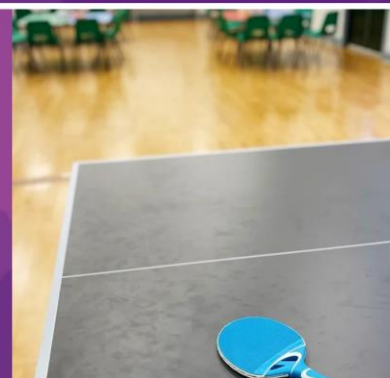
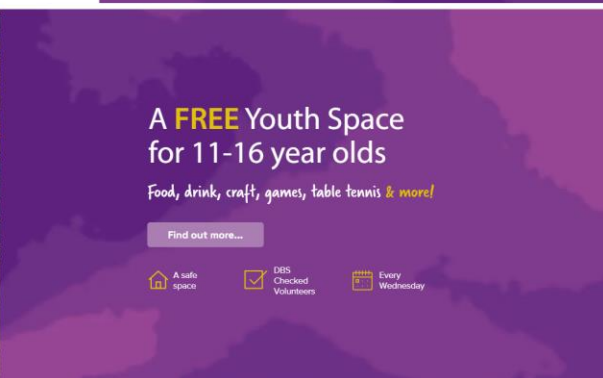
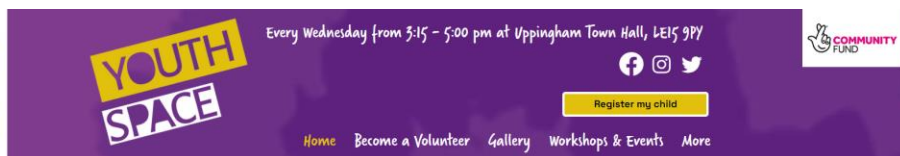


Uppingham Town Council - Uppingham Youth Space

August 2024



Uppingham Youth Space is weekly a drop in for 11-16 year-olds in the town, organised by a local charity and hosted at the Town Hall. The sessions run for two hours after school every Wednesday and the sessions are free to attend. The project aims to deliver support for young people to improve their mental health and wellbeing and to help them reach their potential. A combination of food, games and crafts are used to stimulate discussion and encourage friendship. There are visiting leaders who do art, dance, yoga, first aid, eco awareness and more with the young people. They've even welcomed the police to lead sessions. The local secondary school also welcomes a lunchtime session once a week.

Uppingham is small attractive market town with an image of affluence, but this hides the fact that within the community there are people who really struggle, relying on universal credit and food banks. There is nothing to do for young people who aren't into sport in the town and public transport is very limited. This has resulted in some crime and antisocial behaviour, and it puts young people at risk of drug use.

Securing funding for the project has been very challenging due to the image of the town as a wealthy community. However, through hard work and dedication the charity has now secured funding from the National Lottery Community Fund for five years to cover the running costs of these sessions. This will also include employing youth workers for 9 hours a week. Further funding has been secured from the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Commissioner for 12 months to help combat crime and anti-social behaviour and from the Coop.

During the two and half years that the group has been meeting many children have passed through, but there is also a core of 15 who have been there from the start and they describe the benefit to them. At one point when we were really short of money one of the girls wrote, and read, a speech for the Town Council. They were very moved and gave £3,000.

We've learned that we need rules for everyone's safety, that listening is more important than talking, that we should ask them what they are interested in doing, and that sometimes we don't get out table tennis when we want them to do drama! Sometimes we have to trust them in ways they don't expect and sometimes we are disappointed, but we try never to give up.