

MEDWAY YOUTH COUNCIL

Newsletter – September to November

Welcome to our first newsletter. The last few months have been extremely busy for the Medway Youth Council, and I'm extremely excited to be able to update you on all of our progress and events over the last few months. I'm pleased to announce that the Organisation's rebrand to Medway Youth Council has now been fully completed, and our new brand now fully in use. I hope that you find this newsletter a useful resource, and look forward to meeting with you in due course.

Our next newsletter will be produced in the new year, so please let me take this opportunity to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yours faithfully,



George Perfect
Organisation Chair, @georgehperfect

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On 7th November we welcomed young people from across Medway to our annual conference at the Corn Exchange. The event saw nearly two hundred young people in attendance, with workshops run throughout the day around bullying. They were:

- Workshop A – Focusing on how we tackle bullying and how it should be treated – where young people can go for help and who should be helping them?
- Workshop B – What is bullying? Types of bullying, and young people's experiences.
- Workshop C - Why do people bully and do we punish or help?

The day also saw James Okulaja (UK Youth Anti-Bullying Ambassador) perform his new single, Black and White, which both young people, and our special guests enjoyed! The conference welcomed a panel in the afternoon, with two local Headteachers, a Police Inspector and James. This Q&A proved to be tough for the panel, with some challenging but thorough questioning on key topic areas. The lunch was kindly provided by the young people of Woodlands Youth Centre, and was extremely tasty. Work will now begin on our report, which we hope to share with you in the early part of the new year.



You may not have the vote, but you do have a voice!

Organisation Chair: Mr George Perfect YC

Working closely with Medway Council

Medway Youth Council, Gun Wharf,
Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TR

medwayyouthcouncil.co.uk

T: 01634 338748

F: Medway Youth Council

T: @MYC_Medway

MAKE YOUR MARK & HOUSE OF COMMONS VISIT FOR MEDWAY MYPS

We would like to thank you all for the incredible support that we have received in the 2017 Make Your Mark Campaign. We have received a wealth of support from so many local schools and youth groups, and this has really helped us locally, and the British Youth Council nationally, in understanding the current issues and concerns that are facing young people in Medway. The choices on the ballot paper this year was wide ranging, and the responses that we received from young people, will really help us in our campaigns over this next academic year.



This year we received the highest ever number of ballots in the history of the Medway Youth Council, with 5098 votes being cast. This beats the target that we were set by the British Youth Council, and represents to us over 20% of 11-18-year olds in the Medway towns.

The biggest issues this year were as follows:

- *Transport – Making public transport cheaper, better and accessible for all - 914*
- *Mental Health – Services should be improved with young people’s help - 850*
- *Work Experience hubs for 11-18-year olds – Knowing where to find work experience can be challenging. Government should create an online space to help young people with this. - 643*

The top five schools, in terms of ballots received were as follows:

- The Rainham Mark Grammar School - 1149
- Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School – 676
- Rochester Grammar School – 570
- The Robert Napier School – 524
- Strood Academy – 470



These issues have now been fed nationally into the UK Youth Parliament, and Members of the National Youth Parliament sat in the House of Commons on 10th November, following a unanimous vote by MPs which will enable Members of Youth Parliament to debate in the Commons chamber for the rest of this Parliament. Our representatives met with colleagues from across the country and debated the main issues on the Make Your Mark ballot. Both George and Malachi represented Medway well and did us proud! The national campaign for 2017-18 at UKYP will be votes at 16, and a curriculum for life. However, MYC will campaign locally on transport and work experience hubs, as these were the top issues for Medway's young people.

NEW WEBSITE

Back in July we announced that we would be changing the website to fit a more modern and easy to read theme, and we are thrilled to announce that this has now come to life. On the first of this month we launched our new website medwayyouthcouncil.co.uk, and we’re pleased with the design. The website will share the latest news and stories surrounding the youth council, and will be constantly evolving with new details. Thank you to Questor Insurance for kindly donating the new website and branding to us.

MEETING WITH NEW MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER

At the start of October, we were pleased to welcome Dr Ben Smith, Clinical Director for Psychological Services and the Allied Health Professionals at NELFT NHS Foundation Trust and Graham Tanner, Medway Council's Partnership Programme Commissioning Lead. They discussed the changes to mental health services for young people in Medway.

Our Deputy Chair, George Peck said 'Meeting with our partners frequently is one of our priorities for MYC and myself and the Chair will be working with the newly elected Partnerships Director to ensure that we have a good relationship with important partners like the NHS, thank you to Dr Smith and Graham for coming along'



CATCH UP WITH MP FOR CHATHAM AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SOCIETY & SPORT

In September we welcomed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport and the Civil Society, and MP for Chatham and Aylesford Tracey Crouch to our Full Youth Council meeting. Our members asked a variety of questions including about Tracey's work as an MP, and the workings of Government.

QUESTION TIME

On the 19th October, our Chair was delighted to attend the Robert Napier School Question Time event. The event saw local Councillors and the MP for Gillingham and Rainham in attendance, answering four questions to the around what issues matter to young people, and how to tackle crime in Medway.

It was great for us to visit one of our local schools, and answer key questions from young people. This engagement work is vitally important in allowing us to carry out our representation of young people across the area.



MAUNDENE PRIMARY SCHOOL VISIT

We were delighted to visit Maundene School in Chatham in October & meet with the Student Leadership Team at the school, which included their Head girl, and Head boy. Pupils were asked to talk about what they love about the Medway towns, and what they would like to see improved, and the Youth Council work on. These were then drawn onto their own coat of arms that they were asked to design for the area. The pupils were assets to the school and a brilliant group, who were passionate about Medway, and their school.



MEDWAY NHS FOUNDATION TRUST ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING

On 26th September, our leadership attended the Medway NHS Foundation Trust Annual Members' Meeting, at the Canterbury Christ Church University in Chatham.

It was brilliant to attend the annual members' meeting, and hear about all of the work that is going on across the trust. I would like to thank the Trust Chair, Stephen Clark, and the Chief Executive Lesley Dwyer, for the invite, and congratulate them, the board and the staff team at Medway for their continuing work and dedication.



BLACK HISTORY TRUST GALA

Our Partnerships Director, Jasmine, and Marketing Director, Malachi attended the Black History Trust Gala Dinner last month. The dinner provided our members with the opportunity to speak about the work that MYC carries out, and hear speeches from the Deputy Mayor and local politicians. The evening also celebrated the importance of Black History and its links to the community of Medway. MYC sits on the organising committee for the event, and has had an active role in this year's event, and helped with the set up.



SOCIAL MEDIA FEEDS

We are currently in the process of growing our social media feeds. Please can we ask that you like/follow our pages below, where you will find the latest news regarding MYC.

- ✓ Facebook: [Medway Youth Council](#)
- ✓ Twitter: [@MYC_Medway](#)
- ✓ Instagram: [@medway_youth_council](#)

IN THE NEWS

Read our latest feature in the Medway Messenger, around our youth conference. For more see our website.



Youth council conference shines light on bullying

by Nicola Jordan
njordan@thekmgroupp.co.uk
@nicolajordan01

Getting to grips with bullying was the hot topic at the Medway Youth Council (MYC) annual conference, which was attended by more than 200 students.

Delegates representing secondary schools and colleges crammed into Rochester's Corn Exchange last Tuesday.

They discussed ways of tackling the growing problems of cyber and physical abuse.

Some victims shared their experiences with the audience of young people and the panel of two head teachers, a top police officer and a leading anti-bullying campaigner.

Workshops were held throughout the day looking into the root of bullying and whether perpetrators should be punished or helped.

There was also a Q&A session chaired by panellists James Okulaja, a national anti-bullying ambassador, acting inspector Adam Duke and Andrew Minchin and Tina Lovey, head teachers of Gillingham schools

and the panel really related to the audience.

"Some of the stories shared were particularly shocking, including one girl who was too scared to leave her home for fear of being targeted.

"We find being young ourselves they are more likely to relate to us rather than a counsellor.

"Cyber bullying is the biggest problem and is not something that just goes on at school. It is 24/7."

MYC, an elected, non-political forum, has 39 members.

They represent the Towns in the National Youth Parliament - taking on issues such as transport, drink and drug abuse, homelessness and modern slavery. One of the current subjects on their agenda is lowering the voting age to 16.

Robert Napier School pupil George said the Medway group had bucked the national trend and polled against a change.

MYC's mission statement is: "You may not have the vote, but you do have a voice."

George added: "We're not political and totally independent.

"Our doors are open to anyone between 10 and 19."

Head teachers Andrew Minchin and Tina Lovey, anti-bullying campaigner James Okulaja and acting Insp Adam Duke take part in a Q&A panel at the Medway Youth Council conference

Robert Napier and Rivermead.

The findings will now be compiled by MYC members, who will report to the council's overview and young people scrutiny committee.

They will also be sending out information packs to schools on how best to implement solutions.

MYC chairman George Perfect, who gave the opening speech, was delighted with the response of the seminar, which was attended by many Medway councillors, including mayor Cllr David Wildey.

George, 17, said: "It was brilliant. We had representatives from comprehensives, grammars and the university technical college and from all over Medway. Discussion was lively