

Bingley Youth Council

After speaking with two representatives from Silsden Town Council, we were allowed to borrow their past documentation which I have attached.

Silsden Youth Council was set up in 2003 after a group of young people contacted the Town Council to request facilities for off-road biking. These young people became part of the Youth Council and ran a fundraising campaign to bring the 'Rocks & Ramps' project to life. It was believed that by having meaningful hobbies it would curb "nuisance behaviour".

Although Silsden Youth Council is no longer active because all but 2 went off to university at the same time. They are actively seeking to revive it as they understand how important it is for the community.

Meetings were held once a month and is attended by the clerk and 1-2 councillors. The young people elected themselves into the necessary positions and took turns taking minutes. The councillors said that they had to help them at first but after awhile they were able to conduct the meetings themselves and the councillors + clerk were only needed to ensure the decisions made were practical and within the law.

Piloting group

It was recommended by the BYCA booklet I sent out in October that we should start out by setting up a piloting group to help determine what's needed to best facilitate the Youth Council.

I would suggest we start by finding an agreement with schools and other organisations and then run several workshops. We can later decide on whether or not elections will be needed and how to organise them if so.

Election/selection process

If a certain number is not met it may be the case that we decide not to hold elections. At the piloting meeting(s) Silsden did, everybody who was interested in standing was first and seconded in order to appear on the ballot. Internal positions would be voted on at an AGM just like regular town council meetings.

The number of seats/system of representation can be decided later but I would suggest we aim to have 8-16 young councillors. The booklet from BYCA suggests we use either 11-18 or 13-18 as the age brackets, but this can go up to 25 so we could use the age brackets used by Bradford Council Youth Services which is 11-19 + adults up to 25 if they have a disability.

Youth Councils have a reputation of attracting young people mainly from wealthier backgrounds, although this was not the case in Silsden so the councillors taking part in the piloting group would be tasked with attracting young people from all backgrounds. We can also consider using an all women's shortlist for half of the positions to ensure we have an equal number of both young men and women.

Costs

I would like to suggest that the council spends up to £500 on set up costs, keeping in mind that it is likely to cost much less than this amount. This should include, leaflets posters and other small expenditure.

As for having a budget, it is not necessary to have one as projects can be funded through fundraising activities. From what I understand Silsden Youth Council does not have a budget but the Council and their Mayor did put donations towards projects.

If we are wanting to further replicate what it truly is like to be on a parish council I would recommend having a budget, but I believe organising fundraising activities is an important part of demonstrating to the community what Youth Councils are about so I would suggest we strike somewhere in the middle and having a small budget which can be topped up via fundraising. The piloting group should help us determine our budget.

Affiliation to the British Youth Council costs £57 per year which I believe is required, and if not I would recommend anyway. Affiliation to Youth Voice costs £525 per year which may not be worth looking at at this time but offers far greater benefits such as affiliation to the Youth Parliament.

Summary

I would like to propose at this point;

- 1) We select 3 or more councillors to run the pilot scheme and come back with a more details based on what young people would want from a Youth Council.
- 2) Approve a spending budget of up to £500 for setting up the Youth Council.
- 3) Agree on which age brackets we are happy to use.
- 4) Agree to ensure that the Youth Council is set up and ready before the elections next year.