

Review of 2018

From the Chairman

2018 was another exciting year at North Avenue Youth Centre (NAYC), building on the expansion begun the previous year. I took over as Chair from the Rev Mark Meatcher at the AGM in June and was immediately impressed by all the work being done by our amazing staff and volunteers, including those who volunteer their time to act as my fellow NAYC Trustees.

With NAYC's part-time Senior Youth Leader moving on at the start of the year, we took the ambitious step of recruiting a full-time Centre Manager to take NAYC further forward, so it can offer ever greater opportunities to encourage the development of more young people. Charlie Newton started at NAYC in April and quickly got into her stride. Charlie brings experience both in centre-based activities and in detached youth work, as well as lots of passion and enthusiasm for this work.



As well as maintaining the four weekly sessions in term time, Charlie has introduced a new programme of activities during the school holidays.

We were delighted that NAYC's bid to the Chelmsford City Council's Community Infrastructure Fund was successful. NAYC is indebted to Cllr Jude Deakin for her assistance in putting this bid forward and for promoting the work done by NAYC in the local community. Over £40,000 was awarded and the main item funded has been the development of the newly acquired land at the rear of the premises into an all-weather outside play area for the young people (see below for more details about this award).



Rev Ken Thom

Objectives and activities at NAYC

The aim of the North Avenue Youth Centre (NAYC) is to help boys and girls (age 8-25) through their leisure time activities so to develop their physical, mental and spiritual capacities that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and as members of society, and that their conditions of life may be improved.

It does this by running a varied programme of out-of-school activities for young people from the local area, which is one of great social deprivation. NAYC has the use of purpose built facilities which include a sports hall.

During 2018 sessions were run by the Centre Manager, assisted by two paid youth workers, four volunteers and two young leaders. (Young leaders are those more experienced seniors who develop during their time at NAYC to the point where are ready to take on more responsibility within the sessions.) Additional support is provided from time to time by staff from Essex Boys & Girls Clubs (EBGC).

How NAYC is run

NAYC is a registered charity and is overseen by a Management Committee. The members of this Committee are the charity's trustees and are responsible for seeing that NAYC is run according to its constitution and in line with the requirements on charities. The Committee is chaired by the Rev Ken Thom; it is made up of representatives appointed by the United Reformed Church (URC) and the Essex Youth Trust, together with others appointed at the Annual General Meeting. A young people's representative was appointed at the AGM as a non-trustee member of the Committee. The Committee is advised by the Safeguarding Officer of the URC's Eastern Synod and a representative from the Essex Youth Service.

During 2018, as well as the Centre Manager and two youth workers, NAYC employed staff to fill the roles of part-time administrator, fundraiser and caretaker. Over the course of the year NAYC reviewed and updated all its policies and procedures and improved its evaluation and professional development processes.

2018 Activities

Activities are held on three evenings a week during term time:

Monday (5.30-6.30pm for those at senior school) – numbers attending this session grew from a slow start over the course of the year.

Wednesday (4-5.30pm for juniors aged 9-11 and 6-8pm for those at senior school) – usually the most popular night.

Friday (from 6-7.30pm for those at senior school) – this was originally designed as a more relaxed session where young people could chill out at the end of the week, but over the course of the year it has become more structured to help manage some behaviour issues.



A wide variety of activities is on offer from sports (especially the ever popular football), craft and cooking, as well as music, games and discussion groups. These have been developed over the course of the year in a participatory way allowing the sessions to be young person led and promoting a sense of ownership.



Many new young people who had not accessed NAYC before have been welcomed over the course of the year, including a number who do not access any other form of extra-curricular activities or engage with outside professionals. We have developed our scope to include home visits and 1:1 support with young people and families where appropriate. By making referrals and links to other organisations (such as family solutions, schools, and alternative provision providers), we have helped consider the needs of young people in a more holistic way. We were able to connect one young person to funding to enable them to access coaching and further develop their exceptional talent in a way they would never have been able to without support.

We have established a group of committed young leaders who are engaging in training, evaluations and planning sessions with the juniors. We also have set up a committee involving young people for the Jack Petchey award scheme.

Trips

In June we delivered two offsite/residential activities. There was a sleepover at Bounce



Village which was very much enjoyed by the ten juniors who went.



A similar number of seniors went to the EBGC Adventure Weekend at Stubbers. This weekend is full of opportunities for young people to develop their confidence, self-esteem and

independence with the many activities on offer there. It is also a chance to work at planning their day, cook their own food, and manage disagreements within the group.



During October half term ten young people went kayaking and paddle boarding at Lee Valley water centre



Also during the October half term three young women from NAYC had the opportunity to go to Wales with EBGC and a NAYC volunteer. They took part in a four day adventure residential, including a wide variety of activities. As well as having a fantastic time, all those attending identified personal achievements with staff upon their return.

Holiday Programme

In a new development this year, NAYC was able to start offering activities during school holidays.

During the summer 4 weekly sessions were held, incorporating a healthy



lunch and sports activities at the Centre followed by and games in a local park. Additionally 2 members of staff delivered detached/outreach sessions in the community promoting the sessions and youth centre, as well as learning about the needs and experiences of young people in the area.

As this was the first time such a programme has been run and the time for planning and advertising was short, numbers participating were

relatively low. However it provided considerable insight into how NAYC might develop such programmes in the future.

A popular sleep-over was held at the Centre in the October half-term holiday. There were other activities on offer that week which had a lower take up.



Presentation Evening

Following its success the previous year, in 2018 we again combined our Annual General Meeting with the NAYC presentation evening. As well as allowing the young people and their parents the opportunity to take part in the process, this gives them the chance to meet members of the Management Committee and get a greater understanding of how the Centre is run.



We were privileged to have both the Lord Lieutenant of Essex and the Mayor of Chelmsford attending and presenting certificates to the young people to mark their achievements.

The young people showed their appreciation to the Rev Mark Meatcher who was stepping down as NAYC Chair following his appointment to churches in Enfield.



Funding NAYC

NAYC relies mainly on grant funding to operate. In 2018 the income towards running the Centre came to just under £44,000 (this was about £5,000 less than our income in 2017). Expenditure on running the Centre increased by around £8,000 to just over £52,000. Employing a full-time Youth Centre Manager accounts for much of the increase. The gap between income and expenditure in 2018 was met by drawing on our reserves.

Once more we were grateful to Essex Youth Trust for funding of £16,000 towards our core costs. For additional funding our thanks go to Essex Community Foundation (ECF), URC Eastern Synod, Walter Farthing Trust and Christ Church URC Chelmsford.

Grants totalling just over £1,000 in recognition of specific young people were received from the Jack Petchey Foundation and the ECF Chrysalis

Fund. We were also very pleased that Chelmsford City Council awarded us a grant from the Community Infrastructure Levy to be spent on capital projects – see below.

Securing enough money to keep the Centre open and to expand its activities continues to be a priority activity.

Community Infrastructure Levy grant 2018

The grant from Chelmsford City Council totalling £41,050 not only helped us provide the all-weather play area at the rear of the premises, it made



it possible to install an up-to-date fire alarm system, install CCTV and more emergency lighting, and update the intruder alarm system. It also funded a large wall mounted TV

screen, a projector and portable screen; and it allowed us to put up new signage and a cycle rack.



Future plans

NAYC is working on ways to promote further all that it can offer to young people in the local area. New signage with better physical visibility, a new website under construction and increased use of social media will play key parts, as will working in partnerships with local schools.

We are looking at ways to respond to feedback that it would be good to split the large age range (currently 11-19) in some senior sessions to enable activities to be more focused on differing needs between age groups. However, it will first be necessary to attract more paid staff and volunteers to join our existing committed team.

Holiday provision will be expanded during 2019 and promoted more actively. We hope to be able to take more young people to the Stubbers Adventure weekend. We are also looking to involve the young people in some fundraising themselves – the first activity being a craft sale in February half-term, which they will plan, run and evaluate themselves.

We have submitted a further bid to the City Council for funding from the next round of the grants from Community Infrastructure Levy to improve the NAYC facilities. In particular we want equip the new garden with a BBQ and picnic tables, and to replace the lighting in the sports hall so that it is more energy efficient and lower maintenance.