

ACT : Working together for our communities

From: Kate Van der Plank on behalf of ACT Management committee, and Advisory Board

To: Scrutiny Officer, Bromsgrove District Council

Subject: Enquiry into Alvechurch MUGA

Overview

- ACT fully support the recommendation brought by the Scrutiny Committee to leave the MUGA in situ.
- We believe the MUGA provides a valuable resource for children of a variety of age groups, some of whom also attend youth club.
- The MUGA, like the Meadows, provides a useful venue for organized youth club activities during the summer months / dry weather and the youth club intends to extend the number of organized outdoor sessions next summer, now we have additional youth worker resources
- ACT are keen to contribute to, and support efforts to improve the situation at the MUGA, wherever possible and welcome the opportunity to work with the Council on this issue

Specific Responses to Board Recommendations

1. ACT request that Recommendation 3 is AMENDED to read:

‘ACT review youth club opening hours and aim to extend youth club provision (either opening more evenings or for longer), if funding can be found’

2. ACT request that Recommendation 4 is AMENDED to read:

‘ACT youth workers carry out targeted outreach to positively engage young people and encourage them to join the youth club. Youth workers to run organized activity sessions at the MUGA ’

Recommendation 3: ACT extend youth club opening time to 10pm

- By the end of January, the youth club will open for three evenings per week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) from 6.30pm to 9pm at our new premises in The Square,



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Alvechurch. This represents a recent increase of 275% in the youth club opening hours over the period of the MUGA enquiry.

- There are three barriers to extending the youth club opening hours further:
 - Cost - We need two qualified youth workers at every session and currently have sufficient funds to pay for two youth workers working 12 hours a week each. (This equates to 9 hours contact time and 3 hours planning). For budgeting purposes, each extra hour of youth club provision would cost an additional £40 in direct staff time plus some additional costs for heating, lighting etc. There would be no impact on rental costs. So as an example, to open one more evening a week, at the current hours of 6.30 – 9.00pm would require an additional £7,000 (approx)
 - Planning consent for the new premises – Planning consent was granted on the basis that the primary purpose of the new premises is for use as an Internet café.
 - Consideration of neighbouring residents – any extension to youth club opening hours will need to consider the needs of local residents and due consultation would be required to solicit their opinions
- ACT are very willing to explore options for extending youth club provision if funding were available and subject to compliance with planning consent. This could involve opening more evenings a week and/ or opening more hours / later hours each evening. A full review / needs analysis would need to be carried out to determine the most effective extension of services/ use of resources before a specific decision was made
- As above, further consultation would be required with the youth workers and young people, and local residents near to the youth club, as well as approval from the landlord who owns the youth club premises and the Bromsgrove District Council Planning Department before specific agreement could be given to the recommendation to open until 10pm

ACT therefore request Recommendation 3 is rewritten to read:

‘ACT review youth club opening hours and aim to extend youth club provision (either opening more evenings or for longer), if funding can be found’

Recommendation 4: Targeted outreach

- Part of the job role of the two youth workers is to do outreach work with young people as they get to know the area and build a rapport with the young people
- Some outreach work has, and will continue to be done in conjunction with the CSO's – the youth workers will accompany the CSO on their rounds and some outreach will be just the youth workers
- As well as outreach, the youth workers will continue to deliver some youth club sessions outdoors both at the MUGA and the Meadows. ACT have already run a number of outdoor



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sessions, both during the evenings and during the summer holidays and these have been well attended and well received (and with excellent behavior from the young people)

- From ACT's perspective, youth worker outreach can be an important tool in building positive relationships with young people and raising awareness of youth club.
- The whole ethos of the youth club is around positive citizenship and teaching young people to take responsibility for their actions and behaviors and this is something the youth workers reinforce both in their outreach work and at the club. We strongly believe that longer term, this approach and ethos will have a positive impact on ASB throughout the village
- However, whilst ACT support outreach as described above, we need to be clear of our definition of 'outreach'. **ACT are unable to support the full recommendation in this report, as we strongly believe it is not the role of our youth workers to:**

'Carry out targeted outreach, after dusk, to challenge anti-social behavior, alcohol misuse and rowdy behavior'

ACT wouldn't describe this activity above as 'outreach' we would describe it as 'policing' and as such, it is clearly the role of the police, who have training and experience in this area and also the remit and authority to take punitive action, should it be required. Under no circumstances could we ask ACT youth workers to intervene or try and tackle ASB as it puts both themselves and young people at risk

- ACT therefore request Recommendation 4 is rewritten to read:

'ACT youth workers carry out targeted outreach to positively engage young people and encourage them to join the youth club. Youth workers to run organized activity sessions at the MUGA '

David Shoesmith

On behalf of ACT Management Committee and Advisory Board

January 2011



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