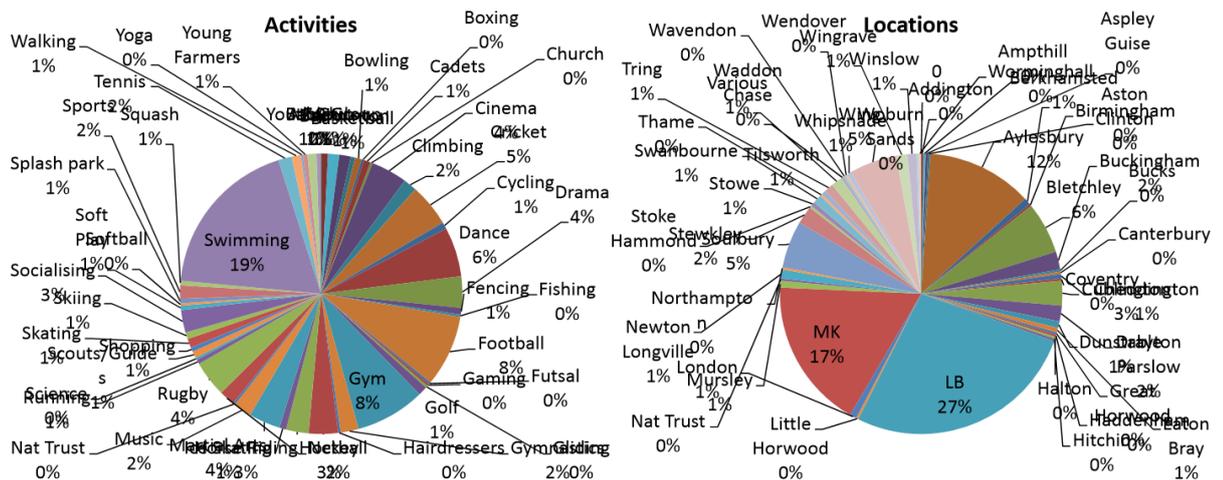
The output from these surveys are contained in Attachment A and the following groups surveyed:

- Youth Club
- Brownies
- Scouts

4 FINDINGS

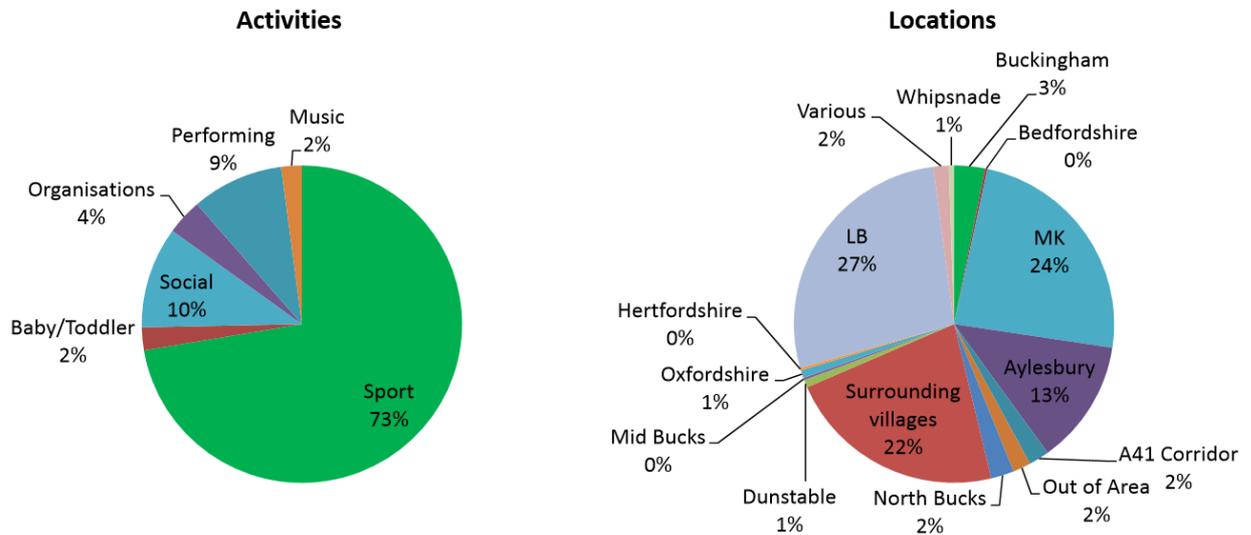
- According to the survey Youth represent between 10% and 11% of the population of the Parish (approximate).
- All Youth need to get to school via bus transport and the costs are covered up until the age of 17 (sixth form) where the costs rise considerably.
- There are very few part-time job opportunities within Stewkley, with the majority of 16 to 19 years olds needing to find such work in neighbouring towns and, hence, often relying on a parent or guardian for transport
- Youth are heavy users of the recreation ground facilities either with friends or as part of an organized club. The Rec is the most important asset for Youth
- Those Youth aged between 11 and 14 are very well catered for; however, outside of formal clubs those aged between 14 and 17 are not so well catered for. There are almost no social events arranged for this aged group and their desire for a space(s) (eg: shelter on the Rec) are often overlooked due to Health and Safety concerns.
- Within the Village, the Scouts is the most used service overall, followed by Sports (especially football), and then the Youth Club. Many Youth travel outside of the village to attend a multitude of other clubs and to access other services (eg: swimming pool, cinema, etc).

A huge variety of activities are followed by Stewkley's young people, in a wide range of locations.



The Youth are not looking for the Village/Parish to start some of these services.

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- Older youth (16 to 19) did express that a more regular bus service might be of benefit; however, it would need to be very regular (eg: every 15 mins to places like Milton Keynes, Leighton Buzzard and/or Aylesbury).

The main clubs (Scouts, Brownies and Youth Club) are addressing their hurdles and needs themselves.

5 **CONCLUSIONS**

1. The Youth enjoy where they live and appreciate what is on offer in Stewkley for them
2. Those aged between 15 and 17 would like to have a “space” they can call their own; however, providing such a space (eg: shelter on the Rec) raises Health and Safety issues so this is not easily addressed.
3. Youth would benefit from a cycle way (including mopeds) between Stewkley and Wing as this could mean they could get to Leighton Buzzard with friends and those attending the Cottlesloe could get to school.
4. Youth are not looking for more clubs (sports or otherwise) to be opened and realise that the need to travel out of the Parish to other clubs is part and parcel of living in a rural community.
5. Youth would like more play equipment on the Rec that is suitable for 11 to 15 year olds – or even older. These could be climbing frames and higher slides. There was mention of a fitness trail with equipment stationed around the Rec.
6. The majority of Stewkley's Youth are very busy with both school and non-school based activities. Any free time is scarce and jealously guarded.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In accordance with future housing developments in Stewkley remain conscious of the benefits that Youth would realise from:

A cycle way between Stewkley and Wing	<p>Stewkley is situated less than 3 miles from the closest catchment school and if a cycle way was installed young people attending Cottlesloe would have the choice to cycle to school. This would benefit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent’s of sixth form student who have to pay for their child’s transport once they turn 17 • Student’s who want to attend after school clubs but can’t due to transport issues that mean they need to catch the bus • The young people themselves as cycling to school would offer valuable exercise <p>Please also note - a track would also benefit other age groups in Stewkley, for example, commuters to London who would be able to safely cycle to Leighton Buzzard Station</p>
Play equipment on the Rec	<p>Most of the existing play equipment currently installed is for younger children (up to 11/12). Young people coming to Youth Club have often asked why there aren’t any larger climbing frames or similar items.</p>
A fitness trail on the Rec	<p>Such a trial is not specifically targeted at Youth but could be used by them and also other clubs. Parents and their children could use it as a family exercise event.</p>

2. How other rural parishes manage the “hang out shelter” wish of Youth aged between 14 and 17 should be investigated further because many are having such facilities removed because of social issues that have arisen.

It is recommended that a panel of young people interested in a “hang out” shelter is convened as part of a team that could investigate whether such a shelter is needed, how Youth would benefit and how such a shelter could be managed from a health and safety perspective.

This team could also investigate the possibility of young people (15 to 17) being allowed into village pubs as long as they are not served alcohol. Young people aged between 15 and 17 are poorly catered for in the Parish and they are not looking for “organised” events – just a place to “hang out” other than home.

3. The Parish Council could benefit from a once yearly meeting with village Youths who attend the various clubs to discuss ideas they have about village life and its facilities.

7 Attachment A

Youth Club

Would you like to strengthen your group in anyway?	The Youth is in a transition phase at the moment, with volunteers who have been supporting it for the last 6-8 years phasing out and the need for new people to “fill their shoes”.
Key hurdles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining a committee to oversee the running of the club • Maintaining the right number of volunteers • Being able to offer Youth Club trips that all members can afford to attend. Hence these need to be subsidised in some way • Size of the facilities in the winter months when the club is restricted to being indoors. Note – this hurdles should be alleviated by the restructuring of the Pavilion building.
If money wasn't a factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would organise more trips for the group so they experience travelling as a group and without their parents. • We might hire equipment like bouncy castles and go-karts more often.
Three things that would make a difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People pro-actively asking to become volunteers • More space in the Pavilion over the winter months • Being able to afford more trips

Brownies

Would you like to strengthen your group in anyway?	Having a Rainbow and Girl Guide Unit would make a difference but is down to volunteers
Key hurdles	<p>Finding temporary buildings while the Pavilion is refurbished</p> <p>Losing young people to Scouts and other activities because they are only a Brownie unit and can't offer progression</p>
If money wasn't a factor	Our own storage room and even own building (note – the storage is being rectified by the Pavilion refurb)
Three things that would make a difference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outside designated space with bollards to demarcate and area 2. More storage space and better washing facilities 3. Try to attract more young woman to volunteer

Scouts (by Chris Oliver)

The 1st Stewkley Scout Group has been in the village for over 50 years and currently provides youth activities for over 70 young people. Ages range from six years to eighteen, with a further option in the initial stages of development, catering for 18-25yr olds on a district wide basis.

Chris spoke with the 14-18yr olds in the Explorer Scout section and 8-10yr olds in the Cub Scout section. Three questions were asked:

1. What do you like (about Stewkley)?
2. What would you like started, stopped, continued?
3. What do you dislike?

In practice these evolved slightly according to the audience but some useful answers were received, as follows:

- 14-18yrs
 - What do you like?
The park – tennis courts – nature reserve–cricket club –scouts – school – village hall – location of the village – religious/faith groups .
 - What would you like started, stopped, continued?
Harvey's was good – shop –more family oriented pub/restaurant – need a bus service to Aylesbury/Leighton Buzzard/Milton Keynes – more social events for younger people.
 - What do you dislike?
Driving past parked cars – no bus service.
- 8-10yrs
 - What do you like?
Friends – wildlife – countryside – pavilion – scouts 'panto' – shop – football.
 - What would you like started, stopped, continued/ What do you dislike?
Bigger playground at the school - more equipment in the park - fix the roundabout – more shops – not build loads of houses.

The older section chose two members who would be happy to attend subsequent steering group meetings to present their views.