



**Harlow Youth Council meeting  
Monday 2 June 2008  
Civic Centre**

**Present**

Bharat	Jasmin	Sam (Minutes)
Bridget	Jordan	Sean
Charlie	Josh	Sophie
Chloe	Kinjal	Tara
Danni	Matt	
Hannah (Chair)	Megan	
Jack	Michael	

**Guests in attendance**

Diane Butler Harlow Council	Cllr Murial Jolles
Cllr David Carter	Ruth Morton Essex CC Int. Youth Support
Cllr Joel Charles	Lynn Seward Head of Community services
Cllr Lee Dangerfield	

**Apologies**

Doris	Gracie	Cllr Andrew Johnson
Georgina	Zoe	(Leader)

**Absent**

Alex	Connor	Leroy
Charlotte	Daniel	

**1. Welcome and introductions**

**2. Apologies**

**3. Minutes from last meeting – Agreed as correct**

**4. Matters arising from last meeting**

**NAP meetings.** Diane has contacted the community safety team for dates of NAP meetings.

**5. Young Chairperson**

Councillor Charles introduced the Young Chairman's paper for discussion. Cllr Charles spoke about the positives aspects that Lewisham Borough council had experienced and they were happy to advise Harlow. Cllr Joel Charles had some testimonials from the young people on their youth council to read out. Having a young chairman has given Lewisham more press exposure.

Cllr Charles stated that a young chairman's role would bring financial incentives and serve as an advocate for the youth council and as a youth champion for the town. Their key responsibilities would be an extension of the

Youth Councillors' roles and responsibilities and that it was important to increase and enhance the young people's input in decision making. The young chairman would have a budget of £3,500 from grant aid to invest in youth projects.

The consultation can be continued and Cllr Joel Charles said that nothing would be done without prior consultation with us on all policies and things that affect us. He said he was not imposing the position on the youth council.

**Hannah** informed Cllr Charles that Harlow Youth Council was one of the longest established youth councils and they give advice and guidance to many newly formed youth councils including the Camden Youth Cabinet, Colchester, Castle Point and Brentwood Youth Councils and Capelle aan den IJssel in Holland. Hannah said it was important that Harlow Youth Council shadows the adult council and elects a chairperson from the existing elected members.

**Chloe** asked why were the youth council not consulted about having a young chairman? Joel said the initial meeting with youth councillors last week went through the paper and he has listened to what the youth councillors had to say.

**Sean** asked what evidence was there that introducing a young chairman gives greater strength to an existing youth council? Cllr Charles said both the Lewisham and Hastings have a young chairman and every year have a bigger turnout in the youth elections.

**Tara** said the youth council has grown since it was formed in 2004 from 12 to 28 seats and has had the same budget of £9,500 since it started. Having a young chairman will put additional strain on the budget and demean the role of the youth councillors. Cllr Charles said that the main focus is on enhancing the youth councillors' remit in the press locally and nationally.

**Megan** asked how many hours would the young chairman be expected to work to ensure they attend the relevant meetings and events? Joel said the structure has a chairman and two deputies, who can assist with duties, for example, during exam times. He agreed it was a huge commitment, as they would have to attend civic events with the chairman of the council and other organisations. There would be support from the adult councillors. If the young chairman could not attend it would go down the scale to the youth council

**Hannah** asked would they be expected to work on their own as youth councillors are assigned a mentor when they join the youth council? Joel said they would have two deputies.

**Charlie** suggested using the elected Youth Councillors.

**Michael** said that the youth councillors already represent the young people. Joel said that the chairman would attend the public events, as there is a need for a spokesperson.

**Charlie** said that the youth council already attend important events and they have a spokesperson – Bridget.

**Sophie** said organisations and the media already ask the youth council for their opinions on a range of things that could affect young people. Cllr Charles said it would give the chairman the opportunity to have an insight into the adult world of politics.

**Bridget** requested that a role of young chairman be a neutral one as the youth council is non-party political.

**Kinjal** said the paper refers to the young chairman's opinions being taken seriously and making changes for young people. Do you think our opinions are not taken seriously and that we do not make a difference? Cllr Charles said the youth council is not as prominent as it could be and having a young chairman can give them a bigger focus and increase the publicity.

**Alex** asked if you are proposing that the young chairman attend meetings and put forward the case for young people when any new policy, service or procedure is being discussed as well as shadowing the Chairman of the Council, how would you accommodate the fact that a young chairman will be at school or college during the daytime?

Cllr Charles said the adult chairman has the responsibility of managing a budget and therefore the young chairman should have a budget of £3500 to allocate to young people's projects.

**Charlie** said was the finance conditional on a young chairman being elected? Cllr Charles confirmed it is not conditional.

**Sam** asked if the youth council did not support a young chairman would the £3500 still go to the Youth Council to support other projects? Cllr Charles said yes.

**Bridget** thanked the councillors for their enthusiasm to support the Youth Council and hoped that they will continue even if the youth councillors do not support the young chairman proposal. Cllr Charles agreed that there were new ideas to involve the youth councillors to develop new projects and contribute in writing a young peoples manifesto for the council.

**Tara** said that the youth councillors were already carrying out the job specification. She said having a chairman would take over our role at meetings and they would get all the credit for what we have achieved as a team.

**Georgina** said that the youth councillors have been trained and some have 5 years experience. A new chairman will need our help, it makes sense to have a chairman from the elected youth council and not from the outside, and it is a better use of our skills and knowledge.

**Tara** informed Councillors that youth councillors receive six months training.

**Jack.** Who will pay for the Young chairman's election within schools and youth facilities? Cllr Charles said the council would pay.

**Tara** said if a member of the public was voted in as the young chairman it would not be fair on the 17 reserve youth councillors.

**Hannah** said that the cost of a separate election would be expensive. She was also concerned that having a senior position could cause a rift in the youth council, which it currently does not have as everyone is equal and they share the role of chairperson so everyone gets to develop skills. Hannah said that her school have recently removed the position of head girl and boy, as they were not working as a team.

**Danni** said why should there be a ranking, or tiers, within the youth council? Cllr Charles agreed there would be no tiers and no one person would be better than the other

**Tara** said if the third option is recommended, who is recommending it and why did you consult with them and not us? Cllr Charles replied there was a consensus that they thought that this was the best and fairest way to do it.

**Hannah** suggested if a young chairman's role is to increase voters, then politicians should be raising young people's awareness through the school curriculum and working with Jon O'Connor at the schools consortium.

**Charlie** said why should the person stand for the chairman's job if they are not interested in being a youth councillor? If the chairman were elected from the youth council, like the adult members, then we would know they are committed.

**Doris** said what if the young chairman resigns? Cllr Charles said that it would be offered to the person who came second.

**Megan** said the chairperson should run in the HYC elections first.

**Hannah** suggested if they trailed having a young chairman and if they didn't like it, could they remove them after their year in office? Cllr Charles said no it's not an option. **Hannah** said that the café is a pilot.

**Michael** said it was limited because if 29 people stand for the position of chair and 2 deputy seats, the 26 reserves will lose interest. Cllr Charles reinforced that it will open up opportunities and bring in a wider range of ideas and working across the UK.

**Bridget** said the opportunities to get involved are already there; they should concentrate on the existing youth council work, support the reserve youth councillors and support the youth bank, who are already awarding grants to youth groups.

Cllr Muriel Jolles said there needs to be more youth facilities of all kinds, not just football, to promote structured play and competitions. It is something the youth council and a young chairman can bring about, as it will increase the power of the youth council. The basic idea is to shadow the adult council.

Lynn Seward said that more information should be forwarded on both parts as the new administration may not be aware of the Youth Council's work and achievements to date, also of work carried out by other groups, such as the Play Strategy and YouthBank, who are young people granting money to youth groups. **ACTION: to arrange another meeting to discuss the matter further.**

#### **6. Feedback from Harlow Council - Lynn Seward**

**Skate Park** issue of drug use has been addressed and there will be regular visits by PCSO's and dog handlers to keep the area safe.

**CYPSP** (Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership) How do the youth council want to input their ideas into these strategies, would the youth council prefer a CYPSP representative to come to their meetings with the important issues or for youth council representative to attend the CYPSP meetings (held during the day)?

#### **7. The Y.E.A. (Young Essex Assembly) Green Pledge**

**Matt** reported that Youth Councillors, YEA and Youth Bank members attended the YEA launch of the Green pledge in Chelmsford. At the event young people took part in a music workshop with instruments made from waste and a bin bag and waste fashion show. The Green pledge has ten points to save energy and save waste. Schools and youth groups were invited to sign up to the pledge and select 2 Eco Champions for their project. Matt agreed to be the Eco champion for the Youth café and to promote the pledge and support recycling and saving energy. A copy can be obtained from Ruth and on the Youth café web site [www.harlow.gov.uk/cafeyouth](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/cafeyouth) and Youth Council web site. [www.harlow.gov.uk/hyc](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/hyc)

#### **8. Project groups**

**Young Concern.** Bridget is meeting with young concern to go through the YOF application form for the 'L8r' project.

**Bill Rammell.** Bridget and Jack met with to update Bill on local and youth issues. Jack said Passmores school closure was a concern for pupils and it would increase local traffic. Bill said that 50% of Passmores people live in Brays Grove catchment area. They stayed for Bill's live link up to the Sky news.

**The Square.** Hannah reported that the Square reopens on 4<sup>th</sup> July under the new management of Square One Partnership.

**New Leisure centre.** Tara reported there were concerns from young people that it will be expensive. It should be affordable.

**Bus lanes.** Hannah reported that young people were not supportive of the new bus lanes on First Avenue. The Gateway project is strongly supportive and that it is better on the edge of town than in the town centre.

**Jack Petchey.** Ruth - We have problems ordering the phones that Michael has chosen. The phone is only available online with a credit or debit card and only two per customer. We need 20 people, with a credit/debit cards to place 20 separate orders and then claim the money with their receipt. Ruth and Diane were happy to buy 2 phones each online but we will need 18 parents or adults to do it too if they agree. Please ask your parents and let Ruth know urgently so she can send them the link to purchase 2 phones. They must keep receipts for full and immediate refund.

**Young Essex Assembly.** Bridget reported that the SRE (Sex and Relationships Education) DVD would be interactive. It has a toolkit and a workbook that can be completed as you watch the DVD.

**Café Youth.** Opening times on Saturday are changing on 28 June to 1pm until 7pm so it covers lunch hours and there will be two extra opening days on Monday and Thursday during the school holidays

#### 9. **Diary Updates.**

**Speakers Bank Grand Final.** There are 8 free tickets to attend the finals of the 'Speakout Challenge' run by SpeakersBank and Jack Petchey. The public speaking finals are in London on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>. Consent forms are available online and must be returned to Karen Jeffery in the One stop shop by 1 July. Due to popular demand, tickets are available to anyone who has not attended this event before.

**Supervision** dates are in post trays.

**C Card** meeting with Ben Adams on Monday 9 June at 5.30pm in the Civic CR2AB.

**Rock School.** County Cllr Simon Walsh, Lonica and Nigel from Essex will be attending the Rock School meeting on Monday 9 June at 6pm in CR2AB Civic

#### 10. **Any Other business**

Rainer. Maggie reported that Rainer is having an information day at 10.00.am. at Shield House in the Pinnacles on Monday 9 June. Contact Maggie for transport or directions. Tel: 408374

**ACTION:** Bridget to attend. Matt and Sean to write a letter to Rainer about the times being during school and therefore excluding young people from participating.

Recycling bins. Jack would like to know if the town are looking at providing recycling bins with the 3 sections to improve our recycling? **Action: Diane to invite Lisa Pawlowski to a future meeting.**

Cllr Joel Charles would like to talk about improving the Harlow Youth Council website at the next meeting. **Action: Everyone bring your ideas to the next meeting.**

**David Cameron.** The visit on 3 June falls during the Council Purdah period. Mike White, Head of Legal Services, advises that local politicians should not use the council's resources to gain any party political advantage. Mike advises that youth councillors should avoid any publicity opportunities as they are non political. Due to the Purdah period, council resources cannot be used, this includes Council Officer time to make any of the arrangements, escort them to the meeting, or use the budget to pay for transport.

**CCV folders.** Ruth reported that CCV folders are almost completed. Please contact her if you need to check what is outstanding.

**8.00 Finish**

**Next meeting: Monday 7 July @ 6.30 – 8pm**  
**Venue: CR2AB Civic**