



HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

Haverhill Town Council

Notes of a Meeting of Haverhill Town Council's

LEISURE & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Held at Haverhill Arts Centre on Tuesday, 4th March 2025 at 7.00pm

- Present:** Mayor D Smith
Councillor J Burns (Chair)
Councillor A Brown
Councillor P Hanlon
Councillor J Mason
Councillor D Page
- Apologies:** Councillor Q Cox
Councillor A Luccarini
Councillor M Martin
District Councillor H Sowa
- In Attendance:** Colin Poole, Town Clerk
Daniel Schumann, Creative Director (until 7.35pm)
Jane Lomas, Council Administrator

No members of the public were present.

Welcome:

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chairman advised that the meeting was being streamed live on the Council's YouTube channel.

MINUTES

LC25 Apologies for Absence

/015 The above apologies were noted.

LC25 Declarations of Interest and requests for Dispensation

/016 None.

LC25 Minutes of the Last Meeting

/017 It was proposed by Councillor P Hanlon, seconded by Councillor A Brown, that the minutes of the meeting held Monday, 20th January 2025 be agreed as a true record.

RESOLVED

ACTION

LC25 Actions Arising from the Minutes

- /018** LC25/009a – Refresh of bar drinks menu. The Creative Director has carried out a survey with the Arts Centre team and spoken to multiple suppliers who will provide various options to explore.
LC25/009c) – Decrease of party bookings at The Zone. The ice-cream machine has been relocated from the Kiosk to The Zone. HAC's marketing manager is carrying out dynamic marketing.

LC25 Public Forum

- /019** There were no members of the public present.

LC25 Reports from Officers (attached – Appendix 1)

/020 a) Creative Director and Arts Centre Report

The Creative Director reported another successful run with many sold-out shows. A highlight is being awarded £20,000 from the Suffolk County Council Culture Fund. The fund received 131 applications and only 33 applicants were successful. Officers from the Heritage Lottery Fund visited the Arts Centre and it is heartening to see the positive impact it had on them. They are keen to take the project forwards and consider the Arts Centre building 'heritage at risk'. More work needs to be done reshaping the bid which needs to be submitted by the end of April, so a Arts Centre Working Party Meeting will need to be called.

The visit to Haverhill by Michael Rosen was a huge success and the Creative Director would like to thank all councillors who gave some of their locality budget to make this possible.

The Creative Director has negotiated a new provider for cinema programming which will reduce costs but offer exactly the same programme.

The Claude Cahun exhibition raised a lot of interest, but it is too early to provide figures. We are extremely lucky to partner with London's Hayward Gallery and another exhibition is in the pipeline. Councillors noted how well the exhibition was presented and asked that thanks go to all involved.

b) Youth Skills Manager Report

Councillors agreed that it is interesting that the Locality NEET figures illustrate that Haverhill at 2.64%, has the second least number of people who are NEET in Suffolk. This is a direct result of work carried out to encourage students to stay in sixth-form and offering local college provision for 16-18 year olds. It is heartening that the work Karen Chapple is doing is attracting funding and creating real-world life-changing results for people. Councillors thanked Karen and her team for doing a fantastic job.

c) Zone Manager and Lead Youth Worker Report

The new ice-cream machine is now in situ and it is hoped that party bookings will increase through marketing. Ways are still trying to be found to increase visitor numbers. It is noted that on some occasions visitor numbers are high but income per capita is low.

Town Clerk

Town Clerk

Sandra Linnane is trying to source a qualified youth worker so that more youth work hours can be covered.

It is noted that youngsters have been spotted hanging around the bus station during the evening. The Town Clerk will speak with Sandra Linnane with the aim of youth workers visiting that area.

Town Clerk

A new laptop for the On The Spot van should arrive during the next couple of days. This is received with thanks to West Suffolk Councillors who funded it.

Thanks were given to Sandra Linnane and her team for all her work and an informative report.

LC25 Bus shelter, Eastern Avenue

/021 Councillors discussed the bus shelter in Eastern Avenue which is in disrepair, and a quote received to refurbish it. The town council owns four bus shelters around the town and the Town Clerk will circulate a list illustrating all bus shelters and their responsible owners.

Town Clerk

It was proposed by Councillor D Smith, seconded by Councillor P Hanlon that the quote of £2,150 be accepted for the refurbishment of the town council owned bus shelter in Eastern Avenue.

RESOLVED

LC25 Grant Requests

/022 a) Year to date expenditure on grants:

Councillors considered Appendix A – Grants made, attached to the agenda. The balance shows an overspend of £2,015.37 but this includes the grant request from St Mary's Church (item LC25/022b) which will actually be drawn from the 2025/26 budget.

NOTED

b) Grant requests:

Requesting Group	Purpose	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded
St Mary's Church	Funds towards renovation works for 2025/26	£2,000	£2,000 Councillor A Brown Councillor D Smith RESOLVED

Deputy Clerk

LC25 Grant Recipient Reports

/023 None.

LC25 Hire Fees at the Clements Community Centre and Arts Centre

/024 Councillors discussed recommendations for an increase in standard fees from April 2025. These were last reviewed in 2022/23, with the Clements Centre fees unchanged from 2019.

It was proposed by Councillor D Smith, seconded by Councillor D Page that standard hire fees at the Clements Community Centre and Arts Centre be increased by 5% from April 2025.

RESOLVED

Post-meeting note: The councillors were incorrectly advised the exhibition space rate quoted in the recommendations was 'per week'. It is in fact per day and the charge is putting-off potential exhibitors. Officers apologise for this error and recommend to full council scrapping this fee altogether in favour of a commission levied on any sales – which for the most part won't apply to most exhibitors. This should encourage more exhibitions and therefore hopefully more footfall.

LC25 Working Party Reports

/025 a) Civic Events Working Party

To note the Civic Events Working Party has not met since the last meeting of this committee

NOTED

b) Community Events Working Party

To note the Community Events Working Party has not met since the last meeting of this committee.

NOTED

LC25 Any Other Business

/026 Splash Pad – A new pump has been ordered and it is expected the Splash Pad will open on 21st May

LC25 Date of Next Meeting

/027 Tuesday, 15th July 2025.

LC25 Closure

/028 The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.06pm.

Signed
Chairman

Date

APPENDIX 1 – MANAGERS' REPORTS

7a) Arts Centre Report

Box Office Update The Arts Centre has had a successful and busy start to the year.

Notable shows have included:

- Cilla & Swinging Sixties – Sold out
- Creation Bubble Show - 112 sold (good for a family show)
- Haverhill Music Hub - 187 sold (big turn out and lots of great feedback - providing a voice for local musicians)
- Haverhill Youth and Community Band - 142 sold (two rows had to be blocked so only 20 seats from a sell-out)
- Pure Floyd - 156 sold (also two rows had to be blocked so only around 10 seats from a sell-out)
- Seriously Collins - Sold out
- Name's Bond - 160 sold • 2024 Panto: Snow White - 1,306 tickets sold - Made £2,000 more than last year!

Future Sales

The following have all made a particularly healthy start:

- Andy Parsons – 15 from sell-out (expected sell-out)
- Country Superstars – 163 sold (expected sell-out)
- Seann Walsh – Sold out
- Taylor Swift – Sold out

Cinema

- Les Miserables Concert - 99 sold
- Macbeth - 200 sold over 2 shows (Stour Valley School also came to the screening for educational purposes)

Our Dementia Screenings in partnership with The Terrific Tuesday Club continue to go well. These are being helped with funding from the warm spaces fund.

Half Term & Princess Show Show

MICHAEL ROSEN spent a hugely successful day in Haverhill on 13th February...

Over 500 young people benefited from this rare and special visit and got signed books.

Here is a bit of feedback from the event:

A fabulous time was had. Michael Rosen was engaging and accessible with his skilful performance of some of the children's favourite poems. He spoke about how he was inspired to write and how poetry is a living breathing activity not something old and dusty in a book. He had great advice for his young fans – stories don't have to be hard work. A great story can be short with the right choice of words. After the reading and questions, some children had books signed by Rosen and were delighted to see their own names in his distinctive hand.

Quotes from the children included:

“He made me laugh. I liked the poem about the dog when he couldn’t open the bag.”

“It was good because we watched a show and I hadn’t seen a show before. He let us ask questions.”

“He was tall and he made me happy rather than making me laugh.”

“He told funny stories about chocolate cake and a dog like an onion.”

Also, for School Holidays we are creating our own PRINCESS SHOW...

The show was very high quality, and we did three very successful performances. We also offered free crafts for families in the café before and after the shows. Just under 2000 people attended.

We got the following feedback from the artist running the craft session:

It was a great event, and I had a fair few people come before and after the shows! A lot of parents commented how great the council are for putting on events like this. It was lovely to hear such good feedback about the council doing great events!

Comedy Nights

I am pleased to report that our first two shows with our new comedy partner have sold out.

Developments of Note • Visual Arts Exhibitions

We have a touring Claude Cahun exhibition from the world-famous Hayward Gallery in the studio at present and feedback is very positive.

- ***Cinema Programming***

I have now signed a contract with our new provider - The Independent Cinema Office - who can offer us a more cost-effective programming service. They start from March.

- ***Suffolk County Council Culture Fund***

We were awarded £20,000 from this fund. The fund received 131 applications, and we were one of only 33 successful applicants.

Arts Centre Improvements

Following the submission of our stage one application, I have a face-to-face meeting with The Heritage Lottery Fund officers on 27th February. I can give a verbal update at the meeting.

Daniel Schumann

February 2025

7b Youth Skills Report February 2025

Youth Skills Staff

Whilst KC recovers from an upcoming operation, RT will take the lead on our mental health initiatives, while CT will head up the employability projects. Both will collaborate closely to support each other across both areas. KC has full confidence in their ability to drive these projects forward together whilst she is off.

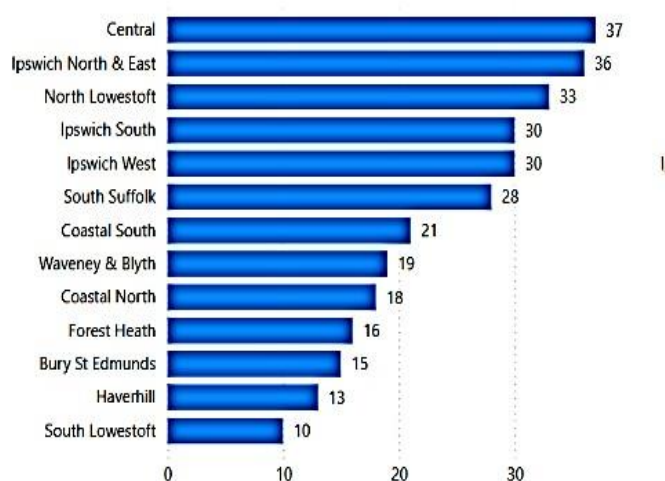
Level 2 WS Provision Update This new training provision in Haverhill has had a positive impact on the recent NEET figures released last week. The introduction of a local offer for 16–18-year-olds at Level 2 has provided a valuable addition to the community's resources. It also offers an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of our current strategies to identify any gaps in services, and to plug them, ensuring comprehensive support is offered to the youth in Haverhill.

Academic Age

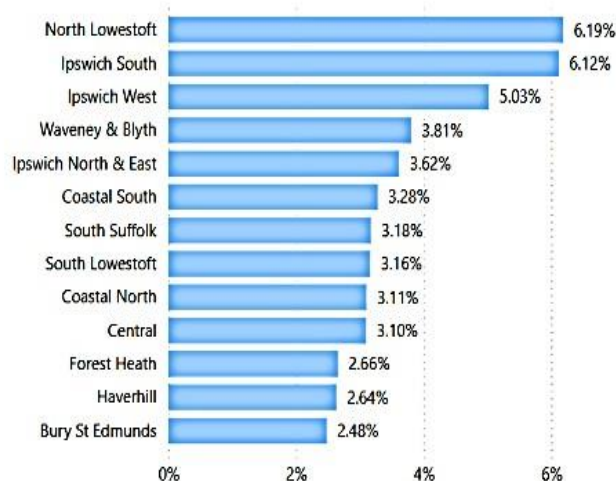
16



Locality NEET (Latest Month)



%



NEET % by MI Month and Area

Supporting Students in Schools

N lives in Haverhill and carried out his work experience with us. He studies at Hills Road College and is writing an EPQ project on Skills. He reflected on his time spent with us and wrote the following paragraph:

"This week I had the privilege of working with the Haverhill Youth Skills and families Team; It was an eye-opening experience. One of key highlights was visiting the Signpost group where I met children from age 11 and a few in their late teens. Their happiness and smiles reflected the amount of time and effort the team had put in. The use of fun activities to bring everyone together was excellent. I felt extremely welcomed by Karen, Callum and Rebekah. They all spent a lot of their own time teaching me and showing me around at all times with a smile on their faces. I felt extremely comfortable, and I believe I have gained a lot more confidence. Karen was also kind enough to bring me along to a network event at the epicentre. She enabled me to step out of my comfort zone and talk to a lot of people, introducing me to a variety of great and lovely people. My biggest takeaway is how crucial it is to tackle youth skills, such initiatives that offer such huge support can cause a multitude of ripple effects that positively benefit a community. But to do so effectively one must be kind,

sympathetic and be able to listen to the plight of the underprivileged, with an aim to offer on equal opportunity for the younger generation.”

At the visiting the Epicentre, Skills were the topic of conversation, N was asked to join a focus group giving a voice to the young BME community in West Suffolk. He has also agreed to forward his skills report once complete.

An opportunity arose for members of our team to take part in Castle Manor’s mock interview day, which gives students the opportunity to experience a job interview situation. R and C carried out interviews. On completion of the interviews they gave verbal and written feedback on how they did and little things to improve on, to boost their interview skills.

1-2-1 Sessions Job Club

We have had some good success stories from our Wednesday meetings. A client who was very far away from the jobs market, when signing up for our service(severely lacking in confidence and social skills) secured work in his chosen area, after completing a long stint of work experience for a local business. His patience and focus paid off, he is feeling proud and excited to be entering the world of work. He has been tried and tested, and the business has spent time upskilling him for this new post. All parties have benefited.

Apprenticeships

We are adopting a refreshed approach to apprenticeships, placing a strong emphasis on engaging local businesses and maximizing the involvement of local education providers. CW will be meeting with local businesses to promote the idea of employing local talent to benefit the local economy.

The team recently met with Anthony from WS Training to explore the strategies they have used to engage businesses. While Anthony experienced challenges recruiting businesses in Haverhill despite successful efforts in other Suffolk areas, we believe that a local presence—specifically through the town council's youth skills team acting as an intermediary—will significantly improve the likelihood of apprenticeships being offered in Haverhill.

Signpost Projects

Adult Signpost

The adult signpost group has welcomed some new members recently. They’ve participated in a range of sessions, including volunteering for Haverhill Town Council, where they helped plant seedlings for a hedgerow. The session left them tired, wet, and cold, but they also felt proud of contributing to their community. We tied this experience to the "wellbeing" pillar of community, reflecting on the sense of fulfilment it brought.

Referrals for Adult Signpost from the DWP team at the Job Centre, have not been showing up for prearranged meetings, so we are working on developing a more connected signposting system to improve engagement.

Toddler & Me

The group has recently witnessed positive transformations in the lives of some of the parents. One member has successfully passed their driving test and is now actively seeking employment, while another has been offered and has accepted a position as a cook at The Zone.



To further support the parents, we have invited guest speakers to share valuable insights on topics that are relevant to themselves and their children. Recent sessions have focused on exploring potential career paths, as well as building confidence and enhancing communication skills.

One of our clients, who recently moved from the Coupals Court Parent & Baby Unit to a new home, successfully benefited from a housing support grant. This assistance enabled her to purchase essential white goods, ensuring a less stressful and more comfortable transition into her new home.

Junior Signpost

Junior Signpost is a free afterschool group for young people dealing with low mood, anxiety, and depression. Since Christmas, sessions have focused on different wellbeing pillars, such as roller-skating and badminton for physical fitness, making lavender pillows for sleep, and fruit-flavoured cheesecakes for nutrition. Each session includes discussions on wellbeing, and participants receive a leaflet on the week's pillar. The group has fostered strong social connections, and participants have expressed how much they enjoy attending. A parent praised the club, saying *"It's clear to see the effort, and S loves coming"*. One young person shared *"I make sure I don't get a detention on a Wednesday as I don't want to miss the session"*. We are working with her to improve her behaviour too!

Transitioning Support Group

Meeting regularly bonding and supporting each other. The group have renamed themselves "Something inbetween". They attended the Claude Cahun art exhibition at the Art Centre. The group were interested in her approach to the gender fluid theory. They went on to make a framed collage picture that reflected their thoughts on gender and identity. We will now hang this with pride at one of our locations.

Wellbeing Hub

The Wellbeing Hub welcomes around 25 young people each week, where they learn about maintaining their wellbeing and participate in open discussions with staff. The attendees take responsibility for signing themselves in and out, a duty they've embraced. Since Christmas, they've enjoyed various activities, such as making magnets, tie-dying, and playing air hockey. One of the standout events has been balloon-centred games. Based on feedback, we've introduced snack nights, like toastie nights, and now offer fresh fruit like mango and kiwi. This week, we had a police officer join us to talk to the group about the importance of taking time to make thoughtful decisions.



Boost (Crime Fund)

We were awarded **£11,902**, we have spent to date £8,743.72 We have £3,158.28 to spend in the last quarter. We are encouraging young people to make better decisions/choices. Using a therapeutic approach to tackle behaviour through therapy, encouraging activities that focus the mind and serve as a positive outlet for energy. Mentoring sessions 1-2-1 with someone they respect.



"Thank you to you and the Boost team for the work and effort you put in with these students - they are all lovely young people who need a bit of extra support to get back on track - we are very grateful that you offer this support" Samuel Ward

Sewing Project

The group, a recent addition to the Boost (Youth Skills) offer, now has six regular participants who are steadily growing in confidence as they master the sewing machine. Thanks to £2,700 from the West Suffolk Prosperity Fund, we were able to repurpose an unused room at the Zone to provide a space where young people can build confidence and acquire valuable life skills. So far, we've held four sessions, and the participants' confidence is soaring as they learn new skills. They're already creating take-home projects they can be truly proud of, such as pincushions and room decorations from last week's session.



Looking ahead, we're exploring the possibility of HTC staff using the room during their free time to pursue their own hobbies, promoting good self-care along the way.

Shortlisted for the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2025

“Congratulations! We are delighted to inform you that your entry ‘Boost - Youth skills and family support’ submitted by ‘Haverhill Town Council’ has been shortlisted in the ‘Children's services’ category.”

We are pleased to share we have been shortlisted for the Local Government Chronical Awards, which serves as a strong endorsement of the quality and impact of our services. Being shortlisted is recognition that we can leverage to our advantage when applying for future grants. It shows the value and effectiveness of our work, which will undoubtedly strengthen future applications.

Funding News

We are pleased to announce that we were awarded:

£5,000 West Suffolk Council Thriving Communities Grant to support the rollout of our Signpost Projects for 2025-2026.

£10,000 from the Suffolk County Council (UK Government) Household Support Fund, enabling us to provide vital financial assistance to individuals and families in need. This funding supports the purchasing of essentials such as food, household bills, and white goods. To date, we have supported 32 clients/families, helping them access the resources they need during challenging times.

£19,950 from the National Lottery's “Awards *for All*” community fund for our “Empowering Young Minds Project”. This will allow us to expand our services for isolated, vulnerable individuals experiencing low mood, from April 2025-2026.

Karen Chapple

Youth Skills Manager

7c) Zone Manager and Lead Youth Worker

The Zone

Staffing –We have a new member of The Zone team. Maddy is working through her induction at the moment. She is firstly being trained in the café and kitchen. Monica will be stepping up to Cover Team Leader when required.

Training – Online and in house training continues as and when needed. Highspeed are offering a free Allergy & Anaphylaxis training for Schools. (Suitable for indoor play venues) endorsed by the Natasha Law Foundation. This information has also been shared with the Arts Centre. All Zone staff if available will be completing an in-person customer service training during the next couple of months.

Parties:

The number of parties has been lower than last year. We still have an outside agency who deliver laser tag, dodge ball and football parties.

Comparative numbers of **parties** booked in January 2024 and 2025 is 41% down:

	2024	2025
January	22	13

Soft Play:

These numbers do not include the birthday party attendees. Attendance is 4% up:

	2024	2025
January	1646	1714

Zone Comparative Financials

January 2024:

Entrance £3439.99

Café Sales £4854.13

Party Sales £3162.76

January 2025:

Entrance £3494.36

Café Sales £5302.77

Party Sales £2909.29

We are up by £249.54 across the board compared to January 2024 due to entrance and café sales.

February Half term – Was a very busy, sometimes challenging, week but great to see so many customers in. Curiously the day the weather looked the worst was the day we had fewest customers. Sometimes there is just no rhyme nor reason.

Toddler Time - (parents attending and are responsible for their children) this session takes place during term time only stops during the school holidays. These prove popular sessions, and we have regular customers who prefer just having preschool children here and it's usually a calmer session. Good time for parents and children to make new friendships.

Toddler Multi-Sport – We have teamed up with Prestige Sports who have been delivering multi sports in our football/basketball area on a Thursday morning. Age range 2 to 4 years. The children have the opportunity to take part or just use the soft play equipment or do both. We have had some attendees who have come just because we have the multi-Sport session. It is too early to tell if this activity is bringing in more customers overall.

SEND Sessions – Funded by Activities Unlimited, these take place every other Monday during term time. This ensures we only have a maximum of 25 children, and parents/carers

have the opportunity to chat with others who are experiencing similar concerns but also sharing what works for them. Unlimited squash and some healthy snacks are offered to the children. This group has a good uptake. Any children/parents who find our main public sessions too challenging are given information regarding our Monday SEND session. We have submitted our funding application to Activities Unlimited in the hope to secure funding for 2025 to 2026. We are still awaiting to hear.

Outside Area at The Zone – We are in the planning stages to decide what to offer in our newly re-fenced outside play area at the back of The Zone. There is lots to think about for offering safe activities out there. Will have more information next meeting.

Funding – We continue to look for funding to enable us to offer different projects at The Zone.

Youth Work

Staffing – Our two youth workers we took on late last year have not been available as much as we had hoped due to their other work commitments. We are in the process of advertising for another youth worker and should yourselves or anybody over 18 that you may know who would be interested please email me.

Training – None carried out so far this year, but always on the lookout.

Funding – We continue to look for funding to help us deliver our youth projects.

Pride Alliance Group – Continues at Castle Manor (term time) for an hour on a Wednesday to meet with Miss Kennard, Miss Sparks and young people to discuss matters regarding LGQBT+ and other topics of interest. We usually have between 12 to 16 young people attend. The school is very supportive regarding any concerns or issues the young people come up against. I was lucky enough to go to the Pride assembly held at Castle Manor where the young people had produced some posters and information within the group sessions.

Detached – Ideally, we would like to go out weekly but due to the limited availability of youth workers this has not been possible. PC Jack Oakley has offered to come out when his shift pattern allows. We continue to work with the police, communities within Haverhill, and other professionals to enable us to provide the best service possible to the young people.

SEND Youth Night – We could not hold the SEND youth session during February half term due to the sudden drain blockage that The Zone encountered. We will be looking at rebooking. This session invites young people with their families/carers to access pool, table tennis, giant Jenga, giant connect four, colouring, football, basketball and also the chance for the young people and their families to meet up. We welcome younger siblings if this is the only way SEND young people can visit us, but the youngest is usually about 11. These are great evenings and thank you to Activities Unlimited for the funding.

Wellbeing Youth Hub – Young people can play football, basketball, PlayStation 5, giant Jenga and giant connect four. Arts and crafts are available, pool, table tennis and air hockey. Some of the young people like to just sit and chill and catch up with their mates. We invite other professionals in to deliver other activities. PC Jack Oakly came during February half term and was well received by the young people. He answered lots of questions and showed them around the police car.

Boost Project – We continue to work with the Youth Skills team to mentor young people who are attending the Boost Project.

Football Project – We are still working with Jon Eaton & Chris Swarbrick at West Suffolk plus local neighbours on the Hales Barn Estate regarding antisocial behaviour around the playing of football behind some houses. The ball hits the fences and properties and has in the past caused damage. Thanks to funding from Councillor Firman's Locality budget, new goal posts are being erected in the field next to Samuel Ward this is hoped to ease this problem. We continue along with staff at Haverhill Rovers, to try to engage with the said young people if they are out when we visit the area. We are talking with the neighbours to gauge the best times in the hope to see them.

On Spot Van – Been out when staffing has permitted. Chris Swarbrick, Families and Communities Officer with West Suffolk, came out with us during half term. Very quiet regarding young people and we will endeavour to book another session for Chris to attend.

Thanks for your continued support.

Sandra Linnane

Zone Manager & Senior Youth Worker