



Bringing Hope and Focus to Youth & Families of South Wight



The King's Award
for Voluntary Service
The MBE for volunteer groups

email: admin@southwightyouth.org

office tel: 07880951243

www.southwightyouth.org

South Wight Youth Partnership | Charity Registration 1160139

SWAY February 2026 Update

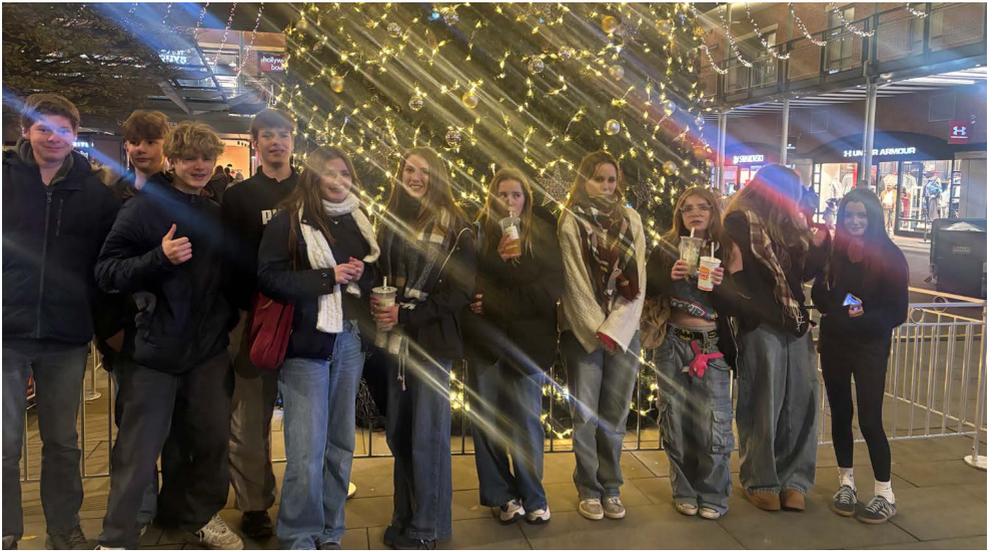
In the last Update we featured the opening of the Hub. That was 25th September. It was a very exciting moment and many of you came along to share in the day. We have now been open about 3 months. In this issue of the Update, we want to let you know the progress that has happened in the Hub, hear from our Manager, Steph, as well as feature one of our most important and successful areas: the River Project, with Year 6s across three primary schools in the South Wight.



Christmas celebrations

First of all, Christmas! SWAY was busy in the days leading up to Christmas. During the Brighstone Christmas Tree Festival we had a lovely time in St Mary's, Brighstone with the annual Stars of Wonder concert. Three of our young people performed during the evening and others helped serve mulled wine and mince pies to an appreciative audience of around 100.

Two groups of SWAY carol singers gladdened the lives of the elderly in Niton and Brighstone on two evenings, who might otherwise have struggled to get to a carol service over the festive period. These visits by our carol singers were much appreciated by those upon whom we called.



Lastly, we had two wonderful concerts: Carols with Shanklin Town Brass Band and Nine Lessons and Carols at Mottistone, both of which collected donations in aid of SWAY. A good amount was raised from both events. Thanks to Richard and Chrissie for organising these wonderful festive events.

The River Project has become one of our most important areas of work in recent years. We asked Kathryn Alvis, who is heading it up this year, to tell us all about it.

River Project – Kathryn Alvis

One lunchtime I sat with paper and pens, and a group of four Year 6 students. One of the boys said,

"I think worry would be shaky, I'm going to give him big eyes too". Another said, *"Rudeness would have his hands on his hips".*

A third drew Spiderman and wrote the word confidence above it.

We were thinking about emotions - how many can we name? How do they make us feel? What would they look like if they were characters?

Why were we doing this? It was all a part of the River Project - our school based small group mentoring project.

Each year 16 young people are referred to SWAY from across 3 primary schools. The aim is to support these Year 6 young people who may struggle with the transition from Primary School to High School. We do this through weekly small group sessions, termly trips and encouraging young people to join in with other SWAY activities.

Our weekly sessions use games, activities and discussion starters to explore topics such as emotions, friendships, and taking care of our physical and mental health.



Our termly trips are an opportunity to build social confidence. The invitation to join with other SWAY activities acts as an extended support network, which can then continue on through the transition to year 7 and beyond, as it has done with a number of previous members of the River Project.

Recently 10 of the River Project young people enjoyed a great time at Snacks and Ladders in Newport, which opened early especially for our group. It was really encouraging to see the young people enjoying the wide choice of games and making new friends from other schools.



We really enjoy running this project. It's hugely rewarding to see young people growing in confidence throughout the year. There's an air of excitement for the Project in the Schools too! Each September the new groups are full of excited questions about what they'll be doing and what they've heard from the previous year's River Project groups.

Of course, the most important reviews of the project come from the young people and their parents:

"I think River Project is a wonderful, calming and fun place to be" – Yr 6 student

"Sunday evenings are better because I can look forward to enjoying River Project during lunchtimes at school: thanks for coming into school for me." – Yr 6 student

"He has really benefited from making new friends in the group and the wider group; trying new experiences, from tasting new foods with Zoom cooking, learning new skills with cricket and canoeing, and making new relationships with peers through socials at Pizza Hut. This has built his resilience up and improved his understanding of social interactions. Thank you for all your support: he has really enjoyed the experiences SWAY has to offer." – Parent

Manager Steph's thoughts

The people who have helped to get me settled in at SWAY, and more importantly to get the Hub up and running, have been some of the most generous and helpful people you could hope to meet:

- The endless patience of the electrical contractors when something isn't working properly (Heating and Alarm Systems!).
- The blind companies trying to find the exact solution we need for privacy and blackout in the Bradbury Room (on the 3rd incarnation now!)
- The refrigeration company (Snows) who got the Chiller Unit up and running (my riskiest purchase yet) despite the odds, and saved us about £2000 in having to buy a new one.
- Louis, our Godsent IT guru! He has zero patience with delays, but seemingly endless patience with my lack of IT understanding when it comes to network solutions. He has found solution after solution for getting us organised, professional and corporate. He's extracted us from punishing mobile phone contracts and saved us a lot of money by finding charity deals and freebies to make us more efficient. He instigated the dialogue with WightFibre which we are hoping will see not just the Hub, but the whole of Chale, connected to the fibre network within the year. Keep that one in your prayers.

Thanks to Abbi, and her team of amazing volunteers, the Pantry runs here once a month and up at the Village Hall on alternate fortnights (couldn't have happened without the continued financial support of the Parish Council). Our pantry coincides with Kathryn's Warm Welcome which is starting to gain numbers, thanks in part to Rodney's Board & Card games club. Olivia's after school and Saturday drop-ins have been a great off-shoot from the Chale Youth Group. We are in negotiation about hosting fitness clubs, and there is a good level of interest in a craft club, which will be starting on Tuesday 24th February 2pm - 4pm at The Hub.



Our Volunteers' brunch on 17th January was well-attended (approx 21 people) and a lovely way to start establishing 'teams' depending on people's interest and skillset. The next one is 7th March, 10am - 11.30am, do come along!

As Pete has said, we are hoping to appoint a cleaner, and possibly a Youth Worker, but we do still need a male youth worker for the longer-term. We have also engaged the services of Bobby at Unlock Solutions to help us secure funding for some of our outstanding projects.

Thanks for all the support, visits and prayers, we couldn't do this without them.



The Hub Project

As Steph has indicated, it has not been plain sailing with the Hub since we opened in September. It took a while for the heating to be installed and working efficiently. The strength of the wifi signal has hampered communications for those working at the Hub. The signal in Chale Green is recognized as not very good, so this was always going to be a bit of a challenge, but as Steph has noted, we may be near a solution for all in the area.

We have not managed to open the Shop yet, but we are working hard to make that happen within the near future. The Café has similarly encountered setbacks, but we are hopeful that it will begin to function soon.

Steph has mentioned the Pantry and funding from Chale Parish Council, which is brilliant and will hopefully keep the Pantry running for at least 6 months.

The new youth group that meets at The Hub on Wednesdays for 8-11 year olds is running really well and growing. It is a welcome addition to our weekly timetable.

Our first Café Church happened on the last Sunday in January. This was attended by



nearly 20 people and was a great success, where we thought about community and its importance in our lives. We hope to hold this on the last Sunday of each month going forward.

Olivia is hosting weekly drop-in sessions for young people offering a warm space, a place for doing homework, playing games or just spending time with friends. This session operates on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 4pm to 6pm, then Saturday 1pm to 4pm.





We gathered the Young Leaders Group together for a meal to celebrate the New Year and to plan the year ahead on 16th January. We had 13 young people there for a tasty meal of spaghetti bolognese and apple strudel with custard: cooked by our very own Pete Taylor. We discussed bad news in the media and how to make things better! Recognising we are so often powerless to change anything there, we did come up with some things we could do: help people in need, talking, donations to charities, being kind, listening and prayer. A good list, we thought!

We had an exciting meeting on 17th January, when we invited all new volunteers to the Hub for coffee and cake and for them to see the Hub and hear about how they might be able to help. 21 volunteers turned up which was fantastic. Steph spoke about the different ways they could help and get involved. To get this kind of support for what we are trying to do at the Hub is very exciting.

Talking of volunteers, we asked one of our oldest and most reliable volunteers to tell us a bit about his role as a volunteer at Roots.



John Reddicliff or as we fondly know him “Reddi”

“WORK WITH KIDS?” “YOU MUST BE CRAZY!”

That’s the response we got 35 years ago when we realised there was little for the youth to do in Niton. So we formed a youth group that was supported by the churches, then Youth For Christ and later South Wight Area Youth and is very active to this day. It gives the youth an opportunity to gather with their friends in a safe environment. What do we do? We are there to support them, get involved in activities, and participate in group activities. We had a new attendee one evening and I asked what brought her to the club. She responded that her mother had attended years ago (made me feel old!) and encouraged her to attend! I doubt I’ll be around for her children but I hope the youth group is still running then! We must be doing something right. That makes me feel young and that the time and effort is all worth it.

Website and ‘Friends of SWAY’

Abbi, our Admin lady, has been working hard on a re-launch of our website, to make it more user friendly and up to date. This has now been done and you can see the results at www.southwightyouth.org



It has been suggested for a while that we establish or recognise a Friends of SWAY group. All those who support us through regular giving will be automatically added to the list of Friends of SWAY. Friends of SWAY will continue to receive the Updates and the Annual Review each year. We will also be organising occasional get togethers for the Friends, the first of which will be a Cheese and Wine Evening on Friday 26th June at The Hub, where there will be a presentation of our work over the last year. The evening, we hope, will be an opportunity to chat with staff, trustees and volunteers, but also to hear from a variety of people

involved in the work, including some of our young people. We trust this will be a good evening that will give you further insight into our work and our plans.

Please put it in your diary, further details nearer the time. If you would like to become a Friend of SWAY, visit our website and click ‘Donate’.



Final Thoughts

We come to the end of another Update. As you can see from this report, staff, trustees and volunteers remain busy making a difference in the lives of the young people of the South Wight. Please continue to pray for all we do. We are more than grateful for your ongoing support.

In particular, can we draw your attention to a few needs for the next stretch of time.

1. We really do need a few more trustees to help build on the vision and aims of the charity. We have mentioned this before, but it is a pressing issue for us now. If you are at all interested, please do come and talk to one of us and we can tell you more about what this involves.
2. We are in need of another part-time youth worker, which may develop into a full-time worker at some point, but it starts as part-time. This is to enable Kathryn to spend more of her time on the family work rather than helping fill the gaps with the youth work.
3. There are still items needed for the Hub for it to function fully, such as a screen and projector to enable us to show films, presentations and to facilitate things like café church.
4. Help with the landscaping as we move into Spring time.



How to make a donation to SWAY

You can donate straight to SWAY using the bank account details below, **OR** through our PayPal Giving Page: <https://www.paypal.com/gb/fundraiser/charity/3225911>

If you would like to become a regular donor, please complete the Standing Order mandate.

Please consider if you are able to Gift Aid your donation.

Just fill in this form and return to:

The Hub, Spanners Close, Chale Green, PO38 2HY

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate. Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer. In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:

I want to **Gift Aid** all my donations to SWAY until I give notice otherwise. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

My Details:

Title: First name or initial(s): Surname:

Full Home Address:

Postcode:

Date: Signature:

Please notify the charity if you:

1. Want to cancel this declaration. **2.** Change your name or home address. **3.** No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Standing Order Mandate

To the manager (your bank name):

Bank Address:

Sort Code: - - Account number:

Account in the name of:

Please pay to: **South Wight Area Youth Partnership (SWAY)**

HSBC Account no: **81783211** Sort Code: **40-34-26**

Please pay: Monthly Quarterly Annually

Commencing (dd/mm/yyyy): / /

The sum of: £2 £5 £10 £20 Other (please specify)

Date: Signature:

South Wight Area Youth Partnership

Company Limited by Guarantee No. 9186090

Charity Registered No. 1160139

Website: <https://www.southwightyouth.org/>

Email: admin@southwightyouth.org

Tel: 07880951243

