

Appendix 1: Summary Opening Addresses and Achievements to date

Inaugural Gedling Youth Council Meeting 2022 – 2024

Overview

Gedling Borough Council elected its first Youth Council in April 2014.

The Gedling Youth Council is a voluntary body of young people who are nominated from within their schools and serve an initial term of 3 years, having the option to stand again whilst ever they are within the required age range.

The role of the Gedling Youth Council is to:

- Investigate local issues and concerns
- Look at how local authorities spend their money and ask questions
- Tackle big issues, such as bullying and careers advice in schools
- Examine the quality and value for money of local services to young people and make suggestions for improvement
- Fundraise for activities for young people, or for projects that matter to them
- Make recommendations to service organisations on how best to engage with young people
- Work with Councillors, MPs and local organisations to improve the area for young people

Cllr John Clarke, Leader of the Council

Over the last eight years, the young people have exceeded all expectations, not only acting as a consultation forum for the Council and partners on key services to young people, but also instigating and delivering their own campaigns aimed at improving the wellbeing of young people in Gedling. As new members become familiar with their roles, they will continue this invaluable work and gain a range experience to further their own development in the process.

The hard work and dedication of successive Youth Councils over the years resulted in the Gedling Youth Council achieving the Lord Lieutenant's Young People's Volunteering Award in early 2020.

Jean Pardoe, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire

In assessing the nomination of the Gedling Youth Council for the Lord Lieutenant's Young Volunteering Award, I was delighted to meet with the members in early 2020 and hear about their campaigns.

Gedling Youth Council is a well-established voluntary body of young people drawn from schools across the area. Their role is to investigate local issues and concerns on behalf of their peers and act as a consultative group, making recommendations to service organisations such as the Gedling Council and the Police in order to improve

their engagement with young people. Members commit to serving for an initial 2 years and included the Borough's first Youth Mayor who, alongside the Mayor of Gedling, has hosted an overseas delegation alongside other Youth Council members, winning great praise from their guests. 25 young people are involved and the group has been active for 8 years. Although supported by an adult worker, they have considerable scope to set their own agenda. The work of the Youth Council is widely respected both within Gedling District Council and beyond. Their influence has undoubtedly had an impact on improving services and on raising the profile of young people in civic society. This local success story is highly and widely regarded, as was exemplified in 2019 when the retiring chair won the Pride of Gedling Award.

I therefore had no hesitation in recommending Gedling Youth Council for the Lord-Lieutenant's Award or Promoting Voluntary Service.

Cllr Viv McCrossen, Portfolio Holder for Young People and Equalities

Every year, the National Youth Parliament Initiative runs a campaign called 'Make Your Mark', a national ballot to determine the top 10 manifesto priorities to be taken forward by the National Youth Parliament. In 2019, the Gedling contribution to the Countywide ballot was over 25%, thereby demonstrating the Gedling Youth Council's wholehearted commitment to furthering democracy, citizenship and proactive involvement in decision making around the welfare of young people.

Key priorities for the Gedling Youth Council have included Mental Health, loneliness and isolation, young people's personal safety, intolerance and wider forms of bullying. In March 2019 the Youth Council designed and hosted an Intergenerational event, inviting the Gedling Seniors Council and members of community groups serving the older community to join them in a structured conference to discuss six key subjects of concern to them:

- School life
- Bullying/Cyberbullying
- Prejudice and Discrimination
- Loneliness and Isolation
- Mental Health
- Knife Crime, fear of crime

In designing the event, young people worked collaboratively with older people to come up with a vibrant format for the event incorporating poetry, jokes, theatrical props, keynote speeches and a mindfulness session, with attendees additionally speaking to camera to express the common pressures and concerns felt by both generations.

The outcomes of the conference have been compiled into a **Manifesto for Development** on these six subjects, to be shared with key influencers and decision makers.

One of our members, Eleanor Lumb, fulfilled the role of Countywide Young People's Health Champion from 2018 - 2020, meeting regularly with the Nottinghamshire Public Health Commissioner to advise on an action plan for Young People's health.

In June 2019 Gedling elected its first Youth Mayor, one of only three Youth Mayors in the County, who acts as a role model and example of citizenship for young people in the Borough.

Amongst many other successful engagements, our first Youth Mayor Abigail Hutchison hosted a School Twinning Delegation from Rotenburg, alongside the Mayor of Gedling and other Youth Council members, and all were widely praised for their conduct and positive engagement with the guests.

Both Abigail and current Youth Mayor Muhammad Malik have given presentations at Mapperley and Arnold Rotary Club, to local Gedling Business Club meetings, and represented young people at annual Remembrance events in the Borough. Muhammad and the Youth Council also led a successful Climate Change campaign, inviting all Gedling primary schools to sign up to 'Kids Against Plastic' and reach zero single use plastic status.

During their involvement with the Gedling Youth Council, members have presented to formal Council meetings on their most personal concerns, showing great honesty and courage in the process, and having an inspirational impact on Elected Council Members and Senior Officers alike.

As Portfolio Holder for Young People and Equalities, it has been a privilege to work with these exceptional young people over the last three years on enhancing young peoples out of school activities and in delivering the Young People's consultation in 2020/21. I look forward to working with them in taking forward an action plan in response to the consultation in 2022.

Gedling Youth Council is widely regarded as one of the best in the County, and also enjoys the most diverse representation, comprising over the years of representatives of local Schools, Youth Clubs and Disability Schools and a strong multicultural mix of young people. Meetings consistently have the highest attendance of Youth Forums across the County, and as a result previous Chair Florence Orchard was the overall winner in the Annual Pride of Gedling Awards 2019.