

Background

The “Heads Up Project” is an early intervention project, designed by SYA’s “Shropshire Young Health champions project”. The aim is to help young people understand different aspects of emotional health & wellbeing.

There are two aspects to the provision:

1. Creation of a safe space drop-in service for young people aged 10 to 18.
2. Development of workshops exploring a specific issue related to emotional health & wellbeing.

The Town Council at its meeting on 28.1.21 debated commissioning this service in Wem under minute number 320/21 and passed the following resolution

RESOLVED:- that

- **The Town Council agree that a grant application can be made to Connexus Community fund for £5000.**
- **The Town Council agree to commit up to £6000 in the 2020/21 budget allocated to youth projects as match funding.**

The Town Council agree to manage the project should grant funding from Connexus be awarded.

The Connexus Grant was successful. A contract with Shropshire Youth Association (SYA) to deliver a Headsup Project in Wem on behalf of the Town Council, for 46 weeks for 2 hours a week was approved on 11.5.21.

The service is run from Wem Youth Club on a Monday evening and started in June. From the beginning of June to the end of July, despite a publicity campaign in the press, schools and beyond no one accessed the service. A contributing factor to this was that this period coincided with a significant spike in covid 19 cases locally with several year groups from schools being required to self isolate on and off for most of the term.

It was agreed with SYA (Shropshire Youth Association) that the project would be paused and that no charge would be made the June and July.

The Project was relaunched in early September with renewed publicity and it was heavily promoted by both schools and locally on Social Media platforms. However, usage of the service by young people to date has been minimal.

Discussions have been held with the pastoral team at Thomas Adams and the Head of St Peters over the need for the service and they have both stated that there is very much a need for this type of service as they have a significant number of students who require support for their mental health. They considered several factors could be contributing to the poor take up of the service including :

- Parents of primary school age children do not consider the youth club to be for primary age students.
- As so many students at Thomas Adams live outside the town it is difficult for them to access the drop in sessions after school as they are reliant on parents having to bring them back into town to attend the sessions.

- There is still a stigma by young people around accessing mental health services out of the school environment
- Publicity of the project is confusing and young people may be put off by the name of the project.
- SYA have been unable to go into schools to promote the project in the traditional way using assemblies as these are not currently being held.
- There are several popular clubs running for young people in the town on a Monday evening.

A meeting was held on 12.11.21 between SYA, The Town Clerk and the Head of Pastoral at Thomas Adams and Head of St Peters School to see whether it would be possible to locate the service within the school environment.

Both schools stated that they were very keen to progress this option as they felt it would enable them to refer the students most in need of the support to the service, something they may not access out of the school environment.

It was agreed that

- **From November 2021 Heads Up sessions would move to Thomas Adams School and be held at the School on a Monday over break and lunchtime until May half term 2022.**
- **For the last half term of the academic year session (June – July 2022) sessions would transfer to St Peters School focusing on year 6 pupils to provide support to students during the period of transition from primary to secondary school.**

As the project would be moving from a weekly project to a termly the financing of the project may be slightly different but it would not require any additional funds

A discussion has taken place with the primary funder Connexus who are happy with the changes to the location of the delivery.

Project funding

Connexus Grant	£5,000
Rotary	£2,000
Cllr Granger Mayor's Fundraising	£1,000
Nobel Street Trust	£1,000
Town Council	£3,000
Total	£12,000
Total Spent to date (1 term)	£4,000
Balance	£8,000

Recommendation

That the Town Council notes the report and approves the change of location.