

YOT

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Warwickshire Youth Offending Team

Newsletter

We have just completed our Youth Justice Plan, which will be submitted to the Youth Justice Board. This is always a tense time as it is at this point that we review our progress against targets set and face the figures, which show if the Youth Offending Team's work is making a difference. Are we really preventing crime by young people - which is our remit? We are pleased to report that our figures show that there has been a 12% reduction in the number of young people entering the criminal justice system since 2001 and there has also been a reduction of 21% in the number of crimes committed by young people since 2001.

We now know that 50 young people committed 26.3% of known youth crime in 2003 and this knowledge is enabling us to target our interventions to address the offending behaviour of these young people. We are hopeful that the recent introduction of Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes will reduce this still further.

30% of offences were criminal damage and theft.

Many Young People will now be asked to carry out work that will help them understand why criminal damage is so unacceptable in their communities. Putting things right often takes considerably longer than causing the damage. We are pleased to report that some of the young people are responding well to doing work, which benefits the community whilst gaining skills at the same time. Violent offences represent 15% of the offences committed but motoring offences represent almost double that number - channelling young peoples interest in all things mechanical whilst keeping within the law - is challenging. Programmes are being developed across the County which help them to understand the consequences of stepping outside the law where driving is concerned. (See details of some of the work programmes later in the newsletter) Drugs offences account for only 5% but we are aware that substance misuse can lead to offending in other ways and we are keen to help young people address this issue.

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*Never Doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world:
indeed, it's the only thing that ever does.....*

Margaret Mead

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The Allotment Project

The Rugby Allotment Project has been running since July 2003 and has proved to be a great success. It was developed as a partnership between YOT, Rugby Borough Council, Warwickshire Police, the Probation Service and the local community.

Kelly Cossar, one of the YOT Practitioners responsible for reparation said: "Rugby Borough Council donated a large unused allotment site and also provided initial funding for a shed, tools, plants etc.

Lots of different vegetables and plants are grown and all produce is to be donated to Age Concern. The allotment is organic and visits to Ryton Organic Gardens have been included in young people's sessions to give them a better understanding of what organic means."

It is intended that the project will be on going which fits in with the goal of achieving sustainable development both for the young people and the local community. Each year young people will be involved in the cycle of planting, growing and harvesting the produce. Mark, one of the Sessional Workers involved with this project said "Work is starting now for the 2004 season and we are seeking donations of tools, seeds and plants which we can use to make this year better than ever".

If you can help please contact Kelly at Newton Hall, Rugby.



Land Rover recognises the work of Young People in the Community

One of our Sessional Workers (David) had the excellent idea of approaching his ex-employer - Land Rover - to support our Community Projects.

We are indebted to Ruth Martin of Land Rover for guiding us through the process that led to a grant of £1600 being made for this work. Many thanks Land Rover!

Tall Ships Adventures

In March this year one young person at the end of his Referral Order embarked on a 'Voyage of Understanding' on the Tall Ship; Prince William. The trip was funded by the Youth Offending Team, Tall Ships Youth Trust and himself. The voyage involved circumnavigating the Canary Islands. Prior to the voyage this young person was dependant on cannabis and initially a reluctant participant. However, this whole experience has totally transformed him and he is now drug free, the third YOT success of this programme. Another Young Person embarks on his 'Deep Water Challenge' in April this year, sailing from Tenerife to the Azures. We wish him all the best.

The Allotment Project



Clearing the site

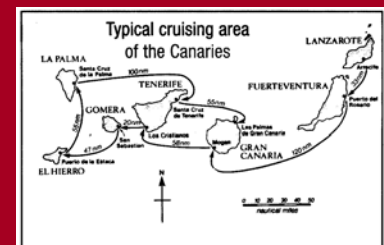


Planting

Tall Ships Adventures



Prince William



Voyage of Understanding

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Margaret Mead

Citizenship – ASDAN Award

Four Young People and two staff; YOT & PRU, visited London in completion of an AQA Citizenship Unit and an ASDAN challenge.

Our MP; Andy King, paid for the Virgin rail tickets and met us at the Houses of Parliament where we were given passes for the Strangers Gallery and watched a debate in The House of Commons on Police speed camera's.



This was followed by an escorted tour of the House by Andy and a tour of The House of Lord's; including the Queen's Robing Room where Marie Antoinette's £5 million clock raised an eyebrow or two! We took tea in the MP's tearooms and had a visit to the terrace for photographs.

In the afternoon, after lunch in Leicester Square, we visited the Central Criminal Courts and observed a trial at The Old Bailey. The young defendant had committed an aggravated burglary, which had resulted in the death of a frail old lady. He was being charged with murder and at the point at which we entered the Courtroom the defence barrister was questioning a police officer, who had discovered the crime scene. The experience prompted a great deal of debate after we exited the Court.

We ended the day with a flight on the London Eye.

The Young People were great, got a lot out of the day and did themselves credit both in Parliament with their MP and at The Old Bailey.

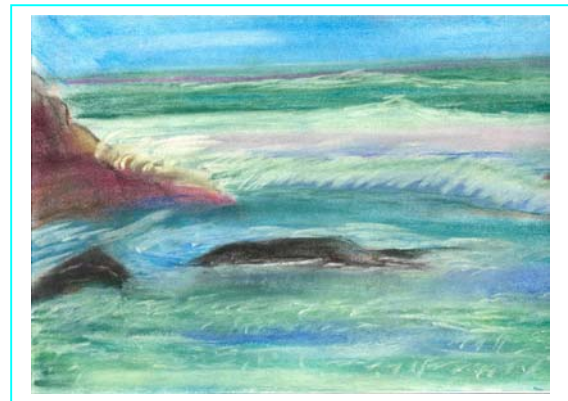
John's an Author and Daniel's an Artist!

Tasks set as part of Young Peoples work whilst on Orders have produced some excellent results.

John was asked by his Referral Order Panel to research the effects of Cannabis (under the supervision of a worker). Following research in the Library and on the Internet an excellent document was produced.

John told us "By doing the research myself I really became motivated to stop using it and even though my Order has finished I have produced another leaflet on Arcade games and how they can lead Young People into crime". This could be the start of something BIG!

Daniel's Artwork, produced in a group session really attracted attention. A Seascape 'par excellence' it is now framed, on display and contributed towards his Silver ASDAN award. We are hopeful that Daniel will continue with this interest as his work has demonstrated considerable talent – Well Done!



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Dates for your Diary

Goodbye!

Ray Savage, Panel Member and Panel Member Delegate will be leaving us in April. Ray was one of Warwickshire's first Panel members and his contribution to the development of the Service and to Young People and their families through his work on the panels is much appreciated.

David Grimshaw, a valued member with the old and new Youth Justice System having been in Warwickshire since 1987, is retiring at the end of March. David was instrumental in developing Victim Support and has a wealth of knowledge of the restorative process that will be missed by all. For those people that know David well, will appreciate that his time will now be spent travelling either in his camper van or on his bike creating more of those well-liked stories. I am sure some of you may see him on your travels around the roads of Warwickshire. We wish him all the best in his retirement and not too many punctures!

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The recent changes in the law regarding the classification of Cannabis are giving us the opportunity to raise the issue with young people who need to understand the legal situation. Lots of education needs to be done around the use of alcohol, as young people are often unaware of the dangers and of the law relating to its use.

We are also pleased to report that the number of young people in Warwickshire who are known to have committed offences represents **only** 1.7% of the total 10 - 17 year old population of Warwickshire. 79% of the young people committing offences were male, 95% of offenders were white. Still lots of room for improvement, but very encouraging all the same

The Last Word from Diane Johnson.....

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