

MELBOURN PARISH COUNCIL

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Opening hours:
Monday - Friday : 10:00 – 13:00 / 14:00 – 15:30
Please call in advance to arrange an appointment

To all participating Parish Councils
MAYD Joint Committee
By email

5 October 2022

Dear Parish Clerk

Melbourn Area Youth Development (MAYD) Joint Committee

I write to you as both a parish councillor for Melbourn and as the Chair of the MAYD Joint Committee. This approach follows my instructions from a recent meeting of the Joint Committee on which your council has representation.

You will know that the constitution governing MAYD requires a councillor from Melbourn to act as chair. This reflects the majority interest played by this village as the location of the Village College from which the vast majority of young people attending youth club are drawn. Melbourn also willingly absorbs a majority share of the MAYD running costs.

The reason for this letter is to make your council aware that MAYD has suffered a period of great difficulty due principally to the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic stopped normal youth meetings completely for a while. The interruption was followed by a troublesome re-start. Difficulties arose due to health uncertainties and general reluctance on the part of young people to re-engage with the more 'open' pursuits that had been the case pre-pandemic – they had become used to isolation and were cautious about the re-establishment of past or new friendship groups.

This situation is thankfully changing and the Joint Committee feel very optimistic that the MAYD offering will again be an important opportunity for young people in this part of South Cambridgeshire. The Joint Committee are also aware that the need to support young people has probably never been greater due to the widespread negative impact of the pandemic on their self-confidence and mental wellbeing. MAYD is in a position to address the issues but must be properly resourced in order to achieve the objective.

To summarise, MAYD is probably more important now than ever before but requires enthusiastic support from all participating councils to ensure it is secure financially and can operate into the future with confidence.

The Joint Committee wishes to re-invigorate MAYD and have identified two routes forward.

Firstly, as a result of local research done this year post pandemic, we will be installing equipment at the Melbourn Pavilion location to create an online 'gaming café' environment. This will be alongside the regular cooking, mentoring and counselling activities provided through Groundwork East who run the sessions. We believe this rich mix will attract and engage young people. It also provides a safe space for them to better understand online safety as well as receive support in other areas, depending on individual need. Some capital investment will be required to set up the gaming café and this will need to be financed through contributions from participating parish councils.

Secondly, the Joint Committee is exploring the *Connections Bus* youth services project that is operated out of Histon. This involves a fleet of two double-decker buses that travel to different locations carrying a full complement of youth services, including youth workers, food, Wi-Fi, games and music. Bus visits can be arranged to individual villages and would be a way of positively linking MAYD with the other communities that currently support it centrally at the Melbourn location. It could operate alongside the present MAYD offering. We think this would be an exciting way of creating some diversity and interest in the delivery of youth services while perhaps sharing the services around geographically.

Again, the *Connections Bus* will need funding and forward financial planning.

I hope this background picture is helpful in better understanding the status, direction and aspirations for the MAYD project. It is both difficult but also very important to provide good support to young people. The MAYD platform is a very efficient way for a group of different councils to finance and jointly deliver on their obligations to their young people as they move into adulthood. The Joint Committee members strongly believe in the future prospects of MAYD and have asked me to make that case very clear on their behalf.

Please therefore look generously on both routine and non-routine requests for MAYD funding when these are put forward for approval at your particular council meetings. It is our obligation to young people to do the best for them and we seek your help.

Yours sincerely

John Travis

Cllr John Travis
Chair, MAYD Joint Committee

cc:

- Meldreth Parish Council
- Shepreth Parish Council
- Foxton Parish Council
- Royston Town Council
- County Cllr van de Ven, CCC
- District Cllrs Hales and Hart, SCDC
- District Cllr Stanier, NHDC
- Amanda Silvester, Cambridgeshire County Council
- Groundwork East