

2020-2021 Supporting young people throughout the Pandemic thanks to financial help from local groups, shops, charities, councils & national funders

We are very grateful to the following organisations and individuals for their donations, grants and advice during the Covid-19 pandemic. As well as directly supporting our Covid-19 response and the needs of young people, we have also been able to refurbish and re-equip the Centre to reduce running costs, make it more attractive to a wider range of hirers, and increase the ongoing financial and environmental sustainability of the charity.

When the future looked bleak, with the immediate loss of room hire and event income, the **Government's Covid Emergency Fund** was a lifeline, enabling us to retain Lead Youth Worker Brad to provide ongoing support for our 70 regular members, struggling with lockdown, school closure, cancelled exams and loss of social contact. Many existing issues faced by these young people worsened and new issues arose, exacerbated by ongoing uncertainty and fear.



From the start of the outbreak, Lead Youth Worker Brad kept in touch with

young people registered with the Centre. Through a combination of online 1:1 sessions, real-time quizzes and phone calls he was able to find out how young people had been affected. Creating a response plan was made possible by a grant from **Worcestershire Community Foundation** that enabled Youth Worker Jordie to return from furlough. Together Brad and Jordie assessed ongoing and new needs, developed new ways of working with young people, and also volunteered through the County's 'Here to Help' scheme to support families of SEND children facing acute needs in lockdown.

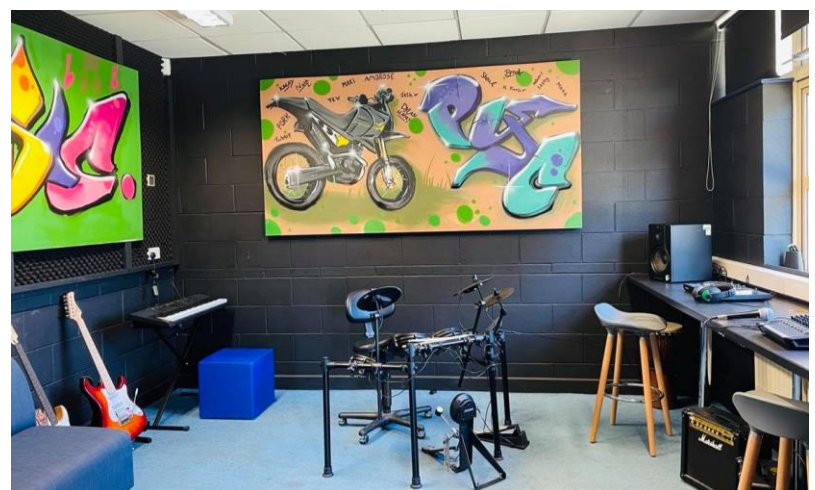
The key issue was working out how and when young people could safely return to the Centre. Trustees approved a risk-assessed plan for an outdoor - very carefully managed - barbeque evening. After this, armed with sanitiser, PPE and approved Covid safety indoor plan, we ran pre-booked 1:1 sessions in the Centre, then groups of up to 3 on the decking. When Centre Manager Abi returned and restrictions eased, we make best use of our outdoor space. Thanks to **Eckington Open Gardens Committee** and **Wychavon District Council** lending us gazebos, we could keep going through the heatwave and storms!

Hi All,
We have been
working all weekend to figure out how we can work with you & do as much as we possibly can during this difficult time...

From 6 then 12, eventually, we could allow sessions of up to 15 in the building again. We could not have done all this without our fantastic cleaners Beth and Bob. A core team of Trustees volunteered to get the Centre ready to re-open: planning and rigorously testing Covid procedures, decluttering and disposing, repairing and renovating, jet washing, re-decorating, and fundraising!

In March 2020, **Persnore Flower Club** began the Centre's refurbishment with a donation to improve the office equipment and efficiency. While the Centre was closed, Trustees took the opportunity to update more of the 25-year-old décor, creating a positive new start when youth groups returned. A vote initiated by Youth Council resulted in a purple and grey scheme, much calmer than the previously exuberant orange and lime!

The music room was finally re-equipped with a match-funding grant from **Wychavon District Council**. It is great to see the graffiti boards on the walls, as these were completed in memory of a late youth group member, in what turned out to be the last youth session before lockdown. Thanks to street artist **Title**, for running the workshop.



Just before Covid, the **Friends of Pershore Hospital** generously funded replacement kitchen equipment and facilitated a new Healthy Living Project. Everyone was delighted to have a functioning cooker (below), microwave and other equipment. Bar stools are particularly popular!



Weekly Summer cooking sessions showed youngsters in low-income families how to make cheap, nutritious meals. They enjoyed learning life skills and eating the results.

Throughout this whole period, local supermarkets have been very generous. **Asda & Tesco's** both provided fresh food, drinks and bakery products through the Fare Share scheme, which staff and volunteers collected and distributed from the Centre. Families who needed extra help because of reduced furlough payments, redundancy or the need to feed children studying at home, were very grateful.



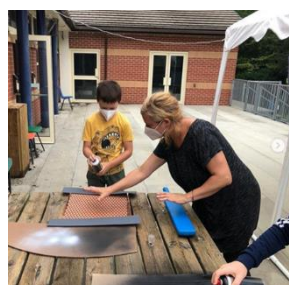
Easter 2020 saw SEND Youth Worker Terri delivering Easter eggs around Pershore. During lockdown she distributed food and support to Pershore families struggling to access shops while caring for family members with additional needs.



Wychavon District Council funded holiday hunger food packs for families in need, prepared to order by youth workers. **Worcester Waitrose** continued to supply food for regular youth work sessions and provided a chef to prepare and cook Christmas dinners for three small scale, socially distanced, youth club parties.

In August the whole team returned from furlough and could really start to make a positive difference. Young people sought support for a range of issues, including exam result upsets, disengagement from future education and fears for the future. Throughout the four Activity Weeks for vulnerable and key-worker kids, staff were on-hand to pick up on any wider concerns and offer 1:1 coaching - supported by **Tesco's Bags of Help**.

The **Summer Activity Weeks** took full advantage of our setting to offer socially distanced outdoor fun and games. Everybody enjoyed the watersports, provided by **Bonkers Activities**, and the session run by FROGS, or Youth Leadership Team.



Kate from Click Click Collective brought out everyone's creative side with colourful personalised stencilled t-shirts.

Ryan devised 'Eggcellent' Egg-Cage Olympics





Qualified youth workers, a big field, and energetic young people - what more could we want for a youth group?

Trustees received a request for goalposts

to enable everyone to let off steam, with some healthy competition. Within 15 minutes of a cheeky request, **Pershore Town Football Club** came up trumps with two surplus sets!

Active Hereford & Worcester in partnership with Sports England's Tackling Inequalities Fund provided a 6-month grant for a nutritionist and sports professional to work with children additional needs. Nicole has been working in our SEND Sunday Club, engaging with the young people and their families around well-being. This face-to-face support has been very well received – initially in the usual large group, then in smaller groups, and even works in an adapted format for online home-based delivery during lockdown.



2020 started with a blow to our regular income from the closure of a day care service based at the Centre. As the impacts of Covid became clear, Graham from **Pershore Rotary Club** became a driving force behind re-furbishing and equipping this redundant room (right) to create a multi-functional space.

Donations from **Pershore Civic Society** and **Pershore Town Council** enabled us to repaint and install modular furniture to create a bright, flexible welcoming place. This room proved to be ideal for 1:1 and small group youth work; and was essential when lockdown lifted and more young people returned to the Centre.



Without this room, we would not have been able to implement the required one-way system, social distancing and regular cleaning necessary to re-open to groups. Together with the hall and meeting room we have been able to deliver pre-booked social and targeted youth work throughout 2020 and into 2021.



Pershore Rotary Club's subsequent donation of 4 Chromebooks has helped young people without access to IT or reliable wi-fi to catch up with online learning and look to their future and career development.



The new Community Room, suitable for a wide range of users, is now available for local groups to hire. This fulfils a long-held aim of opening Pershore Riverside Centre to a broader spectrum of Pershore's community groups.

We are grateful for the following donations from local group that benefit the youth workers and Centre users. **Pershore Round Table** provided a much-needed dishwasher for youth groups and future fundraising events. **Pershore Plum Plodders** funded enhanced remote-access CCTV, enabling us to monitor the building, respond efficiently when alarms are tripped and help anyone needing access eg weekend hirers.

The Centre now operates more efficiently, which costs less to run and benefits the environment. Donations from two County Councillor Trustees enabled us to repair the boiler, install high-tech heating controls, LED lighting and sensor, which also make the Centre look and feel much better. Groups returning to the main hall in May 2021 will see the result of a youth group vote for a new colour scheme, part funded by Trustee **Dan Boatright's** 2020 half-marathon challenge. The final stage is to renovate the floor. **William A Cadbury Charitable Trust** has awarded a grant for half of the costs, so we shall be busy fundraising to ensure the work can be completed.

Throughout 2020, **Wychavon District Council** continued to support the Centre's core work, with funding for Youth Clubs, Summer Activity Weeks, the Prince's Trust Achieve Programme, alleviating Holiday Hunger and re-equipping the music room (Community & Social Mobility Grants). **Worcester County Council** funds the SEND Group (Positive Activities) and we can reclaim costs for helping 16+ NEETS into employment from the **EU Social Fund**. However, future grant funding is not assured. The Pandemic reinforced the need to increase the range of income sources and reduce running costs in order to provide essential services. We are especially grateful to individuals who sign up to make donations through online purchases - at no cost to themselves - by using **Easyfundraising** and **Amazon Smile**.

