Children’s and Youth Work May 2022

As restrictions have been relaxed and the team have been able to physically meet up with one another, the young people as well as the lay workers and volunteers, our main challenge has been that of uncertainty. When events and activities have had to be cancelled or moved online at the last minute this has impacted the wellbeing of everyone concerned. Such that, along with many of the churches, we find a lack of energy but not desire around CYF events.

Despite this we have run activities throughout the year, beginning with archery and participation in the workshops at the September Synod. In January we held our third annual sleepout for Homelessness. This year we were at Lidgett Grove Methodist church, due to the building works at Central in York. We were joined by a number of students from the Just Love society at York University as well as young people and staff from around the district, raising just over £5000. In February we held our first residential since the start of the pandemic and plan another in July. Victoria volunteered at 3Generate in October and has been invited to co-lead the Town Hall venue this September. We hope that some of the young people from across the district will get involved in shaping and delivering this venue at the weekend. As well as these events we have continued to work online, with a monthly young adult Bible study alongside other one-off zoom activities. And as sweets in the post seem to be popular amongst the young people, we have done a regular mailing throughout the year.

The lay workers community of practice has continued, with monthly well-being sessions being added to the regular drop-in coffee sessions and termly regional meetings. June sees our first physical meet up at the lay workers retreat at Wydale Hall.

Following discussions with the strategy group and DLT, we decided to leave the One Opportunity scheme fallow for another year. This does not mean that a young person could not undertake a project in their church under similar terms and conditions, simply that we are not formally recruiting for and running the scheme. If you know of a young person who is interested, please encourage them to get in touch.

Looking to the future, we have a district youth weekend at Carlton Lodge, Thirsk, in July. Happily, there has been a lot of interest in this from around the district. September sees the second 3Gen at the NEC and we hope to take a group this year. April 2023 is Flourish 2, this time the team are running the children’s and family stream and are hoping to add a young adult stream to the youth activities. Victoria is also working on collaborations with the Yorkshire West and Sheffield Districts as well as York Diocese. Despite the undoubted challenges ahead, the future looks bright!