



## Wells City Council

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### **Introduction and Background**

Following Council's previous decision to Community Health and Wellbeing Grant funding of £1,500 (application of 3rd February 2025) and the following Request for Tender process, Brunel YMCA submitted a bid for scoping the provision of children and young people activities outside Wells City boundaries.

The requirements of the scoping were to reach out to all surrounding parishes, regarding children and young people provision with a view to develop partnership arrangements. It was specifically requested that the scoping include the following:

- Assessing the number of children between 8-14 within the rural areas.
- Of this value, those already supported by provision, or external activities and their source.
- Those who are not currently sourcing support or activity of any kind but have an interest in doing so.
- Those who are denied access and the barriers that prevent access.

We asked that Brunel YMCA gather and share information about the numbers of young people reached and which parish they live in, as well as the wider demographic information and numbers about the young people actively engaging with the project. We also requested that they share governance information and the sources of said information.

Additionally, they were requested to share information from those that took part, what any additional or amended youth provision may look like.

## **Headline Findings**

There were multiple outputs determined from the investigation. The headline details are:

There is a clear gap in accessible, inclusive, and age appropriate activities for young people across Wells and the surrounding villages.

Of those survey, over half said that there was nothing local for them to take part in. However, of those surveyed from rural locations, over 19% said there was no provisions, with those within the City being asked the same question, only 12% referenced not having provisions. Suggesting that there is a greater need within the surrounding area, to that of within the City. (7.1)

There was a noted absence of structured weekend activities for 8-14 year olds, and the lack of youth specific spaces contributes to an ongoing disengagement and isolation for those in outlying villages. (7.1)

There were noted barriers of transport, costs of activities, awareness and confidence of youth to join services, inclusion activities for neurodiverse young people and weekend provision. (7.2)

Beyond access and awareness, there are deeper systemic issues associated with reduction in provisions, reduction in independent opportunity and wider funding (7.3)

There are a number of short term steps identified within 8.2, which range from support to advertise opportunities and improve signposting, through to identifying future funding opportunities.

Section 9 of the report references a series of next steps for consideration.

## **Finance**

At the time of the original application for seed grant funding of £1,500, the possible second stage applications were up to £35,000. Since the time of the grant request if February 2025, this second stage funding bid has been amended. The grant programme relaunched on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025 with amended size of grants:

1. Largest grants now £10,000 (previously £35,000)
2. Grants for Community Plans – possibly with support from CCS
3. Small grants of up to £1000 for parishes with a population of under 500.

As such, to deliver the suggested outcomes in line with the original proposal would now likely need additional funding from Wells City Council or another third party funding source.

The initial decision of Council specifically referenced that further consideration would be required for any additional grant funding applications of the City Council.

## **Recommendations**

Council is asked to:

1. Note the content of the Rural Youth Provision Scoping Exercise Report (Appendix A)
2. Note the amended values of Community Health and Wellbeing Grant funding, Stage 2.
3. Debate and agree if Council wish to submit a Stage 2 bid for funding and/or any application of proposed next steps.
4. Agree to support any initiatives of surrounding Parish Councils, in any future direct applications for funding through Community Health and Wellbeing Grant, or otherwise, in order to work towards the areas identified within the report.

**Appendices:**

- Appendix A: Rural Youth Provision Scoping Exercise Report

# Rural Youth Provision Scoping Exercise Report

version 1.0

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# Executive Summary

This scoping exercise explores the experiences, needs, and gaps in provision for children and young people aged 8–14 in Wells, St Cuthbert Out Parish and surrounding rural villages. It draws on 157 survey responses, 82 adults and 75 young people, and broader stakeholder input.

Key findings highlight a basic level of youth provision in Wells itself (youth clubs, scouts, sports clubs, leisure facilities) but much more limited or sporadic activities in the villages. While 22% of adult respondents and 19% of young respondents came from St Cuthbert Out, many reported no local provision for their age group, particularly outside school hours and on weekends. Over half of village-based young respondents said there were no local clubs or activities available to them.

Barriers to participation include:

- Transport – buses are unreliable or unavailable, and most young people rely on parents for lifts.
- Cost – several respondents noted that activities in Wells are unaffordable.
- Confidence and stigma – some young people feel unwelcome or self-conscious in public spaces.
- Awareness – a lack of clear signposting means many don't know what's available.

Young people themselves expressed a desire for creative, social, and active spaces:

- “A youth club where you could hang out with friends with no parents and go on fun trips after school.”
- “A crafting café place that people could go to work or just hang out.”
- “Free music lessons for young people to encourage more people to learn an instrument.”
- “Things away from the screen”.

Adults and young people alike called for:

- More inclusive and accessible spaces (especially outdoors and arts-based).
- Better use of existing facilities like village halls and schools.
- Youth-led or co-designed approaches to build trust and participation.

This report recommends partnership-based solutions, such as shared rural youth outreach, co-creation with young people, and clearer communication of existing opportunities. Aligning

efforts with broader Somerset Plan priorities and Local Community Network goals will help ensure equitable access, reduce rural isolation, and support young people's well-being. The recommendations have resource implications.

YMCA Brunel Group recommends the following priorities:

- Explore setting up a LCN 'youth provision' working group.
- Address the communication gap and improve signposting by putting in place a regularly updated and disseminate 'calendar' that is age-group specific that details youth-friendly provision. This could be hosted by Wells City Council.
- Develop a prototype roaming 'youth experiences' for the villages: Use the resource of the Wells Youth Club, commissioned by Wells City Council and provided by YMCA Brunel Group, as a starting point for expanding reach of youth provision into surrounding villages and to expand the types of activities offered.
- Explore youth-led and voluntary, community, faith, social enterprise (VCFSE) services  
Micro-Grant Schemes: Offer small grants for young people and community led services to run their events, clubs or campaigns.
- Review after 6 months, in collaboration with young people.



# Introduction

## Background and Rationale

This scoping exercise has been undertaken to better understand the needs, interests, and experiences of young people in the Wells area, and the primary focus is on children and young people aged 8–14 living in rural communities around Wells. By engaging with young people, their families, and local stakeholders, the aim is to build a clearer picture of how young people currently spend their time, what opportunities are available to them, and where there may be gaps in provision. The findings will help inform future decisions about youth services and activities, ensuring they are relevant, accessible, and responsive to the needs of the 8–14 age group.

The scoping exercise was designed to engage with all surrounding parishes within the Wells & Rural Local Community Network (LCN) area to explore current youth provision and identify opportunities for partnership development. The scope of the exercise includes:

- Assessing the number of children aged 8–14 within the rural areas.
- Identifying those currently supported by existing youth provisions or external activities and their sources.
- Determining those who are not currently engaged but would be interested in participating in such activities.
- Highlighting those denied access and the specific barriers they face.
- Collecting and sharing data on the number of young people reached, including details about their parish of residence.
- Recording methods used to promote the scoping exercise.
- Identifying and documenting existing community strengths and successful initiatives will help to build on what is already working within the local context.

This work was commissioned by Wells City Council on behalf of St Cuthbert Out Parish Council.

## Objectives of the Scoping Exercise

The primary objective is to assess the availability of activities, services, and support for children and young people aged 8–14 in rural areas surrounding Wells. Specifically, the scoping exercise aims to:

- Quantify the number of 8–14-year-olds in the area.
- Identify the extent of current engagement with youth services and their providers.
- Understand barriers to access and identify potential solutions.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration between parishes and organisations to enhance local youth provision.

The scoping exercise aimed to engage directly with young people and other local stakeholders to understand what services currently exist, what’s missing, and what could be improved. A key component of this process was a survey designed to gather insights from:

- Young people – on how they spend their time, what matters to them, and what services or activities they would like to see.
- Adults and professionals – including members of the community, parents, carers, teachers, councillors, volunteers, and others working with young people, who can offer insight into current provision and areas for development.

Feedback collected will help build a clearer picture of existing strengths and service gaps, informing better youth provision across the region.

## Geographical Focus

The scoping exercise incorporates Wells but focuses on rural parishes within and around the St Cuthbert Out area, including:

- Within St Cuthbert Out Parish: Burcott, Coxley, Dinder, Dulcote, East Horrington, Easton, Haybridge, Launcherley, Maesbury, Polsham, South Horrington, Southway, West Horrington, Woodford, Wookey Hole, and Worminster.
- Adjoining parishes: Wookey, Croscombe, and Godney.

## Timeframe

The scoping exercise ran from 2 May to 9 June 2025, a period that included the Easter holidays, a Bank Holiday, and a half-term break, which influenced the tools used for the scoping exercise pushing it to be predominantly online.

## Key Limitations

- The time frame of the scoping exercise was shorter than originally planned and occurred during a period of several holidays.
- The primary data collection method was an online survey, which may have limited accessibility for some participants and potentially excluded those less digitally engaged.

# Methodology

The methodology for the scoping exercise initiated with desk research, stakeholder consultation, and mapping of existing services. A variety of data sources were utilised, including demographic data, local knowledge, and stakeholder interviews. Consultations were conducted with a range of local stakeholders and community representatives.

Initial preparatory meetings and communications were held with key stakeholders such as the Parish Clerk of St Cuthbert Out, the Clerk for Wells City Council, Local Community Network Link Officers, Connect Somerset Champions for West Mendip, and the Parent and Family Support Advisors (PFSA) for the Blue School. Discussions also took place with members of Wells Youth Club, several who live in the St Cuthberts Out Parish. These early conversations formed the foundation for determining the next steps of the scoping process.

A preparation meeting was convened with the Wells Youth Club Staff Team to agree on a suitable methodology and to co-design two surveys, one targeting young people and once targeting adults. The survey was then created, piloted, and finalised; it included both multiple choice and open-ended questions (see annex 1). It was disseminated online from 7 May to 27 May. Distribution channels included the PFSA of Wells Blue School, all local primary schools in and around Wells, all local village halls, the local community network channels (defined through the initial communications with stakeholders) and various local Facebook groups. Additional outreach efforts were made to the village halls and primary schools to encourage survey participation.

The survey received 157 responses in total, comprising 82 adults and 75 young people aged between 8 and 18. The survey responses were anonymous, and no personal data was collected. Following the completion of the data collection phase, an analysis meeting was held with the Wells Youth Club Staff Team to review the initial findings and to develop an outline for the final report. Based on this outline, and an analysis of the data was made and a draft version of the report was produced.

## Limitations

The main research tool was an online survey, which may have limited participation from individuals without internet access or digital confidence, as such, certain voices may be underrepresented in the findings.

It was decided that face-to-face outreach in the villages would not be appropriate as it would be highly unlikely to meet anyone, given that there are approximately 350 young people aged

between 8–14 years in St Cuthberts Out parish, and this would not be a effective use of limited resources. In the future, face to face focus groups could be convened in village halls.

The scoping exercise was general in nature and did not specifically focus on any special needs or targeted topics. Its aim was to gather broad insights into the experiences and needs of young people without concentrating on any one subgroup or issue. Finally, the scoping survey did not take collect data on gender, and did not explore any gender-based differences.

## Context and Demographics

### Youth Population Overview (Ages 8–14)

According to the 2021 Census, the City of Wells has a population of approximately 11,145 residents. While specific age breakdowns for the 8–14 age group are not detailed in the census data, nationally those aged 10–14 represent about 6% of the total population, if we extrapolate to the 8–14 age group this is probably around 600 young people. In contrast, individuals aged 65 and over represent about 30%, highlighting a significant demographic imbalance with a higher proportion of older residents compared to the national average which is 18% of the population.

This demographic trend is influenced by factors such as limited local employment opportunities, high housing costs, and a scarcity of modern entertainment options, which often lead younger individuals to migrate to larger cities for education and employment. Combined, local and national migration trends suggest younger people are leaving rural areas like Wells.

### Youth in Surrounding Villages

The table below presents the number of children and young people under 19 by age group:

Table 1: **Youth Demographics per Parish (based upon 2021 census data)**

Parish	Aged 4 and under	Aged 5–14	Aged 15–19	Total under 19
Chewton Mendip	14	64	34	112
Emborough	5	14	10	29

Parish	Aged 4 and under	Aged 5–14	Aged 15–19	Total under 19
Godney	8	27	16	51
Litton (Mendip)	5	21	15	41
North Wootton (Mendip)	19	35	13	67
Priddy	22	65	51	138
St Cuthbert Out	225	495	228	948
Wells	433	1,066	647	2,146
Westbury (Mendip)	26	91	48	165
Wookey	49	128	70	247
Binegar	10	27	20	57

Based on this data, 346 young people aged 8–14 are estimated to live in the St Cuthberts Out Parish.

Although the absolute number of children varies across these parishes, the proportion of children relative to the total population remains consistent across the Local Community Network (LCN) area.

## Children in Low-Income Families (CiLIF) Indicators

The Children in Low-Income Families (CiLIF) metric provides insight into the economic conditions affecting children across the parishes. The figures below represent CiLIF rates per 1,000 population and the most recent recorded numbers:

Table 2: **CiLIF Indicators by Parish (based upon 2021 census data)**

Parish	CiLIF per 1,000 Latest Year	
Godney	56.07	12
North Wootton	41.01	13
Westbury	39.75	32

<b>Parish</b>	<b>CiLIF per 1,000 Latest Year</b>	
Wookey	33.88	43
Chewton Mendip	25.36	14
Wells	23.89	266
St Cuthbert Out	22.99	106
Binegar	22.61	9
Priddy	20.93	14
Emborough	0.00	0
Litton	0.00	0

These figures highlight areas where children may be particularly vulnerable due to financial disadvantage and point to potential areas of focus for targeted support or provision.

## Results

The survey results are separated into the young people's survey and the adult's survey, refer to annexes 2 and 3 respectively.

The survey offers useful insights and perspectives, particularly about broad themes and needs. However, statistically it's not fully representative for precise generalization to the whole town's population. Geographically the proportion of respondents roughly matches the real-world share of St Cuthbert Out.

The main differences in responses from young people and adults are summarised as follows:

Table 3: **Results**

Aspect	Young People	Adults
Main Concerns	Safe, fun spaces; affordability; transport issues	Transport, affordability, lack of inclusive activities
Ideas for improvement	More creative spaces, skateparks, inclusive activities	Enhanced parks, direct youth engagement, wider transport options
Awareness of Existing Activities	Often unaware of existing activities	More aware of local clubs and initiatives
Barriers to Participation	Transport (buses), cost, no fun spaces	Same barriers identified by adults, plus cultural barriers
Inclusivity & Engagement	Many feel unseen and unheard, especially in decision-making	Adults recognise many of challenges being faced by young people



# Current Youth Provision

## Description of Services and Activities available by Area/Parish

There is a base level of youth provision within Wells, particularly for children and early teens, with a mix of structured and informal opportunities. Current activities include:

- Uniformed groups: Scouts, Cadets.
- Creative and cultural: Youth theatre, choirs, and music sessions.
- Recreational: Youth clubs, sports coaching, martial arts, football.
- Facilities: Wells Leisure Centre, Blue School Sports Hall, Wells Skatepark, public libraries.

However, outside Wells city, provision is limited. While there are some ad hoc or seasonal offerings (such as Easton Youth Week or informal activities in Wookey), St Cuthbert Out Parish has no known regular provision targeted specifically at 8–14-year-olds. This aligns with survey responses where 57% of young people from villages reported no access to clubs or groups near where they live.

We don't have anything unless someone's driving us in."  
— Young person, village respondent

## Providers Involved (Statutory, Voluntary, Community)

Youth provision in the area is delivered by a combination of statutory, voluntary, and community-based organisations, each with varying levels of formality, funding, and reach:

### Statutory Providers

- Schools: While out of scope for this survey, schools are the main statutory service for young people.
- Library: Some young people referred to the library and also to Switch Club.
- Wells Leisure Centre: Technically a statutory service, though respondents suggested the centre's offerings for youth are limited or unaffordable.

"The leisure centre is expensive."  
— Parent, Wells

## Voluntary Providers

- YMCA Brunel Group Wells Youth Club: Funded by Wells City Council; runs one evening per week.

“It’s a shame it’s only funded for once a week as I think more children would benefit from it being on more days.”

— Parent, Wells

## Community Providers

- Scouts, Cadets: Long-standing community organisations reliant on volunteers.
- Sports clubs such (Wells City Football Club, rugby, tennis): Offers youth teams and recreational opportunities.
- Dance/drama/music groups: Often parent-led or private with a community focus.
- Church and village hall-led activities: Ad hoc and often volunteer-driven.

“I go to the Wookey Theatre Group on Sundays.”

— Young person, Wookey

“My child has been on the waiting list for Scouts for over 18 months now and still can't get a place.

— Parent, Easton

“We’ve got stuff like the rugby club in Wells, but not much in our village.”

— Young person, rural village respondent

“Wells cricket club and Wells rugby club are all wonderful”

— Parent

“There aren’t many non-sporty activities”

— Parent

## Access Models (in-school, drop-in, outreach, mobile)

- Current access models are mostly centralised and static, with limited flexible outreach provision.
- In-school: Most provision during school time was outside the scope, but some partnerships exist.
- Drop-in: Wells Youth Club is the main structured drop-in space for young people aged 10–18.
- Outreach: no structured service currently rotates through the surrounding villages.

“It’s too expensive and there’s no bus to get there.”

— Young person, Wells survey

“If I could create an activity, it would be a ‘Maker’s hub’.”

— Young person, Wells survey

## Good Practice or Standout Provision

Despite gaps, there are examples of promising or innovative approaches that could be scaled or replicated:

- Skate Park Enhancements: Young people frequently use the skate park in Wells; it’s one of the few public spaces they feel ownership of. There are suggestions for lighting, seating, or community events to activate the space further.
- Sports Clubs: Viewed as positive.
- Youth Club-Civic Partnerships: The collaboration between Wells Youth Club (YMCA Brunel Group) and Wells City Council.
- Library Switch Club.

### **Desire for Meaningful Offline Activities – National Perspective**

- 72% of young people wanted more offline activities in their communities. YMCA England & Wales report (2021)
- 65% of young people aged 13–18 said they want more ‘real-world’ opportunities to connect with others, like youth clubs or sports. UK Youth Survey (2023)
- “I feel like I’m always on my phone, but I’d rather be out doing something real with my friends.” UK Youth Research (2023)
- “More safe spaces would help me get off screens and meet people in real life.” UK Youth Research (2023)

### **Young People and Physical Activity – National Perspective**

- Only 46–47% of young people meet the recommended 60 minutes/day of moderate-to-vigorous activity. Sport England (2023)
- Girls, children in low-income families, and those in rural areas are less active overall. Sport England (2023)
- 70+% of young people (16–25) prefer outdoor exercise (vs. gym-based) for mental health benefits like calmness and social connection. Natural England (2023).
- Outdoor activity has been linked to reduced stress and better mood after just 20 minutes in nature. Natural England (2023).

# Gaps, Needs and Barriers

## Areas Underserved or Lacking Provision

There is a clear gap in accessible, inclusive, and age-appropriate activities for young people across Wells and the surrounding villages. While Wells itself has relatively more structured provision (e.g., Wells Leisure Centre, YMCA youth club), rural areas show lower engagement levels, often due to limited local provision.

Although 19% of young respondents were from the target villages, over half of them said there was nothing local for them to take part in. This contrasts with only 12% of the total respondents from the young people's survey who said the same, suggesting a substantial rural provision gap.

Several respondents to the survey felt that there was a lack of creative opportunities for young people. This is supported by national data.

### **Creative Opportunities for Young people**

According to a 2023 report by the Cultural Learning Alliance, there has been a significant decline in arts subjects offered in state schools in England since 2010. GCSE arts entries (Art & Design, Drama, Music, Dance) have fallen by over 40% in the past 13 years. A 2022 Local Government Association report found youth service budgets had been cut by 73% since 2010, impacting informal arts access outside of school.

Studies from the Royal Society for Public Health and National Foundation for Educational Research have linked arts engagement with positive mental health, improved self-esteem, and life satisfaction but note a downward trend in youth participation, especially in rural and low-income areas.

Several respondents wanted more meaningful opportunities to get away from technology.

"I don't think that young people are made to feel welcome in the community. They are seen as a nuisance in town, but they are just bored with nowhere to go."

— Parent

"Wells is a safe community, and you can be yourself and you don't have to impress anybody."

— Young person

“I think the [current] skate park is fine but when there are a bunch of people smoking, I don't feel entirely safe.”

— Young person

“I'm only allowed out the front of my house”.

— Young person

“We need more spaces around the area where young people can feel safe and welcome to meet with friends and interact with other kids”.

— Parent

“We need to encourage them to spend time away from home and screens and video games”.

— Parent

“Better facilities would be great to appeal to a broader range of tastes”.

— Parent

The absence of structured weekend activities for 8–14-year-olds and the lack of youth-specific spaces contributes to an ongoing disengagement and isolation for those in outlying villages.

## Barriers to Access (transport, cost, awareness, stigma)

Youth participation is shaped by a number of interconnected barriers rooted in infrastructure, geography, and economic pressure:

- Transport: Infrequent or unavailable public transport restricts access to services based in Wells or other towns.
- Cost: Several said activities were “too expensive” or that they “can’t get there” because of affordability and no lift. Participation in sports, clubs, and trips can be prohibitive, particularly for low-income families or those with multiple children.
- Confidence and stigma: some mentioned lack of confidence as a barrier.

- Awareness: Many simply didn't know what was available, suggesting poor signposting or limited outreach.
- Weekend provision: There is a lack of weekend options that cater to younger teens across the area.
- Inclusion: Respondents noted limited inclusive activities, especially for neurodiverse young people or those with additional needs.
- Rural exclusion: Survey responses from St Cuthbert's Out and surrounding villages differed notably from those in Wells — highlighting geographic isolation and uneven service coverage.

"The buses are very unreliable."

— Young person

"It's too expensive."

— Young person

"As a wheelchair user, the paths are atrocious. Normally the dropped kerbs are not at all dropped or not there in the first place."

— Young person

"My parents sometimes don't have time."

— Young person

"The timings overlap with my siblings' clubs."

— Young person

"No one trusts us."

— Young person

"I don't feel very confident about going."

— Young person

"It's too far to walk."

— Young person, Wells

“There’s nothing for them to do at the weekends.”

— Parent

## Structural or systemic issues (e.g., funding, capacity)

Beyond access and awareness, there are deeper systemic issues affecting provision for young people:

- Fewer formal youth services: Village-based youth work is sporadic or non-existent; existing services are heavily dependent on short-term funding.
- Community reliance: Many villages depend on informal networks, volunteers, or faith/community groups without long-term sustainability.
- Limited independence opportunities: Young people in rural areas lack safe, accessible environments to meet or explore independently.

### **Young people would like:**

- “A proper basketball court/ public access hard top sport facility.”
- “Free music lessons for young people to encourage more people to learn an instrument.”
- “A crafting café place that people could go to do to work or just hang out.”
- “A club for sports of all kinds open Tuesday-Friday from 4pm-6pm and on a Saturday open 9am-5pm.”
- “A music composing group.”
- “A youth club where you could hang out with friends with no parents and go on fun trips after school.”
- “More outside things to do (tennis courts or crazy golf and hiring bike) and different activities for everyone.”
- “Things away from the Screen”.
- “I don’t know.” (Lots)



# Opportunities and Recommendations

## Partnership Development

There is limited awareness, coordination, or public visibility of existing partnerships. While there may be collaboration between schools, councils, and charities, these partnerships often feel informal, under-publicised, or disconnected from the communities they aim to serve. This results in duplicated efforts or missed opportunities for joint working.

The data also suggests strong potential for co-designed youth services and youth agency in decision-making, particularly for rural settings. There is an opportunity to build youth-led alliances and embed young people in shaping provision.

Young people's responses suggest strong potential for co-designed services and more direct involvement in shaping provision:

"If I could create a club, it would be a makers hub or something creative."

— Young person, Wells survey

"People are online enough – we'd rather have something real."

— Young person, Wells survey

There is also a need to better communicate partnerships and who's behind current offerings:

"I don't know what's going on."

— Young person

"I don't know of any clubs"

— Stakeholder

Partnerships with local sports clubs, arts organisations, and faith-based groups can enrich the range of activities available and also support resource sharing. Additionally, working closely with transport providers and digital access initiatives would be essential to overcome geographical barriers common in rural settings.

Partnerships with the following could be considered: Local Community Network, Parish councils from nearby towns and villages, local schools, Connect Somerset and local area champions, and Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) services.

## Short-term Actionable Steps (e.g., outreach, shared resources)

Several practical, low-cost steps could address immediate needs and build momentum:

- Create a centralised youth activity calendar or directory (print and digital) covering Wells and surrounding villages, by age group (8–11, 12–14, and 15–18 years), that is updated and disseminated regularly. For example, Find Frome, Frome Town Council <https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/find/>
- Improve signposting through schools, noticeboards, parish newsletters, and social media.
- Encourage community to drive awareness and engagement.
- Encourage all opportunities that support age-appropriate socialisation and connection for young people.
- Identify funding and resourcing opportunities for implementing medium to long-term suggestions. For example, the Somerset Community Foundation. There are also other opportunities. YMCA Brunel Group could potentially support proposal writing.
- LCN could establish a ‘youth’ working group.

Take a participative approach that consults with and engages young people in the process, considering the needs of different age groups.

## Medium to Long-Term Suggestions

In addition, longer-term strategies should focus on creating sustainable, inclusive infrastructure that reflects young people's needs:

- Experiment! Create a trial outreach activity that travels to different village halls. This could take the form of youth club, or could trial different activities, see annex 5 for ideas (for example, two activities in tandem per session).
- Ensure a holistic range of activities including sports, creative arts, skill development, and health and wellbeing.
- Coordinate shared use of existing spaces (village halls, schools, churches) for youth events.
- Optimise use of existing spaces.

- Explore community transport initiatives for young people.
- Fund rural youth workers to work across parish clusters.
- Identify and train volunteer youth workers. YMCA Brunel Group could provide the opportunity to identify and train volunteers.
- Build capacity among community groups through training, micro-grants, and mentorship, including volunteer youth workers.
- Support youth-led initiatives and micro-projects, giving small budgets and mentorship to young people to shape activities.

## Strategic Alignment (e.g., Local Community Networks, Somerset Plan priorities)

To ensure sustainable impact, these recommendations should align with broader strategic frameworks:

- Somerset's Children and Young People Plan calls for safe places, equal opportunities, and participation – directly supporting these goals.
- Local Health and Wellbeing strategies emphasise prevention, connection, and place-based services – relevant to youth inclusion.
- Parish and city councils can align youth efforts with Community Network priorities, especially in improving rural health equity and reducing isolation.

# Next Steps/Implementation Considerations

## Potential Models to Explore

To strengthen youth provision across Wells and surrounding villages, the following models could be explored or adapted:

- Wells Youth Club: Use existing the youth provision, currently financed by Wells City Council and provided by YMCA Brunel Group, as a starting point for expanding reach of youth provision into surrounding villages and to expand the types of activities offered.
- Clustered Rural Youth Hub Model: A shared staffing/resource model where a youth worker rotates between town and villages. This approach maximises limited resources while ensuring consistent local engagement.
- Youth Link Worker: A named individual based in Wells who is available to link all young people with local activities, mentors, and wellbeing support.
- Youth Community Champion Scheme: Train and support local young people (13–17 years) to help lead events, co-design activities, and represent youth voice.

## Suggested Pilots or Feasibility Studies

To build evidence and momentum, trial small-scale, measurable initiatives:

- 3-month Mobile Youth Programme Pilot: Test weekly pop-up sessions / workshops across three underserved villages, tracking attendance, satisfaction, and need.
- Youth-Led Micro-Grant Scheme: Offer small grants (£100–£500) for young people to run their own events, clubs or campaigns with adult support.
- VCFSE services Micro-Grant Scheme: Offer small grants for VCFSE services to run or expand programmes for young people. Young people could be decision makers on which services receive grants.

## Roles for Wells Surrounding Village Parishes, Wells City Council and Partners

To ensure collaborative delivery and sustainability:

- Wells City Council and Parish Councils
  - Lead on strategic coordination and cross-parish working.

- Integrate youth outcomes into broader place-making and wellbeing plans.
- Parish Councils
  - Provide spaces (halls, fields) and local champions for pilots.
  - Co-fund or contribute in-kind to outreach services.
- Partners (YMCA, schools, charities, sports clubs)
  - Share facilities, volunteers, or expertise.
  - Embed shared referral pathways (especially for wellbeing-focused support).
  - Support training for young leaders and volunteers.

# Annex 1: Survey Questions

## Young People Survey Questions

1. Where do you live?
2. What year are you in at school?
3. What is important to you?
4. What do you like to do in your free time?
5. Are there any clubs, groups or activities near where you live?
6. How do you get to these activities?
7. Is there anything that makes it hard to go to these places?
8. If you could create an activity in your local area, what would it be?
9. Do you feel there are safe and fun places for your age group?
10. What do you like to do online?
11. If you could create a club or activity online, what would it be like?
12. Anything else you want to say about activities for young people?

## Adult Survey Questions

1. Where do you live?
2. Can you briefly describe your role and any interaction you have with young people (ages 8–14)?
3. What youth activities, services, or facilities currently exist in your local area? Who provides them? How well used are they?
4. Is there any particular group or type of youth provision in your area which stands out as successful, in your opinion?
5. What gaps or unmet needs do you see for 8–14-year-olds? Are there specific groups that are missing out?
6. What are the biggest barriers young people face in accessing services or activities?  
(Prompt: *transport, awareness, affordability, limited options, etc.*)
7. Are there any existing partnerships or informal networks supporting youth work? What's working well? What could be strengthened?
8. Are there any local ideas or initiatives in early development you're aware of?
9. What would be one or two things that could make the biggest positive difference for young people?
10. Is there anything else you'd like to say about activities for young people near you?
11. Is there anyone else we should talk to?

## Annex 2: Summary of Responses to the Young People’s Survey

Table 4: **Summary Responses (Young People's Survey 2025)**

Question	Response	Village Responses
<b>Where do you live?</b>	45 respondents come from Wells	14 responses form target villages which represents 19% of respondents (Coxley, Dinder, Wookey, South Horrington).
<b>What is your school year?</b>	Most respondents were in year 9 (26) and year 8 (18). Year 10–12 also common. Limited responses from lower years.	Year 4 (1). Year 8 (4). Year 9 (3). Year 11 (2). Year 12 (4).
<b>What things are important to you</b>	Family. Friends. Having fun, Fitness/health. Education. Social relationships and fun activities are highly valued.	Responses largely match the main group. Social relationships and fun activities are highly valued.
<b>What do you like to do in your free time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hanging out with friends.</li> <li>▪ Gaming.</li> <li>▪ Reading, cricket, sports.</li> <li>▪ Leisure activities are varied—mix of sports, socializing, and digital activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sports (e.g., rugby, tennis).</li> <li>▪ Singing, music (cello, Bath Abbey Choir).</li> <li>▪ Gaming.</li> <li>▪ Exploring fields, hanging out with friends.</li> <li>▪ Sewing, crocheting.</li> <li>▪ Reading at the library.</li> <li>▪ Drawing.</li> <li>▪ Studying/revision.</li> </ul>

Question	Response	Village Responses
<b>Are there any clubs, groups, or activities near where you live?</b>	12 'no' answers (16% respondents) Dance, youth clubs, army cadets. Limited availability or access to local clubs for many.	8 said no (57% of village respondents).  Rounders, Dance, and Karate (1) Bath rugby on Sundays (1) Tennis club in Wells (4x/week) (1) Rugby club on Tuesdays and Sundays (1) Wookey Theatre Group (Sundays) (1)
<b>How do you get to these activities?</b>	Parents drive them (44). Walkin or cycling (25). Bus usage is rare. Many rely on parents for transportation.	Parents drive them. Walking or cycle.
<b>Is there anything that makes it hard to go to these places?</b>	No (45) (60%). Expense. Lack of confidence. Transport costs and confidence barriers for some.	No (6) (50%). I can't get there (2). Too expensive (3). Lack of confidence.
<b>If you could create an activity in your local area...?</b>	Not sure. Arts and crafts. Parks. Gaming. Young people would like more creative and social spaces.	Maker's hub. Music. Newspaper. Swimming pool with good opening times. Exploration. Roller skating, rugby. Youth club, gaming club, theatre.
<b>Do you feel there are safe and fun places for your age?</b>	Yes (18) (24%). No not really (majority). Most feels there's a lack of safe, engaging spaces.	6 said no. 7 said yes. 1 said maybe.
<b>What do you like to do online?</b>	Chatting with friends, social media. Gaming. Learning new things.	Same main trends. Chat with friends. Social media. Gaming. Learn new things.



Question	Response	Village Responses
	Heavy use of social media and online games.	
<b>If you could create a club/activity online, what would it be like?</b>	Many "I don't know". Safe non-judgmental spaces. Interest in online safe spaces and creative outlets.	Maker's hub. I don't know (5). Gaming. Inclusive fun activities. People are online enough.
<b>Anything else to say about activities for young people?</b>	Need for more local youth spaces. Strong calls for better, more varied opportunities.	Same concerns: limited public transport, would like more youth activities, chance to socialise with friends.

## Annex 3: Summary of Responses to the Adult Survey

Table 5: **Summary Responses (Adult Survey 2025)**

Question	Response	Village Responses
<b>Where do you live?</b>	33 respondents lived in Wells and other respondents lived in the surrounding towns and villages (not including St Cuthbert Out).	18 lived in St Cuthbert Out (22% of respondents).
<b>Role and Interaction with Young People</b>	Respondents include parents, grandparents, foster carers, teaching assistants, and community leaders. Most have direct involvement with young people.	Similar roles represented.
<b>Existing Youth Activities, Services, or Facilities</b>	<p>The following were mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Youth clubs (weekly).</li> <li>▪ Sports clubs and leisure centres.</li> <li>▪ Scouts and cadets.</li> <li>▪ Skate parks.</li> <li>▪ Drama clubs.</li> </ul> <p>A base level of provision exists, often led by community groups. Usage varies, with youth clubs and sports clubs being especially popular.</p>	Most report needing to travel into Wells for activities. A few mentioned Easton Youth Week or occasional hall events in Wookey Hole. Several noted no provision in their village.
<b>Successful Youth Provisions</b>	Youth clubs and sports clubs are frequently noted as successful. Dance and scouting are also seen as effective. Activities with consistent structure and social engagement (e.g., team sports, clubs) are perceived as most impactful.	Football, scouts, and Wells Youth Club were cited as successes, but not local. No standout activities within St Cuthbert Out itself were repeatedly mentioned.

Question	Response	Village Responses
<b>Gaps or Unmet Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of weekend options and provision for under-10s.</li> <li>▪ Limited inclusive activities for disadvantaged groups.</li> <li>▪ Some respondents unsure or unaware.</li> </ul> <p>There's a gap in accessible, inclusive, and age-appropriate activities, especially outside school hours.</p>	Clear concern about no consistent youth provision in villages. Several asked for more under-10s provision.
<b>Barriers to Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Transport and affordability are the top barriers.</li> <li>▪ Limited awareness and scheduling conflicts.</li> <li>▪ Rural geography poses inherent challenges.</li> </ul> <p>Infrastructure and socioeconomic factors heavily influence youth participation.</p>	Transport is a major barrier. Several mentioned the cost of clubs in Wells and long travel times, especially for younger children.
<b>Existing Partnerships or Networks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited awareness or acknowledgment of partnerships.</li> <li>▪ Some mention of Wells Youth Club collaboration.</li> <li>▪ Mostly "not aware" or "don't know" responses.</li> </ul> <p>Either partnerships are informal/under-publicized or there is a communication gap with the wider community.</p>	No known partnerships or outreach into their villages. Multiple respondents wrote "don't know" or "not sure." Very little visible coordination at parish level.
<b>Emerging Local Ideas or Initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Skatepark improvements.</li> <li>▪ Civic partnerships with schools.</li> </ul>	One mention of Easton Youth Week as a highlight. Most respondents unaware of anything

Question	Response	Village Responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many respondents unaware of new initiatives.</li> </ul> <p>Some promising developments, but broader community engagement and visibility are limited.</p>	<p>new. One suggestion to "use the village hall more often for youth events."</p>
<b>Suggestions for Positive Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revamp parks and create engaging public spaces.</li> <li>Consult directly with youth</li> <li>Develop multipurpose activity centres.</li> </ul> <p>Empowerment and infrastructure improvements are key to making a positive difference.</p>	<p>Strong support for youth-led events and accessible public spaces in villages. Some called for mobile outreach or rotating clubs. Parks and village halls mentioned as underused assets.</p>
<b>Additional Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns about lack of activities for older young people.</li> <li>Need for youth-led initiatives.</li> <li>Concerns about rural exclusion.</li> </ul>	<p>"Kids here are forgotten." Common themes: rural exclusion, lack of transport, absence of regular opportunities. Several want young people to have "a say" and "a space of their own."</p>

## Annex 4: Developmental Needs of Children and Young People (Ages 8–18)

Understanding the developmental needs of youth across different age groups helps ensure that provision aligns with real-life stages and capacities. The table below outlines these needs, categorized by age range, and includes examples of realistic informal activities that may suit most contexts.

Table 6: **Developmental Needs**

Age Group	Cognitive Needs	Social Needs	Emotional Needs	Physical Needs	Educational Needs	Suitable Rural Activities
8–11 yrs	Concrete thinking, need for structure	Team play, forming friendships	Confidence-building, empathy	Steady growth, coordination	Structured, skill-building tasks	Nature clubs, gardening, arts & crafts, after-school groups, Scouts, walking, cycling
12–14 yrs	Early abstract thought, curiosity	Peer bonding, identity forming	Mood shifts, belonging	Puberty changes, energy surges	Guided independence, critical thinking	Local sports, community volunteering, drama clubs, youth clubs, safe hangout spaces
15–16 yrs	Abstract reasoning, autonomy	Romantic/social identity	Stress management, self-esteem	Risk-taking increases	Career-oriented, practical skills	Peer-led projects, community work, mentoring, skill workshop, online clubs, work experience

Age Group	Cognitive Needs	Social Needs	Emotional Needs	Physical Needs	Educational Needs	Suitable Rural Activities
17–18 yrs	Complex decision-making, leadership	Mature relationships	Resilience, independence	Adult physical needs	Adult transition, life prep	Internships, travel skills, peer mentoring, youth council work, organising own events

## Annex 5: List of Activities that may be of interest to Young People

The following activity modalities were identified to support youth development across multiple domains. These can guide future provision planning and highlight opportunities for diversification:

Table 7: **Activities**

Category	Examples
STEM & Digital Skills	Coding, robotics, engineering challenges, makerspaces, drone clubs.
Creative Arts	Drawing, crafts, sculpture, photography, DIY.
Performing Arts	Drama, dance, music, spoken word, talent shows.
Sports & Physical	Football, martial arts, cycling, athletics, skateboarding.
Outdoor	Bushcraft, hiking, nature conservation, camping, outdoor activities (potholing, abseiling, climbing, kayaking etc).
Uniformed & Civic Groups	Scouts, cadets, DofE, Junior Police/Fire, youth councils.
Life & Practical Skills	Cooking, budgeting, bike repair, first aid.
Social & Wellbeing	Peer support, resilience workshops, safe spaces.
Enterprise & Leadership	Event planning, social enterprise, public speaking, financial literacy, entrepreneurial training.
Volunteering & Community	Local councils, community service, Market support, intergenerational projects, clean-ups.

Agriculture & Environmental learning	Gardening, animal husbandry, nature clubs, local food production projects and sustainable farming.
Culture & Heritage	Local history and walking tours, traditional crafts, folk art, cultural exchange, creative writing clubs.
Media & Communication	Journalism, radio and podcast production, video production, social media training.

