



Shining Light

Stewart Cutler

A report on the operation, development and future direction of youth work in Linwood
Parish Church.

In December 2009 Linwood Parish Church decided that this was an opportune moment to review their work with young people to help them learn lessons from the past and to develop a clear picture of where they are at present and to consider their plans for the future.

This report is the result of that process and the beginning of another.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stewart Cutler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 INTRODUCTION 5**
 - 1.1 Structure Of This Report 5
- 2 A BRIEF HISTORY 6**
 - 2.1 Context of the Parish Project Worker 6
 - 2.2 Contradictions or Perspectives? 7
 - 2.3 Beginnings 7
 - 2.4 Preparation 8
 - 2.5 Remit of the Youth Worker 9
- 3 YOUTH WORK ACTIVITIES 10**
 - 3.1 Church Based Activities 10
 - 3.2 Residential Work 12
 - 3.3 Relating to the Congregation 12
 - 3.4 Schools Work 13
 - 3.5 Building Relationships 14
- 4 MANAGEMENT 14**
 - 4.1 Support Group / Management Committee 14
 - 4.2 Kirk Session 15
 - 4.3 Line Management 16
 - 4.4 Presbytery 16
- 5 OWNERSHIP 16**
 - 5.1 Adults 16

5.2	Young People.....	17
6	COMMUNICATION	18
7	RECORD KEEPING	19
8	STRATEGY	20
8.1	Age Range	20
8.2	Progression	20
8.3	Planning Ahead.....	21
8.4	Delivery or Development?.....	22
9	FUNDING.....	22
9.1	Salary	22
9.2	Expenses	23
9.3	Youth Work Budget.....	23
10	EVALUATION	24
10.1	Evaluation of Church Based Youth Work.....	24
11	RECOMMENDATIONS	25
11.1	Strategy.....	25
11.2	Management	25
11.3	Finance	26
11.4	Communication	26
11.5	Recording Youth Work.....	27
11.6	Support.....	27
	APPENDIX 1 - PROJECT BRIEF	29

1 INTRODUCTION

This report is a review of the youth work of Linwood Parish Church.

It details the thoughts of stakeholders in the youth work provision of Linwood Parish Church, Church Members, Schools, Community Learning and Development, Parents, Supporters, the Presbytery and Parish Worker (Youth Worker), the Minister and Young People themselves.

It will identify areas of good practice and areas offering opportunities for improvement, suggesting possible ways forward.

The potential areas of improvement identified in this report should not undermine the clear successes of the youth work. The quality of the youth work is obviously high and of great benefit to those involved but there is always room for improvement.

This report will try to shine some light on these achievements as well as illuminating some of the aspects of the youth work which need to be addressed to ensure the continued positive impact of Linwood Parish Church on the young people of their community.

1.1 Structure Of This Report

This report will address the following areas:

- Setting the context of the youth work
- Current youth work provision
- How the work is organised, managed and funded
- How people feel about the work
- Recommendations for the future

2 A BRIEF HISTORY

2.1 Context of the Parish Project Worker

In 2001 the Church of Scotland's Department of National Mission appointed a Youth Worker to Linwood Parish Church. This post has subsequently become known formally as a Presbyter and Parish Worker but is known locally as Youth Worker and for consistency will be referred to as such throughout this report.

Prior to 2001 a Deaconess whose remit was to provide pastoral care, bereavement care and funerals and to engage with the wider community served by Linwood Parish Church.

At the time of her retiral it was decided to pursue the appointment of a full time Youth Worker.

Conversations took place between the congregation and the Church of Scotland's Board of National Mission, who were responsible for employing and placing Deacons and Parish Project Workers, and it was agreed that a Youth Worker would be deployed in Linwood.

A review took place in October 2004. There is no written record of the event or of points to be carried forward.

As the work developed a Youth Work Project was formally constituted in April 2004 to facilitate grant applications. Under that constitution a Management Committee was appointed.

In September 2009 the Youth Work Project was formally dissolved because the Constitution no longer served the work effectively. It was agreed that a committee of the Kirk Session would now supervise the Youth Work.

The members of this new committee would be the members of the former Management Committee.

The Ministries Council of the Church of Scotland is now the employer of the YOUTH WORKER following a restructuring of the Church of Scotland's General Assembly functions.

Linwood Parish Church makes no contribution to the salary of the Youth Worker. They are responsible for the Youth Worker's expenses and working costs such as office equipment, telephone and mileage.

In December 2009 Linwood Parish Church decided that this was an opportune moment to review the work with young people. This would help them learn lessons from the past and to develop a clear picture of where they are at present and to consider their plans for the future.

2.2 Contradictions or Perspectives?

Two views of the youth work quickly emerged from the focus groups:

1. The Youth Work is good and it fulfils its remit
2. The Youth Work has not fulfilled their expectations

Even though these two points of view may seem contradictory at first glance, that is not necessarily the case. These views have emerged from different perspectives of what youth work is and what it should achieve and are, in many cases, both held by the same people.

To understand why this is the case it was important to understand the origins of the youth work in Linwood Parish Church and where stakeholders think it is today.

2.3 Beginnings

The introduction of the Parish Project Worker was not the beginning of youth work in the church. There had been successful youth groups until the mid 1990s and a Boys Brigade company which ran until the mid 1980s.

During that period Linwood Parish Church was served by a Deaconess. When she announced that she would be retiring in 2000/1 a conversation began about if and

how she might be replaced. The retiring deaconess was active in laying the initial plans for a youth work appointment.

The Kirk Session entered into conversations with The Church of Scotland's Board of National Mission who agreed to deploy a Youth Worker.

2.4 Preparation

The Board of National Mission was the employer at the time of the initial deployment of the Youth Worker. As such, they had a responsibility to ensure that the congregation in which the Youth Worker would be placed had a clear understanding of what having a youth work specialist would mean for their church.

It could reasonably be expected that this preparation would involve National Mission staff, or staff with a Youth Work development remit, visiting the congregation to engage them in a conversation about their hopes and expectations. This would have helped clarify what a project of this nature could involve and highlight the responsibilities of the congregation.

This kind of consultation, which could reasonably have been expected (The Works), did not happen to the extent that was required.

A small group of people from the Kirk Session and the minister at the time were involved in discussions about a Youth Worker post. These conversations mostly limited to the Kirk Session, although those involved tried to keep the wider congregation up-to-date with developments.

Many people in the congregation had varying expectations of what a full time Youth Worker would bring to the congregation. The Minister and Kirk Session tried their best to share with the Congregation. Preliminary meetings between the minister and deaconess and National Mission took place both in Linwood and Edinburgh. The Minister and Kirk Session then tried to pass on this information but in hindsight this information may not have been transferred as effectively as it could have been.

2.5 Remit of the Youth Worker

The remit of the Youth Worker has remained to:

1. Identify the needs of young people and encourage the congregation to find ways to meet them
2. Liaise with the local community youth initiatives and establish links to build bridges into the church community
3. Help identify volunteers, encourage and train them to support and lead youth initiatives
4. Develop a system of monitoring the work of volunteers to give support and develop skills
5. Give all necessary and all relevant support to present youth organisations and their leaders to strengthen existing links between the church and these organisations
6. Share in the Chaplaincy work, especially in the high school
7. Share in the promoting, publishing and exploring of possible sources of further funding, to develop the work as outlined above
8. In consultation with the minister and support team, prepare written reports and follow agreed targets

During the period where the youth work was a separately constituted project the objectives were:

- The provision of creative and unique youth activities to complement existing services in the Linwood area
- To offer opportunities for young people in the Linwood area to develop socially, emotionally, morally and spiritually
- To offer support and guidance on a one-to-one basis as and when appropriate
- To help and encourage young people to strengthen their relationships with the local community and with the church

While those people who were involved in the early work to establish the Youth Worker post were very clear that the Youth Worker's remit was not to bring young people into the church on Sunday mornings, others had very different expectations. They wanted the number of young people in the church on Sunday morning to increase, or at least for more explicitly church-based activities to be in evidence.

It should be noted that these expectations are not, and never have been, uniformly held across the whole congregation. Rather they are generally held by those with little or no involvement in the delivery of the youth work or no involvement in the Kirk Session. Nine years later, these expectations around attendance at Sunday worship have never been adequately addressed.

The Youth Worker's remit makes no mention of where the youth work should focus beyond a reference to building community links and sharing in the school chaplaincy.

While the remit does clarify the developmental and supportive nature of the post, it is also clear that the Youth Worker's role is not primarily to deliver all the youth work personally. Many of the areas of work focus on identifying the needs of young people, encouraging and enabling the congregation to meet those needs and supporting them through training.

The community focus of the youth work does not appear to have been adopted by the wider congregation in terms of their understanding of outreach and mission.

These aspects of the role are fundamental to the long-term viability of the youth work. This requires the Youth Worker to work towards an enabling role rather than the role of key provider, particularly in the church based work.

3 YOUTH WORK ACTIVITIES

3.1 Church Based Activities

Linwood Parish Church is in many ways typical in that the attendance of teenagers on Sunday mornings has reduced over time.

One response to this was Do-nut Time, a time during the Sunday morning service where teenagers could leave to have a time of teaching and discussion in a manner more appropriate for their needs.

Do-nut time ceased when it stopped being viable because of falling attendance. There were also issues about an appropriate space within the church building.

Two regular youth groups have operated, Pulse8 for young people in P6-S2 (Sunday evening) and After8, for young people in S3-S6+ (Tuesday evening).

Pulse8 met on a Sunday evening in the church. Initially around 80 young people attended and this levelled out at around 40 young people each week. Activities included crafts and games.

Pulse8 ceased at the summer of 2008.

After8 was launched in January 2004 as a follow on group for young people who were now too old for Pulse8. This group still functions with around 20 members.

Many of the older members were originally members of Pulse8 and all of the other members have joined through friendships with members. After8 does not advertise or actively recruit members. There is a deliberate policy of operating a group of this size to allow good relationships to develop.

After8 is currently focused on helping the group to transition into a more self-supporting group of young adults linked to Linwood Parish Church. More than half of the members of After8 have now left school and are in work, college or university.

After8 is, at present, the only church-based group offering opportunities for young people.

The Parents and Supporters focus group named the following activities that they knew were offered as part of the youth work programme, mostly offered through After8:

- Involvement with Community Learning
- fundraising
- Go-karting
- Laser quest
- BBQ
- Beach bonfires
- Camping
- Snowboarding
- Ice skating
- Linwood High School café
- Leaflet deliveries for church
- Car boot sales
- Sponsored walks
- Group decisions
- Quad biking
- Showstoppers (holiday club)
- Crafts / baking
- Youth assembly

- Glen Kin
- Church service participation

3.2 Residential Work

Residential work, and in particular outdoor activities, has long been recognised as an excellent way to build relationships, to expose people to new experiences and to create an environment where preconceived ideas and understandings can be challenged or developed. This is a key element of the After8 programme with around six residential opportunities each year.

These residential are often focused on outdoor activities, which offer an excellent vehicle for team building, challenging personal limits and relationship building. Each residential includes times of reflection and discussion around faith and spirituality. The young people value these opportunities to talk about their beliefs and how those impact their lives. The staff at the outdoor centres regularly comment on the quality of these reflective sessions.

3.3 Relating to the Congregation

Each focus group was asked how young people contribute to the life of the church.

Interestingly, in every focus group except the Young People's and the Youth Leaders' groups people initially reacted by saying that there was very little interaction. However, when asked to give examples the same people went on to list a wide range of ways in which the young people contribute. These included music, leading worship, speaking to the congregation, helping with fund raising events, clearing out the church grounds and hosting social events.

The groups were surprised at the number of ways in which the young people are involved in the life of the church.

3.4 Schools Work

The Youth Worker is a school chaplain in two primary schools, East Fulton and Woodlands, and also in Linwood High School.

Representatives from the three schools noted that the Youth Worker:

- Takes part in school services and assemblies
- Helps devise school policies
- Encourages links with community
- Attends residential visits as a leader (as well as helping build relationships with the children this also saves the schools money as they don't have to pay a member of staff to go)
- Facilitates a COSY Café at Linwood high, a lunchtime activity giving leadership opportunities
- Is involved in P7 positive behaviour initiatives (East Fulton)
- Delivers elements of P5/6 Health & Wellbeing programme (Woodlands)
- Provides direct link to former students (Linwood High School)
- Delivers citizenship lessons (E Fulton)
- Provides programme of events for focus weeks
- Co-ordinates a projects to provide art installations for National Youth Assembly
- Supports all school events (cluster)
- Involved in preparation and delivery of Religious Observance

This is a huge range of activity and the Schools highly value both the input of the Youth Worker, both professionally and personally.

The Parents and Supporters focus group were mostly unaware of the extent of the Youth Worker's work in the schools and the Schools focus group were mostly unaware of the range of activities offered in the other contexts.

Both groups expressed a concern that there was a possibility the Youth Worker could take on too much work.

3.5 Building Relationships

The youth leaders have been able to develop excellent working relationships with young people.

Many of the young people spoke of their relationship with the youth leaders as one of the most significant relationships they have with an adult. They feel able to approach the leaders for pastoral support and many of the members told of their gratitude for the support, assistance and friendship they have received.

Working in a community for a long period allows time for strong relationships to be built. This is particularly evident in the young people who are now part of After8. Many of them first became involved with Linwood Parish Church through Pulse8, the group catering for young people in P6-S2. They were recruited when they were in Primary 6 and are still involved nine years later.

The Parish Project Worker has also built excellent relationships with the staff at each of the three schools. The School's focus group was particularly clear in its wish to express the value of the relationships between the schools and the church but also the value of their relationship with the Youth Worker as someone outside their agency who can give advice and encouragement.

There have been a number of volunteers who have been involved in the delivery of youth work. These volunteers have been of all ages and some of those original members of Pulse8 are now leaders. The volunteers feel a sense of purpose and are highly valued by the Youth Worker.

4 MANAGEMENT

4.1 Support Group / Management Committee

It seems clear that from the outset a Support Group appointed by the Kirk Session should have been in place to keep an overall view of the youth work. This was done but the Support Group found it difficult to find a remit.

The weakness of this Support Group as presented in the Youth Worker's remit is that it does not explicitly locate the Support Group's role in a structure.

The Support Group seems to fulfil three separate, and possibly conflicting roles: to support the Youth Worker; to keep an overall view of remit and direction; and to provide administrative support. These roles should have been clarified.

The terms of the former constitution required a Management Committee to be responsible for setting policy and strategy for the youth work as well as assisting in accessing funding. This development should have addressed the problems with the role of the Support Group but it was clear from the focus groups that the Management Committee has never played that strategic role fully. This is at least partly due to a lack of training and support for them as Management Committee members and a lack of clarity about what their role was and what the Youth Worker was responsible for.

The Management Committee had, and still has, no clear remit and no clear relationship to the Kirk Session or to the Youth Worker.

4.2 Kirk Session

The Kirk Session is the decision making body of the church and as such has a responsibility for policy, finance and strategy.

The Kirk Session seems to have no clear sense of its formal responsibility for the youth work beyond receiving reports. The Kirk Session, by its own admission, has not adequately supervised the youth work. This has never been a deliberate step but this lack of input from the Kirk Session has contributed to a sense that the youth work exists separately from the rest of the work of the church.

The move to a separate constitution and management committee in 2004 was made to facilitate access to greater range of funding opportunities but also had the unintended consequence of further separating the Kirk Session and the work with young people.

The Youth Work's separate constitutional arrangement was wound up recently and the youth work should now come firmly under the direction of the Kirk Session. The

Management Committee should now be a standing committee of the Kirk Session but as previously stated the Management Committee still has no clear remit and no clear relationship to the Kirk Session.

4.3 Line Management

The Youth Worker is line managed by the Minister.

This arrangement works well for the Youth Worker and for the Minister. The Minister and Youth Worker receive team training and appraisal training but there is no training in line management and no training specific to working with Youth Workers as part of the support offered from the Ministries Council.

Although this management arrangement works well locally in terms of managing a post (the Youth Worker) it does leave open the possibility that the youth work agenda could be driven by the Minister and the Youth Worker without any real consultation with the Kirk Session.

The Minister appraises the Youth Worker annually and the result of this appraisal is submitted to Ministries Council.

4.4 Presbytery

Although Presbytery has annual reporting system the church are unsure what the purpose of this report is or what happens to it after submission.

5 OWNERSHIP

5.1 Adults

There is a clear division in the perceived ownership of the youth work.

Those with direct experience of the youth work value it highly.

Those with little contact or experience of the work with young people feel very little sense of ownership of the work.

Much of this relates to the origins of the youth work when the Board of National Mission gave no explanation about the nature of work with young people to the wider congregation. This, coupled with unrealistic expectations in the congregation about the nature of the work and its possible benefits, has led to a legacy of a small section of the congregation voicing dissatisfaction with the youth work and with the Youth Worker, sometimes in an inappropriate manner.

The Youth Worker's remit highlights the need to identify the needs of young people and then encourage and enable the congregation to meet these needs. This work is evident in the enthusiasm for the work with young people from those who have been involved in some way.

However, a lack of regular communication about the work with young people by the Youth Worker to the wider church community contributes to this feeling of disconnection and dissatisfaction.

It is also clear that those who are dissatisfied have made little effort to find out about the work or enter into conversation about their expectations beyond very vocal, non-specific complaints.

5.2 Young People

Of course, ownership is not a one-way street. The young people involved with the work of After8 feel a real and valuable connection to Linwood Parish Church even though they feel that their presence is not always a welcome one.

They feel a very strong sense of ownership of After8. It is, in their view, their group and they are encouraged to make decisions for the group themselves.

6 COMMUNICATION

The work of the project is not well communicated to the wider congregation and community. All of the focus groups felt that the way the youth work was communicated was an issue.

Communication is always problematic for organisations. It takes time and it can never fully satisfy people's expectations. Because of this there has been a tendency to avoid the task of preparing communications in favour of what are perceived to be more immediately beneficial tasks.

The Youth Worker often feels that the time necessary to prepare reports on the activities could be time spent with young people but the benefits of a clear communication strategy would well worth the effort.

At the end of five of the focus groups a number of people said, "I've learned something". While it is not unusual that people would learn a little more about the work with young people and other people's opinions of it in this kind of discussion, the learning seemed to be more about some of the work and how it is delivered.

Participants were unaware of most of the work the Youth Worker does.

Most of the people who attended the focus groups had a broadly positive view of the youth work. Some had the opposite view. Those with the opposite view were not well informed about the huge amount of work with young people going on in their name.

When sceptics perceptions were changed when given examples of the value of the work by those who knew a little more and they became more open to hearing about the possibilities the work offers to young people.

There has been a deliberate effort to involve different people in the youth work to help them understand what is happening and equip them advocate on behalf of the project. This has been a successful strategy but it needs to be supported using different kinds of media to reinforce those positive messages.

The vast majority of focus group members appreciated the times when the young people have made presentations to the church congregation on Sunday morning during worship. This type of communication reaches people who will never have any direct contact with the youth work.

This method of communicating also addresses part of the expectation that the work with young people will result in more young people being visible on Sunday mornings.

7 RECORD KEEPING

The minutes of the various committees with some kind of link to, or responsibility for, youth work, focus on decisions. It would be helpful to have some record of the discussions that have taken place to help in the evaluation of those decisions. As there are no records of the various options presented, arguments in favour of against and expectations of the impact of the decisions made it is almost impossible to compare current opinion to an historical context.

Youth Worker's remit requires regular reporting but there are very few written records of what has happened with young people. This has been resolved fairly recently and the Youth Worker now reports regularly to the Kirk Session.

Out-with the formal committee structure of the Kirk Session, reports have been even less frequent.

In future a brief report will be included in the Church Magazine.

There are reasons for this. Throughout the history of the youth work there was often no clear reporting structure. No-one was responsible for receiving reports or acting on them and no-one asked for reports so none were made.

It is good practice to record work, especially for evaluation purposes, and to keep attendance records to meet safeguarding requirements.

8 STRATEGY

Youth Leaders talk about their work with the young people in strategic terms there has never been any formal strategy.

All of the youth work currently undertaken in Linwood broadly meets the formal remit of the Youth Worker.

Decisions have been made to do certain pieces of work and to stop doing others.

At some level these are strategic decisions but there are a number of major elements that need to be addressed, namely age range, progression and planning ahead.

8.1 Age Range

There is no agreement on the age range of the young people the Youth Worker should work with. Some people suggest 10 – 18 years old while others would suggest beginning at 12 and extending the upper age to 25 years old. This definition, 12-25, would cut out all the work currently done by the Youth Worker with Primary age children. This would seem counter-productive as it would cut out some of the good work supporting young people in the transition between primary and secondary school. Extending the upper limit to 25 would allow some support to continue as young people make the transition from secondary school to college, university or work.

Making a decision about this age range may seem like a minor issue but it will clarify some issues around responsibility for areas of work and set limits on provision.

8.2 Progression

There is wide concern about the lack of church-based provision for young people in the Primary 6 - Secondary 3 age range. There is no clear progression of these kinds of activities or opportunities for young people after leaving Sunday School.

Participants commented about the previous success of Pulse8, but also recognised that sustaining a weekly club for 40 young people over a number of years is demanding and has an impact on the Youth Worker's work load.

There are a number of children reaching P6 and P7 who will soon be too old to attend Sunday School.

There are no exit strategies in place for young people leaving at the upper end of the youth work.

8.3 Planning Ahead

There has always been a community focus for the Youth Worker's role. This has mostly been realised through the development of relationships with the schools.

The Youth Worker's School Chaplaincy is a very significant commitment to the life of the community.

There was a concern that the Youth Worker may take too much on board and also may not have the understanding and support needed from their home church. A Youth Worker requires this level of support to help achieve the youth work aims.

Much of the work is opportunistic. This has allowed the youth work to react to new opportunities but could also result in missing other new opportunities or lead to gaps in provision.

The Management Group, Kirk Session and Congregational focus groups all expressed a desire that provision would be made for young people who were now too old for Sunday School. Such provision should be at some time more appropriate to young people other than on a Sunday morning.

This also relates to the discontinuation of Pulse8, the group for younger teens, which would have been a way to continue the involvement of younger teenagers in the life of the church.

When asked why Pulse8 stopped the Focus Groups found it difficult to give reasons. Those who expressed an opinion gave different answers:

- not enough leaders
- leaders were exhausted
- falling numbers of young people
- competing demands and difficulties getting adults to bring young people along
- exhausted / sickness
- young families

Some suggested that Pulse8 was meant to restart but didn't. No one was sure why not, although an opportunity to become more involved in chaplaincy work in the schools arose at around the same time.

8.4 Delivery or Development?

The youth work is very reliant on the Youth Worker taking the lead in delivery. This is not unexpected as the Youth Worker is the full time member of staff responsible for this area of work but it does pose a number of questions about the sustainability of the work with young people.

- What is the role of the Youth Worker in developing leaders?
- How can the continuation of the work be secured beyond the current post holder?
- How can volunteers be enabled to lead rather than assist?

This kind of development role requires time for strategic thinking and also needs resources.

9 FUNDING

The former Board of National Mission gave no clear guidance to the congregation about the costs of having a Youth Worker.

These costs fall into three categories:

9.1 Salary

Linwood Parish Church does not pay the salary of the Youth Worker. The Church of Scotland's Ministries Council, the Youth Worker's employer, meets the salary cost. They then deploy a Youth Worker to a congregation.

9.2 Expenses

The congregation is responsible for paying the Youth Worker's expenses including mileage, office equipment, computer, printer, stationary, phone, broadband Internet and other costs incurred in the course of the work.

The extent of these expenses was not made clear at the outset. The congregation was under the impression that their only contribution was mileage. This has been a source of difficulty, partly because the church is not in a healthy financial position.

This continues to be a problem with no clear understanding of what the congregation should pay for.

9.3 Youth Work Budget

There was no initial expectation that the congregation would have any responsibility for contributing funds to the delivery of youth work and there was no budget for youth work as part of the congregational finances.

This was recognised as problematic and was the primary reason for the establishment of a separately constituted Youth Project. It was hoped that this separation would allow the youth work to attract funding that was not open to the church as a body whose primary aim is the promotion of religion.

The separately constituted Youth Project did attract some funding but most of these were small grants for individual projects. The Youth Worker made all these applications.

The changes in charity legislation, and a desire to bring the youth work back within the structures of the congregation, led to the dissolution of the Youth Project in 2009.

The congregation still does not contribute directly to the youth work through its budgeting process. Some funds are donated from the Friday Café but this is on an ad hoc basis.

There is a separate account for youth work, a hangover from the Youth Project, which is administered by the Management Committee, also a hangover from the

constituted project. As at the end of March 2010 this account contained a little over £200.

For most After8 activities the young people either pay themselves, fundraise or both for residential. Fundraising activities have become part of the programme for After8 and have contributed greatly to the development of the group. They have promoted teamwork, organisational skills, creativity and a sense of purpose. Something significant would be lost if these fundraising activities were to stop but the uncertainty of funding makes forward planning extremely difficult.

10 EVALUATION

10.1 Evaluation of Church Based Youth Work

After8 evaluates its work informally. This is especially true of residential where the group always discuss their experience on their return.

That said, there is no written record of this evaluation process so it is difficult to see how the findings are carried forward, acted upon or learned from.

Work with young people is based on building positive relationships. Relationships are obviously hard to measure, but this does not mean that there are no tools to evaluate the effectiveness of the work.

Lack of formal evaluation means it is difficult to gauge the impact of the work.

Qualitative methods would be much more appropriate than any quantitative measure but in some cases, like the COSY Café, attendance numbers give some indication of the level of engagement.

11 RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 Strategy

The Kirk Session, in consultation with the Minister and Youth Worker, should prepare a strategy document outlining the key areas of work to be addressed. This should project forward to between 3 and 5 years.

This should include:

- A clear definition of the age range of the youth work (e.g 10 – 25)
- A clear definition of the range and scope of the Youth Worker's remit. This should also address the relationship to, and expectations of, the national church events and commitments and the Glen Kin Experience.
- Church based provision for the Primary 6 – Secondary 2 age group (e.g. restarting Pulse8)
- Addressing the variety of regular worship opportunities beyond Sunday morning worship
- A commitment to recruit, train and support volunteers to deliver services
- Funding requirements and a plan for accessing funds
- Communicating work with young people to the wider congregation and community

11.2 Management

It is important that a clear structure be in place to consider strategy, policy and financial arrangements. This layer of management would operate alongside the more practical day-to-day management of the Youth Worker by the Minister.

The Management Committee should:

- Be a standing committee of the Kirk Session (Y& CW committee)
- Include young people as full members
- Include representatives from the schools
- Be responsible for oversight of the implementation of the strategy for youth work

11.3 Finance

Youth Work should have an annual budget agreed by the Kirk Session.

The treasurer of the Management Committee should administer this budget. The Management Committee, in consultation with the Youth Worker and minister, should produce an annual financial plan, forecasting requirements for the year ahead to allow fundraising and programme planning.

The Kirk Session should investigate sources of funding and make plans, in consultation with the Youth Worker, for accessing such funding. This should not be left to the Youth Worker.

The Kirk Session should have a clear understanding of the costs for which it is responsible. These should include the following as a minimum:

- A laptop computer and software (replaced every 4 years)
- A mobile telephone (including calls)
- Mileage incurred in the discharge of duties
- Office equipment (desk, chair, stationary, printer, external hard drive)
- Broadband internet access

11.4 Communication

The Youth Worker should ensure the work with young people is communicated in the following ways:

- Frequent reports from the Youth Worker to the Management Committee and Kirk Session
- Regular updates in the Parish Magazine
- Regular information about the Youth Work during Sunday Worship, preferably from young people
- An annual report prepared by the Youth Worker, involving contributions from leaders, young people and schools

- Consider establishing a suitable website to be updated and maintained by young people as part of the youth work programme

11.5 Recording Youth Work

The Management Committee should:

- Ensure that full minutes are kept of their meeting

Youth Leaders should:

- Ensure that appropriate attendance records are kept in line with safeguarding policy
- Ensure records of youth work activities are kept
- Ensure the youth work is evaluated regularly
- Include these evaluations in the annual report
- Encourage young people to record their experiences and to reflect on them

11.6 Support

The Ministries Council should create a package of support for congregations which are considering a Youth Worker, including:

- Consideration of the role of the Youth Worker
- Expectations of the congregation
- The role and ethos of youth work
- Financial commitment of the congregation (expenses and budget)
- Strategic planning
- Regular evaluation
- Expenses and budget
- Office equipment
- Line Management training (discipline specific)
- Continuing Professional Development (e.g. First Aid, Minibus licence, Child Protection)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - PROJECT BRIEF

Introduction

The Youth Work at LPC is at a crossroads. As a team it is time to pause and evaluate what has happened. Reasons: The work is cyclical; YP are now coming out of Youth Work; practical considerations (accommodation, finances); lack of review process to date. We have decided that a review and consultation are needed at this time, so that the work done can be evaluated, highlighting strengths and points for growth. We hope then to see a clearer picture of the way forward.

What We Want To Do

A process of consultation with all stakeholders in LPC youth work who have been involved since its inception up to the present:

Consulting as broadly as possible with different stakeholders, find out

- Benefits from the Youth Work since Youth Worker came into post
- Has the work met expectations of those involved in achieving the appointment of a Youth Worker
- Were the expectations realistic
- How has the work impacted the lives of people who have been associated with the work (youth and volunteers)
- What have been the difficulties and disappointments
- What do people see as the future of the Youth Work at LPC
- What about the young people who are now 18+ - how do people perceive them in relation to the Youth Work at LPC and to LPC in general
- How has the Youth Work at LPC been funded
- Has the funding been sufficient
- How was the organisational management of the work undertaken
- Was that satisfactory

Outcome

A written report containing evaluation and pointing to possible future steps, including remit for the Kirk Session Youth Work Committee.

How We Want It Done

Involve representatives of all stakeholder groups –

- Adults who can remember what was intended, including Kirk session members, Congregation, Management Committee, Volunteer youth leaders, Supporters
- Young leaders
- Group members (young people)
- Other users/ beneficiaries eg school staff& pupils; parents & family; wider community eg Community Learning and Development

Qualitative rather than quantitative

In-depth input and reflection from the young people

Content of the report to include:

- Budget: How was/is the work funded?
- Organisation and management of the work –How was that done? Was it satisfactory?
- Good news stories
- Points for growth

Outcome

A written report, as detailed above

APPENDIX 2 - METHODOLOGY

HOW THE INFORMATION WAS GATHERED

Choosing a Methodology

The Project Brief (Appendix 1) required two things, qualitative data and stakeholder involvement. It became obvious that gathering the relevant stakeholders into focus groups would be the most appropriate way to collect the qualitative data requested.

The opportunity to follow up these stakeholder groups with one to one interviews was available but proved unnecessary due to the consistency of the issues raised across the groups.

The Stakeholder Groups

Each group of stakeholders has a different connection with the youth work.

The focus groups were:

Kirk Session – the ruling body of the church comprising Elders

Management Committee – a committee established during the period when the youth work was governed by a separate constitution and still in existence

Youth Leaders – those currently working with young people through Linwood Parish Church (mainly with After8)

Young People – the members of After8

School Staff – from Linwood High School and

Parents & Supporters – parents of young people who have contact with the youth work through After8 or school activities, representatives or the Parent Teacher Council and Community Learning & Development

Congregation – people from the church who did not fall into any of the above groups but who hold strong opinions on the work. This group include some younger people who attended with their families and contributed to the discussion.

The Minister and Youth Worker identified the members of each stakeholder group. There are issues around the impartiality of those directly involved in the work selecting the members of each focus group but the reality was that only two of the groups could be compromised in this manner, the Parents and Supporters and the Congregational Groups. The other groups are comprised of people who are either employees, members or who have been elected or appointed to the Kirk Session or Management Group.

These stakeholders were then invited to participate in a focus group by letter. The letter explained the purpose of the research, the format and that the report would be available to anyone who wished to read it. The data collected has also been used by the researcher in a Masters in Research dissertation for Glasgow Caledonian University, which will also be available to anyone who wished to read it.

The participants were advised that data would be anonymised in the reports and that should they wish to make comments confidentially they could do so by letter or email.

Each Focus Group lasted for one hour and was asked the same basic open questions based on the research brief. Each group were also asked some questions specific to their role and relationship to the youth work.

Young People

The focus group with the members of After8 (the youth group) followed a slightly different format from the others, taking into account the age and nature of the group as service users rather than those responsible for providing the service.

This session was more interactive, using simple post-it responses and visual prompts to help stimulate discussion around similar topics.

A brief questionnaire was also used with the young people to allow them to make comments they may have been uncomfortable making in the presence of their peers.

Schools and Parents

The Schools and Parents groups met at the same time in the same place meaning the methodology had to be adapted. Instead of a conversation based around open questions with verbal responses the group was divided into teachers and others. Each group discussed their answers to the same questions and listed them on large pieces of paper.

This was particularly helpful as it allowed a comparison in a time of discussion at the conclusion of the session.

Interviews

The minister and Youth Worker were interviewed individually for around one hour each. They were asked the same series of open questions based on the topics highlighted in the review brief (Appendix 1).

They were not part of any of the focus groups given their unique and highly involved roles. This removed some of the possibility that their leadership positions might influence the conversations. Of course this influence can never be completely eliminated as conversations would take place prior to the focus groups.

Documents

Copies of minutes, reports, job descriptions and a project timeline were provided for context and analysis.