

Review of 2017

From the Chairman

2017 was a great year of growth at North Avenue Youth Centre (NAYC). We doubled the number of sessions a week, we saw numbers attending increase significantly on the past few years, and we received considerably more in grants than in recent years. All this was the result of decisions we had made the previous year to invest in more staff time to help us deliver more activities for young people in the local area.

We had appointed Paul Iseghohi to work as our Senior Youth Leader for 25 hours a week from the autumn of 2016. He went into local schools to promote NAYC, and successfully recruited the additional volunteers who were critical to us being able to increase the number of sessions from two to four from the spring of 2017.



Rachel, our fundraiser, appointed during 2016, really got into her stride in 2017. Helped by Jane, our new Treasurer who joined the Management Committee during the year, she successfully applied for additional funding from a number of new grant making organisations as well as some who had helped us in the past

These achievements are great, but they are just one stage in an ongoing story. Paul decided to move on early in 2018. So, with benefit of the additional funding we have secured, we are taking the ambitious step of recruiting a full-time Centre Manager who will be able to take NAYC further forward so it can offer ever greater opportunities to encourage the development of more young people.

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 2017 sessions were run by the Senior Youth Leader, 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 Mark Meatcher; it is made up of representatives appointed by the North Avenue church, the Essex Youth Trust, the Essex Youth Service and others appointed at the Annual General Meeting.

As well as the Senior Youth Leader and two youth workers, during 2017 NAYC employed a part-time administrator, fundraiser and caretaker.

2017 Activities

The regular Wednesday evening clubs (4-5.30pm for juniors aged 9-11) and seniors (6-8pm for those at senior school) continued throughout the year. The sessions offered a variety of activities, from sports to baking, computer games to craft. Pumpkin carving at the Halloween club night was a particular favourite. So is the annual inter-club dodgeball competition run by EBGC at NAYC. All the young people participated, and it was a fun semi-competitive session with everyone finishing the evening very tired.



From spring 2017 we were able to run two additional sessions for seniors. The new Monday session from 5.30-6.30pm had an emphasis on sport, making full use of the facilities and equipment available at NAYC. Sports delivered include football, hockey, badminton and table tennis. The new Friday session from 6-9pm was designed to provide a space where young people could chill out at the end of the week, and learn about new topics in a relaxed environment. During the year youth workers from Essex County Council delivered sessions on sexual health and the prevention of child grooming.

Numbers attending both junior and senior sessions on a Wednesday increased considerably on recent years with up to 25 youngsters attending each session. We were particularly glad to see so many juniors going straight up to seniors at the start of the new school year in September, as there had been some dropping away at that point in the past. Numbers at the Monday session remained fairly low throughout the year (enabling more attention to be paid to those who did come). After a slow start for the new Friday session, numbers there were reaching 20+ by the end of the year.

Trips

This year for the first time we were able to offer some of the juniors the chance to go on a couple of local trips. In February 15 of them thoroughly enjoyed themselves at the newly opened Jump Street trampoline park in Chelmsford. The cost was covered through the Jack Petchey Achievement



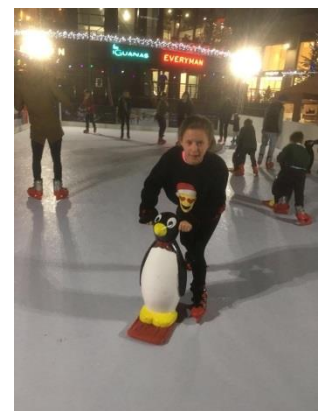
Scheme. At the end of the summer term 10 juniors went to an evening session of laser tag, which they loved.

In June leaders and volunteers took 10 seniors to Stubbers Outdoor Adventure Centre for the EBGC Adventure Weekend. The weekend was a huge success with many of the youngsters attending for the first time. Over the weekend they camped on centre for two nights and own food, taking turns so that everyone had the opportunity to help cook for the group. This was an amazing experience for the young people many of whom had never camped themselves before. Over the weekend very evident, things for the first time and coming home with lots of new experiences to tell their family and friends about.



In the October half-term, three young people and their leaders went to Maes Y Lade Outdoor Centre in the Brecon Beacons (Wales) for EBGC Weekends. This was a unique experience for the three lucky enough to get some of the limited spaces available for this trip. All three had an amazing time in the rural centre (where there was no phone signal, much to their delight). Over the weekend they mixed with their peers from other youth clubs across Essex and did a variety of activities culminating in a hike up a mountain where they were able to take amazing pictures.

The final trip of the year was to the grand opening of the Bond Street Ice Rink in Chelmsford, the first time this had been staged. Ten young people really enjoyed the evening with a few of them ice skating for the first time. They also managed to talk their way onto Heart Radio by speaking to one of the presenters who was hosting the opening of the ice rink. Afterwards the young people were provided with Christmas snacks at local pop-up stalls to complete the festive feel and end the year in style.



Presentation Evening

This year we combined our Annual General Meeting with the NAYC presentation evening, allowing the young people and their parents the



opportunity to take part in the process. This was also an opportunity for the young people and parents 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 High Sheriff and the Mayor of Chelmsford attending.

The High Sheriff and the Mayor presented certificates to the young people marking their achievements. Having both events combined before the end of the school year was the perfect way to end before NAYC closed for the summer.

Funding NAYC

NAYC relies mainly on grant funding to operate. In 2017 it cost over £44,000 to run the Centre, with the main cost being for staff. Total income for the year was just under £50,000.

We were again grateful to Essex Youth Trust for funding of £16,000 towards our core costs, and to the Jack Petchey Foundation for three awards to young people to spend on activities. For additional funding our thanks go to Gannett Foundation, Essex Community Foundation, Fowler Smith and Jones, Charles S French, MG Ltd, and Garfield Weston. We also received funding from Essex Boys & Girls Clubs Active Chelmsford programme, the Essex County Council Youth Strategy Group, and URC Eastern Synod and the Chelmsford Star Coop. Some further income came from entrance money and from letting the hall.

Securing enough money from grant funding to keep the Centre open and to expand its activities will remain a regular, ongoing priority area in the future.

Future plans

With a full-time Centre Manager in post, we hope to be able to continue to run all the current sessions and perhaps start more, to recruit and train more volunteers, to look at running some sessions outside term-time, and offer more life-skills opportunities as well as trips etc. In addition we will look to promote NAYC more widely to local schools and to work in closer

partnership with them. And we would like to increase the letting of the Centre, including the sports hall, during the day when it is not needed for activities for the young people as this would generate more income for NAYC activities.

We have submitted a bid to the City Council for funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy to improve the NAYC facilities. In particular we want to turn the newly acquired land at the rear of the premises into an all-weather outside play area for the young people.