

# Another brick in the wall

IN the democracy week of 2006, groups of young people from around North Yorkshire were asked to put their ideas onto bricks, which were then built into a wall and presented to County Hall. These ideas were to help services get young people more involved in democracy and for them to have their say in politics. This article will look at what has changed from last year, and if there have been any developments on that young people wanted.

- Roseanna

## Communication

- Communication is very important as it builds trust and understanding, and some small steps have been taken to improve this.
- 4Youth has used a texting software programme to gather bookings for gigs, and we would hope for the return of cow cam, a video diary booth that young people can use to express their views.
- However, more still needs to be done on promoting access to councillors' contact info and how we should approach each other.

## Young persons' showcase events

Events during the past year have included:

- Gateshead Conference;
  - Festival 07;
  - Pioneers – the young people who are developing the young mentors scheme;
  - Kidz Karnival, Scarborough;
  - Last Gig Before Christmas.
- ...to name but a few



## Youth councils/forums

- Youth councils and forums have been set up to get young people more involved in politics and to let them have their say. However, they have been a bit hit and miss across the County.
- This autumn a new approach has been taken and more youth councils are being set up. These will form a wider network of councils and groups (see panel below).
- To add to that a group of young people has also sat on a focus group to help identify the key spending priorities for the NYCC budget (£770m!)

## Better understanding

- Several workshops and seminars have been run for councillors to help them understand what young people want from councillors and how they can be better at engaging with them.
- A new electronic voting system has been adapted to use to get young people's input. This system was also used by us at the Young People's Conference in Gateshead (see report below).
- Councillor Tony Hall is the current Young People's Champion (YPC). The young people's development workers have reviewed the role of the YPC and their recommendations are with the executive members.

## Access

- A new team has been appointed to identify and find solutions to the barriers that young people with learning difficulties and disabilities face.
- We are also encouraging councillors to meet young people in schools and youth clubs. However, this needs to happen more often.

# Politics - it's not all bad

WHEN approached and asked to attend a conference about young people and politics I couldn't help but think I was in for a boring two days.

How wrong could I have been? It's not often you get to visit the Sage (a big glass conference building in Gateshead), eat food that has obviously eaten into someone's budget and play with an electronic voting system very similar to that used on Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?

Through all this fun it would be hard to believe we were discussing important issues such as the "hoodie" crisis and the legal age to vote.

What's even more surprising is that this wasn't all run by "adults". Me and a small group of young people actually ran a workshop, which other young people took part in and had the chance to express their views on politics.

- Jenni



## marks the spot

ELECTIONS are taking place to form youth councils in various localities across North Yorkshire, including Harrogate, Knaresborough, Pickering, Malton, Boroughbridge, Ripon and

Selby. Here's what will happen after the September 28 deadline for candidate nominations:

- October 1 for one week:** Meetings, mainly through schools, with prospective candidates;
- October 8 for two weeks:** displays of candidate publicity in schools;
- During w/c October 15:** Elections through schools and colleges;
- October 29:** Declaration of results;
- November 5:** First Youth Council meetings.

## Meet the editors



THIS issue's Young Times was written and designed by Jenni Myers and Roseanna Scott.



If you would like to get involved in writing or designing Young Times, contact Martin Feekins on 01609 533109 or email martin.feekins@northyorks.gov.uk