

### **Feedback from Community Youth Club Handbook launch event – attended by Mike Petheram**

A good meeting, well worth attending and I am grateful for the opportunity to have gone. In essence I have come away with a one stop guide and many contacts as to how to establish and run youth facilities within the community (I have the copy here - would you like to come and collect it?). Notwithstanding there is already much expertise within the PCC (most notably Sue Place) I am sure the handbook will come in useful in our deliberations over the future of the village hall and parish plan.

Hosts ... Mr Jeff and Mrs Kirstie Brown - authors of the handbook. Also present ... Ms Shelia Wheeler - Chief Executive of Somerset County Council. Ms Zara Scott-Davies - Senior Youth & Community Worker with direct responsibility for South Somerset.

Attendees: Approx: 40 - a mix of councilors (ours was not there) and (predominately) youth workers so talking to an audience with a vested interest. From what I could establish, I was the only Parish Council representative (more on that when we speak).

But of more import was the networking I was able to achieve with people present - I think it is fair to summarise their position as lots of good intent, support and ideas, including potential sources of funding and visits (which is good), but tempered by the understanding that when starting from scratch (which we are) it is likely to take sometime before we have anything tangible to boast about. That said, there was wide spread recognition of the difficulties/challenges Henstridge has had with the provision of youth services and a number of ideas emerged during discussion:

- Forming a Youth Parish council - strikes me as good idea, perhaps not to mirror what the PCC actually does, but to provide a forum within which the youth can discuss and solve issues of import to themselves .... one of them might be the lack of a youth club?
- The import of a coherent parish plan supporting the provision of youth services ... and a building in which to provide them!
- Dealing with the arson and underlying criminality issue - I had a long discussion with the The Chief Executive of Somerset County Council on a number of topics. She was particularly concerned to hear that the Hall has been torched three times in the past five years (I believe there have been other unsolved crimes in the parish as well) and asked what the authorities (police etc:) were doing about it - I said I thought there had been little progress so she invited us to write to her outlining the facts and our concerns and she will "she what she can do about it" under the auspices of her Community Safety remit. I think we have a potential ally in addressing this key issue, which will need to be resolved before we implement any long term plans for youth provision or the village Hall.