

WOODCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL - 26th SEPTEMBER 2024
Subject - A Woodchurch Youth Council -Discussion document

Introduction

Whilst the Council has agreed in principle with the Committee of the Whole's recommendation to establish a Youth Council, there are a number of issues to consider. These include: -

- 1) Is there a known demand from young people for a Youth Council?
- 2) Will council appoint a relevantly-trained adult to support the youth council?
- 3) Will the youth councillors be chosen by young people in the community e.g. elections?
- 4) Will council allocate a budget to the youth council?
- 5) Will council delegate authority to the youth council?

According to the British Youth Council and SLCC, If the answer to the above questions is "Yes" then, a Youth Council which mimics a full Council is more likely to be successful than one created where the answers are "No" or "uncertain". In addition, their research shows that Youth Councils tend to be more successful in larger local Councils (eg Town Councils) which have greater resources to support them.

Options

- 1) A shadow Youth Council (ie one that mimics the full Parish Council)
- 2) A Youth Council that is linked to the adult decision making process and which feeds in and contributes to Council strategies
- 3) A Youth Council created in response to a specific matter - eg the re-imagining of the Play area/ Village Green leisure space where we already have a range of options submitted at the time of the Village Survey

Recommendation

Option 3

Reasons for the recommendation

- 1) The Council cannot answer "Yes" at this stage to the 5 issues above and based on the findings of the British Youth Council/SLCC, it is unlikely that a form of Youth Council that mimics the full Council would be successful
- 2) A full Youth Council should remain a goal for this Council. Decisions made by local councils, including those relating to transport, housing and environment all affect young people eg. development proposals for new homes. Young people are not consulted on planning applications for new homes despite the likelihood they will aspire to live in them in the future. Such enhanced engagement could be achieved through a full Youth Council in due course.
- 3) Currently, the Council is committed to a range of projects in its Village Plan, some of which are important to younger residents, but has little experience in successful youth engagement, As a starting point Option 3 would seem to be the best fit.

Next steps

1. Council to nominate a Member responsible for Youth Engagement and development of the concept of a youth council.
2. Council to decide which specific project(s) it would like younger residents to be involved in
3. Council Member to engage with youth groups and youth workers to encourage support and involvement

4. Generally - Review use of social media as a means to engage with the whole community
5. Ensure legal issues -Safeguarding/DBS etc
6. Use newsletter and new website etc to promote the importance of engaging young people in all areas of council activities

Cllr Rob Woods
September 2024