

saint marys

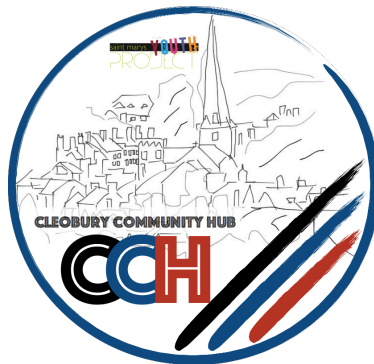
YOUTH

PROJECT

2021

# ANNUAL REPORT

ROCKTOTS



CLIMBING CLUB

Kids Climbing Club

*The Sunday Session*

CLIMB 61





**CLEOBURY COMMUNITY HUB**



## **ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Chair's Review**

The last twelve months have been another extraordinary year in the story of St Mary's Youth Project, with a lived sense of wonderful things being done within our community in the context of very challenging times. The picture has been one of growth in spread of activity and also in depth of involvement. As we have moved through the various stages of the second phase of the pandemic activity within the Community Hub intensified. It is now a home to a large number of groups widely differing in identity from Rock Tots to our bereavement support group, from structured activities of various kinds to the days in the week when for a large part the space is occupied by members of the community who have dropped in for a cup of (very good) coffee and a chat. It has become a centre for all kinds of healthy interactions which enrich and grow Cleobury's life. This development has been enabled by the recruitment of a growing community of staff and volunteers, and the cheerful and friendly atmosphere that they themselves generate as a group is a further gain to us all.

As local society has opened up so it has been possible to return to our core activities of working with families and young people. Work in schools has been extended as has informal work with youth partly through intentional relationships and partly through the means of open drop-in opportunities. We continue to try and support families. The project has a very high degree of visibility and of

credibility in the town and our wider catchment area. The status of being a 'trusted partner' in the eyes of other agencies and informal networks for which we have always striven and always greatly valued has continued to grow. All in all, our calling and ambition to try to help and support people to become their best selves we pursue with a reborn energy, post Covid.

Our enthusiasm and dedication to the project is also motivated by the sober realisation that the condition of our community has been damaged by the events of the last two years. New problems have emerged and other trajectories of harm been made worse. The drugs problem has grown, issues with alcohol have not gone away, and a whole disturbing set of behaviours around vapes are causing life-limiting problems. Family dynamics are often difficult and made worse by the lockdown rollercoaster. It is a sad realisation that schools are not comfortable places for the majority of children because of policy which relentlessly narrows down their focus to the purely academic. All children need space and opportunity to explore the other ways that they could flourish.

SMYP brings the team we have created and the resources we have assembled to try and bring light into darkness. As Chair I am profoundly grateful for the dedication and commitment of our team in making people's lives better. I remain astonished at what has been achieved in Cleobury and determined that we continue to build on our success.

**Reverend Ashley Buck**

## The History of SMYP

SMYP began life as a youth club set up by St Mary's Church in the year 2000. In 2010 it moved to a new phase, appointing its first youth worker to meet the requirement to support disenfranchised young people in the local community. The Church initially provided seed-corn funding for this project; other local charities and funders have supported our development to the current phase, when we were incorporated as a CIO in November 2019.

Increasingly, over the years, schools asked us if we could support disengaged children before they reach exclusion, and so Mark, our Lead Youth and Family Worker, developed a programme (Active Education) which also involves the parents, as without total family support and commitment it is not possible to bring about real change in individual young people. This ability to react to challenge and create positive change, manifested itself in the development of the Community Hub, designed and driven by our young people.

Taking the Cleobury Neighbourhood Plan project as a catalyst, we challenged the young people to get involved in creating a 30-year forward plan for this small town. They developed with us the concept for a Community Hub which met the active and aspirational needs of young people but was open to welcome in and able to engage the whole community. So we set about turning our Hub drop-in centre that the young people use, into the new Community Hub. With fundraising and lots of involvement and effort from local people we opened the first phase. This includes a café area, soft play, bouldering wall and meeting hall for young peoples' activities. People can drop in for coffee, parents and carers can bring

toddlers and wait while their older siblings climb, and the young people have a drop-in centre which is part of rather than isolated from the community.

Although the Covid crisis closed the Hub for a while, it did not break our community engagement. Indeed, we have now, after much fund-raising, installed a bouldering/climbing wall. We take many young people climbing and have set up a climbing club, as we are well aware of all the research showing positive benefits for this activity, particularly in supporting mental health interventions. An important part of our work right from the beginning has been to involve the families of the young people we are working with. Many of the issues young people carry are family-based and can only be rectified within a family environment. We are particularly proud of the number of young people and parents who climb together at Climb61, our bouldering wall, where often there was little interaction between them. With this installation we will now have all the prime facilities we need in one place without having to travel to obtain them.

Accordingly we look forward to the next chapter in supporting and engaging our young people in the process of "healthy community building".





## Mission Statement

SMYP has a vision to support and stimulate all young people and their families, especially those in some way disadvantaged, along their journey through schools and into early adult life, so they can discover and develop their own full potential.

To enable this vision, its mission is to provide a socially inclusive environment for young people, outside of school, that will engage and challenge them to be involved in a healthy local community, to work with them in school to build positive self-esteem, confidence and resilience and to engage with their families as appropriate to meeting the needs of the young people.



## Structure and Governance

SMYP is a charitable, non-profit making organisation and is meticulous in managing its financial affairs to break even as a minimum, within a financial year running from January to December. As part of mission in action, St Mary's and the Diocese of Hereford provided seed-corn funding with local churches, to support the establishment of the "Project", operating it under the auspices of the church PCC. SMYP

has continued to develop its service provision through donations, grant aid and income generation, particularly through the Community Hub. To facilitate the continued development of these services, SMYP became an independent charity in the form of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, in November 2019.

SMYP is run by a Management Committee of trustees, whose members are volunteers. Primarily they support the employed Lead Youth and Family Worker and his team, both employed and volunteers, by bringing a wide range of relevant skills to direct and oversee activities; ensure the development of a break-even budget; determine, prioritise and approve annual objectives and in-year initiatives.

The Management Committee in 2021 comprised (\*trustees)

Rev Ashley Buck (Chair)\*  
Samantha Dolphin (Secretary)  
Chris Kippin (Treasurer)\*  
Roger Aston  
Patrick Buck  
Leonora Castledine \*  
Nick Davis\*  
Simon Harris\*  
Sonya Hill\*  
Linda Lambert  
Rev Joe Simons

Non-executive members may be co-opted to sub-committees, to bring further expertise to particular issues.

The Management Committee meets bi-monthly, with additional meetings convened as necessary.

*"We love 'Rock Tots' - All of the staff are incredible with my daughter. The soft play is great, the climbing wonderful and the snack is incredible."*

*"We love the age range of staff and volunteers - from youth - 82yrs - They are an awesome team."*

## Youth and Family Worker's Report

Here at St Mary's Youth Project we want to say a huge thank you to you for your support over the past 12 months. It has been a trying time for many but we have seen so much compassion and support for our communities. There are so many things to be thankful for and your support to St Mary's Youth Project's growing list of activities and outreach is something we are thankful for on a daily basis.

2021 began with yet another lockdown limiting the activities of St Mary's Youth Project and the whole country. Despite not being able to meet in person for our main sessions we had continued connecting with the community in new and inventive ways.



By the end of January we had secured all of the funding for our major development in the Cleobury Community Hub (CCH): Climbe61 - bouldering wall. We had a date for the 8th March for the builders to start but there was much to do in preparation for the construction. We started working with a small group of adults to take up the floating floor and prepare the ground beneath for a concrete plinth to be installed. It was a fun project that brought together a diverse group of people that have continued to support the work of St Mary's Youth Project through the CCH.

We followed the government guidance and re-opened the CCH on

the 29th March for outdoor drinks and on the 12th April we were able to open indoors and open the newly completed Climbe61- Bouldering Wall.



We chose to call the Bouldering Wall Climbe61 based on Psalm 61:2 - "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I". We chose this verse as it highlights two important aspects of our focus on climbing and of God. When we climb, everything falls to the wayside as focus is directed on the next move, getting higher and reaching for the summit. The Psalmist wrote those words about putting our trust and focus on God, the Rock, in order to take us up and out of being overwhelmed. These words, whether someone believes in God or not, have power to help people focus and develop.

As we moved through 2021 our outreach and connection with individuals and groups has grown exponentially. Using a grant from the Nationally Lottery Reaching Communities fund we were able to explore employing a new youth worker. In September we took on Naomi Cornell as our full-time Youth Worker. In the short time Naomi has been with us, she has developed a rapport with local young people, growing relationships with the schools and has become a main feature of the work in the Cleobury Community Hub.



## **Youth Worker's Report**

### ***Youth***

Since starting in September, with the support of Mark, I have been able to set up a youth group that alternates from a Wednesday to a Thursday each week. We have had an average of 24 young people each week throughout the last 4 months. This has enabled us to develop a rapport with a core group of young people in the community. We are so excited to see what grows from these relationships in the future. Each week we have a different themed activity, such as making pizza, climbing, team games, tie dye, taskmaster challenges, junk modelling and so much more.



### ***Primary School***

Since I took up the post of Youth Worker I attend the local primary school on Wednesday mornings, working one to one or in small groups of children who may need help with confidence, lack of social skills, struggle with some elements of school or need one to one attention. I have loved working with the children and staff, helping to provide a holistic approach to a child's health and education. Every child is different; therefore, I do not have set structure but cater to the child's needs to help them overcome any issues or barriers they may face.

On Wednesday afternoons I work with Mark on the Active Education Programme (AEP). We are working with the whole of year 6 throughout the academic year, working in groups of 6 children on a 3-week programme. We use Climb61, bouldering wall, and work on different hard and soft skills that relate to climbing, such as comfort zones, boundaries, fears, encouragement and much more and as we do, we relate those themes to other areas of their life. Not only is this enjoyable for the children to climb but it helps to increase their confidence and self-esteem on and off the wall.

### ***Community Hub***

During the week, it has been lovely to be a part of the café side of the Community Hub to serve coffee and cake whilst meeting and chatting to many of the local people. I really now feel integrated into the community, especially being able to journey with people. Alongside the café, helping the team with the bouldering wall and the clubs that run alongside that (Rock Tots, Kids Climbing Club, Youth Climbing Club and Climb 61).



It is incredible to see the development of people as they climb each week. To see individuals improving in their ability, confidence and overcoming fears has been a real highlight. You can see the development from any age, from 18 months right through to adult climbers.

The bouldering wall is a great way to draw people in from the local area as there is nothing like it close by. The monthly average of recreational boulderers for the last 2 months of 2021 was 90. From January to February we have seen a third increase on that number and it seems to be growing each week.

### Looking Ahead

'Consolidation' is the buzz word from the Trustees for 2022. After all of the capital developments and covid disruptions over the past 12 months, they are keen for us to focus on doing our current activities really well in order for us to create a stable foundation for the years ahead. However, we know that as needs arise and opportunities come to the fore, we will be ready to respond, engage and support those in need.

### Mark and Bev Greaves

*"The Hub is a great place to meet friends and chat - Plus the coffee is excellent"*

*"Weekly climbing has improved my core strength and flexibility. It's a very encouraging environment, helping you go that bit further. It's even helped my football - something no-one thought possible!"*

*"We love Hub Youth. We get to do loads of fun stuff every week and hang out with friends."*

*"Volunteering at the CCH has given me a new lease of life. I am involved as much as I am needed and really enjoy serving and talking with those that come through the door."*

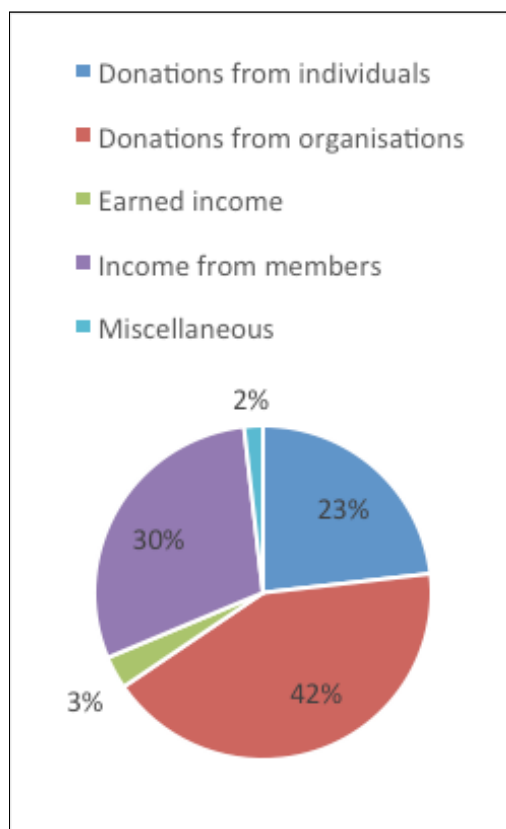
*"The atmosphere in the CCH is great. Everyone feels welcome and listened to. It is a place to feel encouraged and supported whilst also being a safe haven if you want a nice coffee and to read a book."*

## FINANCIAL REPORT

This has been another good year financially for the Project. Although overall we made a loss of £4500, this was because we spent a lot of money accumulated in 2020 on completing the climbing wall. Excluding these developments, our normal income comfortably exceeded our normal expenditure, and this leaves our capital in a healthy position to support our activities in 2022 and beyond.

### Income

The main sources of our income are shown in this chart.



### Donations from individuals

This includes donations made monthly by standing order, other donations from individuals, and collections voted by the members of voluntary groups. Most personal donations are eligible for Gift Aid tax relief, and this is also included.



## Donations from organisations

These include donations and grants from churches, charities and other bodies who have kindly supported us during the year. Overall, income from this source has been lower in 2021 compared with 2020, when our income included many donations towards the further development of the Community Hub.

## Earned income

We continue to provide support for pupils at our two schools in Cleobury Mortimer, though our ability to do that has been significantly reduced by the pandemic. Social distancing requirements have affected the hiring of the Community Hub for dance lessons and other activities, but these are returning.

## Income from members

This is the money paid by members for activities they take part in, including the café income from the Community Hub. Following the installation of the climbing wall and the resumption of other activities, income from this source has increased significantly.



We are very grateful to all individuals and organisations who have contributed to our income and helped

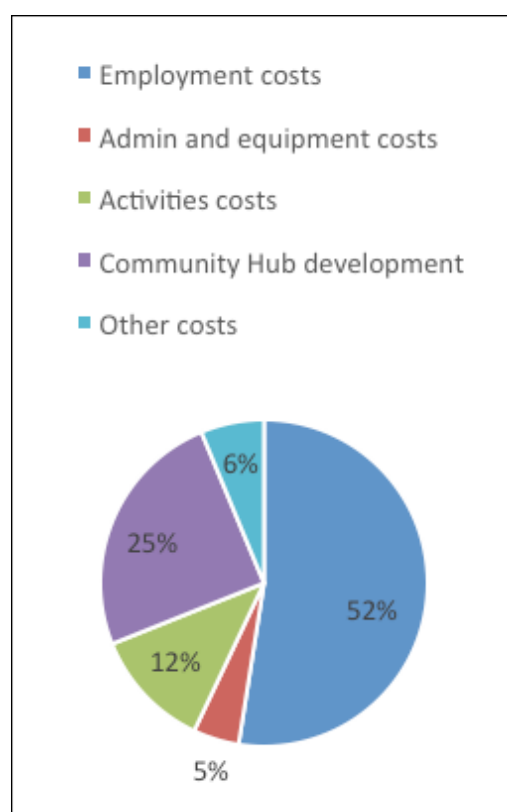
us in other ways during the year. Apart from payments from our schools and other partners for work undertaken, all our income is voluntarily given.

## Other income

This includes furlough payments from the Inland Revenue under the Job Retention Scheme, and income from selling surplus equipment.

## Expenditure

The main types of expenditure during the year are shown in this chart.



## Employment costs

These continue to be by far our largest expenditure. They have risen markedly this year because we have employed more staff during the year.

## Admin and equipment costs

These include such things as insurance, publicity and running our payroll, as well as equipment needed for delivering the services we provide.

### Activities costs

These are the costs of services and activities which we provide for our members. Some of this is covered by contributions from members themselves, as mentioned above. It also includes the overhead costs of running the Community Hub, and the café consumables.

### Other costs

This is mostly the rental we pay to the Methodist Circuit for the use of the Methodist Church premises. However, this is equally matched by a grant from the Methodist Circuit which included in our income, so there is currently no cost to the Project for our use of the premises.

We are indebted to all those who support our work financially and in other ways:

- Individuals who make donations
- The Parochial Church Councils of Cleobury Mortimer and Neen Sollars
- The New Life Church
- Kidderminster East PCC
- Cleobury Mortimer Town Council
- Cleobury Mortimer Running Club
- National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund
- Gillett Charitable Trust
- Baron Davenport Charity
- Kelton Charitable Trust
- Millichope Foundation
- Midcounties Co-op
- Joseph Rank Foundation
- Wolverhampton & Shropshire Methodist Circuit
- Connexus Housing
- Shropshire HAF

and our many volunteers who give freely of their time and talent to support the Project.

### Contact details, further information and to get involved...

#### Charity Postal Address:

St Mary's Youth Project  
Benefice Office,  
Market Hall  
Cleobury Mortimer  
DY14 8BX

#### Operational Address:

Cleobury Community Hub  
1 Lower Street,  
Cleobury Mortimer  
DY14 8BN

#### Social Media:

@saintmarysyouthproject  
@cleoburycommunityhub



#### Youth and Family Workers:

Mark and Bev Greaves  
07828116810  
mark@smyp.org.uk

#### Youth Worker:

Naomi Cornell  
naomi@smyp.org.uk

*"We are so blessed to have a facility in our rural community as good as the CCH. Often places in rural locations get overlooked, thank you to everyone at St Mary's Youth Project for helping make Cleobury Mortimer a better place."*

*"My son does not engage in sporting activities but as soon as he stepped onto the climbing wall his confidence grew and now he talks openly with other climbers and can express his emotions so much more."*







