

Report on Malmesbury Area Local Youth Network (LYN) to the Community and Town Promotions Committee of Malmesbury Town Council meeting on Thursday, 7th April 2016

The LYN Management Committee meets on a monthly basis under the leadership of young people from Malmesbury School supported by our Community Youth Officer, Xina Hart.

As part of their attempts to find £25m in savings Wiltshire Council have announced a consultation on the future staffing of the Local Youth Network across the County. This seeks to reduce the number of Community Youth Officers (CYOs) and Assistant Community Youth Officers (ACYOs) from the 23 to 7. As a result all existing CYOs and ACYOs were given formal notice that they are at risk of redundancy. A 45 day statutory consultation period started on 23rd March 2016.

In the note that Wiltshire Council have issued they make reference to creating the new roles of “Locality Youth Facilitator” (LYF) and “Assistant Locality Youth Facilitator” (ALYF). These new posts will be transferred from Operational Children’s Services to become part of the ‘Community Engagement and Governance’ team responsible for delivery to Area Boards. The day-to-day management of these new posts will fall to the Community Engagement Managers. Wiltshire Council says the reduced number of Youth Officers will require them to be “shared” across Area Boards.

Wiltshire Council has 18 Area Boards covering 98 Unitary Ward areas. Mathematically it would seem that the new youth post will need to cover an average of 14 Unitary Wards.

The Malmesbury Area Board is one of the smallest Area Boards covering four Unitary Wards. Our neighbours in the Royal Wootton Bassett & Cricklade Area Board cover six Unitary Wards (three in Royal Wootton Bassett, Cricklade & Latton, Lyneham and Purton). And the Chippenham Area Board covers 10 Unitary Wards (eight in Chippenham plus Kington and By Brook). Both are significantly larger towns than Malmesbury.

This new arrangement raises a number of important questions. Among these are:

- Is it feasible for only 7 Locality Youth Facilitators, no matter how committed, professional and hard-working to make a meaningful impact and difference particularly to the lives of vulnerable young people?
- If our single youth officer is to cover either of these extra Area Board areas in addition to their current geography then how can we ensure that Malmesbury and our surrounding villages do not “miss-out” against larger areas with bigger towns?
- How will the Local Youth Networks and their respective Area Boards agree work schedules for a shared staff resource?
- What, in addition to our current activity, can our Town Council do to support our young people and particularly those who are vulnerable?
- How can we collaborate better with our neighbouring Parish Councils, local schools and youth organisations to support all of our young people and particularly those who are particularly vulnerable?

I propose that we seek answers to some of these questions from Cllr John Thomson, Chair of our Area Board.

I also propose that we convene a meeting to consider how best we might support local young people inviting to attend our local school and youth group leaders.

Cllr Gavin Grant,

Town Council representative to the Malmesbury Area Local Youth Network