

YouthBank Briefing Winter 2009



Welcome to the first in a series of Briefings to introduce some of the great work going on in local YouthBanks across the UK. This Briefing is for anyone, but especially those who have not heard much (or anything) about us before. So feel free to pass this on to your colleagues, particularly those working as elected members, as commissioners, or within the youth sector.



What is YouthBank? YouthBank is a grantmaking initiative run by young people for young people. YouthBank UK co-ordinates the network of more than 80 local YouthBanks across the United Kingdom. These are groups of young people who fund young people's ideas to benefit their own communities. Young people themselves make decisions about who receives the money, how the YouthBank is run and, through a Trustee Board of young people, also direct the UK-wide programme.

YouthBank is 10!

YouthBank celebrates its 10th Birthday this year. The Summer residentials, planned around the '10' theme by Wolverhampton YouthBank and attended by over 170 young people, were once again very popular with young people and YouthBank Co-ordinators. YouthBankers participated in the variety of activities and some led workshops and ice breaker sessions.

To see the level of energy and enthusiasm from young people was a great present for the YouthBank UK staff. If we have one Birthday wish it is that we'll be able to keep these events going for many more Birthdays to come.

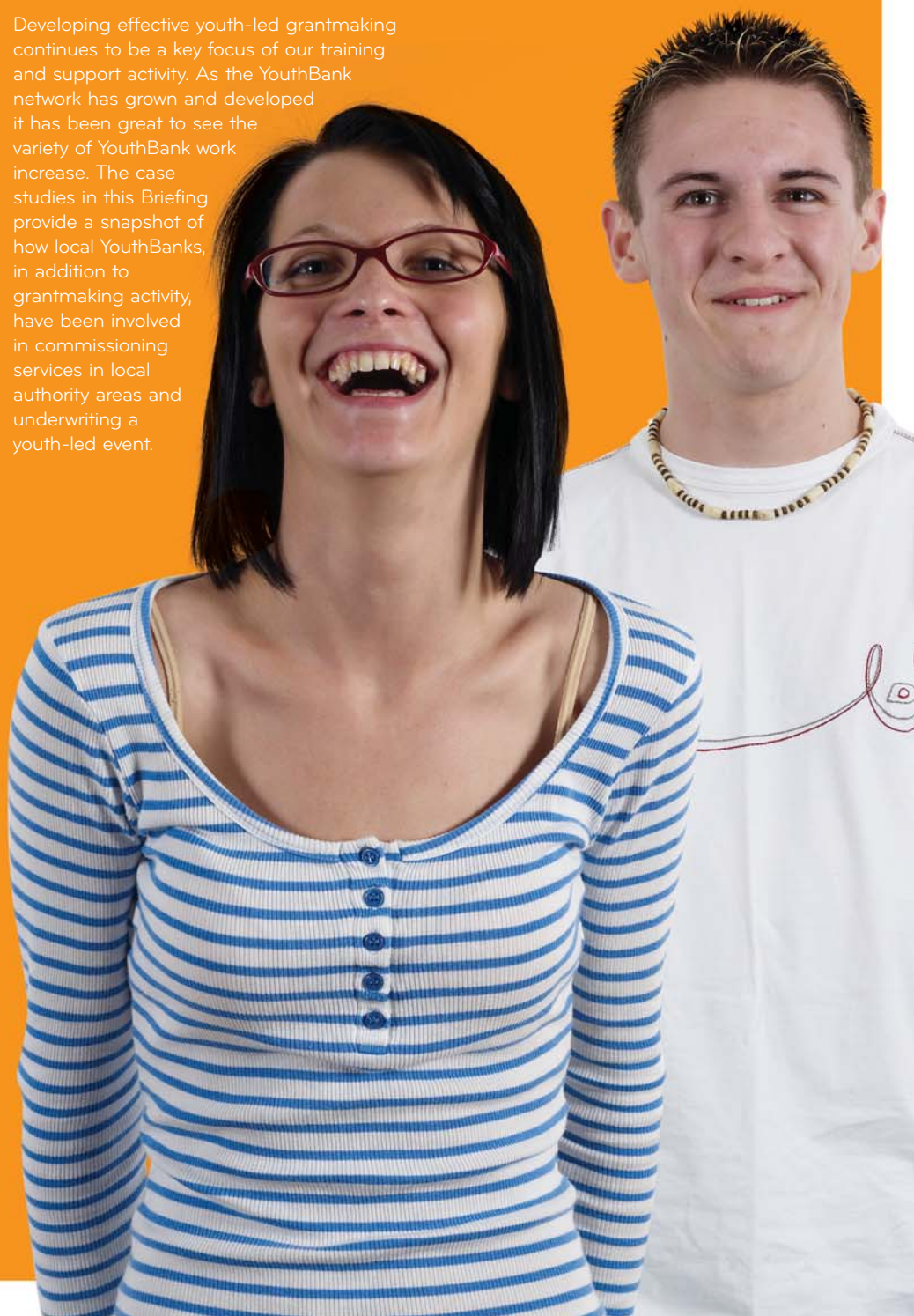
YouthBank in numbers

Over the last ten years almost 234,000 people have benefited directly from YouthBank activity. Over £13m has been distributed by young people through in excess of 7,000 grants. Over 5,000 young people have made decisions as part of their local YouthBank group.

YouthBank in action

YouthBank is about developing youth-led grantmaking practice in communities. We support young people in a range of ways, including accredited training packages designed to improve the range of skills required for effective grantmaking such as decision-making, leadership and presentation skills.

Developing effective youth-led grantmaking continues to be a key focus of our training and support activity. As the YouthBank network has grown and developed it has been great to see the variety of YouthBank work increase. The case studies in this Briefing provide a snapshot of how local YouthBanks, in addition to grantmaking activity, have been involved in commissioning services in local authority areas and underwriting a youth-led event.



Involving young people in commissioning: Essex

It is important that the involvement of young people is embedded into the commissioning process to ensure their perspectives help make better decisions.

This is why young people have been involved in the distribution of the Local Priority Fund in Essex. This is funding which has been drawn from three principle funding streams: Connexions NEET* to EET funding, Children's Fund and Social Care. The fund is over £3 million per year in Essex and is being commissioned by the 11 Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) panels in the county in response to their local priorities.

Most of the young people who took part in the commissioning had previous YouthBank experience. They were from very diverse backgrounds, such as young carers groups, looked after young people and young people with special needs. They already had an understanding of community funding and local needs developed through YouthBank training which helped them to relate to the commissioning process. The young people undertook further specific training on the Local Priority Fund (for services supporting vulnerable children, young people and their parents) and scoring the types of bid expected.

Mostly during their half-term break, the young people worked full days in small area groups to assess the commissioning bids. They were supported by local youth workers and locality commissioning support managers, who provided advice and guidance (if required). This was a great experience for the young people; they were empowered, involved and became more confident as the process took place. They displayed high levels of communication and negotiation skills and remained objective and fair throughout. Confidentiality was essential throughout the whole process and the young people all respected this.

In recognition of the achievements and contributions made by the young people, they attended an evaluation and celebration evening. Here they were able to feedback their personal commissioning experiences and think about the skills and knowledge they had gained. They also discussed how best the monitoring of the funded projects could be undertaken and how they could be involved in it. Certificates were presented to all the young people by Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Director for Commissioning (Essex CC Schools, Children and Families directorate), who emphasised how proud she was of their involvement and achievements.

As a direct result of the commissioning work, the young people also benefited from the opportunity to attend a further session to enable them to gain a "Volunteering for an Event" qualification, which was offered via ASDAN, the awarding body. Fifteen young people so far have successfully completed and achieved this.





Stockton's Young Roots A Youth Opportunity Fund grant from Stockton YouthBank has had a great impact on the development of the allotment and other related activity at The Youthy, a youth club based in Stockton-on-Tees, managed by The Five Lamps Organisation.

Germinating from an idea from young people attending the Entry to Employment (e2e) programme, the allotment activity has blossomed thanks to a grant which allowed the group to purchase appropriate tools and improve their horticultural skills. The award of the grant, like other Stockton YouthBank grants, required some matched funds to be raised by the young people themselves.

The work of the young people on the allotment has also attracted interest from older allotment owners and acted as a means for the different generations to communicate with each other, breakdown pre-existing barriers and learn new skills. The participants have now planted their crops, some of which have been donated by other allotment owners, built a small pond to attract wildlife and are learning about the best plants to grow to attract bees for the pollination process. The group also received £200 worth of vouchers from Wilkinsons stores to help with buying seeds and equipment.

The young people have now moved into livestock and have purchased and rescued some battery hens enabling them to learn

about keeping livestock and the responsibilities of looking after animals. The young people have built a chicken run and the hens have started laying which has created great excitement, particularly amongst the younger members. They are now able to produce food that is healthy, natural and free and which they can use within their own cooking.

The next stage of the project is to build further links with the community, learning skills from older generations relating to cooking the allotment produce and eating healthily. The allotment has also provided opportunities for exercise and learning the health and financial –benefits of growing your own food. One of the young people involved commented: *"I thought that working at the allotment was fun; I learnt new skills and met new people. It gave me a chance to do something I have never done before and make me fitter...[I'm] now doing voluntary work at The Youthy during the day and hope to become more involved in helping other young people enjoy the allotment and have fun"*.

Project leaders

Name: **Kelsey Christie**

Age: **16**

Project name: **Caithness Gymnastics Club Springboard to Success**

YouthBank that funded you: **Caithness YouthBank**

How much money did you receive: **£1055.60**

What difference did receiving the money have on your community?

With over 100 gymnasts at the club its made a huge difference to the club as a whole. It was very beneficial as members of the whole club can get use out of it, from the younger squad who are 5-6 to the competition squad who have gymnasts at the age of 17-18.

Describe YouthBank in three words: **Generous, uncomplicated, amazing!!**

Social entrepreneurship in Devon In October 2006, Ashley approached his YouthBank and Devon Youth Service with an idea: to raise money for a charity in Uganda working with young people who are homeless and living on the streets.

Ashley was about to take part in a college trip performing in the African drumming group, and to spend some time helping in local schools and with the Suubi 3Medical Clinic, the designated charity in Uganda.

With the support of his local YouthBank and Devon Youth Service, a business plan for a charity fundraising event was drawn up. It was calculated that selling 175 tickets would cover the costs of having the Wurzels (legendary West Country band) perform as part of the event. All money over that figure would be donated from the fund raising event to the Suubi Clinic. The decision to go ahead was a considerable risk. Ashley's major concern was the financial consequences if the event was cancelled or something went wrong.

Ashley applied to the YouthBank for (Youth Opportunity Fund) funding, asking for the cost of the event to be covered. The key part of his application was in asking the fund to underwrite the cost of the Wurzels entertainment fee of £1800.

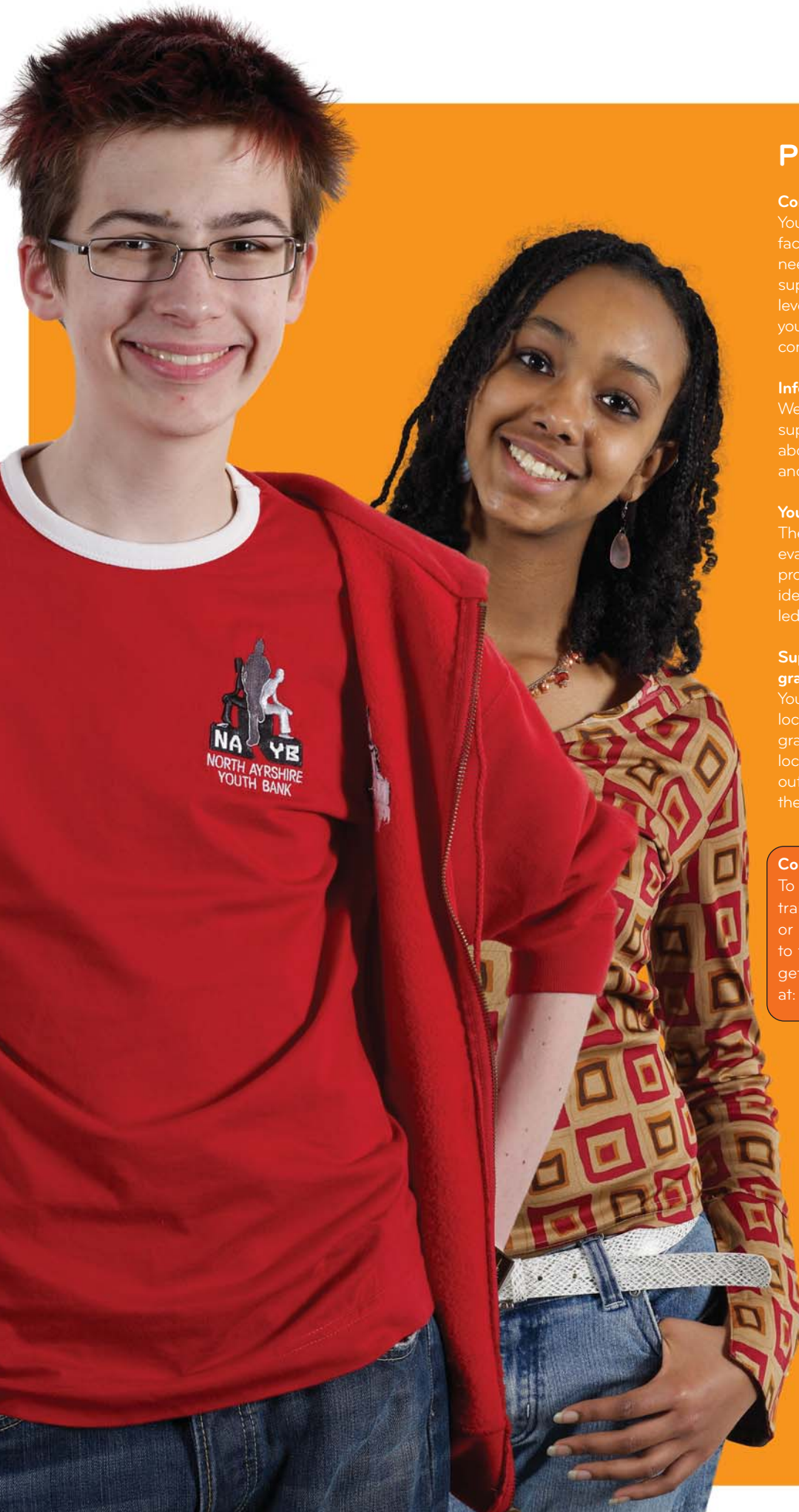
On the night itself, in February 2007, a young local band from Chulmleigh, Robyn & The Matchstickmen, took the opportunity to support the Wurzels as the first act of the night. Chulmleigh Community College North Devon were very supportive of this project and gave the use of their college hall free. Ashley was assisted by approximately 20 other young people from the college who acted as stewards, stagehands and general support.

Ticket sales reached the maximum number for the hall, and £600 in profit was raised for the Suubi Clinic. The profit also included funds raised by Ashley's quiz sheet which was sold on the night.

This case study highlights one way in which funding sources can be used to encourage young people to try new projects without exposing them to the most serious financial risks if things do not quite happen as intended.

The funding here was not seen as a license to spend money but instead used as a way to enable Ashley and his friends to fulfil their idea. In total, a funding package of £2200 was allocated but he only used £400 of this to cover his expenses in putting the event on. The remaining money was then re allocated to other projects.





Products and Services

Consultancy and Facilitation

YouthBank UK offers consultancy and facilitation services tailored to meet your needs, drawing on our experience of supporting organisations to increase the levels of engagement and participation of young people. Our work supports local commissioning processes.

Information briefings

We offer a series of briefings on key topics to support young people in making decisions about money and leading their organisations and projects.

YouthBank UK toolkits

The YouthBank UK Toolkit and mini evaluation and peer assessment handbooks provide practical exercises, checklists, tips, ideas and standards to support young people led grantmaking.

Support to set up young people led grantmaking panels

YouthBank UK supports a national network of local YouthBanks where young people give grants to other young people to benefit their local community. Please contact us to find out more about setting up a YouthBank and the benefits of YouthBank UK membership.

Contact us

To make an enquiry, talk to us about our training, consultancy or facilitation services, or if you would like the work of your YouthBank to feature in a future edition of this briefing, get in touch on 0116 242 7446 or email us at: youthbank@nya.org.uk