

March Update 2021



Bringing hope and focus to Youth & Families of South Wight

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South Wight Area Youth Partnership | Charity Registration 1160139

Introduction

What a challenging year this has been! Yet in SWAY we have never been busier. By the time you have read this, hopefully, most of the 24 young people and adults will have completed their SWAY Triathlon for February. This was a Challenge to read one chapter of the Bible a day (following the overall story through from Genesis to 1 John), keep a daily journal and complete 10000 steps each day. From all accounts, participants have benefitted enormously from the experience.



At our recent AGM on zoom Peter Johnson came to the end of his time as Chair of SWAY. Jo Richards, one of the founding Trustees, is now taking over as Chair and relishing the challenge of continuing the great work done by all involved in SWAY.

We have much to thank God for and much to look forward to in 2021. SWAY has big plans for the coming return to some normality – camps, residentials, Community Hub plans and growing the Box Project (see later). As usual, thank you for your interest, support and prayers. Without these we would not be able to do any of this.

So, let us hear from the team.

Jack Norridge (Youth Worker) writes of his time with us.

Over the last four months (since our last Update in November 2020) it has been an interesting time for many areas of work, including youth work!

I have loved taking part in the amazing activities run by volunteers and SWAY members. Just before Christmas we managed to join with the young people in Niton and Brighstone to sing some carols to the vulnerable people in the surrounding area. It was amazing to sing with the young people. Seeing them come together to bring joy to lots of people was a great experience for all (we hope!). During this time, we have also gotten underway with the Box Project. It has been great to see some amazing creations from different families!



After Christmas the announcement of a 3rd lockdown once again affected what we can do, limiting us to Zoom. This has been where we have stayed over the past 6-7 weeks; 'jackbox.tv' and 'among us' providing some very fun and energetic evenings! It has been great to see the Rock Solid group continue to grow over this time and getting to know some new young people. The Roots Solid and Attitude group have been particularly enjoying some 'among us' games. I have also been doing some 1-1 Zoom sessions with some young people, continuing to support them in these trying times.

Unfortunately, I now need to announce that at the end of March I will be moving on from SWAY, since before joining SWAY my wife and I have felt called to go overseas and serve God. He has been opening doors for us to move to the Middle East. We will be joining an International House of Prayer and I will be working in a refugee school. Leaving England is going to be a difficult process, but I look forward to keeping in touch with SWAY, specifically the young people, trying to be a good example in showing what it can mean to live a life for God. I am looking forward to using the tools that we have learnt in this time with online communication to both: stay in touch with the young people at SWAY and use in our new setting.

Fresh from his exalted status as an IOW Local Hero with IW Radio, Andy Dorning (Project Lead & Youth Worker) reports on the last few months.

As Jack has mentioned, since our last update, the winter months and the national lockdown have brought great disruption to our lives. It has not been easy for parents or young people, working from home and home schooling. We have our boys, Noah (11 years) and Zachariah (2 years), as well as recently moving into our new home in Ventnor, we are also taking on the challenge of spending a lot of time at home together all under one roof, experiencing the many joys and difficulties this brings.

The work with the young people has continued mostly on Zoom and via the Box Project: see the reports by Jack and Jennie. We have continued our weekly school assemblies by recording them at home and sending them to the school each week. However, as I write this Update we are filled with hope as to what God has installed for SWAY. With the vaccine and spring and summer round the corner, we are full of HOPE that we will be able to meet up again soon. We are looking forward to getting out and involved in the community.

We are still planning to hold activities, go to Corf Camp in June and are in the process of planning arrangements for a summer trip to the Lakes. Like so many we are longing for a fresh start where we can engage with young people and meet together again in the 'real'.

We are pleased to welcome Kieran Orr to the SWAY team. Kieran is on a youth worker placement from Moorlands Bible College in Christchurch until April, and is looking forward to getting to know SWAY's young people.



Jennie Burke (Youth & Families Worker) writes.

We have tried, in creative ways, to engage our young people and families during the winter lockdown. The Box Project started on the 13th November with 10 young people creating Christmas cards together on Zoom. The cards were designed by one of SWAY's parents and fun was had by all.

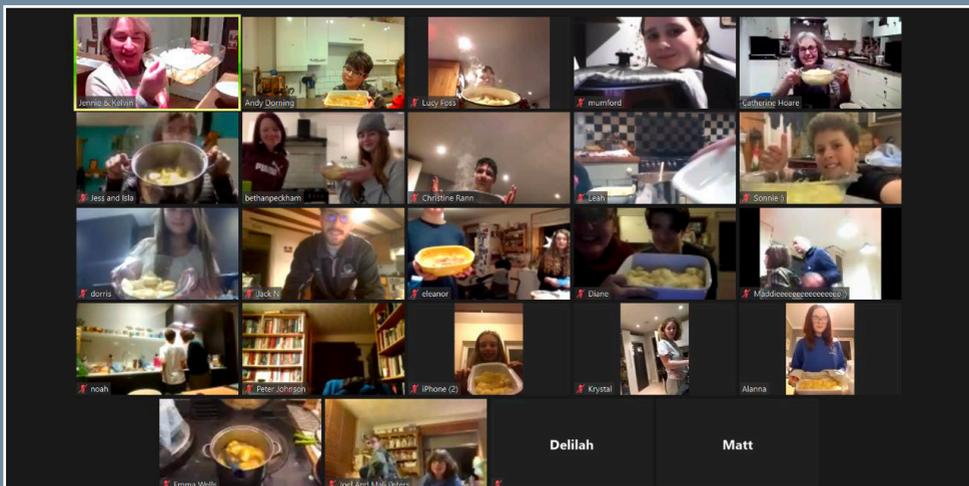
A trial cooking session started the following week making cottage pie. Each family had the ingredients delivered to their home, with the recipe, ready to make the dish. For some of our young people this was the first time they had cooked a substantial meal and there were great conversations about how to chop up onions and how to stop their eyes from watering.



The following week was a craft session run by Keith Plater (SWAY Trustee) which involved plaster of Paris and successfully resulted in not causing too much mess at home. Another craft session will be held in March 2021.



We have had three more cooking sessions in 2021 with three more to run before the end of term. Each time our numbers have grown and it's been amazing to see the young people and their parents enjoy cooking together and savouring some nutritious food. The Box Project has been so popular, that we've had to limit the number to 20 because of the limits of Zoom. So far, we have made cottage pie, chilli in pitta bread, apple crumble and chicken/veggie korma with flatbread. We try to focus on eating well for less. Each time the food has been donated by local stores. We are very grateful to Southern Co-op in Freshwater, Norris's family store in Niton, Tesco's in Ventnor and Brighstone Village Stores.



We have had wonderful feedback from parents and young people.

'I just wanted to say thank you for the SWAY cooking sessions. My son insists on doing them by himself, and as much as I would really like to get involved with him, I'm so grateful that you give him this much needed opportunity to do something a bit grown up and independent. Lockdown has meant that our young teens are so missing out on stretching their wings as they normally would, so thank you. Meanwhile I'll continue to sit just out of the way and keep my mouth shut!!'

'Well done SWAY! It's so nice to see some positivity over lockdown. She loved making this with her Dad. Thank you so much!'

'Our curry was so delicious. Thank you for all you do for our children'

'Thank you for organising a wonderful session, everyone. The korma was great! It even managed to look something like a curry.....'

'Thank you. We enjoyed it. First time cooking a main meal and she was happy to eat the vegetables!'

'The SWAY Cooking has been amazing! I can't thank them enough for the change in her and the willingness to try new things.'

'We are looking forward to doing this again this week. She's learning great cooking skills and making dinner for the whole family more often since starting this project.'

'It would be great if they could open this up to other areas too.'

'She cooked for us all with her youth group on Zoom. So, we dressed for dinner and ate. Staying in is the new going out. Thank you, SWAY.'

Summary

As you can see, there is a lot to be positive about and so, going forward, there are a number of things for prayer and thought:

- Continuing plans and preparations for the Community Hub,
- A replacement for Jack,
- The growth of the Box Project,
- Plans for our programme of activities for the Spring and Summer,
- Continuing applications for funding.

Many thanks once again for your support and prayer for this vital and important work for the South Wight. It is much appreciated.

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