

A Consultation on plans for a youth and community centre at Prout Bridge in Beaminster: Findings report

August 2018

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1. Executive Summary

- A consultation was conducted in August 2018 on plans by Beaminster Youth Club to take on the running of the Youth and Children's Centre at Prout Bridge offering a greater range of activities, services, support and facilities for young people and the broader community.
- A clear need for greater support and more things to do was identified in people of all ages in the town and surrounding area. This need is particularly high amongst young people. Social isolation, mental health, skills development / employment and online safety were all identified as significant issues.
- There is extremely high support amongst people of all ages for the plans for the Youth Club charity to take over the running of the building and for a wider range of activities and services to be offered at the Centre.
- High levels of interest were expressed for many of the proposed activities and services, especially for "Arts, crafts and music clubs", "Youth clubs", "Community events", "Sports and exercise activities", "School holiday clubs", "A library of things" and "Skills training."
- Many parents expressed an interest in targeted youth work support. In particular, nearly two-thirds of parents expressed an interest in "Workshops for young people to support with issues delivered by qualified youth workers e.g. help with bullying, school transitions, self-esteem, eating disorders."

2. Background and objectives

Beaminster Youth Club, a charity set up to provide activities and support for children and young people aged under 25 in and around Beaminster, is in the process of assessing the viability of taking on the running of the Beaminster Youth and Children's Centre building at Prout Bridge. The charity's vision is to develop the building into a thriving and welcoming place for the whole community to share and enjoy, where people can come to chat, make friends, get help and advice. It wants to offer high quality, affordable clubs, activities, services and facilities that support people of all ages and backgrounds in our town and nearby, with a focus on children and young people.

This consultation was conducted to:

1. Understand the extent of the local need for activities and support beyond those already provided by other organisations;
2. Hear people's responses to the plans for the building;
3. Assess the level of demand for different services, activities and facilities we could offer;
4. Invite people's suggestions and ideas for things they would like to see provided by the Centre.

In conducting the consultation, we were keen to reach people of all ages and backgrounds, both in Beaminster and in the surrounding towns and villages.

3. Methodology and sample

The consultation was open for two weeks in August 2018.

People were invited to complete a 10-question survey either online or on paper (the full survey questionnaire can be found in the appendix to this report). People were also invited to give their feedback on local Facebook groups and on comment boards at the centre. The consultation was publicised on local social media groups, on the Youth Club website, on posters and in the Centre itself.

The survey was completed by 196 people, with a good spread of ages and household types:

- Over half the respondents live in Beaminster (102 people) with the remainder living in the surrounding towns, villages and countryside;
- 21% are aged under 25, 52% aged 25-44, 22% aged 45-64 and 5% over 65;
- Just over two-thirds of respondents are parents or carers with children aged under 25 living at home;
- 30% work full time, 49% work part time, 16% are in education or study;
- 4% receive income-related benefits, 5% receive disability benefits;
- 3% are caring for a relative or friend due to their illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction.

4. Understanding local needs

Overall this research identifies a clear need for greater provision of support and a greater range of activities for people living in and around Beaminster. This need is across all age groups, and exists both for families and households without children.

A strikingly high proportion of people of all ages are looking for more to do:

- 93% wish there were more activities and clubs for people of all ages in Beaminster (of which 54% strongly agree).

There are quite high levels of social isolation, and even those who do not feel isolated or lonely would like to have more social connections:

- 41% sometimes feel isolated or lonely;
- 80% would like to meet new people and make new friends.

Affordability of activities is currently an issue for a high proportion of households

- 43% worry that they don't have enough money in their household to pay for the things they would like to do (this rises to 71% amongst households claiming income or disability-related benefits).

Although there is a clear need for activities and support for people of all ages, this need is particularly high for young people:

- Only 6% of people of all ages think that there is enough for young people to do in and around Beaminster;
- Only 15% of people of all ages think there is enough support and information for children and families in Beaminster;
- 78% of people of all ages agree "Young people in and around Beaminster need more support with mental health issues such as depression and anxiety" (of which 42% strongly agree);
- Under 25s are more likely to say they would like to meet new people and make new friends (87% versus 80% people of all ages);
- Under 25s are more likely to sometimes feel isolated or lonely (55% versus 41% people of all ages).

The need for skills development and support with finding employment comes through strongly:

- 77% would like to learn new skills (this rises to 84% amongst under-25s);
- Only 7% believe "It is easy to get a job round here".

People are also looking for support and information with issues such as online safety, sexual health and drugs and alcohol:

- 44% agree "It's difficult to know how to keep safe online";
- 39% would like to be able to "access information and advice about things like sexual health, drugs and alcohol".

It is worth noting that people living in villages or rural/remote locations are more likely to say they sometimes feel isolated or lonely (59% agree versus 43% of those living in the towns of Beaminster, Bridport and Crewkerne). It is thus particularly important that consideration is given to ways to make it possible for those living in the villages and countryside around Beaminster to access the facilities, activities and services at the centre, given the lack of public transport available, for example by providing minibus transport.

5. Responses to the plans for the Prout Bridge Centre

Respondents were given a short description of the plans for the Prout Bridge building:

Beaminster Youth and Children's Centre is the building with black gates on Prout Bridge. It is currently run by Dorset County Council. Because of funding cuts services have been reduced over recent years.

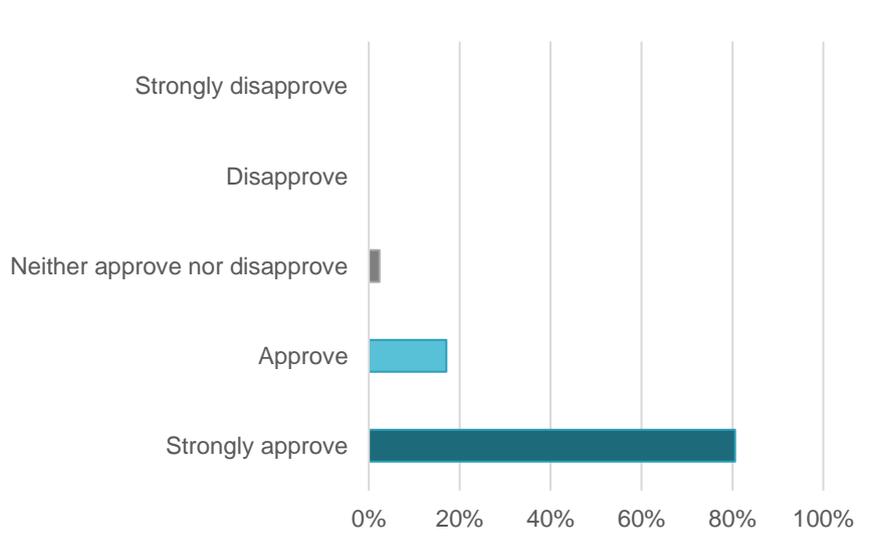
Beaminster Youth Club was set up as a charity in 2016 when funding for youth clubs was cut. Since then we have been running regular well attended youth clubs and holiday activities for young people.

We have exciting plans to acquire the building at Prout Bridge in Beaminster from the county council and develop it to become a vibrant community hub. We will bring new energy and resources to manage it more actively and inclusively. We will work closely in partnership with all current service providers in the town, supporting existing services and also looking to offer new services and facilities where there are gaps.

Our vision is that the building becomes a thriving welcoming place for the whole community to share and enjoy, where people can come to chat, make friends, get help and advice. It will offer high quality, affordable clubs, activities, services and facilities that support people of all ages and backgrounds in our town and nearby.

They were then asked for their response to these plans. Levels of support for the plans were extremely high with 98% of respondents approving of the plans, of whom 81% strongly approved. No respondents expressed any disapproval, either in this question or in their responses to the open-ended questions and call for feedback on local Facebook sites.

What do you think of the plan to revitalise the Prout Bridge building into an active youth and community centre offering a range of activities, clubs, facilities and services?



It is perhaps unsurprising that there is strong support for the plans for the Prout Bridge Centre given the level of need identified earlier in the survey and recent cuts to a wide range of local services. Even so this is an extremely high level of support and should give confidence that a more active Youth and Community centre would be welcomed and supported by people living in and around Beaminster.

6. Level of demand for proposed services, activities and facilities

There were varying levels of support for the different activities and facilities put forward, with “Arts, crafts and music clubs”, “Youth clubs”, “Community events”, “Sports and exercise activities” and “School holiday clubs” receiving the most interest:

Would you or anyone in your household be interested in any of the following if provided by the Prout Bridge Centre... (please select as many answers as you want)	%	No. of people
Arts, crafts and music clubs	74%	123
Youth clubs for different ages	71%	118
Community events such as films, concerts, pizza evenings, talks	70%	117
Sports and exercise activities	70%	117
School holiday clubs	68%	113
Spaces for hire for parties, group meetings, conferences	62%	104
Craft and art spaces	60%	100
Affordable community run café	56%	94
After-school clubs	50%	84
Baby and toddler social / play groups	49%	81
Reading groups / book clubs	49%	81
Band / music practice spaces	41%	69
Flexible workspaces	33%	55
Before-school breakfast clubs	20%	34

Even the activities with lower levels of interest are likely to warrant further exploration of viability given the lowest level of interest was 20%.

There were also high levels of support for the examples given of community services which could be hosted in the Youth and Community Centre, with a “Library of things” and “Skills training” receiving the most interest:

Would you or anyone in your household be interested in using any of the following community services, either now or in the future... (please select as many answers as you want)	%	No. of people
Library of things (where you can borrow e.g. tools, appliances, toys)	65%	103
Skills training e.g. cooking, computer skills, budgeting, driving, first aid	64%	102
Workshops for young people to support with issues delivered by qualified youth workers e.g. help with bullying, school transitions, self-esteem, eating disorders	57%	90
One to one emotional wellbeing support for young people by qualified youth workers e.g. help with anger, behaviour, confidence, family issues	52%	83
Time/skills exchange (where you can trade your time e.g. swap babysitting for gardening, or dog walking for computer help)	47%	74
Advice and information drop ins e.g. on money management, online safety, applying for jobs	46%	73
Support groups e.g. for young carers, young mums and dads	35%	56
Apprenticeships	34%	54
Food bank / community fridge	32%	51

Amongst parents interest in “Workshops for young people to support with issues delivered by qualified youth workers” rises to 63%.

Over a third of respondents took the opportunity to respond to the question “What other clubs, activities, services and facilities would you like to see at the Prout Bridge Centre?”. It’s worth noting that this level of response to an open question in a non-incentivised survey demonstrates a high level of engagement.

Suggestions for additional areas of provision included:

- Adult education classes (crafts, skills, languages, IT, maths...)
- Advice services for parents (e.g. anxiety, anger)
- Bingo
- Boxing/martial arts
- Breastfeeding support group
- Career advice
- Community pizza oven
- Cooking lessons
- Dads group
- Dance classes
- Days out for young people
- Dementia café/group
- Drama group
- Environmental and ‘green living’ hub
- Family cooking
- Fitness clubs
- Forest school

- Gallery for local art – by young people and adults
- Gaming clubs
- Gardening club
- Golf
- Gymnastics
- Help with finding out about further education and courses
- History club
- Indoor hockey
- Informal meeting space for older people who are isolated / disabled
- Inter-generational activities and friendship/mentoring opportunities
- Life skills
- Local recruitment agencies
- Local charities
- Mental health support group (including Bi-polar)
- Natural parenting group
- Older people social club / information drop in
- Pre-school activities (age 3-5 years)
- Riding
- Running club
- Singing
- Sling library
- Theatre
- Toy library
- U3A (University of the 3rd Age)
- Workstations / hot desk facilities
- Yoga (pregnancy, family, older people...)
- Youth town council

The inclusion of other local services in the Centre was broadly welcomed:

What other organisations and service providers do you think should be hosted in the Prout Bridge Centre? (please select as many answers as you want)	%	No. of people
Citizens Advice	70%	107
Sexual health information and contraception	61%	94
Health visitors	61%	93
Drop-in surgery with the local police	52%	79
Midwives	50%	77
Job Centre	50%	77
Housing services	46%	71
Library	45%	69

7. Other feedback and areas to consider

In addition to the structured feedback, some suggestions and ideas were captured in the open-ended questions and in people's feedback in person at the Centre and in comments on Facebook.

One concern raised was that the Centre should not try to be too many different things and risk diluting its purpose – the guidance given in the feedback was to focus on making it a place young people want to go. It is clear that there will be a need to weigh up the interests of different local stakeholders when making decisions about what provision to offer and how to prioritise resources, thinking particularly about the needs of young people identified in this consultation.

Several people raised the potential for the Centre to be a more accessible place to go than other options currently on offer in the town. In addition, people expressed a desire that the centre be open and accessible to all, including people with a disability.

Several people raised the potential for the Centre to bring together people of different ages in the town, by offering intergenerational activities and by providing a community meeting place through a café, activities and events.

A few people spontaneously suggested moving the library into the Centre. Reasons given were to protect the library (as closure of the current site is feared), to allow better access to library services and to join up library services with other support and information provision.

Appendix: the survey questionnaire

About you

We'd like to know a bit about you so we can understand what different kinds of people think - for example if there are differences in opinion between older and younger people. We will not ask you for your name at any point, so all your answers will kept be anonymous.

1. Do you live in

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Beaminster | <input type="radio"/> Melplash |
| <input type="radio"/> Bridport | <input type="radio"/> Misterton |
| <input type="radio"/> Broadwindsor | <input type="radio"/> Mosterton |
| <input type="radio"/> Corscombe | <input type="radio"/> Nettlecombe |
| <input type="radio"/> Crewkerne | <input type="radio"/> Netherbury |
| <input type="radio"/> Drimpton | <input type="radio"/> Powerstock |
| <input type="radio"/> Maiden Newton | <input type="radio"/> Stoke Abbott |
| <input type="radio"/> Mapperton | <input type="radio"/> Not in a town or a village (rural / remote) |

Other town or village (please specify)

2. How old are you?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Under 18 | <input type="radio"/> 45-54 |
| <input type="radio"/> 18-24 | <input type="radio"/> 55-64 |
| <input type="radio"/> 25-34 | <input type="radio"/> 65-74 |
| <input type="radio"/> 35-44 | <input type="radio"/> 75+ |

3. Are you a parent or carer with children still living at home? (please select all that apply)

- Yes I have pre-school age children living at home
- Yes I have primary school age children living at home
- Yes I have secondary school age children living at home
- Yes I have children older than secondary school age living at home (up to age 25)
- No I am not a parent / do not have any children aged 25 or under living at home

4. Are you yourself... (please select all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working full time | <input type="checkbox"/> Receiving any income related benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working part time | <input type="checkbox"/> Receiving any disability benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In education or study | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring for a relative or friend due to their illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction |

Your opinions and experiences

We want to hear what you think about local issues and about your experiences: there are no

5. Below are some statements - please say if you agree or disagree with each of them...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
"There is enough for young people to do in and around Beaminster"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"I wish there were more activities and clubs for people of all ages in Beaminster"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Young people in and around Beaminster need more support with mental health issues such as depression and anxiety"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Sometimes I feel isolated or lonely"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"There is enough support and information for children and families in Beaminster"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"I would like to learn new skills"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"I would like to meet new people and make new friends"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"It is easy to get a job round here"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"I worry that we don't have enough money in my household to pay for the things we would like to do"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"I would like to be able to access information and advice about things like sexual health, drugs and alcohol"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"It is difficult to know how to keep safe online"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Your views on the Prout Bridge Project

Beaminster Youth and Children's Centre is the building with black gates on Prout Bridge. It is currently run by Dorset County Council. Because of funding cuts services have been very much reduced over recent years.

We have exciting plans to acquire the building at Prout Bridge in Beaminster from the county council and develop it to become a vibrant community hub. We will bring new energy and resources to manage it more actively and inclusively. We will work closely in partnership with all current service providers in the town, supporting existing services and also looking to offer new services and facilities where there are gaps.

Our vision is that the building becomes a thriving welcoming place for the whole community to share and enjoy, where people can come to chat, make friends, get help and advice. It will offer high quality, affordable clubs, activities, services and facilities that support people of all ages and backgrounds in our town and nearby.

We would like to hear your views and ideas about this project because we want to make sure we offer activities and services that people really want and need...

* 6. What do you think of the plan to revitalise the Prout Bridge building into an active youth and community centre offering a range of activities, clubs, facilities and services?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Strongly approve | <input type="radio"/> Disapprove |
| <input type="radio"/> Approve | <input type="radio"/> Strongly disapprove |
| <input type="radio"/> Neither approve nor disapprove | |

7. Would you or anyone in your household be interested in any of the following if provided by the Prout Bridge Centre... (please select as many answers as you want)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baby and toddler social / play groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Spaces for hire for parties, group meetings, conferences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth clubs for different ages | <input type="checkbox"/> Craft and art spaces |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sports and exercise activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Band / music practice spaces |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts, crafts and music clubs | <input type="checkbox"/> School holiday clubs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community events such as films, concerts, pizza evenings, talks | <input type="checkbox"/> Before school breakfast clubs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable community run cafe | <input type="checkbox"/> After school clubs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible workspaces | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading groups / book clubs |

8. Would you or anyone in your household be interested in using any of the following community services, either now or in the future... (please select as many answers as you want)

- Food bank / community fridge
- Library of things (where you can borrow e.g. tools, appliances, toys)
- Timeskills exchange (where you can trade your time e.g. swap babysitting for gardening, or dogwalking for computer help)
- Support groups e.g. for young carers, young mums and dads
- Advice and information drop ins e.g. on money management, online safety, applying for jobs
- Skills training e.g. cooking, computer skills, budgeting, driving, first aid
- One to one emotional wellbeing support for young people by qualified youth workers e.g. help with anger, behaviour, confidence, family issues
- Workshops for young people to support with issues delivered by qualified youth workers e.g. help with bullying, school transitions, self esteem, eating disorders
- Apprenticeships

9. What other clubs, activities, services and facilities would you like to see at the Prout Bridge Centre?

10. What other organisations and service providers do you think should be hosted in the Prout Bridge Centre (please select as many answers as you want)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health visitors | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual health information and contraception |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Middles | <input type="checkbox"/> Job Centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizen's Advice Bureau | <input type="checkbox"/> Drop in surgery with the local police |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |