



**in the mix**  
*project*

# Annual Trustee & Chairs Report – Year 2023

*Enabling brighter futures for young people  
and communities through informal education  
and youth work activity*

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## 1. Overview

2023 has been somewhat of a challenging environment for In The Mix Youth Project (ITMP) to operate within. This is due in part to the harsh realities with which the VCSE sector has had to combat (cost of living crisis, fallout of COVID-19, difficulties within the education sector, energy prices, increased salary costs, meeting demand for services, value of public service contracts) combined with our staffing instabilities due to long term sickness's and recruitment difficulties and in ability to secure funding in a oversubscribed climate. We have found it increasingly difficult to meet demand, maintain service levels and provide quality of service.

That said we have had lots of successful events, activities, and outcomes for our service users. During the year, redeveloped our outreach provision, continued to develop our holiday clubs, and offered a variety of targeted youth projects. We have relaunched our alternative provision services and worked on our marketing, developing a model of online and offline promotion associated with our charity. We have further digitalised the organisation improving our data management which has supported to raise awareness of our work and its benefits.

Our plans for 2023 included:

- Further recruit staff to open positions in our charity,
- Increase engagement at board level board,
- Improve our bookkeeping to enable better and up to date finance management,
- Work on the next stage of our business and development strategy,
- Update and review some of our core policies and protocols,
- Further widen the range of youth provision on offer to participants,
- Provide opportunity for staff CPD and training,
- Improve ICT support and data security,

Most of these tasks have been worked towards and significant outcomes have been achieved. We have recruited an additional board member, and two additional fundraisers, held 4 SLT business strategy events working on our development plan. Updated core policies and have an IT management service provider in place. The range of youth provision has increased, and staff have been able to attend training to enable them to support our service users, particularly those who are neurodivergent or experiencing trauma or ACEs and ensure that our services remain of a consistent quality and reflect best practice (National Youth Agency) standards.

Whilst some delivery has had to be postponed or indeed sometimes cancelled due to staffing issues, much of our delivery has been very successful in terms of the progress and outcomes for those attending. We ran a very successful residential experience in May and have been able to provide support in the way of additional activities to youth clubs and groups in Somerset. We have received good feedback from service users, alongside positive thoughts from both parents and the communities and partner organisations we have worked with. The enclosed impact statement clearly shows some of our outputs as well as case studies.

## 2. Objectives and Activities

The purpose of our organisation is to provide community-based youth services which are effective in their role to support young people in their young lives through youth sessions, events, projects and activities. The Charity offers a range of social, economic, educational, and recreational opportunities,

designed to encourage social inclusion and life-long learning, helping to create both economic and social independence, linking to core youth work practices and principles.

**Our core objects are specifically restricted to the following:**

- (a) to act as a resource for children and young people up to the age of 25 living and working in Somerset and Devon providing support, advice, information, and assistance, organising programmes of physical, educational, social, spiritual, developmental, and other activities as a means of:
- (b) advancement of life and helping young adults develop their skills, capacities, and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as independent, mature, and responsible individuals;
- (c) advancement of education, understanding and life skills;
- (d) relieving unemployment and pursuing economic independence;
- (e) providing recreational and leisure time activities in the interests of social welfare for people living in the area of benefit who have need by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disability, poverty, or social and economic circumstances with a view to improving the conditions of life of such persons.
- (f) provisions of activities and events for community relief and benefit.

**Activities during 2023**

ITMP has continued to pursue its charitable objects through its delivery of youth work activity. Whilst there has been considerable pressures as highlighted above, we have continued to operate and meet the needs of children and young people. See highlights of our work below.

**Core Provision**

We have delivered our services in line with our delivery pillars, these encompass

- open access youth work,
- outdoor learning,
- youth participation,
- partnerships and community,
- health and wellbeing,
- and creativity and digital.

Throughout the year, we have continued to deliver and develop high quality youth projects, around areas that support young peoples' development including the learning of life skills, digital and STEM skills, enterprise and employment, environmentalism and conservation, community led projects, volunteering opportunities, and outdoor learning. We have been able to offer a variety of opportunities to young people we support.

**Commissioned Activity**

We have undertaken further commissioned work which is reflected in our accounts, this has included work with Somerset Council and The National Youth Agency around developing independence skills, skills for futures and youth participation. We continue to be a core partner for holiday clubs and the Happy Healthy Holiday scheme in Somerset. We continue to maintain our relationships with our strategic partners.

### **Community Development and Partnerships**

We have increased our community reaching working in further new communities during this operating year including Exford, Cotford, and Dulverton. ITMP has continued to be a core member of the Somerset Youth Work Alliance and we have supported recruit to posts within the alliance.

We have attended several sector-based events as well as attend freshers' college events and LCN meetings within our roles as VCSE youth workers. Our Community Café project has come to a natural end, and we are now looking a specific community-based information and fundraising events from within our venue in its place.

The local Wiveliscombe contacts we have made have increased and we maintain relationships with local community groups and businesses including Wivey Walkers, Wivey First Responders, Wivey Gym, Wivey Co-op, and Wivey Kitchen. We have continued to work with SSE surrounding community minibus hire, and been supported by other community and charity organisations including Somerset Film, Kingsmead School PTA, Taunton Football Club, Taunton Neighbourhood Police Team / Wellington Neighbourhood Police Team, and the 10 Parishes Festival.

We have met with two Taunton Town Mayors, Wellington Mayor, and the Chair of Wiveliscombe Town Council. We have been supported by Paul's Promotions to raise funds through event sales and car boot sales. Our partnering with Neighbourly has resulted in continued donations of food and volunteer events with the likes of B&Q.

Our social media, including our redeveloped LinkedIn page, has continued to build our profile and visibility. We are listed in Somerset Councils Alternative Provision register and we are registered as a Duke of Edinburgh as a licensed centre.

### **Youth Participation**

We have recruited several new youth members and provided opportunity for young people to have a voice, undertaking participation sessions that reflect local and regional change. Youth led and young people's engagement continue to be central to our work and reflect the services we provide. We have provided several social action events and youth volunteering opportunities.

### **Alternative Provision**

Our Alternative Provision services were relaunched in the middle of the year which a huge marketing campaign and we have had several enquires which are developing into professional relationships and contracted service provision. Our relationship with the Somerset DoFE team and Pyrlands School (formally The Taunton Academy) continues to grow and be successful providing a one day per week outdoor learning programme building resilience and skills for life. We have developed and approached partners to provide accredited learning.

### **Traded Activity**

Whilst this has continued to be a lesser commodity, there has been a number of equipment, vehicle, and venue hires during the year which has improved knowledge of the organisation and its objectives and raised a small some of income.

**ITMP Friends and Volunteering**

We have increased our work on community fundraising, and we have delivered the most events ever in a one-year period, this has resulted in increased knowledge and awareness of our work and services and also raised funds to support young people. We have raised a small sum of money which will be put into our newly launched accessibility fund, which we continue to raise funds for.

Whilst regular volunteers have been scarce, those who have regularly supported us have made a massive contribution which we are grateful for. We continue to encourage parents and carers to support our work. There are now several members to our charity increasing the local ownership and demonstrating local commitment. We have maintained the voluntary commitment of previous years from both directors and volunteers. Core staff have also provided a voluntary contribution to support the charities work and objectives.

**Performance**

The Trustees have referred to and worked within the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives for the year represented in this report, and in planning all future activities.

**3. Achievements and Performance**

During the period of 2023 ITMP has continued to work hard to provide opportunities to further its core mission and be responsible to its charitable objectives.

**During 2023 ITMP has achieved the following:**

- Continued to further develop its digital infrastructure and review / renew our policy framework.
- Developed more quality assurance processes and feedback monitoring systems to increase measurement of outcomes and outputs.
- Increased continued professional development instigating staff to update external and internal training relevant to their role.
- Restructured to ensure we are commercially viable.
- Successfully completed commissioned work including youth voice projects for Somerset Council and NatWest Thrive for the National Youth Agency. We have worked once again with Somerset Council to offer DoFE.
- Offered a variety of youth work delivery at different times (afterschool, evenings, holidays, weekends, overnights).
- Secured additional workforce support and extra trustee support.
- Worked on the next iteration of our business and development plan.
- Increased relationships with parents and guardians employing a new correspondence system for welcomes and updates.
- Ran several successful Happy Healthy Holidays schemes for local young people on free school meals.
- Provided support and opportunity to young people from SEND backgrounds (this will increase in 2024).
- We have provided opportunities for participants to access free and low-cost food from our centre in Wiveliscombe.

- Delivered more outreach and community sessions, particularly in the Taunton area, working with the Town Council.
- Increased our reach to young people through sessions in schools and colleges.
- We have ensured our venues are maintained and welcoming, repainting our office spaces and café toilets, increasing our food prep areas for HHH sessions, and made changes to our Log Cabin facility and outdoor garden – reorganising our stores and developing a kitchen on site.

Our work has had a positive impact and provided the opportunity for our service users to develop and grow, learning more about themselves, society, their communities, and their futures. This means they are more like to become contributing members of society and improve their social economic changes and life expectations.

## 4. Financial Review

Enclosed is the review of the charity's financial position for the year end December 2023. We continue to develop our monitoring systems and increased measurement of finances and budgets, looking to review our accounts earlier in 2024. Whilst voluntary support has continued to be made to ensure the smooth running of the organisation, paid hours of the staff team have increased.

### **Trustees' responsibilities in relation to financial statements**

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, that give a true and fair view of the Company's state of affairs at the end of the financial year, and of its income and expenditure for that year. In preparing those financial statements the Trustees are required to;

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply these consistently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charitable Company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### **Reserves and Risk Management**

It is the intention of the Trustees that the freely available reserves of the charity should be sufficient to ensure the continuance of its activities, should there be an unexpected short term adverse fluctuation in income. The Trustees consider that an appropriate level of free reserves is approximately six months' normal expenditure. Our policy is to hold enough reserves to cover a minimum of six months operating costs, this has increased since last year, due in part to increased operating costs (energy, cost of food, fuel, insurance premiums). The Trustees have examined and addressed the financial risks to which the Charity is exposed and in association with its insurers, has mitigated those risks to the best of its ability. Our main risks are our ongoing financial security, income generation, and support at board level.



**Going Concern**

The Trustees note the continued need to ensure our financial stability and raise funds to cover our operating costs to meet our financial obligations and reserve policy.

**Sources of Income**

The charity's principal sources of funds, including any fundraising efforts are detailed in our annual accounts. We have increased our traded activity and commissioned youth work whilst redeveloping our alternative provision services. Next year our priority will be to secure a large-scale multi-year grant based on our strength-based outcomes and available case studies.

We would like to thank our accountant, Tim Green for support with financial reconciliation, his expert knowledge and advice in maintaining our accounts and management of finances.

## 5. Structure, Governance and Management

The Charity was incorporated on the 15th December 2011 as a Company Limited by Guarantee. It is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Charity registered with the Charity Commission on 29th April 2015. The Directors of the charitable company ("the charity") are its trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees. ITMP is managed under our Articles of Association as incorporated on 1st November 2014 and as amended on 8th July 2020, the document sets out our charitable objectives and structure.

The Board has meet on a bi-monthly basis. The trustees retire every three years and may stand for re-election. The Board of Trustees is responsible for determining the overall policy direction of the charity, for fixing and reviewing its annual budget, and for approving annual accounts. New trustees are nominated by the Board and will be asked to visit the charity before attending a trustee meeting as an observer.

Our trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions are laid out in our governing document as well as our trustee recruitment pack. When inducting new trustees, we make use of our own internal recruitment pack as well as the Essential guide to trustees. We have our own conflict of interest policy and declaration form. All trustees receive the same level of induction and welcome.

Our charity is affiliated with several bodies including the charity commission, companies house, UK Youth, and the National Youth Agency. We are members of the Somerset Youth Work Alliance. Mendip Payroll and HR continue to supply support with HR and payroll services.

## 6. Impact Statement

Please find enclosed a copy of our most recent impact statement for the year period.

## 7. Reference and Administrative Details

Please see below our specific charity information.



<b>Charity name</b>	In The Mix Youth Project
<b>Other name the charity uses</b>	In The Mix Project
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1161486
<b>Registered company number</b>	07883347
<b>Charity's principal address</b>	The Hub Centre, Hartswell South Street, Wiveliscombe, TAUNTON, TA4 2NE

## 8. Directors and Trustees

Directors and Trustees of the charitable company ("the charity") are its trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees.

The trustees who served during the period are as follows:

- John Hellier
- Ashley Martin Wills
- Holly Cressida Sutton (Chair)
- Molly Roberts

The Independent Examiner is Tim Green.

## 9. Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to thank the board, staff and volunteers for their extremely hard work and contributions to our service provision this year. We have delivered a huge variety of youth work and provided many opportunities for young people. We look forward to continuing to make a difference to the lives of children, young people, their families, and our communities in 2024.