

Youth Working Group – Minutes

Date: Thursday 3 September 2026 **Time:** 6.30pm–8.00pm **Venue:** Highley Parish Council Office **Acting Chair:** Cllr Leesha Crocombe **Clerk:** Alison Palmer

1. Attendance

Present:

- Cllr Leesha Crocombe (Acting Chair)
- Cllr Tracy Pinches
- Cllr Emma Aspin
- Alison Palmer (Clerk)
- Helena Williams – Strategic Youth Support Manager, Shropshire Council
- Richard Parkes – CEO, All About Youth
- Rachel Symons – Youth Participation & Governance Worker

Apologies: Cllr Meg Roberts, Cllr Andrew Hancox, Cllr Carly Whitehouse, Vanessa Postle (All About Youth Leader)

2. Welcome, Introductions & Purpose of Meeting

Cllr Crocombe welcomed attendees and outlined the purpose of the first Youth Working Group meeting:

- To establish the Group's role, scope and priorities for 2026/27.
- To begin shaping a place-based Youth Offer for Highley.
- To review local youth context including deprivation, transport barriers and limited provision.

3. Overview of the Youth Offer for Highley

Helena shared plans of the emerging Youth Offer model for Highley, noting the intention to create a permanent multi-disciplinary team working from the Severn Centre, aligned with Families First Partnership and Best Start in Life funding streams.

Helena Williams and Rachel Symons summarised findings from their recent tour of Highley's community assets and the Children & Young People's Community Profile. Key points included:

- Wellness Woodlands identified as a potential learning base.
- Guided Stay & Play sessions may be reinstated under the Transformation Programme.

- The Youth Offer is a partnership model enabling adolescents to navigate support based on their circumstances, particularly as the local authority withdraws from direct youth club provision.
- Highley has the highest NEET rate (18–25) in Shropshire, highlighting the need for improved access to adult help, mentoring and pathways into work.
- Importance of linking with Hannah Thomas regarding the universal place-based offer she is developing for Highley.

Actions – Clerk: Compile a comprehensive list of all potential partners for inclusion in the Youth Offer

RP/HW: to explore and share information on future funding applications (e.g., Shropshire Community fund, enrichment funding, HAF).

4. Observation Visit – SYA “All About Youth” Session

Members visited the youth club to observe engagement and speak informally with young people.

- The session was well attended and popular.
- Several children reported that older siblings would have benefitted from extended provision.
- Engagement levels were positive and youth leaders provided insights into current pressures and opportunities.

Action noted: Hannah Thomas will attend the **Halo Big Open Day – Saturday 26 September** to gather public feedback on youth needs in Highley and share with the group.

Action – Clerk: To add Hannah to the group and share updates.

5. Deferred Items from Previous Meeting

5a. BKV Youth Tile Project – Display & Mounting

Members reviewed options for displaying the mini canvases created by SYA All About Youth, depicting young people’s images of Highley. Preferred location: Community Hall (to surprise Hannah, Youth Leader and show the YP they are valued contributors to the community).

Action – Emma: Arrange mounting and installation location.

Action – Clerk: Obtain quotes and permissions for materials.

5b. Senior Youth Club Proposal (Richard Parkes)

The Group revisited the proposal for extended senior youth provision. Discussions included:

- Sustainability and volunteer capacity.

- Alignment with the county partnership model.
- Potential for work experience placements (Halo, Primary School), lifeguard training, and youth-led enquiry work.

Action – Richard Parkes: Submit a formal quotation for an extended youth club leader.

Action – Clerk: Request Severn Centre costings for room hire.

5c. Brownies Community Session – Follow-up

Posters from the Brownies' road safety session to be displayed around the village.

Action – Clerk: Laminate posters. **Action – All Members:** Distribute posters across Highley.

6. New Items Raised

- Discussion on co-designing future youth provision with partners and young people, including development of a participation framework.
- Opportunity to involve All About Youth in the Christmas Light Switch-On to raise funds (via Hannah).
- National Youth Week (first week of November) presents a publicity opportunity to promote youth development in Highley.

Action: (Rachel Symons) Youth-led enquiry work to shape future provision

7. Initial Priorities for 2026/27

The Group agreed the following initial priorities:

1. Senior Youth Club feasibility and funding.
2. Strengthening partnerships.
3. Developing targeted youth work (mental health, NEET support).
4. Improving access to safe spaces and transport solutions.

8. Next Meeting & Close

Members agreed that meetings should be held every half term. Next meeting: Mid-October (post-October half term) – date to be confirmed.

Action – Helena Williams: Prepare a strategy document for the Group, incorporating today's discussions and outlining next steps and suggested meeting date (daytime?)