



## **Bringing Hope and Focus to Youth & Families of South Wight**

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South Wight Youth Partnership | Charity Registration 1160139

# June 2024 SWAY Update

## Opportunities and Challenges - Ventnor

We are now at a critical juncture in the life of SWAY. It would be fair to say that over the last 2 years we have had many fresh and exciting opportunities, but also some difficult challenges too. We have attempted to expand the work into Ventnor with mixed results. The River Project work with the Year 6s in St Francis School has been rewarding. We have worked with 2 groups of children in each of the last 2 years. This has been an exciting opportunity to ease the transition to High School for some children who were referred to us by their school. We have seen some heart-warming changes, building confidence and resilience for these children.

We have enabled the Youth Group in Ventnor to meet most weeks and this has been well supported and appreciated. Yet we have not really broken new ground with the High School young people and this remains an aspiration and ambition, dependent on more workers and volunteers. We are continuing to seek expanding our work into Ventnor. The need is there, we do not doubt, but the mechanism is not quite there yet.

## The Hub

We have sought to bring the Hub vision into a reality ever since 2020, which has been held up repeatedly with a variety of setbacks. Much hard work and prayer has gone into this project, but after what seems like a long wait, the tide has turned. We now have possession of the piece of land upon which to build the Hub. We have planning permission, we have most of the funds and we have a contractor. It remains now for final pricings to be agreed and for the birds to finish nesting in the shrubs that need removing before building. We are excited to be fast approaching the commencement of building.

The next challenge will be to secure funding for a Hub manager, who will act as a Development Manager for the charity. This is an exciting position and we are looking to have someone in place before the opening of the building, with vision, passion for the community and faith to see the charity rooted in its core principles. Your positive thoughts and support is always welcome in this important and vital area of SWAY.



## The Team at Work

Meanwhile, the charity continues to work alongside families, supporting them and helping them to find ways forward in their lives. Our Youth & Families' Support Worker, Lynne, endeavours to work with a number of families who are open to receive that support. This support can come in a variety of ways: listening, talking through problems, taking them to appointments, attending meetings and encouraging them to be involved in wider SWAY activities. She completed an excellent series of Zoom cooking that ran through the winter for 7 sessions. Hopefully, this will be repeated later this year. Lynne did carry out a questionnaire with families a while ago, to discover ideas for family events that would be appreciated. As a consequence, SWAY organised a family picnic in Rookley on 23rd June.

Our Trainee Youth Worker, Olivia, completes her first year at Moorlands in a couple of weeks' time. She has had a really good year, gaining some excellent marks for her assignments, making some good friends in College and developing her confidence throughout the year. Olivia has learnt so much this year and we look forward to what she will bring to the charity in the coming years of experience as a youth worker. We are very grateful to have Olivia on the team.

Our wonderful Administrator, Catherine, is being superb at keeping the communications going and pulling things together in so many ways. We really could not do without her. We frequently wonder how we ever managed before she came along.



The mentoring River Project at Brighstone Primary, Niton Primary, St Francis Primary in Ventnor has helped 16 young people in their transition from Year 6 to Year 7 in September. There are plans for a final celebratory trip for them all before the school year ends in late July. We hope to find the funding for another year of the River Project in September. It has proved such a valuable project for us and for the children who have been involved. One student from our first group of Year 6 is planning to come to our Lakes trip for the second time this summer, such has been the growing confidence he has gained partly through his time with us that began in the River Project.

Roots and Rock Solid continue to attract good numbers of young people on Mondays and Thursdays, supported by a good mix of workers and volunteers.

## **Corf Camp 2024**

The annual Corf camp took place at the start of summer held from Friday, 31st May to Sunday, 2nd June, and was blessed with a very warm and dry weekend. For once, the tides were not at all suitable for us getting out on the water. Would we have enough to do to fill the time? I think the common consensus would be, yes, we did! It was an action-packed weekend, as you will see from the pictures. We welcomed 24 young people and several parents to the weekend. We began with our older young people/junior leaders on Friday night, where we talked about leading and how they might be good role models for the younger ones joining in the following morning. We had 12 young people camping with us on Friday night, followed by another 12 arriving Saturday morning.

Saturday morning was busy with Archery, Den Building and a Treasure Hunt. The BBQ at lunchtime was much enjoyed by all, including some adults visiting for the day. In the warm June sun it was idyllic; burgers, birds and green all around. Then began the serious business of constructing two Flintstone carts, one by the Niton



young people and one by the Rest of the IOW, to be raced across the rounders field. The best of three, hotly contested, resulted in a dead heat after a win apiece. Only one thing for it: a tug of war, best of three, of course. The smaller Niton young people could not resist the strength of the larger IOW young people. This was followed by some enthusiastic games of rounders.

As evening drew on, the young people enjoyed time around the campfire and some glow-stick games, before heading off to bed, thoroughly exhausted – at least that was how the leaders felt. Pancakes were made at a rate of knots and the campers must have consumed nigh on 120 pancakes! We then headed to Newtown Church for a celebration of the weekend, where we shared with the community of Newtown the highlights of the weekend and talked about the struggles of life on a troubled sea. We recognise that many of our young people sense this in their lives as they grow up in an uncertain world. After the celebration, it was a short walk back to camp to eat cake and pack up. It was a thoroughly excellent camp.





## **Holly's feedback - always good to hear**

Of course, it is always worth hearing first hand from those who came, in this case our excellent Holly Garrett, who came as a leader:

*"I loved watching the young people perform in the church. It was great to see them so involved and when they were asked to perform the day before, they were so willing which was really refreshing.*

*Personally, I have learned that I love to lead the young people on these activities and I had a confidence I wasn't aware of. I refereed a rounders match (although I wasn't great at the rules); it was a new experience for me. The last time I was at a full corf camp was years ago as a young person, and it showed me how much about myself has changed in the last few years.*

*Was it value for money?*

*Most definitely! It's such a memory making and uplifting weekend for the young people and everyone involved and it's great for the community.*

*Would you recommend the SWAY Corf weekend to friends?*

*In terms of other leaders who may want to volunteer I certainly would, and I would also recommend it to any young people in the SWAY community."*

Well said, Holly.



## Looking forward

Of course, our next big trip is the Lakes Residential, which is fully booked with 28 young people taking part. If anyone would like to sponsor a young person for a place, we would be very grateful. Each place costs us about £350 and we charge them £200. Anything to help us bridge that gap, would be brilliant. Just let Catherine (Office number: 07880951243) know if that is something you could help us with.

This is not to say we are not doing anything else over the summer. There was the Shorwell Midsummer's Fair, at which 7 young people and 4 adult volunteers helped manage 3 stalls (see pictures below); a great afternoon for all concerned. Following this, there is the family picnic at Rookley, a night walk from Freshwater to Carisbrooke, disc golf, a BBQ and the various other activities and trips over the summer holiday including Headhunters, crabbing in Bembridge, roller skating, and cricket.

We are also advertising for a full time youth worker to join the team, so if you know of anyone who might fit the bill, please let us know.

Please keep thinking of us, supporting and cheering us on in our work in the South Wight. We fully appreciate it and could not do this without volunteers and your support.



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