



Shelford and Stapleford Youth Initiative – Report

April 2021

Introduction

SSYI, established in 1997, is a community-based Christian charity serving the villages of Great and Little Shelford, Stapleford and Sawston, providing youth activities and support for local 10–18-year-olds, with a focus on those who are vulnerable, hard-to-reach, and most in need, supporting them through open access and targeted activities, 1-1 support, schools work and community projects. Our activities provide opportunities to build relationships with young people, encouraging positive behaviour, community involvement and informal education.

This report covers the last year of work from April 2020 to March 2021, including photos, feedback and a case study. We hope you find it informative and encouraging.

Overview



COVID-19 has had a massive effect on our work this year. For the initial part of the first lockdown we moved to online delivery, increasing our social media presence, and posting daily video updates. Lead youth worker Zac Britton (left) has done over 250 of these inspiring messages to date! They can be viewed on our Instagram and Facebook pages (@ssyiyouth). We also kept in contact with many of our young people over the phone. As the lockdowns have eased, we have been able to meet for socially distant one to ones and relaunch detached work in the Shelfords, Stapleford and Sawston. As of March 2021 group work has restarted both online and in (socially-distanced) person.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on young people’s mental health and wellbeing, with lockdowns and remote learning being particularly challenging for those whose home lives are not ideal. According to the mental health charity Young Minds 87% of young people questioned said that they had felt lonely or isolated during lockdown and 80% said that the Coronavirus had made their mental health worse. Youth work provision is more important than ever.

This year, we have taken on additional work in Sawston through our partnership with Romsey Mill. As well as the work within the Village College and the detached sessions, we are expanding the provision of open access and targeted support for hard-to-reach young people in that area.



Refurbishment work at the Youth Centre above the Memorial Hall in Great Shelford has continued, with significant funding from Gt. Shelford Parish, South Cambs., and Cambridgeshire County councils, as well as the local



communities. We have stripped out the old flooring, ceiling, and kitchen, and are in the process of having new electrics, insulated wall panelling, ceiling, and flooring installed. There will be new furnishings and kitchen area. Altogether once finished it will be a fantastic modern space and will be well resourced to allow us to support local young people better than ever.



We have installed an office in the youth centre, which will mean that SSYI has a presence there through the week, to support the use of the facility for the benefit of the community for as many hours as possible.

We strongly believe that the best way to support young people is through building strong relationships and engaging with them in multiple contexts, both in and out of school, in the community and in groups and through a variety of activities.

Activities and Youth Clubs

From Summer 2020, we were able to start **indoor and outdoor small group** provision including our **targeted group for vulnerable girls** and the **RED** group which has a focus on discussion and support around Mental Health and Identity, held at the Johnson Hall in Stapleford. Later in the year we restarted smaller group versions of our Friday groups in the Free Church in Great Shelford along with the **Wednesday Night Dinner** group running in partnership with Great Shelford Free Church and All Saints Little Shelford.

These groups went online during the second and third lockdowns. RED and the Girls Group are once again running in person now with plans to restart **Wednesday Night Dinner**, a **football** group, and the **“Shred-it-Up”** skate/scooter/BMX group soon. The **larger open access** work in Shelford and Sawston will restart when it is feasible to do so.



We have been able to run some extra activities at various points over the last year, including a couple of trips **mountain biking** at Thetford Forest, a **Zorb Football** session at Sawston Sports Centre, multiple visits to **Tenpin Bowling** in Cambridge and a selection of outdoor sports and activities. This has included further work on **The Copse** on Great Shelford Recreation ground, continuing to expand the features and improve the area there. Our young people have been involved in all aspects of the project from the design



and ideas to planting new shrubs and installing den structures. This was made possible through funding from the Cambridgeshire Children’s Area Partnership Fund and support from Shelford Playscape.



Detached Work

Within the limitations due to the pandemic one of the first things we were able to open up was detached work. This involves clearly identified members of our team meeting local young people in parks and public spaces, engaging with them on their terms and beginning to build relationships. This enables us to engage with new young people, many on the fringes who might not otherwise join our work and to focus our other activities on the needs of the young people we meet. When restrictions have allowed, we have been doing at least two and more recently four sessions a week. These take place in all the villages that we work in, with a focus on the recreation grounds and popular hang-out spots.

One-to-one and Mentoring Work

Throughout the pandemic we have expanded our 1:1 support work, initially through regular phone calls with many of our young people which continues. As restrictions eased, we began running these face-to-face, engaging in this way with up to 10 young people a week. Some of these take place within Sawston Village College, at the request of the college, and some in the community. This work is of particular value as it enables us to offer really in-depth support. A lot of the young people we work with in this way are struggling with their mental health and find meeting a member of our team of real benefit to their wellbeing.

Case Study

James* has been involved with SSYI for several years, regularly attending various groups and activities. He has struggled with his mental health for a few years and has had support from other agencies. Recently he left college for work but after being furloughed his mental health began to deteriorate again. James began having a 1:1 with Zac to chat through what he was dealing with and to explore ways in which he could improve his wellbeing. As part of this Zac met with James and his Mum to discuss his mental health and how they could support him in the home, and how they could help each other to make their home environment better. James' mental health is improving, and we are currently supporting him in finding a new job and accessing some professional mental health support. James says:

"I enjoy my 1:1 and find it helpful. It's helped me realise what I need to do and how to do it."

*The name of this young person has been changed

The Team



Throughout this year the work of SSYI has been carried out by our team of youth workers alongside Zac. These are Tina Mogg (left), Charlie Trueblood (centre) who joined us in March 2020 and Jon Sanders of Romsey Mill who continues to provide management oversight and

guidance. We also have a strong team of volunteers supporting all the work that we do. All staff and volunteers are fully DBS checked and safeguarding trained.

Funding

Our overall expenditure in 2020-21 was £54,700. We are most grateful for funding received from the parish councils of Great Shelford, Stapleford, Sawston, and Little Shelford, as well as the local churches and the regular and "one-off" donations from individuals in our communities.

We have also benefited from a number of institutional and government grants, particularly via South Cambs District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, John Huntingdon Charity, and UK Youth

All Saints
LITTLE SHELFORD



St Andrew
STAPLEFORD



Parish Church of
St Mary the Virgin

Great Shelford
Free Church

SSYI normally plays a full part in local events, which in 2020-21 have been restricted to the Sawston Fun Run, and the Drive-in Carols at Shelford Rugby Club. For the new year, we will participate in village events once again as well as planning our own annual summer Garden Party (June 2020), Big Breakfast (October 2020), and the Grand Opening of the refurbished Youth Centre (July 2020).

Future Plans

Aligning with the National Youth Agency's guidance we are hoping that our face-to-face work will increase greatly over the next few months. From the 12th of April indoor and outdoor work is allowed with any young people and from May the 17th Residential and indoor trips may be possible. We are planning to restart several indoor and outdoor smaller groups in April and aim to be running larger open access work by June. If it is feasible, we will run a summer Residential as before, as well as a programme of trips and activities over the summer holidays.

Once the Youth Centre is reopened, we will make increasing use of the facility for specific groups, as well as "drop-in" availability during the week and the larger open access youth club evenings. Work in Sawston will grow, with full engagement of groups involved in existing youth provision there, to meet the needs of hard-to-reach young people in Sawston.

With this expansion, our costs of delivery are growing with a budget for 2021-22, excluding the completion of the Youth Centre Refurbishment, of around £64,000.

We wish to say a massive thank you to all of you who continue to support SSYI financially. Your investment in SSYI and the young people just shows how much you truly care about the local young people and wish to see them flourish as individuals. This includes the local parish councils, churches, businesses, organisations and generous individuals who have given us financial support either directly or indirectly.

A message from the staff and volunteers of



More information

If you would like any further information about SSYI, then please contact:

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...or access the SSYI Website: www.ssyi.club