

Bridge in a Box

When we discovered we were going to be put in a second lockdown in the Autumn, the team set about putting together a project to visit ten young people who had been isolating, or who we knew were struggling. The idea was to put the "Bridge in a box." Over the course of a couple of weeks, we visited 10 young people, starting with the one who was most isolated. This has been a wonderful project, and the time we spent on the doorsteps with young people and their parents made the whole thing worthwhile.

In the box we put a few things from the tuck shop, a can of fizzy drink, some information about staying connected, advice for good mental health in the winter, and a personal card.



*"You guys!! Thank you!! That's just made our day! How thoughtful!
We are so grateful! Lots of excited noises coming from behind the
box as he looks through it!!
Really really kind of you, thank you. xxxx"*

A big thank you!

As an independent charity, The Bridge Youth Centre relies exclusively upon grants, individual local supporters and local supporting business partners who join with us in our work to help young people become Secure, Successful, Proactive & Independent. We want to extend our thanks to several generous individuals, to Libra Systems, to Lowe and Fletcher, and to Torchbearers Trust for their continued support.

Also to the Mayor's Charity, Bridgnorth Lions, Junior Youth Telford Football League, and the Government COVID Support Grant Scheme for contributions towards the work of The Bridge over the past year.

A big 'thank you' too to Ed Brown of EdSpin for all the decorating and the amazing art work he has created for us over the past year, which has transformed our upstairs area, much to everyone's delight.

THE BRIDGE YOUTH CENTRE

2020 Report



The Bridge Youth Centre

The Bridge Youth Centre aims to help young people become Secure, Successful, Proactive & Independent. We seek to achieve this by providing a high quality, safe centre to work from, a professional team of youth working staff, adult volunteers, and a group of young volunteers who participate in a local training programme.

As a completely local charity, we're in a unique position to make an impact on the youth culture of our town. Our staff, volunteers and all of the resources we use are local, as is our funding. We rely on the generosity of local people and businesses to carry on providing great opportunities for young people.



Before the first lockdown in March we were able to hold two Movie Days and an Ice Skating Trip with **15 young people** as well as our normal sessions. Also **2 of our amazing young volunteers** were recognised by the Bridgnorth Lions Club with Youth Community Awards. After the summer we managed to re-open with all the necessary COVID precautions to allow as many young people as possible to come back into Tuesday and Friday sessions, until we were interrupted again by the November lockdown.

In total 81 young people attended sessions in The Bridge last year despite all the difficulties caused by the lockdowns.

Report from Becki about running youth work during the lockdown.

“Every week we have been running virtual youth on Zoom. Although there were initial teething problems, we have had around **15 different young people** engage with these sessions. We play games like ‘Who am I?’, Mafia, Categories, Heads Up, and take time to chat and catch up. I also posted on Instagram daily, giving the young people quizzes, encouragement, and tips on maintaining good mental health. Being visible on social media ended up being really important, and it gave the young people an easy avenue to contact us about things they were concerned about.”

Pictured above: Sharon: Safeguarding. Michelle: Admin. Connor: Session worker. Craig: Volunteer
Keith: Chairman. John: Manager. Becki: Assistant Manager. Mark: Volunteer



ICE SKATING & PHOTO CHALLENGE FUN

It's easy to forget that prior to March 2020, we were still able to accomplish a good number of things. We opened up The Bridge for free for all young people in January, we ran an after school session for young people who wanted extra support, and during the February half term, we took a group of young people into Telford for a day of ice skating, McDonald's and a photo challenge. We had so much fun, even though a few young people were very nervous about the ice. We were so impressed with how more confident skaters were encouraging them and helping them out. The photo challenge was a great opportunity for the young people to get to know people they may not have previously interacted with as much. It was such a fun bonding experience, especially given that we linked with a few young people from Telford as well.

Lockdown 2020

Although it is true that we were able to come back in to the building at times in 2020, the overarching picture is one of finding ways to support young people while they were separated from each other. Of course, in this regard, parents and schools play a massive part, but for what we were able to do, we were proud to be there consistently every week, even if it was only online.

“My children discovered The Bridge as a safe place to socialise with other kids away from school and home and were very pleased when meetings continued on-line this year. This has sustained an important link with 'normality' that has played to kids' natural ability to adapt and has given them an important escape hatch where they can still be 'out' and in the company of older role models. The Bridge has been a vital piece of my kids' mental insulation against the effects of this strange year.”