



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

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South Wight Youth Partnership | Charity Registration 1160139

# SWAY February 2023 Update

As you read this you may well be seeing the first signs of Spring emerging from the ground all around you. Not a moment too soon, I hear you say. January is not the easiest month for hope and cheer, and this one has been no different with all the problems facing the UK, not to say the world at large. However, we have some encouraging news to share with you in this edition of the SWAY Update.



With the newly enlarged team in SWAY we will give you an overview of all the work we are currently engaged in – of course, this has expanded considerably since this time last year, so be prepared to widen your vision.



We shall also bring you up to date with where we are with the Hub. This is exciting, yet not quite there, news. Finally, we will give you an idea of the up and coming events and challenges for the next few months. It looks like it is going to be a productive, challenging and busy time for the team and volunteers. So, please sit down with a

relaxing cup of tea and read on .... We trust you will catch our enthusiasm for all that is happening, and this will add fervour to your support and prayers for the work.

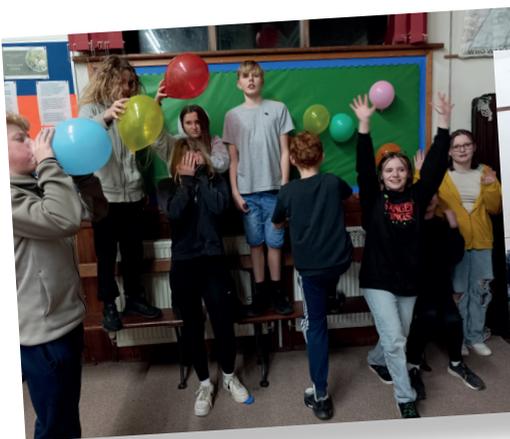
# The wider scope of the work of SWAY

Here are all the groups/activities we run in SWAY in the order with which they come in the weekly cycle.

## Mentoring River Project with Year 6's – Monday and Wednesday

At the moment we have four Year 6 young people from St Francis Primary Academy and four from Brighstone Primary School, whom we meet weekly in their lunchtime. These are young people referred by each School with the aim of preparing them for High School and developing their confidence, building friendships and their social skills. There will be a number of activity trips organised for this group coming up. They have already enjoyed a Pizza Hut evening and games and there is a day trip to Marwell Zoo at half term. We have another four young people from St Francis joining the River Project after half term, such is the demand and appreciation from St Francis.

These young people are growing in confidence and sharing their interests and skills with one another, which has been a big move forward for them. As well as gaining skills to get them ready for High School



## **Individual Mentoring – different times**

Individual mentoring is continuing for a small number of young people, which is vital for those involved. We find that many young people in these confusing times lack a sense of direction and hope. Growing up today has never been so confusing and conflicting. We find that a listening ear, an empathetic and committed approach and a sense of the solid foundations we find in the Christian faith is ever important for such young people.

## **Family work with Lynne – Monday afternoon**

Lynne is also offering a space on Monday afternoons for coffee, chat and craft at the Hut on Chale Green. She has a small number of local families involved in this activity, which is helpful for those with children too young for our groups. This is a creative and fun time to start the work, and we hope that this might blossom into the Hub when it is built and give us a real connection with the community in Chale Green and local villages.

## **Family Work with Lynne - throughout the week**

Lynne has been a listening ear, a support and help to around 7 different families across the whole area and this is very much appreciated by those involved. Lynne is growing into this role and making a difference by her presence in these situations. We are excited to see the way Lynne is using her previous experience, training and expertise to help families. This is such a crucial role for SWAY, to support and be an advocate for families who are finding these times challenging.

## Rock Solid Youth Club – Monday evening

This is a growing group for Years 6 and 7 held in Niton, where a range of fun activities and a Christian message rounds the evening off.

The Rock Solid young people are enthusiastic and enjoy taking part in all the fun activities provided. We have been having some great conversations about the Christian faith and where they stand, while enabling them to explore more. We have seen one young person ask for a Bible and seen the growth in those who have a faith willing to share that in the group with their friends. Furthermore, we have seen those without a faith being open and ready to explore and learn more.

## Brighstone Collective Worship – Wednesday morning

The SWAY team shares the lead on this activity with Rev Jackie Maw of Brighstone. We present a theme set by Mrs Lennon and lead the school in worship with songs they can sing with real enthusiasm and lots of actions. This is a high point in the week for some of the team as they endeavour to engage with the smiling and eager faces at the Primary School. With what enthusiasm they sing 'Be bold, be strong, for the Lord your God is with you!'



## **Prayers and Team Meeting – Wednesday morning**

This is a vital time for us, as a team and as individuals. Each week a different member brings a thought for the day to us for our consideration and encouragement. It is amazing how timely these thoughts can be. Needs, concerns and matters for encouragement are listed for our prayers, when the whole team and volunteers join together to pray for the whole work. This is an important moment of our weekly cycle and we often find we re-gather our bearings and motivation for the work here. Of course, a good cup of coffee and several biscuits are an essential element of this re-grouping!



## **Ventnor Youth Group – Wednesday evening**

There was already a youth group (run by the council) for young people of the area, when we began working in Ventnor in September 2022. The group meets at St Margaret's in Upper Ventnor and 15 young people regularly attend. This group has grown in numbers by providing a stable session, whereas previously it had been stop-start due to not always being able to supply staff. By SWAY providing two more staff this has enabled the sessions





to become a regular weekly session, and consequently young people have been more willing to attend, and as they also see these leaders around their school too. This has allowed us to work both inside and outside the school environment and offer more activities.

It has been a privilege and joy to have been supporting this council youth work, which again seeks to provide a safe space to enable young people to experience new activities, skills and social skills. This is a challenging and vulnerable area which SWAY has wanted to be involved in for some while.

At Christmas we encouraged the young people to prepare a Christmas Roast Dinner, which we then sat down with the young people and shared their meal with one another.

### **Brighstone After School Club – Thursday afternoon**

This is a new group that is just beginning to form for Years 5 and 6. It follows a similar model as Rock Solid and has five young people at the moment, but we hope to grow this group as word gets around. Lively and energetic describes it quite well. It might well be that next half term Marie uses her dancing skills for this slot.



## **Roots Youth Group– Thursday evening**

This is a very popular group for School Years 8 to 6th Form, held in Niton, which is quite a large age range, covering many disparate needs. We aim to provide a safe space for young people to meet with a wide range of fun activities and opportunities to interact with one another. This is our largest group, sometimes reaching a capacity of nearly 30 young people.

## **Post 14 Events – Friday evenings usually**

We have been seeking to provide different activities outside the normal youth activities for those aged 14+ this term. We started with a trip to Pizza Hut to introduce Marie and Olivia, when we had around 14 young people. This was followed by a trip to Skating at Medina Quay, followed by dessert at Sweet Charlies in Newport. These evenings provide opportunities for these young people to step outside of their normal routines and try new activities, discuss issues relevant to their age group and form relationships.

## **Attitude: Brighstone & Shorwell Youth Group (Once a Month) – Friday evenings**

This is a group we have been trying to resurrect, for the young people in the area, who might otherwise have to travel to Niton for a group for their age range. We have sought to provide a safe and welcoming space for these young people to meet, chat and engage in a range of activities. We have found it difficult to attract regular attendance, but are persisting for the time being, aware of the need.

## **Cook-Along sessions – Saturday evening**

Over 4 sessions so far, we have had 24 young people attend Zoom cooking, with roughly 12 at each session. At least 11 are new to Zoom cooking, and several have attended every week.



The young people are growing in confidence with their cooking skills and with interacting on Zoom. There have been several sensory moments with making pizza dough, squashing plum tomatoes and avocado by hand, helpful hints on how to cut an onion without crying and how to see if your spaghetti is cooked by throwing it at the tiles, and getting creative with pastry. It's been a lot of fun and very productive for those taking part and their families.



We have cooked Carbonara, Mince Pie Christmas trees, Pizza and Bean Fajitas and a heart-warming vegetable stew so far, with a nachos and soup to come.

### Here are some quotes from the families of those who have taken part:

*"Zoom cooking is all 'A' has talked about. She is so excited to join in and can't wait for the next session. Thank you for including us."*

*"B would love to come along to the Cook-A-long. Thank you so much for the last one, he had a really good time."*

*"X really enjoyed the pizza making, thank you, they were delicious! X loved the cooking - so much so she's cooked our evening meal for us twice since! (She made a superb Thai basil chicken with steamed vegetables tonight)."*





*“A & H thought the bacon and tomato homemade pizza, including the dough base, was great.”*

*“Thanks for the pizza recipe last week, we all enjoyed a slice or two. I took some pictures and N has really taken up a love for cooking and is trying new things.”*

*“Please can E do the next Zoom cooking? She is learning so much and loving the sessions.”*



So, that is our busy weekly schedule. Not included is our occasional trip to Harbour Church in Gunwharf and IOW YFC's Catalysts and Vibes in Newport. There is a lot going on with our expanded team and volunteers who help make it all possible. If you want to volunteer with any of the groups, just get in touch with Catherine – she'll be glad to hear from you.

Of course, there is a whole team of volunteers without whom it would be impossible to carry on the work and too many to mention here - we would miss someone out for sure! We are enormously grateful to each and every one of those volunteers for their time, commitment and skills which are freely given and much appreciated.



## **The Hub**

This has been a long road getting to this point in the process. But we are now in negotiation with those offering to build for us and this should be determined before long. We have an architect on board who is overseeing the whole process, which is encouraging. Our revised design is with the planners at the IOW Council and we would value prayers for this to be back with us in the affirmative shortly.

We would appreciate continued prayers for the Hub: further funding until we have achieved our funding-raising target, completed the purchase of land from Southern Housing and gained formal approval of our proposed use of common land at Chale Green.

As you can imagine, this is demanding and patient work and we remain very grateful to our project group for their sustained efforts at this time.

## **Looking ahead ....**

Obviously, the Hub is a huge undertaking and until we see a spade in the ground we shall not rest easy on this. Keep praying!

Moving on, we have February half term (Bowling and Laser Quest) and Easter activities to look forward to ... watch for announcements.

Corf Camp on June 9th to 11th – some new ideas brewing there!

Summer activities – again, watch for announcements nearer the time

The Residential Lakes trip – letters to come out soon – 11th to 16th August 2023.

More Harbour Church visits, Mentoring trips, walks and so on. Keep your eye on the website to see what is coming up.

And after all this, keep praying, supporting and encouraging the work of SWAY and all those who work and volunteer, week by week.

**Here are two ways to give to The Sway Community Hub - the link to the JustGiving page and a standing order for a one-off gift**

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/swaycommunityhub> (or use the barcode)



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SWAY can increase your donation by 25% at no cost to you by ticking here.  *giftaid it*

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Please notify SWAY if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay income at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Giftaid donations on your self-assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your Tax code.

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