



YOUTH CONSULTATION IN STONY STRATFORD PARISH

Produced by YMCA Milton Keynes on
behalf of Stony Stratford Town Council

Abstract

This report summarises views of 144 young people on provision of activities in Stony Stratford Parish. The valuable work of existing services is recognised and that the young people in the Parish are relatively engaged. The results of this survey suggest there is room for improvement. This could be increased marketing of existing provision and that there would be demand for a greater variety of services. Some sessions should be targeted to older teenagers.



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Executive Summary

YMCA Milton Keynes was appointed by Stony Stratford Town Council to produce and analyse a survey to gather views of young residents on provision of activities in the Parish. The survey was distributed in a variety of ways over a 6 week period. The data was collected using an online survey tool and paper surveys.

There was a good level of response to the survey, with 144 responses and representation of all three areas of the Parish. Twenty-six percent of respondents (37) completed the survey at one of the three youth clubs in the Parish.

The report recognises the valuable work of existing services and that the young people in the Parish are relatively engaged. Half of respondents (71, 49%) felt that the activities and groups available to them were good or excellent. However, only one third of total respondents attend activities in the Parish, which drops to 10% for those aged 15-19. Of the young people aged 15-19, the majority (17, 55%) thought that the range of activities and groups available to them were awful. These results suggest there is room for improvement. Responses to this survey indicate that increased marketing of what groups do would be beneficial and that there could be demand for greater variety of services. A popular suggestion was a youth café but there were a variety of ideas and many could be provided or facilitated at relatively low cost. Some sessions should be targeted to older teenagers.

The report makes a series of recommendations for supporting existing services, additional services and communication with the young people.

Recommendation 1: The Town Council thank the young people for their responses and update them on the actions it plans to take as a result of the survey as soon as possible, while the survey is still fresh in their minds.

Recommendation 2: Increased marketing of what groups or activities involve.

Recommendation 3: A wide range of communication techniques should be used to provide information to young people in the Parish: email, school, Instagram, website and, where possible, personal invitation.

Recommendation 4: The Town Council should consider ways to increase the variety of activities in or near the Parish, particularly the feasibility of the suggestions made by respondents. This could include trialling, or facilitating trials of, a youth café(s).

Recommendation 5: To provide additional activities or groups targeted at older teenagers, possibly sessions of a trial youth café or transport to existing facilities targeted at older teenagers.

Recommendation 6: The report should be shared with relevant stakeholders, such as leaders of the Parish's youth clubs.

1. Background

YMCA Milton Keynes was appointed by Stony Stratford Town Council to produce and analyse a survey to gather views of young people in the Parish on provision of activities in the Parish. The survey covered all activities and groups that were available to young people in the Parish. It was primarily targeted at young people resident in the Parish.

The report is primarily intended for Town Councillors but may also be of interest to organisations providing services to young people in or near the Parish.

2. Definition of terms

<i>Respondents</i>	Although 71 respondents answered the questionnaire and 65 clicked through to the end, not all respondents answered every question. For this reason, as well as stating the number of respondents giving a particular view, the report also includes the percentage of respondents giving that view, <u>as a percentage of the number of respondents that answered that particular question.</u>
<i>n =</i>	In tables and charts, "n=" is used to indicate the total number of respondents that answered the question, or in that cohort.
<i>Young people</i>	For the purpose of this report, young people self-defined themselves as "young people" by completing the questionnaire.

3. Method

YMCA Milton Keynes and Stony Stratford Town Council worked together to develop the consultation questions. The survey can be found at Annex A.

The questionnaire was available on the Town Council website using an online survey tool (SurveyMonkey) from 24th December – 3rd February and was further circulated in three ways:

Parish magazine: Paper questionnaires were distributed to every household in the Parish via the Parish magazine, the Town Crier. Completed forms could be posted, emailed or delivered by hand to the library. These were added to the online survey.

Local schools: The main secondary school serving the Parish, The Radcliffe School, circulated the electronic link to their students. A large spike in responses was seen on the day of circulation.

Youth groups: The questionnaire was circulated at the two youth clubs in the Parish, and also at a one-off event in Galley Hill:

- York House Youth Clubs at York House Centre, London Road: Juniors (age 7 – 12) 5:30 – 7pm; Seniors (age 12 +) 7:15 - 9pm
Mondays - 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th January
- Youth MK Junior Club at Rowans Children’s Centre, Fullers Slade - 6.30-7.15pm
Thursdays - 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th January
- One-off event, Small Meeting Place, Galley Hill, 12.30-2.30pm
Saturday 18th January

Paper responses were received from all youth clubs and the one-off event in Galley Hill; these were added to the online survey.

Due to the relatively small size of the dataset, responses were primarily analysed as a complete set. Where they provide interesting insights however, sub-sets of data have also been analysed. The sub-sets used were those who completed the form at a youth group, and older teenagers (this was arbitrarily selected as 15 – 19 year olds).

4. Demographic of respondents

4.1 Total responses

Overall, there was a higher than expected response rate to the survey, with a total of 144 responses and 118 respondents (82%) clicking through to the end of the survey (Completion Rate). Thirty seven (26%) responses were collected in hard copy at youth clubs in the Parish.

4.2 Locality

Of the 107 respondents that indicated where they lived, 103 were from the Parish. The numbers of respondents from each area of the Parish are shown in Table 1, below. All three areas of the Parish were well represented in this survey, in a similar proportion to the overall population of these areas, as discussed at Annex B. In addition, four respondents that completed the form at a youth club did not identify themselves as being from the Parish. Three of these respondents were from Wolverton, the other did not specify.

4.3 Youth club attendees

Of those respondents that completed the survey at one of the three youth clubs, the responses were skewed, with the majority (18, 56%) being from Fullers Slade (see Table 1). Of these, all but one had attended the Youth MK Junior Club at the Rowan Centre in Fullers Slade. Of the youth club attendees that were from Galley Hill, two had attended a youth club at York House in Stony Stratford, one didn't specify. It should be noted that while 2 of the youth clubs meet weekly, the youth club at Galley Hill only meets once a month.

Area	Total respondents that gave their area of the Parish	Responses collected at a youth club where the respondent gave their area of the Parish
Fullers Slade	38 (37%)	18 (56%)
Galley Hill	13 (13%)	3 (9%)
Stony Stratford	52 (50%)	11 (34%)
Parish Total	103 (100%)	32 (100%)

Table 1: Area of the Parish which respondents were from

4.4 Age

There was a good spread of ages among respondents, see Chart 1. The age of respondents varied from 8-19, with at least one response from all ages except for 18. The highest response (24 responses, 21%) was from 11 year olds. The age of respondents at the youth clubs had a similar spike. Of those that attended a youth club, only 5 were aged 15 or over.

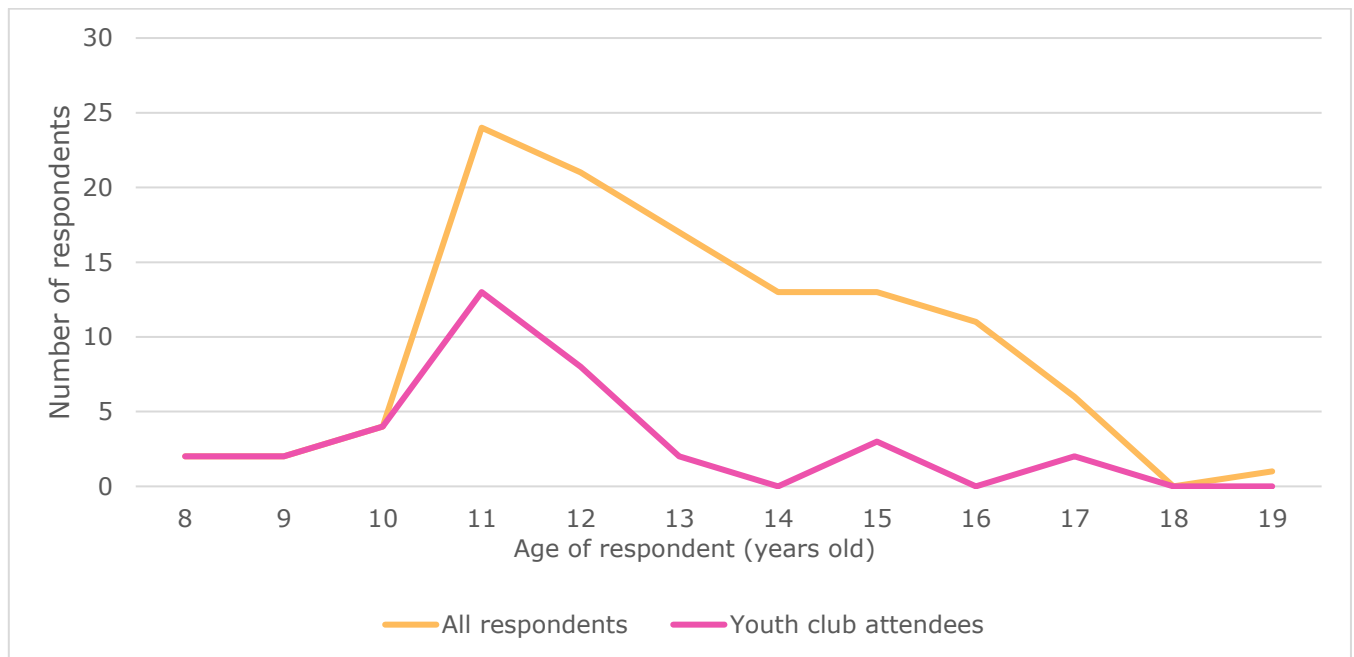


Chart 1: Age of respondents

5. Results

5.1 Views on activities currently available

Every respondent rated the range of youth activities and groups available to them, as shown in pink in Chart 2, below.

- Half of respondents (71, 49%) felt that the activities and groups available to them were good or excellent,
- 29% of respondents (42) felt that the services were not bad,
- 21% of respondents (31) felt that the services were awful.

Despite this, only 30% of respondents (43) said they had attended groups or activities in the Parish – significantly less than the number that considered the range available to be good or excellent. It could be that these young people are accessing activities or groups elsewhere in Milton Keynes.

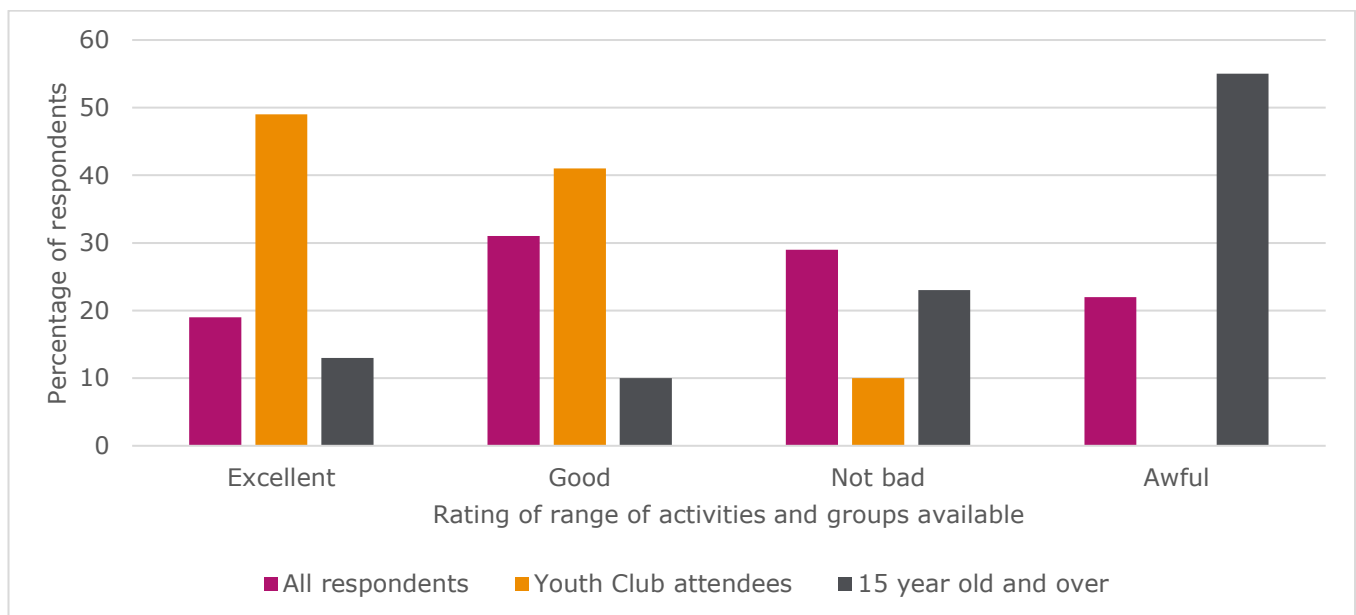


Chart 2: Rating of the current range of youth activities and groups available

Of those young people that completed the questionnaire at one of the youth clubs, the results were extremely positive, with 89% of respondents (23) rating the range of activities and groups available to them as good or excellent. The results are shown in orange in Chart 2, above. None of the respondents that considered the activities to be “awful” attended a youth club. This is likely to be a positive reflection of the service they feel they receive through the youth club, as many of this cohort had suggestions of other services they would like to see in the Parish.

Of the respondents aged 15 or over, the results were strikingly different. The majority of this cohort (17, 55%) thought that the range of activities and groups available to them were awful. These results are shown in grey in Chart 2, above.

5.2 New activities

To explore additional services that young people might like to see in the Parish, the questionnaire suggested some reasonable options to manage expectations of the young people completing the survey, with a free text box for suggestions. A high proportion of respondents (81%, 116) completed the question.

The most popular of the options suggested was a youth café serving smoothies or hot chocolate (59%, 68), as shown in Chart 3. Many respondents selected more than one option, with around 40% of respondents selecting each of the other suggested activities/services: additional activities at local youth clubs, transport to existing local facilities (e.g. the skate park near Willen Lake) and volunteering opportunities.

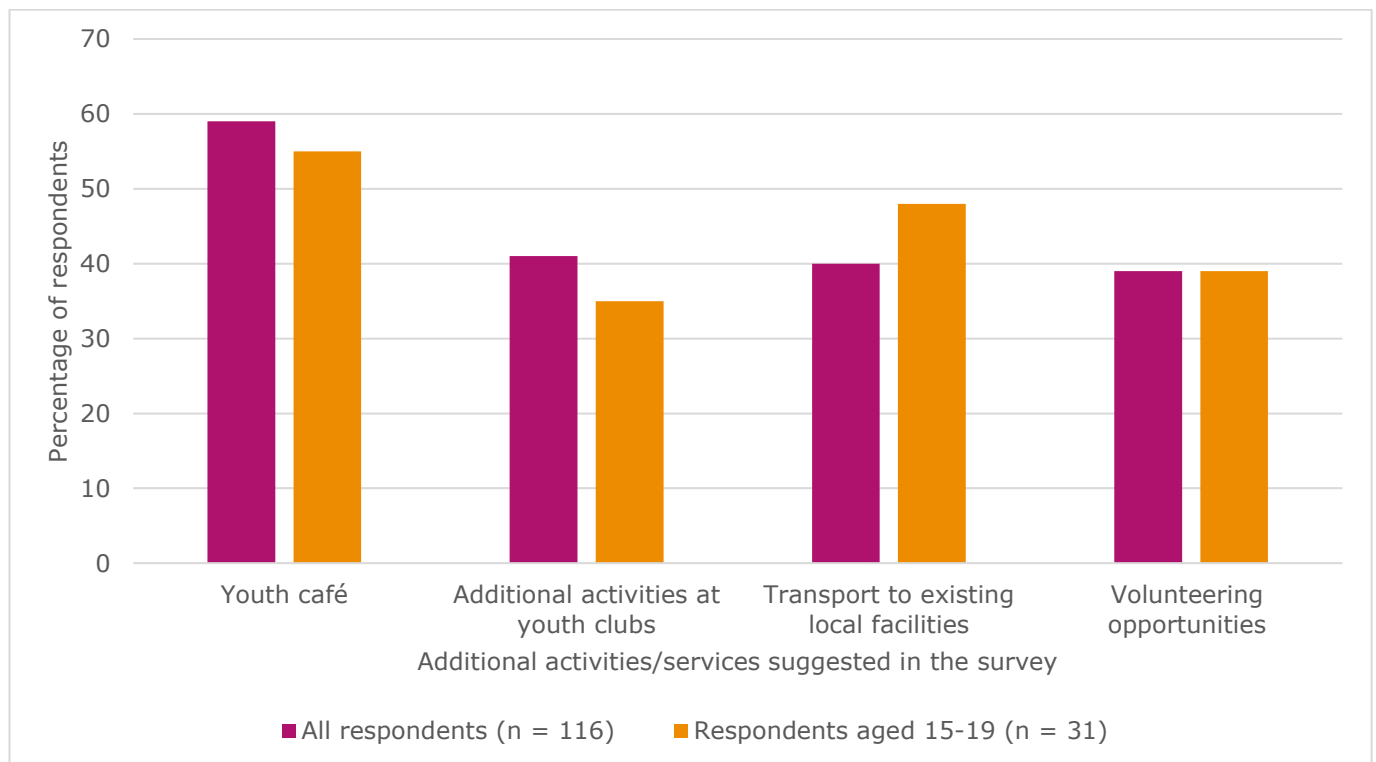


Chart 3: New activities or services suggested in the survey

Note: many respondents selected more than one option, percentages are given out of the total of 116 respondents that answered the question (e.g. 59% of the 116 respondents selected youth café).

Responses from the 15-19 year old cohort were similar, although in this cohort 55% (17) indicated that they would like a youth café with the second favourite option being transport to local facilities (48%, 15).

Of the total respondents, 20 made suggestions in the free text section. Many of the suggestions could potentially be delivered in or near the Parish at relatively low cost. The most popular suggestion was for sports clubs, with specific suggestions being basketball, swimming and outdoor table tennis tables. A cooking club was suggested by 3 respondents. The full list of suggestions is shown in Table 2, below.

Suggestions for activities in the Parish	Number of respondents
Sport ^{1,3}	7
Cooking club ²	3
Art sessions	2
Sweet shop ³ / cookies	2
A free place to hang out	1
Creative writing	1
Debating club	1
Extra activities in the holidays	1
Horse appreciation	1
Roller skating disco ⁴	1
Safer park (less drug users)	1
Skate park	1
Trips away ³	1
Xbox ³	1

Table 2: Suggestions for activities in the Parish, taken from free text responses

- 1 - Specific sporting suggestions were for basketball, swimming and outdoor table tennis tables.
- 2 - Three respondents, all under 15 years old, suggested a cooking club, one mentioned a cooking club held at The Old Bath House in Wolverton. The Old Bath House offers two weekly after-school cookery sessions: a family cook-along and a cookery & food safety session (the latter run by the MK Council Youth Faculty).
- 3 - These were suggested by respondents who were completing the form at a youth club.
- 4 - Specific examples, suggested by a 13 year old, were Jet Roller Skating in Oakgrove Leisure Centre and Jerry Roller Disco in Bletchley Leisure Centre, both on Saturday afternoons.

5.3 Reasons for not attending activities in the Parish

Of the 99 young people who had not attended activities or groups in the Parish, 76 gave reasons for not using these services. Many had more than one reason for not attending groups or activities in the Parish. The three key issues were:

- not knowing what the groups do (47%);
- not knowing anyone who goes to a group (46%); and
- not being interested in the activities available (42%).

Less respondents were concerned about the location of the activities, with 16% (12) stating that activities were too far from home and 11% (8) stating that activities were in the wrong area. These are shown in pink in Chart 4, below.

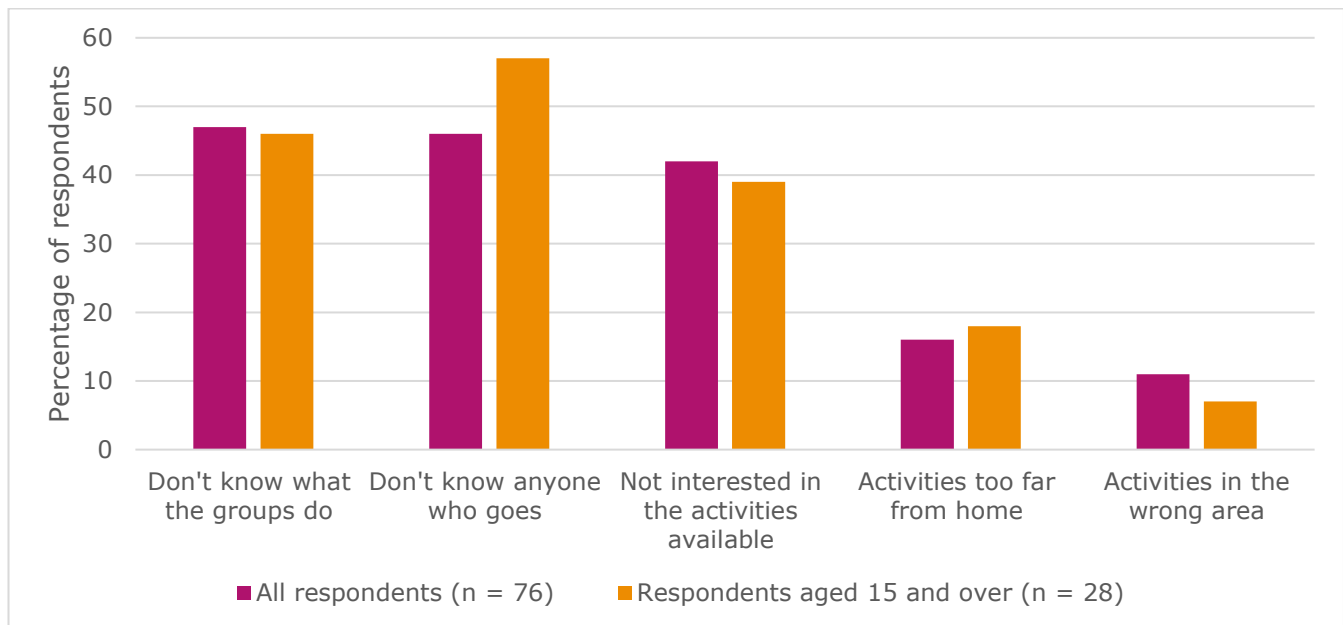


Chart 4: Reasons for not attending activities in the Parish

Of respondents aged 15 – 19, the vast majority (26, 90%) said they had not attended activities in the Parish. Their responses are shown in orange in Chart 4. Responses for this cohort were similar to the responses as a whole, although the biggest concern, for 57% (16) of respondents, was not knowing anyone who goes. Only one of these respondents used the free text section, using it to suggest that because the youth clubs were not run by young people, they did not reflect the interests of young people.

5.4 Methods to receive information

Of the 114 respondents that answered this question, several selected more than one option. Fifty-two percent stated email, 40% would like to hear information through school, 35% suggested social media and 17% suggested other forms of communication. These are shown in Chart 5, below. There was a large spike in responses on the day that The Radcliffe School circulated the questionnaire, which demonstrates that this is an effective way of communicating with young people.

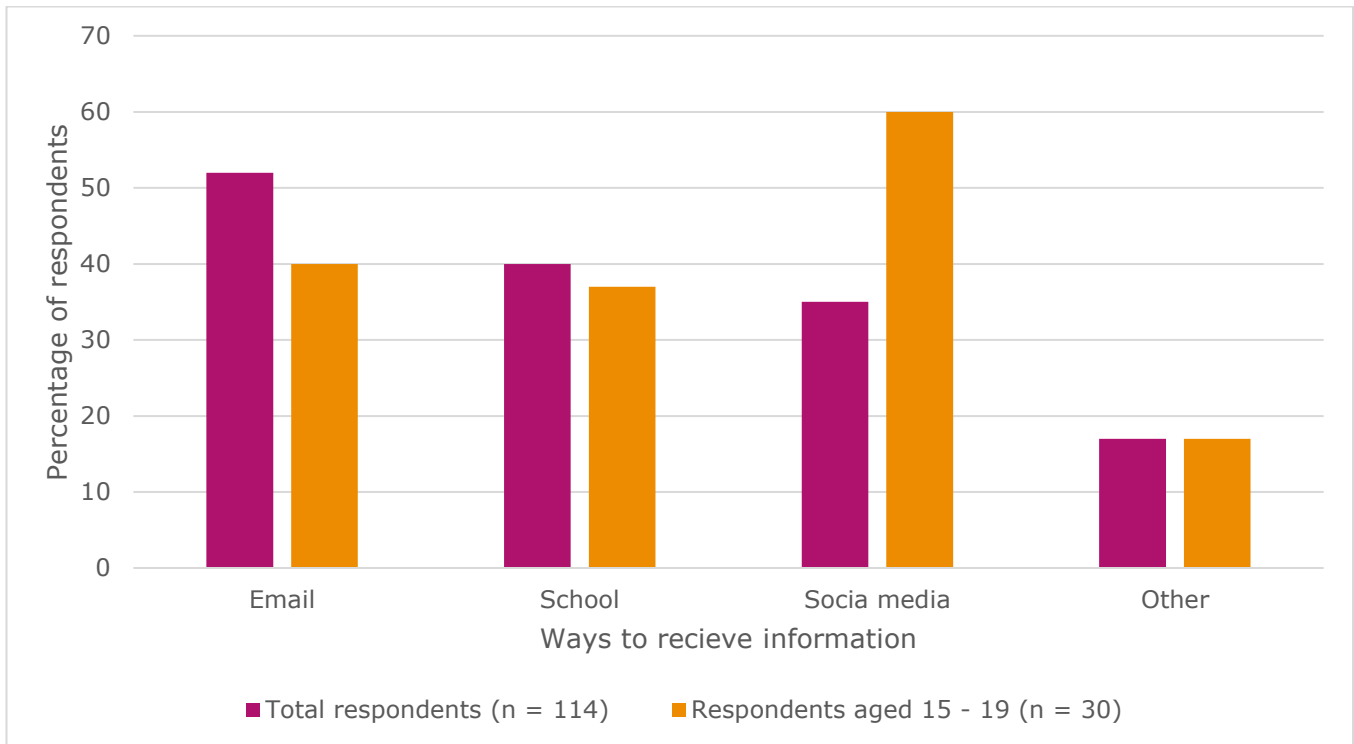


Chart 5: Preferred methods to receive information

Note: many respondents selected more than one option, percentages are given out of the total of 114 respondents that answered the question.

Other forms of communication that were suggested in the free text box included being told by family, or in person, posters and a website. One respondent stated that he/she was not using social media, so would like a website where he/she could check information. The full list can be found at Annex C.

Of the 26 that indicated their preferred form of social media, the overwhelming preference (42%) was for Instagram, with 19% suggesting Facebook. The full list of social media suggestions can be found at Annex D.

5.5 Activities that respondents had attended

Of those that had attended activities in the Parish, respondents primarily named youth clubs, but this is likely to be because questionnaires were circulated at these groups. The full list of activities that were mentioned are listed in Table 3, below.

Activity	Number of respondents
Junior Youth Club Rowans	18
York House Youth Clubs	9
Junior Youth Club ¹	2
Youth Club ¹	2
Guides	4
Act Out	2
Play association days (in school holidays)	2
Act Up	1
Brownies	1
Church	1
Football	1
Stony Stratford Scout Troop	1

Table 3: Activities that respondents attend in the Parish

1 – It was unclear which youth club these young people attended, whether it was at York House or Rowans Centre.

One respondent, aged 13, had previously attended Act Out and Play Association Days, but now felt too old for both of these activities.

5.6 Location of activities

One hundred and sixteen respondents answered this question. Of those, 55% said they would not attend an event elsewhere in the Parish while 45% said they would. However, it is worth noting that the response to the question about why young people hadn't attended activities or groups found location less of a concern than who else was going and what the activity would be.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Only one third of total respondents attend activities in the Parish, and this drops to only 10% for those aged 15-19. This suggests there is room for improvement. Survey results indicate that increased marketing of activities and adding a greater variety, perhaps a youth café, which was a popular suggestion. Some sessions should be targeted to older teenagers.

Recommendation 1: The Town Council thank the young people for their responses and update them on the actions it plans to take as a result of the survey as soon as possible, while the survey is still fresh in their minds.

The higher than expected response rate and representation of all three areas suggests that young people across the Parish are engaged on this issue and are hopeful that this consultation will deliver change. This is an excellent base to build on. It is important that

actions are taken as a result of young people's participation to maintain trust and engagement.

Recommendation 2: Increased marketing of what groups or activities involve

Not knowing what groups do and not knowing anyone who goes to a group were common responses for not attending groups or activities in the Parish. Increased marketing of what the groups do should drive more attendees, which in turn will mean that more people will know someone who goes to the group, further increasing participation.

Recommendation 3: A wide range of communication techniques should be used to provide information to young people in the Parish: email, school, Instagram, website and, where possible, personal invitation

Survey responses suggest that school is an effective way of marketing, and The Radcliffe School has confirmed that they are willing to circulate relevant information on behalf of other organisations, so this would be an effective way of marketing any activities or groups. In the survey, respondents selected a wide range of communication methods, so a wide range should be used to ensure the information reaches as many young people as possible. This includes email, social media, informing parents, posters, advertising on the town council website and informing youth club members. Parents of younger children could be updated through the local primary schools.

Experience from the young adults that use MK YMCA services is that vulnerable young people are much more likely to respond to personal invitation than any other method. Therefore it could be useful for school staff, or other stakeholders, to be made aware of the activities in the Parish, so they can personally inform particular pupils of relevant activities if appropriate.

Recommendation 4: The Town Council should consider ways to increase the variety of activities in or near the Parish, particularly the feasibility of the suggestions made by respondents. This could include trialling, or facilitating trials of, a youth café(s).

The third main reason respondents gave for not using the activities or groups in the Parish was that the activities available did not interest them. A youth café, additional activities at local youth clubs, transport to existing local facilities and volunteering opportunities were all popular options. In addition, respondents suggested a wide variety of other activities including sports clubs, cooking club and art sessions. Consideration should be given as to whether any of the suggestions in Section 4.2 and Table 2 could be provided/facilitated in or near the Parish. For example, a trial of a youth café at an existing youth club site, or a

collaboration with surrounding parish councils to provide a roller disco in a local leisure centre or hall, similar to those provided in leisure centres in Bletchley and Oakgrove.

Recommendation 5: To provide additional activities or groups targeted at older teenagers, possibly sessions of a trial youth café or transport to existing facilities targeted at older teenagers

The majority of respondents in the 15 – 19 year old cohort rated the range of activities and groups available as awful. This cohort was small, with only 31 respondents, and very few used the free text box to give suggestions of activities they would like to see. A youth café was the most popular of the suggestions made, so a trial of this could have sessions specifically targeted at older teenagers. Alternatively, transport to existing facilities was also popular option with these respondents.

In addition, further work could be done to try to establish what these residents would like to see in their Parish, this could be potentially done through a focus group at the school. Alternatively, research could be undertaken to establish what has successfully engaged this age group elsewhere, for example similar projects have been undertaken by other YMCAs.

Recommendation 6: The report should be shared with relevant stakeholders, such as leaders of the Parish's youth clubs

Although the cohort was small, respondents that attend youth clubs in the Parish were very positive about the activities available to them and made a wide range of suggestions for additional activities or services. These results may provide the youth clubs with valuable evidence to extend their current services or to apply for further funding.

Annex A – Survey Text

Youth Survey (aged 11 – 19) – activities available in the Parish

This survey is anonymous, we will not know who has replied. It is for young people or their carers – **please indicate here if you are completing this on behalf of your child/ren.**

Please either complete this survey online at <http://www.stonystratford.gov.uk/news/blog-article/youth-consultation> or return your completed questionnaire to the library or photograph/scan and send to youthconsultation@stonystratford.gov.uk. Please photocopy as necessary.

1. Please rate the range of youth activities and groups available to you:
 Excellent Good Not bad Awful

2. Have you been to groups or activities in the Parish?
 No (go to question 3)
 Yes – if yes, what have you been to and where?
.....

(now go to question 4)

3. If you haven't been to any groups or activities in the Parish, why not? (Tick all that apply)
 Don't know anyone who goes
 Don't know what they do
 Not interested in the activities available
 Too far from home
 Wrong area

4. Would you use these if they were provided in your area? (Tick all that apply)
 Additional activities at local youth groups
 Transport to existing local facilities e.g. skate park near Willen Lake
 Volunteering opportunities
 Youth café serving smoothies/hot chocolate
 Other – please suggest

5. Would you be interested in attending groups or activities in other areas of the Parish?
 No
 Yes

6. What is the best way to receive information? (Tick all that apply)
 Email
 Social media – what type?
 School
 Other – please suggest

8. How old are you?

9. Which area do you live in? (Tick one)
 Fullers Slade Galley Hill Stony Stratford

Thank you

Annex B - Population by area

We do not have data on the number of young people living in each area of the Parish, however the percentage of residential properties and people registered to vote are very similar, so they are used as an indicator of population.

Interestingly there were a high number of responses from young people in Fullers Slade compared to the population, this could be because there is a high concentration of young people in this area, or because they were highly engaged in the survey. We will not know this information.

Area	Number of residential properties ¹	Number of people registered to vote ¹	Respondents that gave their area of the Parish ²
Fullers Slade	614 (17%)	1167 (19%)	38 (37%)
Galley Hill	413 (12%)	773 (13%)	13 (13%)
Stony Stratford	2517 (71%)	4218 (68%)	52 (50%)
Parish Total	3544 (100%)	6158 (100%)	103 (100%)

1 - Data provided by Milton Keynes Council (contact: Saranjeet Chana, saranjeet.chana@milton-keynes.gov.uk)

2 - Thirty seven respondents did not answer the question and four responses were from young people who live outside the Parish, but completed the questionnaire at one of the youth clubs in the Parish.

Annex C – methods of communication

Other methods of communication	Number of respondents
Family	2
Posters	2
Website	2
Friends	1
In person (completed at a youth club)	1
Leaflets through doors	1
Letters (completed at a youth club)	1
School email	1

Annex D – social media

Preferred social media	Number of respondents
Instagram	11 (42%)
Facebook	5 (19%)
SnapChat	3 (11%)
Twitter	3 (11%)
Whats App	2 (8%)
TikTok	1 (4%)
YouTube	1 (4%)