

# Community Connections Jedburgh

An inspiring inter-generational youth led youth project

## **The Need**

Children and young people in Jedburgh had told us that they had no where to go, nothing to do, no youth work project hub and no youth work programme. The success of the Project will be measured by how it answers the demands of young people and how successful the Project meets our chosen outcomes of confident and connected (detailed below) through addressing the gaps and issues identified and listed below

### **The Gaps**

#### **Nowhere to go.**

Apart from a once a week two hour primary school drop-in there is no other provision. There is nowhere in town where young people can meet, socialise & just be together.

#### **Nothing to do**

There is no youth work service in town. There are no youth projects, programmes or activities.

#### **No help or advice**

Apart from a limited statutory service advice there is nowhere young people can get advice on issues around relationships, general health and well-being, sexual health, internet safety, career, further education & employability.

#### **No vocational or volunteering opportunities**

There is nowhere that young people in the town and surrounding communities can find out about volunteering opportunities, training and how to access and experience a range of life skills opportunities.

#### **No means to be involved in life of the community**

Young people feel cut off, estranged and divorced from the life of their community. They have no obvious way to play an active part in what the community says and does.

## **The Solution**

Community Connections has been developed to support young people wishing to engage, connect, assist and play an active role in the life of their community. It will address the gaps listed above by running drop-in sessions, youth led projects, programmes involving young and old in social and environmental action and volunteering programmes

## **The Execution**

Cheviot Youth set out to seek funding and with an approved Trustee brief that made use of management time to find a central town site for a youth project hub and drop-in and a youth work structure which could offer children and young people a range of activities, projects and events.

Community Connections was developed to do exactly what the children and young people wanted through the provision of an entirely new way of looking at their needs and wishes. It was decided that a Project which put young people at the heart of their community; that was inter-generational; that provided opportunities for volunteering, work placement and training as well as a youth-hub would prove popular with young people, the community of Jedburgh and funders and would be the most sustainable preferred option.

It was decided that the Project would benefit greatly from using the two outcomes of connected and confident of its major funder Young Start. Such outcomes would accommodate the range of activities that Cheviot Youth wanted to offer and the opportunities that it sought for the town's young people. It would further allow the charity to set up a clear and easily understood monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure that we were achieving what we set out to do and to enable the timeous delivery of reports to stakeholders.

## **The Programme**

Cheviot Youth Community Connections Project offers children and young people a youth led youth project putting young people at the heart of community action and decision making leading to the achievement of the following

- Establish a youth led drop-in project for children and young people aged 8 – 18 years old in Jedburgh for two sessions a week for up to 40 young people.
- Develop a young person community connections group of 25 young people over two years who will help and assist their community in taking on roles of a social and environmental nature in partnership with local voluntary organisations.
- Encourage and support youth community volunteering opportunities through peer mentoring, twenty four formal group work sessions and 100 one to one sessions.
- Facilitate and support 25 young people's training needs and requirements paying special attention to the areas of youth volunteering and group work.
- To link the extra curriculum award system to all volunteering activities paying particular attention to achieving 20 Dynamic Youth Awards and 25 Saltire awards.
- Recruit 12 local adults to become Community Connections Ambassadors who will help mentor, instruct and support young people in their group work, volunteering and community roles.

- The use of the empty retail space in the town as Pop-Up Drop-Ins to provide a range of young people services in the centre of town, exhibition spaces and information points.

## **Resources and Time in Partnership**

Cheviot Youth is more than aware that it has neither the material resources, staff capacity nor all the answers to develop and run such an ambitious programme as Community Connections (CC) on its own. It is for these reasons and Cheviot Youth's preferred method of working in collaboration and partnership that we set out below how we will make our project a reality.

CC is a project that will facilitate the connection between young people's lives, work, school and their community. We will continue to develop our connections with people and places and expand the range of resources we can call upon to ensure that CC plays an active and central part in the life of the town. We will make the most of community assets through

### **People**

**Working with young people's community connection group, CC Ambassador group and established local community groups.**

- The energy and enthusiasm of young people to have their own youth space, facilities and groups.
- The support of Scottish Borders Council Councillors and the local community council
- The staff of the local Third Sector Interface organisation The Bridge.
- The management team and teachers of Jedburgh Grammar
- The help, assistance and support of members of local voluntary organisations such as The Jed Shed, Jedburgh Rotary, the Trustees of the Laidlaw Memorial Pool and a range of local businesses.

### **Places**

**providing offices, youth drop-in, exhibition and information space**

- The Bridge Office offering free meeting areas and discounted office space.
- The Jedburgh Community & Arts Centre giving discounted hire charges
- The use of empty retail space for information displays and exhibitions.
- Laidlaw Memorial Pool offering free art and exhibition space.

### **Resources**

**Co-ordinating and maximising what the town has to offer through individuals and local groups**

- The use of the local community transport minibus service
- The use of primary school photocopying facilities
- The use of tools and equipment from the men's Jed Shed
- Free materials from local manufacturers of plastics, paper and card.

## **An investment for the future**

The Project which is Community Connections has attracted a considerable amount of funding and will continue to do so in the short to medium term. However we are mindful that we need to be thinking now at the very beginning of our project of how we will sustain what we are now developing. It is to this end that Cheviot Youth are putting a considerable amount of time and energy in developing a number of programmes that will complement the funding from trusts, foundations and lottery. For ease of reference we list such initiatives below

- A Café at The Planet, Kelso expanded to offer healthy eating options to the community and pupils from the new high school through extended opening hours.
- A social enterprise pop-up shop selling books, DVDs and CDs
- A Cheviot Community Sports Hub and Mountain Bike Hire facility.
- An online Charity shop.

While the Café in Kelso has already started in a small way and we will be purchasing 10 mountain bikes and assorted sports equipment in October the other initiatives are waiting on the appointment of employees to begin to develop them further.

But the biggest investment in the future comes from the support and assistance that Cheviot Youth will offer all children and young people in Jedburgh and the communities that are local to the town. We will ensure that opportunities to contribute, be challenged and grow will form the foundation of our work and be measured against our chosen outcomes listed below.

### **Confident**

#### **Some of the ways in which young people will gain confidence will be through**

- Their community involvement work being recognised and appreciated
- Having the opportunity to achieve goals, reach targets and overcome challenges.
- The taking on of leadership and mentoring roles
- Being offered new, exciting and meaningful experiences that will help them grow into responsible citizens
- Having their own youth project, a place for advice, support and assistance.

### **Connected**

#### **Young people will become more connected through**

- Social interaction enabled by inter-generational work.
- Working with a range of different groups in their community
- The sharing of skills and experience between the young person's Community Connections groups and Community Connections Ambassadors and others.
- Being at the centre of community action and decisions.

## **Conclusion**

We have only just started and started with a little success. We have recruited an excellent staff team and have been offered much support and assistance by a growing volunteer force, young and old. We now must build on this early enthusiasm by putting in place the structure and support systems that will ensure that we are still doing right by young people in five, ten and more years' time.

The monitoring and evaluation framework that we will put in place will allow us to report back to all funders and other stakeholders with accuracy and truthfulness as well as letting us fine tune our projects programmes to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

We look forward to reporting back to all supporters at the end of our first year and being able to inform them of our progress to long term sustainability by reporting on key funding and business success.