

Chairman's Report 2011- by Jake Topp (Honorary Chairman)

Good evening everyone. Thanks for coming out tonight and supporting us. Another year has flown past for the Youth Council with us working as hard as ever on various projects. We've experienced an influx of new youth councillors who have added a new dimension to the Youth Council. I'd like to welcome them and thank them for providing a positive contribution to the community and look forward to working with them in the future. We have also said goodbye to several older members, who have left due to college, university or work commitments. I'd like to thank them for their commitment over the last 4 years and the hours they've put in to helping improve the local community for young people.

As said before, this year has been one of the busiest so I'll briefly run through the highlights for the Youth Council. We were successfully awarded the CAT mark which is an award which recognises us as a young person friendly body. To be honest I would have been disturbed if we'd failed to achieve it, but we passed on all the criteria such as equality and diversity and involvement of young people. This shows us as being proactive in what we do and how we do it, so the Youth Council can be rightly proud of this.

We also took part in a joint Takeover Day with members of Havant Borough Youth Council. Together, we identified and discussed issues facing young people in both our areas. We then created questions to put towards a panel of Councillors, including our very own Portfolio Holder for Safer and Accessible Services, Cllr Hilary Ayer and our East Hampshire MP, Damian Hinds. Some of the items discussed included mobile phone bullying, cost of public transport and tuition fees. It was enjoyable to meet and work with another Youth Council.

This year, as normal, we attended many events, both locally and nationally. To name but a few, we were present at the British Youth Council Convention, their Annual Council Meeting and a Reception they held in the House of Commons before Christmas last year. All the events were enjoyable and meeting up with other youth councils enabled us to come up with new ideas and discuss our projects and plans. Although there were young people from a vast array of areas, it is striking how the concerns across the nation of young people are so similar regardless of background, or wealth.

In addition to this, the new Youth Councillors enjoyed a successful trip to Parliament which included a tour and workshop. The annual Butserfest, which has been confirmed for 2011, was also one of the highlights of the year. We had volunteers assisting throughout the day, helping the event run smoothly and it was a brilliant day for the people who attended. I urge you to support Butserfest as much as possible, as it's a unique event and a great day out.

In the last month, we arranged and held a Team Challenge running and cycling event called "On Your Marks.. Get Red..Go" to raise money for Comic Relief. The event took place at Alice Holt and we raised over £350 which was a brilliant total. Not only is it a great total, but one of our key aims is to create positive stories within the media to try and counter the constant vibes of negativity towards young people. This is a prime example of young people doing positive things in the community and I encourage you to get involved.

Thank you for coming out tonight to support us. It is fully appreciated and it's nice to know that the work we do is recognised. I know the coming year will be busier and more action packed, but I'm sure with the new blood we have on the Youth Council, next year can be as good, if not better, than last year. Thank you for listening and now we'll move on.