

## **Minutes of the Gedling Youth Council Meeting: Monday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

### **5.30 - 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre**

- 1. In Attendance:** Freddie Vokes (Chair), Charlie Rose (Treasurer), Jude Blakey and new member Lexie Garratt; Councillor Kathryn Fox, Jane Ansell, Community Partnerships Manager, Fiona Hextall, Health Development Officer, Guest Speaker Jackie Wilson, Positively Empowered Kids.

#### **2. Welcome, apologies received**

The chair welcomed all to the meeting, and the following apologies were noted: Amy Beckworth, NCC Youth Service, Lydia Yates, Stella Clarke, Fatimah Malik, Evelyn(?), Alex Eggleston, Finley Dunn (delayed in traffic, will attend) Luke Sketcher (GBC Work Experience), Rob McCleary, GBC Communications Team.

#### **3. Icebreaker, put forward by the Chair: What type of Starburst sweet would you describe yourself as?**

Attendees responded.

#### **4. Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true record.

#### **5. Items raised by members in the Youth Council Group Chat**

In the meeting, Jude Blakey raised the question of GBC YC Representation on the Countywide Young Peoples Parliament Board, which he had recently attended and listened to Cameron Holt speaking on the item Votes at 16, which has been passed by Parliament. Charlie expanded that Cameron had prepared a questionnaire to raise awareness and ensure that YP get involved in advising the proper implementation of the new right to vote.

Charlie also raised again the ongoing concerns that have been raised in YC meetings about the lack of proper use and current ineffectiveness of PHSE sessions in schools.

Charlie proposed that the Youth Council puts forward a proposal to the County Youth Parliament Board to make this issue a priority campaign. All members present approved this suggestion.

Due to the elected representative having stood down in the early stages, Gedling has no formal representation on the Countywide Board.

It was **AGREED** that Jane Ansell will put both the issue of Gedling YP non-representation on the Countywide Board, and the PHSE Campaign proposal to Amy Beckworth, NCC Youth Forums Lead, who will be asked to advise how

best to address both concerns, and further discussion would take place at the next meeting.

## **6. Youth Mayor updates**

Freddie shared the following updates on behalf of Lydia Yates, Youth Mayor:

Since her inauguration at Full Council in May 2025, Lydia has attended and given an address alongside Kyle Robinson-Payne, Mayor of Gedling at the opening of Arnold Summer Fair on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June. Lydia looks forward to representing Young People on the reconvened Carlton Towns Board. Sha has also been actively promoting recruitment to the Youth Council and has been invited to select a Youth Mayor Charity.

## **7. Gedling Social Mobility Commission:** updates from Youth Council representative Fatimah Malik, if any are available.

Deferred due to Fatimah's absence

## **8. Standing Item: Opportunities for Youth Council / Youth Mayor Promotion and Communications** – key issues, initiatives (GBC Communications)

Deferred due to absence of Communications Team representative.

## **9. Discussion Workshop: Jane Ansell will lead a discussion on Digital Inclusion**

Jane advised that she has recently taken on a new role at the Council of Digital Inclusion and Engagement Manager. This involves establishing a Digital Inclusion Network of expert organisations, practitioners, voluntary organisations and other stakeholders to support greater ongoing digital inclusion and equality of access to learning and skills, technology, build confidence to use online health and wellbeing/other services and social inclusion opportunities. A grant scheme will be launched in the Autumn, with further resources available for training, buddying and other initiatives via UKSPF 2025/2026 Funding.

Jane asked members for feedback on their experience and observations of digital inclusion/exclusion, best practice tools, and ideas / areas of need and possible focus.

### **Feedback from members:**

- People need access to the right technology for their needs, to foster equality in society
- The skills to use tech are not readily available to some young people and members of the community
- Unless YP take computer science at school, or other specific technology subjects, they miss out on access and skills to use
- People/YP then become de-incentivised
- Inappropriate use of tech is also a risk for YP, which reinforces bullying and misinformation/ negative influencing

- To some Tech is an everyday necessity, and to others not so much
- More equal access is needed to higher spec tech is needed, i.e. Mac book, for studying and other personal growth – lack of this creates a rapidly expanding divide
- There are mental health impacts of unmanaged / unsupervised/ untrained awareness of tech use, i.e. no age restrictions or controls
- The way each individual experience the digital world is different according to their circumstances, tech and access to awareness and support
- Risks of exposure to addiction, inappropriate material. Misuse
- Tech / Digital advancement has the capacity to accelerate inequality more quickly than any other previous social change, but properly deployed and managed, could foster equality in society and social mobility.
- Funding for social clubs and schools focussed on digital access and confidence was recommended
- Use of tech for practical help should be fostered in these and other settings, i.e. CV preparation
- Schools having access to tech funding is pivotal due to the captive audience – this would accelerate equality of opportunity
- Maths Genie, Mac Suite, Word, PowerPoint and packages that expand creative practice and nourish confidence were flagged as being core access requirements for all in society
- AI and other tools for revision and research were also flagged
- Cost inequalities/payment premiums were cited as barriers to equality of access. Elite resources are behind a paywall and perpetuate inequality.
- There is a strong divide between those who use tech positively, and those who use it negatively. For example: AI is a great tool which can be used to either positive or negative effect
- All Tech use in society needs to be managed and better regulated if it is to be a force for good in society

Jane thanked members for their great insights, which will inform the Digital Inclusion programme, and advised that she would keep in touch with developments,

#### **10. Proposal for a trip to Parliament at the invitation of Michael Payne, MP**

Jane informed members of an offer from Michael Payne, MP to visit him in Parliament and take a tour, proposed for the October half term recess, date yet to be confirmed, and asked members to register their interest. All four members present confirmed their interest in attending.

**AGREED** that Jane will round up further interest via email and come back with a proposed date as soon as that is available.

## **11. Guest Speaker: Jackie Wilson, Positively Empowered Kids (to be confirmed)**

Jackie introduced herself and young volunteer Lexie Garratt and gave an overview of the aims and work programme of Positively Empowered Kids.

### **Key projects:**

For 5 years to date, PEK has delivered a large scale annual young people's festival, most recently at Nottingham Castle, where fun activities, volunteering, leadership and social connection designed by and for young people aims to enrich lives, build confidence and foster personal growth, independence, self – awareness and positive mental / physical health and wellbeing.

Based in and focussing primarily on Gedling young people, PEK has delivered similar pop - up events in Arnold Town Centre and a Killisick annual fun day and worked with local primary schools on democratic leadership and mental health and wellbeing initiatives.

Plans are in train to deliver a wider number of pop-up activity days in local Gedling parks and recreation areas over the Summer recess 2025.

In the last year and ongoing, PEK has worked in Gedling Youth Club settings to provide group and 1 to 1 practical self – help tools and techniques and listening space to young people, to enable them to address personal anxiety, low mood, stress, lack of confidence, to open up to trusted mentorship and make better life choices.

Jackie endorsed members concerns about PHSE effectiveness and stressed the importance of ongoing safe spaces for young people to share concerns and develop skills for life. PEK aims to develop Wellbeing Hubs for young people across the Borough.

A Q and A session followed Jackies presentation (details not recorded as minute taker had to leave the meeting).

Jackie closed by inviting Youth Council Members to engage with the work referenced at the meeting, including any suggestions around how the organisation can engage with schools. She also invited members to help PEK shape the Wellbeing Hubs work across the Borough.

**AGREED:** Jackie Wilson to be put in touch with Amy Beckworth, and the Youth Council to maintain a partnership with Positively Empowered Kids.

**12. Future guest speakers and areas of interest, upcoming Council Consultations and other developments**

**Next meeting:** Jae Hodgson, East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) Youth Committee Lead and Liam Jackson, EMCCA Careers Hub Lead.

**(Members were asked to note the EMCCA Youth Committee application documents attached Appendices 1 and 2)**

**13. Social session and refreshments in the Beeston Room at 7.00pm**

**14. Date of next meeting: Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September.** Forward meeting dates below:

**Forward meeting dates:**

**2025:** 3<sup>rd</sup> November

**2026:** 23<sup>rd</sup> February