

Report on the future of Carlton Youth Club

Justification for a Youth Club

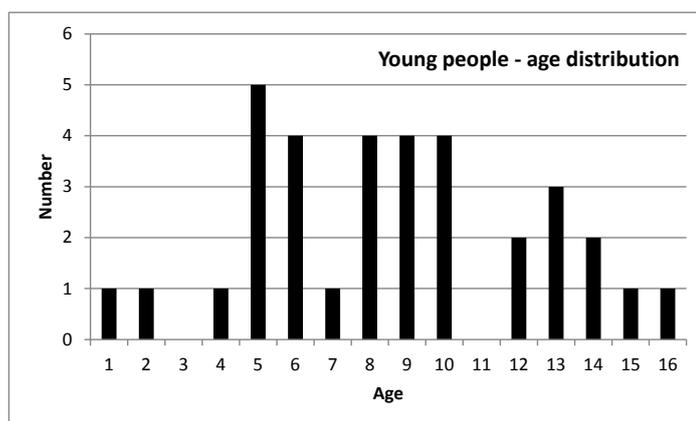
There are not many young people in Carlton, and those of school age attend one of at least 3 different primary and 5 secondary schools. Most young people are taken to school by car. Carlton Green is the only public play space in Carlton, and it is small and next to roads. The nearest equipped play spaces are at Market Bosworth.

Carlton Parish Council (the PC) is concerned that young people in Carlton may become isolated because they find it difficult to travel to play with their school friends, and may also find it difficult to meet other young people of the same age who live in Carlton.

These difficulties are most significant for teenagers who are beginning to become more independent, and particularly those who have moved into Carlton and who may continue to attend their old schools. In other communities, it has been found that the cost of operating youth clubs and summer activities can be justified by savings in dealing with vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

Young people

In September 2011 there were 42 young people aged 16 or under in Carlton. The ages of 34 were known and are charted below. At this time there were 9 young people aged 11-16, and 19 aged 8-14 in the parish. Young people reported involvement in a wide range of activities, often travelling more than five miles to them.



Young people strongly support the provision of some kind of playing space or community building in Carlton as a place where they can meet and play with friends. 25 young people attended village events; 7 did so often; 4 never did so. The things that young people liked least about Carlton were the lack of friends and that it was boring. This information is based on responses to the Carlton Parish Plan 2011, due for publication in July 2012.

Local provision

Local provision is currently limited to school clubs and societies, sporting clubs based in Market Bosworth, the Market Bosworth Young Farmers Club (open to all young people), and Barlestone Youth Club.

Mobile Youth Club

The Mobile Youth Club attended Carlton fortnightly during term time from September 2009 to March 2012. It was only open to 11-18 year olds, and was regularly attended by about 8 young people, though not all of them came from Carlton. The Mobile was provided by the County Council, staffed by two Youth Workers, and supported by a grant of £200 pa from the PC. Following a reorganisation of County Council Services, the mobile has been withdrawn and will be redeployed elsewhere.

Investigations

The position was reviewed, and offers of help solicited in the May issue of Carlton News. Informal discussions in the village suggest that the need is for a club catering for 8-14 year olds, and so far two parents of young children have offered to help with this. One resident from Congerstone has also offered to help. The Barton in the Beans Large Model Flying Group (BitBLMFG) has also offered to host a special flying day for young people. Informal inquiries at Barton in the Beans have not yet produced a response.

The County Council has offered to help set up a new youth club in some suitable public building, and would be prepared to supply a Youth Worker at an estimated cost of £1,300 pa for 2.5 hours/fortnight during term time. A Youth Club could be run by one Youth Worker plus one (CRB checked) adult volunteer, but under County Council regulations would only be able to cater for the 11-18 year old age group. Congerstone Village Hall is probably the nearest suitable venue, and could be rented at £10/hour, equivalent to £25/session. Shackerstone Parish Council has considered this matter and has stated that a youth club at Congerstone would not be financially viable.

Discussion

There were few protests when the Mobile Youth Club was withdrawn, and there has been no strong lobbying or offers of help from the parents of 11-18 year olds in Carlton. Young people in Carlton do participate in a wide range of sports and activities, and many of them attend and enjoy community events. There is no public building in Carlton suitable for a youth club run under the aegis of the County Council. A private youth club might be run in private premises, but would require a high level of organisation and a committed group of helpers. The regulatory position of a private club for young people has not been researched.

Carlton PC has limited resources, and is committed to providing a playing field or recreational space of some kind. Parishioners have already questioned the expenditure of precept income on a small number of Carlton parishioners, and it would be difficult to justify a subsidy of much more than £200 pa. It is suggested that the role of the PC should be to help and encourage young people and volunteers to help themselves, and not to involve itself in making detailed arrangements. The Parish Amenities Fund exists to underwrite new ventures, and the principle of offering limited financial support towards the running costs of a Youth Club has already been established.

A Youth Club in Carlton would be unlikely to attract enough regular members to be financially viable or socially worthwhile. A Youth Club in a nearby settlement might be more viable financially, but would be less likely to attract young people from Carlton, and would not fulfil the primary objective of fostering contact between young parishioners.

The number of young people in Carlton is so small that almost any event arranged specifically for them is only likely to attract half a dozen or so. This comes down to the level of inviting a few friends to join a family outing, and happens anyway.

Recommendations

1. The PC makes no further attempt to set up a Youth Club in Carlton, or in a nearby village;
2. The PC publicises this decision, makes it clear that support is available for any group intended to foster increased contact between young people in Carlton, and suggests that the organisers of community events give consideration to attracting young people;
3. The kind offer from the BitBLMFG to host an event aimed at young people be accepted;
4. A watching brief be maintained for other organisations and events intended to attract young people, and that these be advertised;
5. The responses of young people to the Parish Plan questionnaire be given careful consideration;
6. The PC makes every effort to acquire recreational space for the community, not only for sport and recreation, but as a meeting place and venue for events involving parishioners of all ages.

C J Peat
Parish Clerk
11th June 2012