

ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL
Abingdon Integrated Youth Support Project meeting
12.30pm, 20 May 2022

Present:

Cllr Samantha Bowring	Abingdon Town Council
Cllr Gabby Barody	Abingdon Town Council
Rita Atkinson	Damascus Youth Project
Roxy Elford	Damascus Youth Project
Holly Freeland	The Abingdon Bridge (TAB)

Rita Atkinson chaired the meeting.

NOTES OF MEETING

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Andrew Coveney and Gary Hibbins sent their apologies in advance of the meeting.

2. **Notes of previous meeting**

The notes were agreed.

3. **Update on progress with the youth support project**

Presentations have been made to the town council so an update was not provided under this item. It was noted that the meeting would be beneficial to all sides if it focused on strategy and aims and offered a plan against which progress can be measured.

4. **Programme for the year**

To consider activities for the current year.

2021-22 – survey conducted

2022-23 – action plan arising from the results of the survey.

Engagement with town council

It was suggested that activity of the youth support project with the town council should involve clear, measurable objectives that can be reviewed and used as evidence of the activity of the group. More engagement from young people in the town council to be involved in the work of committees where this is relevant.

Areas of possible involvement of young people would include:

- **recreation areas:** funding for recreation in Abingdon is lower than it is in many other towns.
- **community safety**, which can affect many young people, such as those without access to cars where these may be needed. Lighting, green environment.

There will obviously be many other areas of potential interest for young people but these two were highlighted.

The town council and town councillors in particular could go to the spaces where young people might feel more comfortable to introduce the work of the town council, what areas are affected and how they can affect this. The Abingdon foyer could be involved in any such contact.

The town council's forward plan could be shared and introduced as a guide to future plans. Any such consultation would need to include all youth groups in the town and Roxy Elford noted that the young people they engage with represent a wide range of people in Abingdon.

There are a number of sessions run by TAB and Damascus which town council representatives could attend. It would be useful to consider an activity for these sessions to engage people and to avoid them feeling uncomfortable. It was suggested that this could start with the Youth Voice meeting on the last Monday of each month at 19 Bridge Street. The next scheduled meeting is on 27 June 2022 from 5pm to 6.30pm?

The youth support group would focus on recreation and related community safety in the current year. This could involve visits to play areas in Abingdon and in other towns and would help to introduce young people to the work of the council. The youth project theme of '**inclusion and belonging**' would fit with this plan and could be carried over into future years for people newly engaged in the project. Another relevant theme was '**wellbeing spaces**' as part of a focus on mental health. It would be good to understand what the youth group means by mental health and how this can be addressed.

Action plan for the coming period:

1. Holly Freeland to contact Councillors to visit North Abingdon drop in.
2. Roxy Elford to consider how to get Councillors involved.

3. Cllr Barody and Bowring to visit Damascus on 27 June 2022 at 5pm
4. Holly Freeland and Roxy Elford to work together to create focus groups to unpick mental health and introduce the idea of a recreation consultation group.

5 Issues to consider

See next item.

6 Items for future meetings

- Review of actions agreed at this meeting
- Action plan to set up town council youth engagement
- **Town council to organise an update meeting of all youth groups in town, including the foyer and Yellow Submarine. Need to update list and send out invite. AC to liaise with Roxy Elford and Holly Freeland for contact details of groups and Cllr Bowring for structure of meeting.**

7 Date of next meeting

Friday 15 July 2022, 12.15pm