

## **Questions from the public received under Standing Order 8**

### **Question from Jed Brandreth, Holly Fallon, Jeevan Birk and Myles Kirk, Gedling Youth Council.**

Every year, bullying is raised as one of the most prominent issues that the young people of Gedling have.

We feel that teachers can be out of touch with the new forms of bullying and are uneducated about spotting it.

Could the Council get in touch and influence schools to improve this, if so how?

We would be very grateful if we could receive feedback on any movement in this area.

### **Answer from Councillor Henry Wheeler, Portfolio Holder for Health and Housing**

I would like to thank the young people from the Gedling Youth Council for attending Council this evening. I am aware that the Youth Council is working in theme groups to tackle some of the issues most important to young people in Gedling, including bullying, and am pleased to report that Members Grant funding of £1,200 has been given to help the Youth Council to deliver its action plan this year.

It is great that young people feel that they can come to the Council and ask a question about a real important issue that affects all young people in the Borough – namely teachers' inability to spot the new forms of bullying and subsequently stop it.

As a Council we have also recognised that Cyber Bullying in particular is a new issue which we cannot ignore. Last October our Netherfield Community Safety week focused upon Cyber Crime. We arranged presentations and interactive drama workshops in the two local primary schools and also at Carlton le Willows Academy. The presentations informed of what both 0 to 9 year olds and 9 to 16 year olds are currently doing on-line and highlighted the risks and benefits of this activity. Activity includes social networking sites, sharing sites (such as Instagram), gaming, use of mobile technology and webcams. They also offered advice to parents and children about how to manage use of technology and how to identify the dangers and signs of cyber bullying.

A short video was also produced in partnership with Netherfield Primary School showing the importance of parents taken the time in their busy lives to recognise potential signs of cyber bullying. This video is currently available on You-Tube.

We also agreed with the three schools to run Cyber Bullying workshops for teachers. The purpose so teachers could deliver similar sessions themselves within school and promote greater understanding around the issues of cyber bullying. The Heads of all three schools felt this issue was becoming a real problem within their schools and that staff were not necessarily sufficiently skilled enough to deal with it.

The Council now plans to purchase merchandise around cyber bullying to raise the profile of the issue and this will offer links to some helpful websites. We plan to distribute this merchandise at various events over the summer months.

The question posed tonight by the Youth Council prompts us a Council to build on our initial work we have done in the Netherfield area. The young people have recognised that their teachers are not up to speed when it comes to issues such as cyber bullying and are asking this evening if Gedling Borough Council can help to contact and influence other local schools to change this.

Firstly we have already contacted Nottinghamshire County Council's Anti-bullying Coordinator, who is happy to work with the Gedling Youth Council on this issue.

Secondly we will use the lessons learnt from working with schools in Netherfield to approach other local schools. I propose that the Council and partners meet at the earliest opportunity with representatives of local schools and the Youth Council to explore the issue further and identify some effective solutions to this growing problem.

Thirdly, we will report back to the Youth Council our progress with this.

I would like to thank Jed, Holly, Jeevan and Myles again for taking the time to attend this evening.