**The Moulsecoomb story**

It has now been two years since the Trust for Developing Communities (TDC) began supporting youth work in Moulsecoomb as part of the work of the Brighton & Hove Youth Collective, funded by Brighton & Hove City Council.

“What a difference two years can make” says Adam Muirhead, Youth Work Co-ordinator at TDC, “I’ve seen such a huge swell in the things that are on offer for 13 to 19s locally in spite of the financial climate and so much of it due to the dedication of the community and local services working together”.

Moulsecoomb is an area with its issues:

· 41.3% of people are economically inactive

· 39.2% of children aged 0 – 15 are living in poverty (equal to 1,140 children), the highest rate in the City, by Ward

· 34.3% Households are in poverty, the highest rate in the City, by Ward

(Source: BHCC Community Insight)

The aim of TDC’s youth work in Moulsecoomb is to build the offer for young people and work against some of these very real issues. This is mainly achieved by leading and organising the partnerships in the area and TDC has done this in several ways:

**Networking**

Excellent work has long-existed on in Moulsecoomb through the likes of ‘Moulsecoomb Amateur Boxing Club’, the ‘26th Brighton Boys Brigade’ and clubs run by the ‘New Life Church’ and the Council at the 67 Centre, for example. TDC have sought to befriend these organisations and helped out where possible with things like fundraising and training opportunities.

TDC have also tried to bridge the gap between young people and the wider adult community by supporting local community groups including the ‘Moulsecoomb Local Action Team’. They also launched a new website in 2014 which aims to advertise all youth activities in the area during the summer holidays, (see [www.brightonsummer.co.uk](http://www.brightonsummer.co.uk)).

**Supporting existing youth work**

As an example, The Council’s Youth Service along with key volunteers ran a bike club at the 67 Centre where teens can get qualified in bike maintenance whilst fixing up and selling abandoned bikes. When funding ran dry and the Youth Service’s priorities were shifting it looked as though the club might close. TDC helped the club to raise £1,500 and provided 2 youth workers weekly in order to keep it going.

Sustrans Bike-It Officer, Ben Sherratt (AKA ‘Bike-it Ben’) said “The club provides an amazing opportunity for young people to learn life skills through bike mechanics, working with the TDC has given it a new lease of life!”

**Partnering up over new projects**

Hugely successful new projects have been launched meeting hundreds of teens each year including the ‘Friday Night Sports Hub’ and the annual ‘Wild Park Youth Festival’, both in partnership with the Council’s ‘Active for Life Sports Development Team’ and ‘Albion in the Community’.

Other new projects include the ‘Look Sussex Youth Club’ for young people with visual impairment and blindness and also the Thursday Night Youth Club, run by the Young People’s Centre, both great successes.

On the new youth club session, one young woman said “There isn’t exactly loads of stuff to do when you’re out of school so coming here makes a big difference. We cook and eat together, we run a tuck shop and do stuff we wouldn’t get to do otherwise, like trips go-karting” Taylor Heather, aged 15.

**Youth Work goes deeper**

Adam Muirhead said “Fundamentally, ‘things to do and places to go’ are great in a community where people may have fewer opportunities. Youth Work seeks to go far beyond those things and bubbling beneath what the public often see is all sorts of work on unemployment, mental health, child-protection etc. delivered by skilled, trained staff”. He continues, “Our work on this estate continues to help bring in external funding and resources and build on some of the great work that already happens. We are hoping it can continue long into the future”.