

CCC Next Generation Project: sharing what we've learnt through our work with young people in the Chilterns



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CCC Next Generation team



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Welcome



In the chat box in Teams, please

1. introduce yourself – name and organisation
2. answer the following question:

“What comes to mind when you think of youth, nature & heritage?”

See separate list for names and orgs of those registered.

Responses to: “What comes to mind when you think of youth, nature & heritage?”

- What comes to mind? How do we breach the young people perception of heritage as dull or "not for them"
- Opportunities
- what comes to mind - potential and opportunity!
- Thoughts - it's a huge question - how do we link them all?!
- civic engagement, community and collaborating with charity and nature/wildlife organisations
- I think getting young people out in the field, doing surveys, getting hands-on with their local nature and heritage. Also work experience...
- What comes to mind is how important it is for both youth and wildlife to connect them to each other - they can both help each other so much!
- That question I think of a lot of work to be done! Lots to learn and explore and so many possibilities
- Young Volunteers
- How do we engage the next generation of custodians of local countryside?
- Engagement and inclusion



Responses from attendees cntd



- For me, the idea of making heritage relevant for young people immediately comes to mind - tying heritage to their existing sense of self and identity so that they get a sense of ownership and belonging in their local settings.
- I think of the importance of youth health, connection and well being when I think of youth nature and heritage.
- need for better understanding and how to engage in a way that is interesting and meaningful for young people
- It's a challenge -we have conversations with young people and how they might want to connect with heritage/nature
- Potential to engage with a much wider audience through a new youth audience
- Encouraging the next generation. Creating the links between old and new regarding nature
- Connecting nature and heritage can be challenging, before you introduce youth into the equation!
- Young people think and connect/behave with nature and heritage in a different way to which may be viewed as an orthodox way that the sector does. This allows for both challenges and opportunities in equal measure
- what comes to mind is that there needs to be more ways in engaging youth with nature & heritage.
- What comes to mind? Disconnected.
- difficulties accessing independently
- Nature legal rights - Youth legal access to nature, cultural and cultural heritage.
- essential roles of youth for working with the UN SDGs in respect of culture and heritage
- Ensuring young people know that nature and heritage are for them too,
- they are our future, we have to part of theirs...
- getting young people connecting with nature - make sure how to be inclusive and what barriers there are to do this
- an opportunity for engagement & participation and its benefits - wellbeing and enjoyment
- there remains an ongoing challenge (sector) to connect and inform young people, such that the sector is itself able to have greater knowledge and understanding. Currently, this in itself remains a significant gap.



Hearing from the partners



Hearing from the partners: Chilterns National Landscape



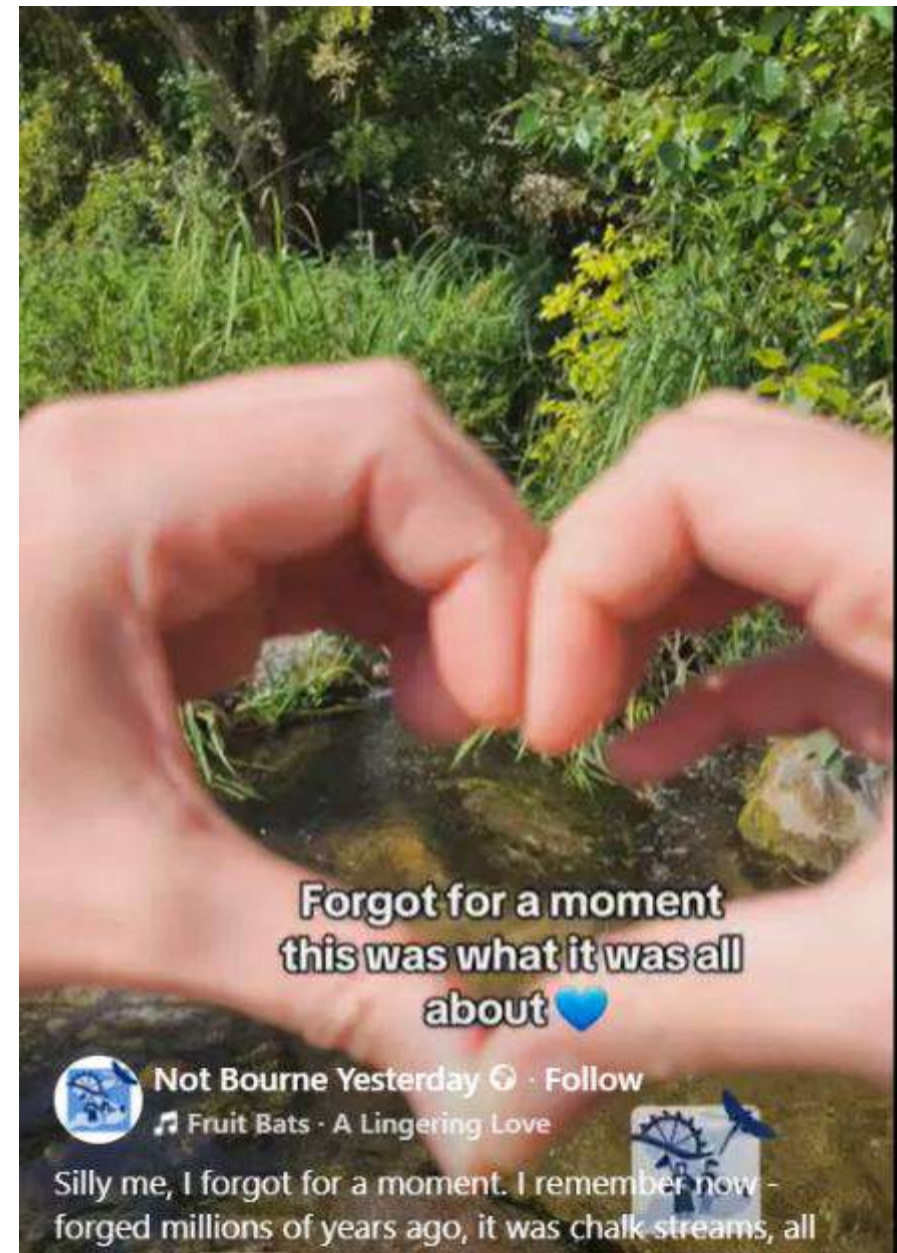
CNL strategic approach to working with young people:

1) CNL role extremely varied

- Chilterns NL Management Plan 2025-30
- CNL led projects
- Supporting/enabling others
- Commissioning/sharing research
- Grant funding
- Comms and shop window for others

2) Many other players

3) Where are the gaps and what should our role be? How can we best add value?



How we did this

- Focus on age 14 - 25
- Looked at youth volunteering/work experience, youth voice & traineeships
- Pooling together research, best practice, case studies
- Speaking to partners and stakeholders
- Piloting activity
- Assessing our organisational capacity



CNL Mend the Gap Learning through Landscapes

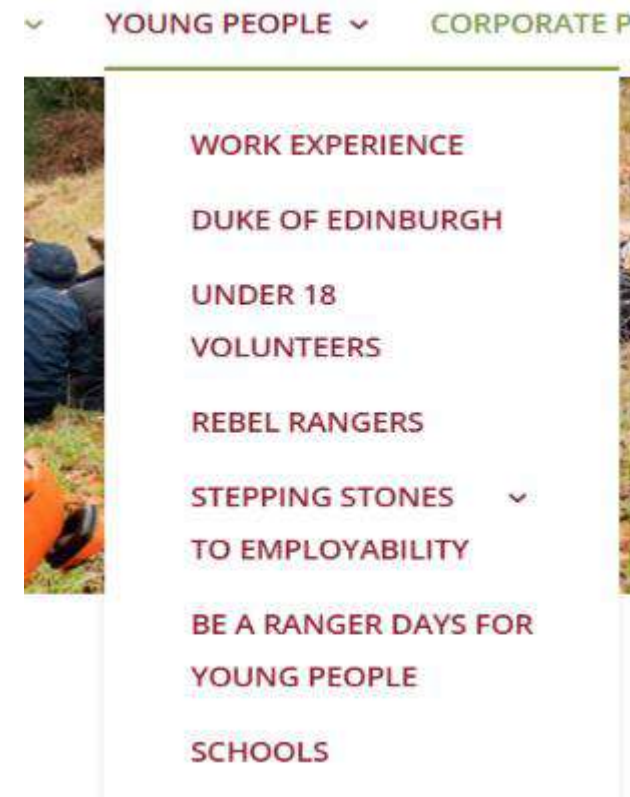
Opportunities and Recommendations

Clarity regarding CNL's Role and Capacity

- Create a dedicated section on CNL website on Youth Volunteering/Work Experience, Youth Voice and Traineeships
- Share learnings, new approaches, research
- Engaging Comms, videos, blogs and podcasts created and co-created by young people
- Develop strategic partnerships – Next Gen, Youth Voice Bucks, Education Business Partnership etc

Views of young people on accessing green careers- top barriers (Groundwork 2024)

- 70% lack of entry level positions
- 67% lack of awareness of opportunities



Chiltern Rangers website – few organisations have dedicated information for young people

Hearing from the partners: Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust



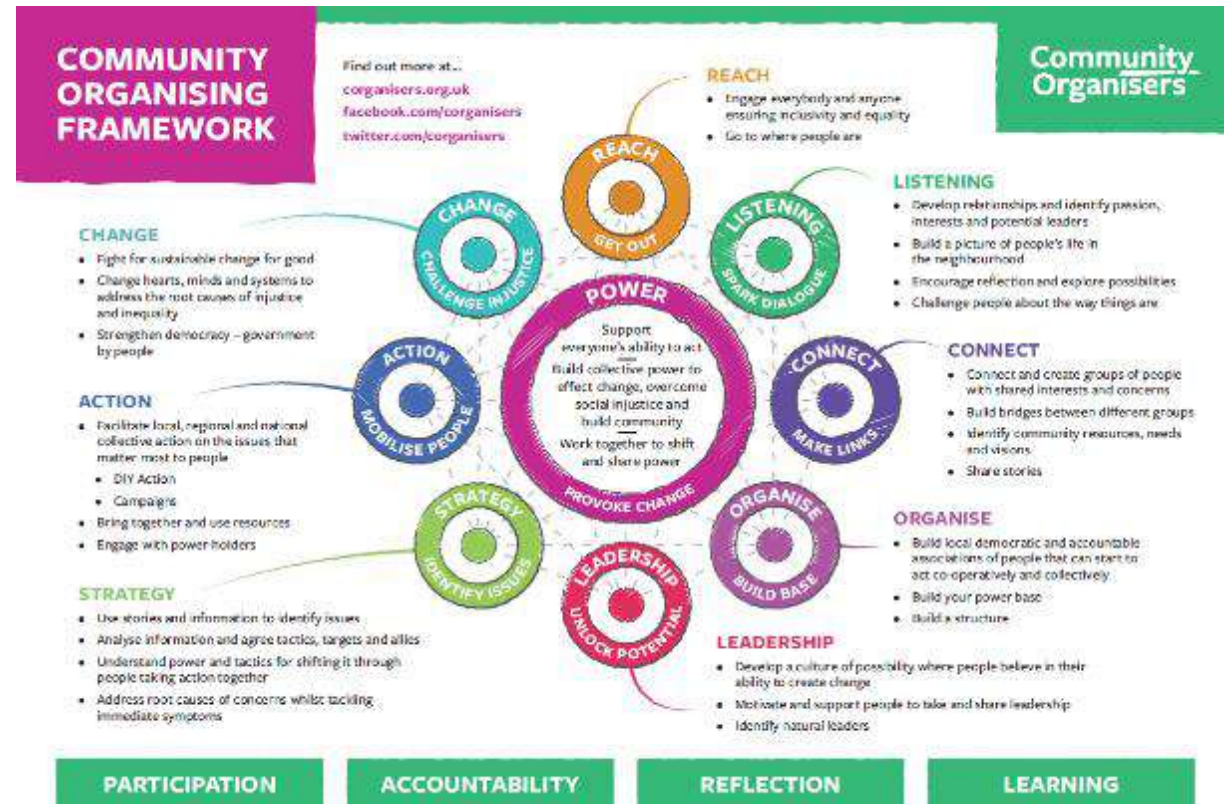
What we did and our reasoning

BBOWT's vision is for "more nature, everywhere, for everyone".

Used a new strategy to understand how young people feel about nature, to understand how we can best work with them.

Community Organising Approach
'Equipping people with the capacity to build the power *they* need to get the change *they* seek'.

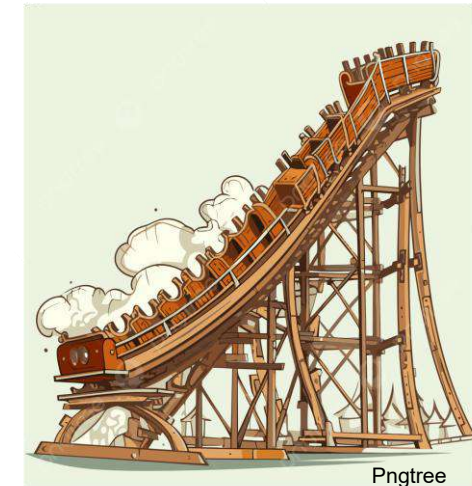
Held 14 listening exercises and asked open questions.



**Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
& Oxfordshire**
Wildlife Trust



Chilterns
National
Landscape



Listening is a skill that needs to be practiced and adaptable.



What would we pass on to others?

Listening is key – it can be the *first* step in engaging with young people



Identify your target audience

Go to them – listen, involve, co-create

Reflect, evaluate (partnerships and connection can be key!)



Hearing from the partners: Amersham Museum



Bring It Back

What did we set out to achieve?

To engage an unrepresented audience group of young people (aged 18-25-ish) with Amersham Museum...

...but more importantly to provide them with a sense of place and belonging at a time in their lives where they might be feeling unsure and/or isolated.

On-site sessions with wildlife & heritage experts, hands-on practical workshops and research. Planning, sharing and socialising!

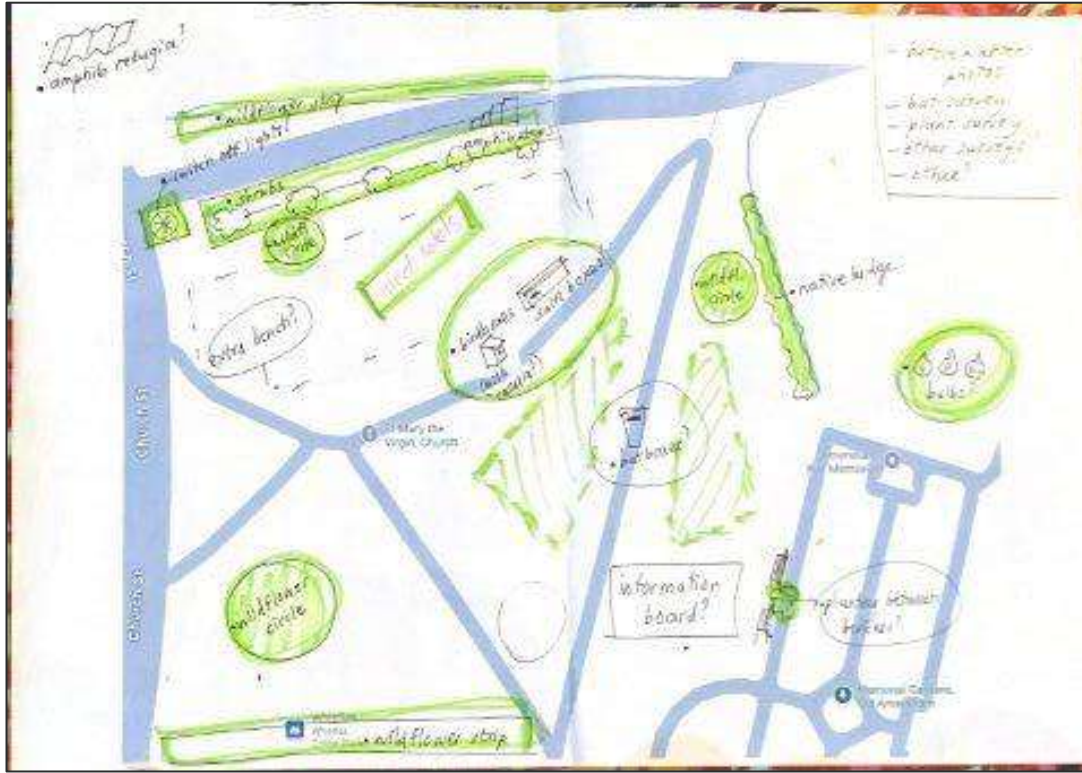


parish records
graveyard archaeology
biodiversity planning
amphibians botany butterflies
churchyard exploration plant inventory
history collections feedback and planning
choosing plants bats
plant folklore
wildflower circle planning

Partnership with

- Wild Amersham,
- St Mary's Church,
- Amersham Town Council





*Chatting to people who
are interested in similar
things to me.*

I'm not alone!

- Building momentum
- Sense of ownership
- Communication
- Letting go!

planting
owl pellets
bird box installation
chalk river habitats
history collections
planning sharing our findings
insects mushrooms
sharing skills
creating sharing resources/activities

Hearing from the partners: Wycombe Museum



Where did we start? What did we want?

We want young people in High Wycombe to feel ownership of Wycombe Museum and understand it's a place for them!

We wanted to:

- Build new relationships with local youth providers
- Develop new models for sustained youth engagement
- Discover our blockers to this ambition



What did we do?

- **Work Experience**
- **Young Volunteers**
- **Youth Groups**



What did we achieve?

- Structured work experience and youth volunteering for plans and processes
- Connections with youth groups and more work with the
- Staff buy-in, to bringing youth to our organisation

What did we learn?

- Freedom?
- Love!
- Resourcing
- Negotiated Relationships



Sam thinks about chairs



Hearing from the partners: Chiltern Rangers



What we wanted to achieve and what we delivered...

Strengthen relationships with community youth providers
Greater connectivity with new partners
Trial "new to us" ways of working

What we achieved: 10 things we did

- 1) 2 practical conservation sessions with BCG Accelerate Group (including Staff Reflections)
- 2) 1 "river clean" with Mama Bee Group
- 3) 1 "Campfire Conversations" evening event for adults working with young people, locally – motivations and barriers to engagement in nature
- 4) 1 presentation to the Bucks, Berks and Herts Science Leaders' Conference (45 schools)
- 5) 1 Youth Survey with 27 responses
- 6) 1 Adult Survey to parents/carers looking for opportunities for young people (34 responses)
- 7) 1 Nature Photography session for young people with professional photographer Neil Marshment
- 8) 1 "Wild Tribe" session based on feedback from the youth survey
- 9) 1 leaflet produced to share with partner schools



What surprised us?

In *some* cases.... fear is one of the biggest barriers to connecting with the natural world.

The fear is seemingly deeply ingrained and prevents adults from encouraging young people to venture outdoors; consequently young people themselves view the natural world as something to fear.



One thing we want to pass on...

Resilience is key for ourselves and our partners – don't give up seeking opportunities to engage with young people.

Some of these groups are hard to reach for a reason.

Long term partnerships are crucial.



Key Themes which came out of the projects



Q&A to our panel around the key themes



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Question: Are you going to try and include historical and archaeological heritage opportunities for young people as well as environmental heritage (on the CNL hub)?

Answer: Yes, that is the intention (Annette)

Question: Other than speaking about 'young people' and relating to their age, what other ways can we describe them in order to have specialist ways of connecting with them? Faith, culture, race, socio-economic background etc.

Answer: Need to tap into their interests. People don't always know what they're interested in until they have a go/are offered choices. That's why the co-created approach is so important. Need a hook to get people interested in the first place. Nature/heritage doesn't have to be the initial hook – could be through the arts (eg Nature Calling), cooking, adventurous activities (something young people have asked for), opportunities to gain some skills for finding work, free pizza, opportunity to hang out with their friends! You may find the [INSTAR](#) report of interest. (Annette)



Q&A to our panel around the key themes cntd



Question: Did any of the projects encourage their young participants to produce their reflections in their own words to share with this forum?

Answer: *We're only part-way through the projects, but all have had built in evaluation with young participants as well as organisers. At Amersham Museum, our Bring it Back group had a specific feedback session in the summer where we shared reflections and used them to plan next steps, as well as feeding them back in detail to the overall project steering group. They will also form part of the overall project's final report. (Briony) Yes absolutely, reflection and evaluation has been built in from the beginning (Roz). Agreed! We will also be sharing aspects of youth voice which came out from our our listening exercises in our final report – look out on the website (Becky)*



Q&A to our panel around the key themes cntd



Question: I understand about listening to young people, and I am very pro that - it is something we are trying to do, we want young people to help us co-create the NBY projects - but does there need to be some structure? Becky mentioned young people talking about theme parks - this is probably not realistic or nature based - how do we manage expectations but also feel like young people are being heard?

Answer: *At Wycombe we've just done this in a more free-form way, something easier in smaller groups and with young people on the older end of young. Giving space for discussion and input has been a very useful tool in moving things forward (Roz). At BBOWT we are wanting to follow the community organising method within my team in order to encourage people to take action for nature, and therefore we want to understand what it is young people care about (rather than specifically put on events for young people, although we do do this too!). If we listen to young people and then together with them co-create/co-develop their ideas, they will have ownership over the outcome, and therefore they hopefully won't feel disappointed by us not being able to deliver something (like a theme park), because we are not specifically planning to "deliver" anything – we will be building power within communities of young people to feel able take action on what they care about. Also, listening is a skill that can be developed and adapted, so while a few young people said they wanted theme parks, a few others said more climbing frames, and a few others said exciting animals, so I'm hearing that many young people want thrilling activities, therefore if you can't deliver a theme park (because who can?!), the suggestion might be to think about what thrilling activities you could include (Becky)*



Q&A to our panel around the key themes cntd



Question: What methodologies (including youth work methodologies) might be used in the future to ensure the successes of this work can be replicated/sustained for the future? Who or how might these methodologies be shared as a legacy piece?

Answer: *I feel that part of the emphasis of this project was to embrace empirical approaches, bottom up from the participants, rather than start with methodologies. What we have piloted works specifically for our organisations, but of course we hope will be useful for others. (Briony) Listening - but as I've said, not just "tick-box listening", but real, genuine listening to your target audience/community, continuously and reflectively. This may mean spending time building relationships and having multiple 1-to1 conversations with people. The community organising framework is designed to be perpetual and sustainable, so do give it a look up. It's just not necessarily fast! (Becky)*



Q&A to our panel around the key themes cntd



Question: Which were the best times of year to schedule and facilitate activities? I have found in the past that final year GCSE and A Level students tend not to attend from early spring to mid June, but then really are keen to engage during the Looong summer holiday after - just when permanent staff are away.

Answer: *It really depends on who you're engaging with and what you're doing. It is really challenging, especially for small, under resourced organisations, but if you ask young people for their views, then is there another way of running things to help provide them with what they need/want....? (Anna). Our project ran across the summer holidays which worked fine for our young people's availability, but was really hard for staff who – as parents – needed to take school holiday leave. Our main challenge was finding times when staff and young people were both available – weekends and early evenings can be hard for staff to facilitate, but were the best times for the 18-25 year olds. (Briony) It depends on the group you're working with – for example youth groups work on a termly basis, but many do projects in the holidays. Work experience is always late spring / early summer – can't change that! (Roz) In conservation there are parts of the year when nothing can be done so things have to work around this and adapt to the seasons! (Steph)*



Q&A to our panel around the key themes cntd



Question: How are organisations reaching out to youth groups? What is the most effective way?

Answer: *We discussed at the start who would approach who so that we didn't bombard groups. We went through existing connections that each partners had, and that Trish from INSTAR had had contact with through her work with us in 2023/4. Some have been 'cold calls' and it hasn't been easy – we haven't got through to many. We also had a budget for paying for youth leaders' time, but this wasn't really used in the end. (Anna) Through co-created projects – takes time and resource. It's important that the engagement/project/activity is shaped by the groups, reflects their interests, is relevant, accessible and that they feel ownership of it. For groups facing many barriers (the hard to reach groups), it usually requires trusted community leaders or organisations to reach them. You may find the INSTAR and Chalkscapes reports of interest. (Annette)*

Question: Are the partners able to sustain these projects moving forward, given that some of you might not be doing this role as your regular day-to-day role?

Answer: *Yes, we've built the project so that it is sustainable, massively helped by increased capacity through working with other partners who bring additional leaders, venues, expertise, funding – and ideas/energy! (Briony) Working with young people was already part of our offer and will continue to be – we will always be looking for funding to do more (Steph). Our project was predicated on the idea we want young people to be part of what we do, so this pilot allowed us to trail areas of work and move ahead with them (Roz)*



Q&A to our panel around the key themes cntd



Question: What resourcing would most help the organisations to continue this valuable work in future? egs. Funding for a freelance project manager, freeing up /backfill for existing staff time, digital resources, time of community partners funded? - what would be your '3 wishes' with a magic wand?

Answer: 1. Funding for existing staff planning and delivery time (especially so that delivery and learning are embedded rather than project-defined) 2. funding for resources eg our group have ambitions for the creation and installation of a bespoke carved bench incorporating representations of wildlife, audio and interpretation! 3. Support for peer group mentoring and shared resources eg the existing photo bank, so that the project's longevity continues in parallel across the partners (Briony). Funding for staff is always the big one. The challenge for small museums is that we can only do additional projects if our core funding is secure otherwise everything becomes existentially focused! However, I think small-scale grants to pilot deeply engaged work with specific audience groups could be a way of giving space to this kind of thing and allowing organisations to trial things, rather than always having to focus on outcomes (Roz) Funding for staff time and funding for non-project specific deliverables. That way, the activities/project/outputs can be truly co-created with young people, rather than adhering to the criteria of a funder, as we won't necessarily know what the young people want until we've spent time building relationships and listening to them. I think some funders are realising that the current project cycle/funding model doesn't always work when it comes to community work, or working with underserved communities as when funding runs out everything stops, where as co-creating from the ground up may lead to better, more sustainable outputs, but funding needs to allow for that. (Becky)



Q&A to our panel around the key themes cntd



Question: How have any of the partners manage the safeguarding implications and the risks of unmanageable behaviour with unaccompanied teens? I am keen to programme for more teenager-centric events but our current museum policy is that children must attend alongside parents or guardians, which means we miss a lot of teens who don't want to go out with their parents.

Answer: *Our current project is with 18-25 year olds, so safeguarding not the same issue. But we run other projects with unaccompanied teens eg our Young Curators, without any issues. Parents give permission and sessions are led by staff member with Enhanced DBS check and first aid training. (Briony). We have had to really think about this as a museum as we started with the usual approach of no one under 18 without parents or guardians. We started by working with volunteers who are 16-18 as a first step and have now branched out to looking at younger teenagers. We've used resources including the NSPCC guidance and Kids in Museums. (Roz). For safeguarding this is something that would need to be embedded within your organisation. In BBOWT, any staff or volunteers working with young people or vulnerable people are DBS checked, and undergo safeguarding training, and there's policies and codes of practice around this. With teens, if you're able to co-create your deliverable programme with them, they should hopefully feel a sense of ownership over that, and be less likely to "act up" as it's something they wanted and helped design and create. (Becky)*



Over to you!

In one sentence, what idea will you take back to your work as a result of this session?



- Different ways of measuring success when working with young people
- The importance of listening and co-creation
- It's an organic process
- The idea of visibility
- Co-creation of programming for young people, by young people!
- Cross sector relaxed networking - breaking out of silos
- The idea of a small number of participants or fluctuating attendance not meaning that the initiative isn't working or shouldn't continue
- Info to share with other museums, a case study for SE non-national museums maybe ??
- Would like to have a young person representative on our steering group to help steer NBY
- 'freedom of space for conversations' i quote!
- Being innovative about our idea of engagement
- As volunteer run group we look forward to the Hub to improve networking partnership working and funding under pin engaging young people.
- partnership working and funding under pin engaging young people.
- The importance of listening and patience and having faith in the process
- Developing a community interest to co-exist with a community or purpose/action
- Embedding this work into what we do, not an additional
- Listening to young people in different ways and connecting with a range of partners for help
- Lots of food for thought - I will take back the need to engage high school-age children and young people in our projects...using some of the methods you suggest!
- Provide space to think and be innovative, rather than being target driven
- Young person representation on steering group at CNL./Not Bourne Yesterday!
- I'll take away adapting levels of support/agency for different groups of young people, and lots of ideas for building a successful partnership!
- we're not scared of nature.... (former dam-builder/ tree climber)



Close and thank you



- Find out more about Chalk, Cherries and Chairs - what it achieved, its legacy etc: chilterns.org.uk/flagship-projects/chalk-cherries-chairs
- Find out more about the Next Generation project: chilterns.org.uk/flagship-projects/chalk-cherries-chairs/our-legacy/ccn-next-generation
- Register for Chilterns National Landscape e-newsletter to hear future news about the project and for a bake-off style 'here's what they did next'! <https://us2.campaign-archive.com/home/?u=f05efab770494e7fcd4443998&id=a2cfee5a2d>



Please get in touch if you have more questions! Email anna@adfconsultancy.co.uk in the first instance

