

## Sway Youth Project, 2024

### **Background and objectives**

In the 1970s a 50-year ground lease was granted by the Parochial Church Council to Sway PC to build a Youth Centre specifically for the youth club, guides, scouts, and young people of the village, with a governance structure of representatives from these groups to manage the facilities which includes car parking. A charity, Sway Youth Centre Ltd, now manages the building but increasingly it is found that the lack of certainty about the future of the building affects decision making, for example a decision like installing solar panels is being delayed. The lease expires in 2029; five years is not a long time having consideration to consultation, design, legals, funding, planning and building of any scenarios that would replace or adapt the Youth Centre and so Sway PC and the Church Council have been discussing the future. Both have agreed that it is important to understand future needs before any progress can be made, in parallel with the Church's own future planning process.

Sway PC agreed that the initial focus of the needs analysis should be focused on the young people in the village given that the building is a Youth Centre. In the 2020 Sway PC village survey, with 750 respondents (c 22% of residents) there were hardly any respondents under the age of 35. It is important to understand that whatever happens to the building will cost money - potentially significant money - and this will involve fundraising. All sources of funding would require a needs analysis and stakeholder engagement before any application is considered. Sway PC, working with partners, in the last year have raised over £70k for projects such as the new tractor, the playground and electric vehicle charging points.

SPUD is an arts and education charity that creates opportunities for people to engage with art, architecture, design and the environment, and is one of the top engagement consultants in Hampshire working on youth projects in Winchester, Ringwood, New Milton and Lymington. They are based in Sway at Spudworks and so have good insight into the village, not least of which is through the opportunities they provide for young people as well as working with many diverse groups across Sway in areas such as dementia. The Council commissioned them to conduct a web survey across the village (which resulted in a 26% response rate), to directly speak to those youngsters in the village who are not involved in community activity, and then conduct a series of workshops to gather more insight into sentiment, needs and ideas. The output was brought together in an envisioning document from the youth perspectives, developing the ideas into 'what- if' concepts, through working with an award-winning Lymington architectural practice, PAD Studio. The final document, the Young People's Vision, was designed by a student from Highcliffe School. The cost of the engagement was £5,120 including the architectural input and was approved by the Council in October 2023.

The Vision was presented to Sway PC on 26 April 2024 at its public Council meeting by the principals of Spud and PAD Studio, attended by representatives of the Church, the Sway Youth Centre Management Committee and other residents.

Whilst the views from the study are only those of the youth of the village the document and output is both very professional and thought provoking if not inspiring, with some good ideas. On 30 April, St Luke's Church facilitated an open evening for residents to find out more about the church and get involved in their own strategic planning process. The Young People's Vision document was shared with residents who attended.

No decisions have been made on any aspect of the Youth Centre's future, but Sway PC have created a working group to engage with wider stakeholders in the Parish and evaluate options. Working with the Parochial Church Council, Sway PC would feed the output from the stakeholder engagement process into the planning, design and funding process, looking at different scenarios. Village consultation would be a significant part of any formal project from the outset. We have already received views from some residents, and we know the aesthetics of the village centre is a significant issue and welcome further suggestions on how to enhance it. The next opportunity to do this would be on Wednesday 8 May at the Youth Centre between 10-12 noon when Cllr Neil McLocklin will be running a surgery session, and then on 23 May from 7pm at the public Sway PC meeting in Jubilee Field Pavilion.

However, anybody who would like to discuss this exciting but complex opportunity for the village can arrange to see Cllr Neil McLocklin at any time via email: [cllrmccllocklin@sway-pc.gov.uk](mailto:cllrmccllocklin@sway-pc.gov.uk)

Links to the relevant documents:

[Youth Vision Document](#)

[PAD Studios Design Document](#)

[SPC October 2023 Agenda and Papers](#) (includes the Spud proposal)

[SPC October 2023 Minutes](#)

