



OUR YOUTH OFFER

BRIEFING NOTE

AUGUST 2014

1) BACKGROUND

The Isle of Wight Council decided in March this year to close its current Island-wide Youth Service on 30 September. In its place it offered £1,000,000 funding over the 2 ½ years to 31 March 2017 for applications from relevant organisations to deliver opportunities in response to an issued Prospectus.

Ventnor Town Council's was one of 23 applications and among the successful 11; in our case for a total of £86,833 over the fund period.

2) VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

Ventnor Town Council is a Quality Council committed to serving the town and its residents in close collaboration with them. Its aims - central to its recent successful application to join the government's Our Place programme (section 6 - are improved health and wellbeing, a renewed and refreshed economy and enhanced community capacity for the benefit of all.

It has a full complement of 11 Members working as an effective team with a wide range of professional expertise and a staff team of 11 (becoming 13 with this project) reflecting part-time contracts and seasonal requirements.

We manage the Esplanade Paddling Pool, a Beach Safety Project and the Putting Green during the season as well as a year round weekly advice and support session for local job seekers in Ventnor Library.

The Town Council does not deliver youth activities directly but supports those local organisations that do: a strategy in which this project is rooted.

3) THIS PROJECT: YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

The basis of the Project is a partnership between the Town Council and three local third sector organisations - Ventnor Together, Ventnor Exchange and Ventnor Skate Park Group - to develop and deliver a local youth offer with a participation rate above the Isle of Wight Council's 20% target and more than double the 13% of the current Youth Service.

The latest available Neighbourhood Statistics show that Ventnor has 619 young people in the Prospectus's 11-19 range.

The three organisations' combination of established experience, already popular provision, positive grass roots reputations, proposals for growth and variety of offer supported by a Town Council employed part-time Youth Opportunities Officer will provide a substantial and sustainable core youth offer within the town.

4) THE YOUTH OFFER

Café 34: Ventnor Together, a registered charity, opened its youth café in October 2008 and provides a social space in its Pier Street premises for two evenings a week for young people to meet, relax, discuss and learn; it currently has 60 young people registered with it.

With £8,000 pa of the funding applied for within this project it will be able to make its facilities available for an additional two evenings a week, run workshops and curricular learning activities for groups of up to 25 young people, add WiFi to their facilities and organise visits to significant sites and events both on and off the Island. Café 34 is also willing to deliver some of their sessions in the Ventnor Youth Centre subject to its availability (section 7).

Ventnor Exchange: Ventnor Exchange is a new organisation formed by the team behind the award winning Ventnor Fringe Festival, a major annual event that launched in 2010; it is a collective of young artists, most of whom were born on the Island and all recent graduates from a range of Universities and Conservatoires' including Camberwell College of Art and the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Having taken on a long lease on the significant building that was the town's Post Office, they will have a multi-use space of café, performance space and meeting space within which young people can hang out, mix with adult role models not much older than themselves and meet professional artists from a wide range of disciplines.

With £10,000 pa of the funding applied for within this project, they will run each year six one-day creative workshops in the school holiday periods led by performers undertaking residencies at the venue and a programme of weekly - 40 weeks a year - workshops in Spoken Words, DJ skills, Physical Theatre (Lecoq & De Cru), Directing, Filmmaking, Graphic Design, Photography, Creative Writing,

Musical Instrument Classes, Event Creation, Illustration and Painting run by members of the Exchange.

Ventnor Skate Park: Ventnor Skate Park Group has developed and maintained the town's Skate Park for over 10 years with enthusiastic support from high profile Skateboarder John Cattle, owner of Island-based Skate Board business Wight Trash, and guided by local Promoter and Event Organiser Fred Woodworth. The Group has a Constitution and appropriate insurance and Child Protection Policies in place.

With £4,000 pa of the funding applied for within this project, they will run each year monthly training sessions with additional ones during school holidays led by John Cattle, develop and launch a dedicated Skate Park web site, produce and display appropriate sign-posting materials and add a small concrete skate board run for the younger end of the age group.

5) THE NEED

There are two factors behind the scale of the funding applied for (at 8.75% of the total available funding, twice the pro rata to age group population 4.23%): deprivation and isolation.

61% (377) of the town's 11-19 year olds live in the two of its four Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that are among the most deprived on the Island. Ventnor's Town Centre (LSOA IOW018A) is the 4th most deprived of the 89 on the Island, behind only Ryde North East, St John's West and Pan; it is the second most deprived on the Island on both Health and Employment, worse off than only Sandown North for Health and Ryde North East for Employment.

Lowtherville (LSOA IOW018D) – also known as Upper Ventnor – is around the 25% most deprived mark nationally and ranked the 5th most deprived on the Island behind only St John's West, Pan, Osborne and Sandown South on the children living in income deprived homes domain and 4th behind only two Pan areas and St John's West in relation to Education and Skills.

Ventnor is – and feels itself to be – relatively isolated from the rest of the Island by the distances and costs of travel to locations better provided with many of the facilities and support services young people need, benefit from and enjoy.

Although only 4 miles from Shanklin and entrance to the Bay area facilities, the natural axis for youth engagement, based in the relationships

established through the secondary school linkage with Medina, is with Newport, a return journey of over 20 miles taking 70 minutes and with a £9 fare.

The Town Council's strategy for addressing the further disadvantages this entails for those already living with the consequences of deprivation, is to increase local access to services and activities wherever possible, and this project would deliver a particularly valuable success in that regard.

6) OUR PLACE

The project will link naturally into Ventnor Town Council's involvement in the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) *Our Place* programme.

Our successful application to become one of the 123 areas on the programme has taken us through its initial phase: the preparation of a Development Strategy for a process leading to the production of an Operational Plan for the area by 31 March 2015.

The heart of the programme is collaboration between communities and the Public Agencies delivering services in the area, giving communities the opportunity to establish service priorities and participation in co-design of future service delivery.

To this end we have established six Vision Groups – one focusing on Young People – and secured positive sign ups to the programme's objectives from 18 Agencies delivering services in Ventnor, seven of which have a direct connection with young people's activities and services for the Prospectus's age profile: St Catherine's School, the Island Free School, the Isle of Wight Council, the Library Service, the Isle of Wight College, Job Centre Plus and Hampshire Constabulary.

7) OUR YOUTH CENTRE

Ventnor Town Council is in advanced discussions with the Isle of Wight Council about the future of the Youth Centre building that they will close on 30 September.

Subject to confirmation by Ventnor Town Council's 8 September meeting, the Town Council will take on responsibility for the building from 1 October 2014 through a Tenancy at Will, continuing to make it available for young people's activities.