

Maidstone Rural Youth Project  
Report April 2009 to March 2010

I am pleased to report that MRYP has had a great year in Staplehurst. Our membership increases regularly and although the young people can be tough nuts to crack, we have had good representation of Staplehurst youth in many activities and events.

Through funding that the young people acquired we have been able to make improvements and updates to the youth club, including new sofas and equipment, a new paint job and notice boards for advice and information posters.

The young people are currently awaiting news on another funding bid that they put in for have security at the club as well as someone to come and fit all the new media equipment. We also are keen to try and get funding to have a brand new kitchen fitted and we will submit a bid soon.

In April 2009, we organised boys and girls only trips - Dirty Dancing theatre show for the girls and paintballing for the boys. Staplehurst young people were part of both these trips.

The project along with the Parish Council paid for a 6 week DJ and music production course which was greatly received by the young people. They learned to make their own drum and bass music, and record lyrics to go with them. Due to the success of this project and the huge uptake of the young people, we are looking at repeating a similar course later this year.

MRYP has delivered lots of trips during all the school holidays including the summer and we have had many Staplehurst young people take part. These included Dover Castle, Midnight Ice Skating, London Theatre shows, a week in Wales doing lots of outdoor activities, wildlife park, a community day at the youth club, dance workshops, bowling, go karting, London Tombs and Thorpe Park.

Since October 2009, the project decided that it was quite difficult to engage with some of the young people in the club because they just wanted to play pool and the behaviour was not good for a while. We decided to take the mobile 'youth bus' instead which we now park on a Monday evening by the library. This has been much more successful because there are no other distractions the young people have no choice but to engage more with the youth workers! They also now know that the youth club is a privilege which they have if the weather is bad or for specific sessions. We are building much better relationships with the young people and they are taking part in quizzes, information sessions and we have a lot of interest in Tall Ships sailing which we are doing for a week in October this year.

We are pleased to say that MRYP nominated a Staplehurst young person for a Try Angle award last year for which he got a framed certificate.

Staplehurst young people have also been involved in a 12 week snowboarding course that began in January this year - for which they will receive a Duke Edinburgh award and get to go snowboarding in Italy next year.

We also successfully interviewed for a new youth worker for the project which one Staplehurst young person was part of.

With lots of activities planned for the next year at least, the future looks interesting for Staplehurst young people!

I would like to thank Staplehurst Parish Council for its support, it is much appreciated. Apologies for my not being there this evening, I had already planned to take some of the Staplehurst crowd for a meal out!

Natalie Penfold, Project Manager