

Youth Council Steering Group

17 September, 2020

5:00pm

Notes

Present:

Cllr Gill Cleeve (GC)
Lisa Cowley (LC)
Cllr Philip How (PH)
Cllr Tony Jackson (TJ) - Mayor
Cllr Kate Rolfe (KR)
Sarah Summers (SS)

Youth Members:

Kerry Alcock (KA)
Amelia Betts (AB)
Danielle Cleeve (DC)
Aiden Drinkwater (AD)
Hope French (HF)
Oliver Hughes (OH)
Eva Key (EK)
Bianka Pawlowska (BP)
Alfie Walker (AF)
William Winter (WW)

All members attended the meeting via Zoom

1. Apologies

Cllrs Victoria Alcock (VA) gave her apologies.

Apologies were also received from Youth Member, Oliver Lines (OL).

2. Introductions

The Mayor thanked the Youth Members for their interest in joining the Youth Council Steering Group. He introduced himself and gave a brief overview of his experience as a Town Councillor and Mayor.

As Chairman of the Group, GC then introduced herself. PH and KR gave a short description of themselves and their Council experiences. GC explained that VA would also usually attend these meetings but was unable to join today.

SS and LC then introduced themselves and described their roles as Officers of the Town Council.

It was then the turn of the Youth Members to introduce themselves and elaborate on the reasons why they would like to be a part of this Steering Group.

Some key themes were:

- Increasing creative experiences for the younger residents of the town;
- Human rights;
- Mental health;
- Social media – particularly to challenge the bad reputation youths in the town currently have;
- Tackling racism;
- Affordable social activities;
- Learning new skills;
- Improving the local area for younger people.

GC then displayed a PowerPoint presentation on the screen (**Appendix 'A'**) which firstly gave a brief history of the Town Council and its responsibilities.

3. Stratford-upon-Avon Youth Council Constitution

The constitution was reviewed item by item to ascertain whether the Youth Members agreed with what was already written, or whether they wanted to change or add any items.

The Aims and Objectives of the Youth Town Council are currently stated as:

The Youth Council shall be a democratic body whose membership could be representative of all young people within

the boundaries of the town of Stratford upon Avon regardless of gender, ethnic background, disability, race or sexuality.

Everyone appeared to agree with this statement, but it was made clear that members could go away to think about any of the items in the constitution and come back to the next meeting with any suggestions for additions or amendments.

The aims and objectives of the Youth Council were then looked at in more detail:

The aims of the Youth Council are:

- *To encourage a culture of participation in the democratic process and to develop an awareness of citizenship;*
- *To provide young people with the opportunity to convey their ideas and priorities to the Town Council;*
- *To provide a mechanism for the Town Council and other organisations to consult with young people.*

HF expressed a wish for a social media presence for the Youth Council, e.g. a Facebook and or/Instagram page. SS agreed this was a very good idea, however it is not necessarily needed as a part of the constitution, but something members could discuss during one of their meetings.

AD asked whether the powers of the Youth Council have yet been decided. GC responded that this is something that the Youth Council Steering Group will be tasked with over the next few meetings.

KA said that she thought we should improve on our acknowledgement of Pride month. KR expressed that she thought this was a very good point and that whilst not necessarily part of the constitution, it could be part of the ethos of the Youth Council. SS noted that flag protocol had changed this year and the Town Council were due to fly the Pride flag just before we had to go into national Lockdown.

SS also informed members of the Town Council's Mission and Vision Statement (**Appendix 'B'**), which is more likely to include some of the above suggestions.

The objectives of the Youth Council

- *To build a relationship with the Town Council;*

- *To develop networks of young people within the town*
- *To persuade young people that they and their opinions are valued;*
- *To comment on Town Council policies that may affect the quality of life and opportunities for young people;*
- *To identify and help resolve forms of discrimination against young people;*
- *To develop links with outside organisations such as the British Youth Council and Stratford Youth Forum;*
- *Youth councillors will act as representatives of young people of Stratford upon Avon at civic events and other functions.*

AD commented that the word 'persuaded' on bullet point three is not necessarily the word he would use as it has connotations of untruthfulness. It was agreed that the word 'show' may fit better. This would change this point to read:

- *To show young people that they and their opinions are valued.*

AB suggested that a good way to show young people that their opinions matter would be to produce questionnaires on issues such as mental health, discrimination etc. EK proposed that these questionnaires be accessible online to reach the desired audience.

Discrimination and racism were discussed further. HF noted that she had attended the Black Lives Matter protest in Stratford in June. OH commented that this movement appears to be a trend that people are not talking about anymore and that it is very important to keep tackling these issues.

AB mentioned the 'Ride out Racism' campaign she has previously been involved in and commented that a partnership with this campaign or something similar could be a good move for the Youth Council.

KR agreed that this was a good idea and noted that the Town Council work increasingly with partner organisations. GC also informed members that when the Youth Town Council is established, representatives from various organisations can be invited to speak/present at meetings.

Due to time constraints it was agreed that the rest of the constitution would be discussed at the next meeting.

4. Planning for the Future

It was agreed to discuss this item at the next meeting

5. Date of the Next Meeting

It became apparent that 5:00pm – 6:00pm on a Thursday worked for the majority of attendees. It was suggested that a WhatsApp group could be set up to keep in touch regarding meeting arrangements. LC will send out a parental consent form for completion to the members under the age of 16.

TJ suggested that members could watch previous Town Council meetings on YouTube or Facebook to get more of an idea how the Town Council operates.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcUDo4Zx6LvSbALK0KcelQQ?view_as=subscriber

<https://www.facebook.com/StratforduponAvonTownCouncil>

The next meeting will take place at 5:00pm on 24 September.

This meeting closed at 6:12pm.