

CANONSGROVE NEWSLETTER

Following our commitment to improve engagement with Trull residents and give a greater understanding of our work we are pleased to bring you the latest news and information from the accommodation project for rough sleepers at Canonsgrove.

The accommodation was set up following a Government requirement to take rough sleepers off the streets recognising this group as particularly vulnerable to Covid-19.

Our approach, bringing in other professional services such as health, social care, mental health and addiction services, means the rough sleepers are receiving extra support in their new environment, preparing them to move to more independent accommodation.

As we enter a second national lockdown, **John Shipley** Housing Services Manager (Somerset West and Taunton) for the YMCA Dulverton Group takes the opportunity to thank those working with us on this project: -

"The Canonsgrove project, a partnership led by Somerset West and Taunton Council and YMCA Dulverton Group, could not have come about so quickly or achieved the outcomes for individuals that it already has without the support of a number of other key partners.

We thought this would be a good opportunity to thank them – Bridgwater and Taunton College, Open Door, RAFT, Salvation Army, All Saints Church, Somerset Drug and Alcohol Services, Trull Parish Council, the Rotary Club of Taunton, the Avon and Somerset Police, Mental Health Services and a number of other statutory partners have all made a significant and much appreciated contribution as have an increasing number of supportive individuals within the Trull and Taunton communities.

We also very much appreciate the feedback from local people within the community when their experience has not been so positive, as it enables us to identify concerns early, address them and consider whether we need to do things differently going forward. Likewise, we also appreciate the positive feedback which has been coming through to us about this project and we are very thankful for everyone taking the time to get in touch.

We are particularly grateful to the NHS who have, before and throughout our time at Canonsgrove, had a number of student doctors and nurses based on the same site and are our nearest neighbours. We appreciate the support given to us by our NHS colleagues and continue to meet regularly with them and the College, who own the site, to ensure that our two communities can live successfully together and that any issues can be successfully resolved.

Projects such as Canonsgrove strongly depend on partnership working – it is not always smooth or easy but if we continue to work together, pulling in the same direction and communicating regularly, we have no doubt that the project will continue to produce remarkable outcomes.”

Open spaces

Canonsgrove residents, along with Lisa Betts of the YMCA, have been helping Somerset West and Taunton Council's Parks and Open Spaces team to plant and tidy-up seasonal bedding displays surrounding the Market House and in the town centre. The Council's Parks and Open Spaces team were really impressed with their hard work and grateful for the enthusiasm shown. The end result looks fantastic! This is just the beginning of what we hope will be a really successful partnership.



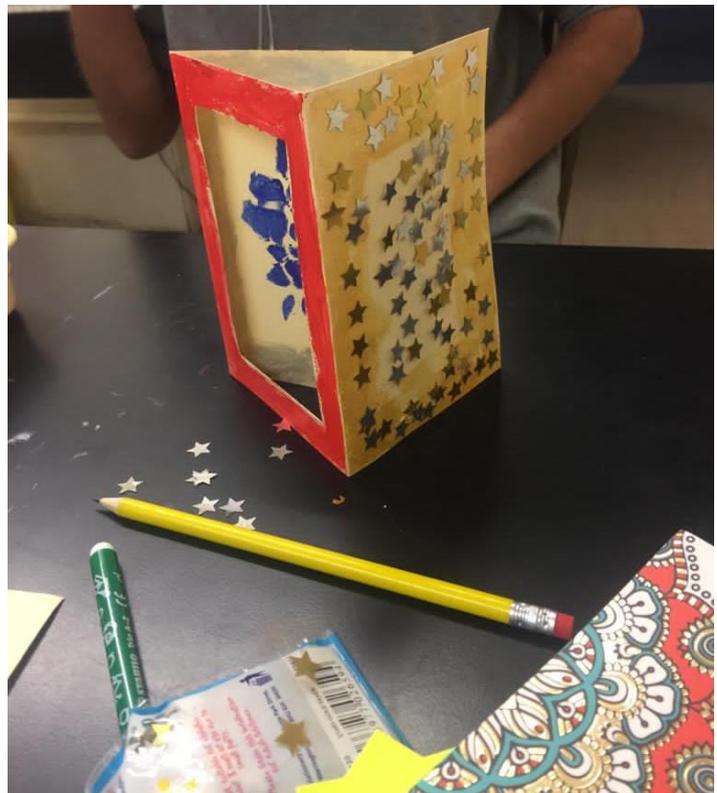
New Gym

A gym has now been installed in the sports hall. Residents are enjoying having a facility to work out using various YMCA equipment. Due to Covid-19 the use of the gym is organised and structured in a way which is safe for all to enjoy.



Art Group

Every week, one of YMCA Dulverton Group's support workers (an experienced and qualified artist) has been running an Art Group at Canonsgrove. The group has been running for a month and is appreciated and attended by a number of residents each week. Already, residents are producing some great work and the group has a mutually supportive atmosphere which everyone finds very welcoming. If you have any suggestions for a theme to be explored within these art sessions please do get in touch.



National restrictions

As we all are aware the Government announced on Saturday 31 October that we would enter into our second period of national lockdown on Thursday 5 November through to 2 December 2020.

We are following guidance from the Government and Public Health England to ensure residents are accommodated safely and appropriately, and will continue to encourage clients to comply with the latest restrictions whilst being mindful of Hands, Face and Space. All residents received a letter from YMCA Dulverton Group on Tuesday 3 November 2020 explaining the new lockdown conditions, what is and what isn't allowed and most importantly the need for us all to keep communicating during this time which can be very difficult for many.

Finally

Somerset West and Taunton Council is now working to identify suitable and appropriate longer term accommodation for the homeless across our District. This work includes forecasting future accommodation requirements and support needs and using these to identify the quantity and type of accommodation needed. We will then review a range of options and sites as part of an options appraisal to determine how we best meet this accommodation requirement moving forward. This will involve us speaking with providers such as Arc and the YMCA, and evaluating sites including Lindley House, Canonsgrove and other sites in Taunton, Minehead and elsewhere to recommend to our councillors the most appropriate solution for the future. We have taken a report to our Scrutiny Committee this week (4 November) and will now take it to our Executive on 18 November to agree this approach.

Further information on the Canonsgrove accommodation project can be found on our websites at

www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-and-information/
<https://www.ymca-dg.org/>

We welcome any feedback or further questions on Canonsgrove@ymca-dg.org

Yours



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