

Pimp my Bike and Mirror Mirror

‘PIMP MY BIKE’ is a project that aims to engage young people in a fun activity, working with artists and mechanics and each other. Young people bring along their bikes and work with mechanics to make them more road-worthy and safe. At the same time they are able to work with artists to design and spray their bikes in whatever colours they want, giving their bikes a new lease of life.



‘MIRROR, MIRROR’ is a fashion project where young people work with an artist to create new clothing or accessory pieces out of old clothing and materials.

The two projects really epitomised partnership working between Eynsham Neighbourhood Policing team, Eynsham Youth Centre, Oxfordshire Youth Arts Project (OYAP) and Cottsway Housing. OYAP have run this project very successfully in partnership with Cottsway on two previous occasions, in Witney (Base 33) and at Carterton Youth Centre. This project is innovative and the young people take away new skills including bike mechanics, art and design skills. The Eynsham policing team had previously worked with OYAP to deliver a graffiti project in the town and this project was seen as a continuation following the good response. Eynsham Youth Centre, now part of Bartholomew School, was the ideal location to stage the project with local young people already engaging with the centre.

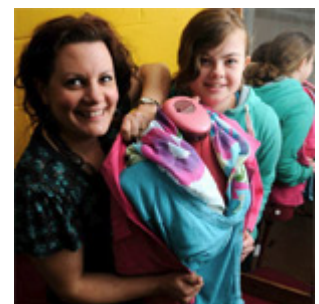
Eynsham does have issues with minor anti-social behaviour and nuisance and a project such as this, working with the police, would take the young people off the street during the school holidays through participation in a fun project. The youth worker at Eynsham was able to engage with all those with an interest in bike maintenance and graffiti art. OYAP suggested another project aimed at young girls to run parallel with Pimp my Bike, giving the overall project a greater reach.

Pimp my Bike

The main aim of the project was to get young people off the streets, doing something they have an interest in doing. The title of the project instantly relates to young people given the popular MTV programme ‘Pimp my Ride’. The bikes are first looked at by the bike mechanic who checks them for safety and discuss any issues with the young person. This was an opportunity for the young people to learn about their bikes, and how to take them to pieces so they were ready to be ‘pimped’. They then work with the graffiti artists to come up with designs and colour schemes, learning various techniques on how to spray, stencil and accessorise their bikes. They then put their bikes back together and the bike mechanic checks that everything was mechanically sound. The finished product was a bike that the young person had designed and worked on themselves.

Mirror Mirror

This project was aimed at girls (though some boys did participate) to take part in a fashion project where they could transform old garments into new. It aimed to create new thinking around fashion, to question ‘trends’, to be inspired by experimental fashion and to empower young people with the skills and tools to create new garments from old clothes in their wardrobes.



What we did

By working in partnership we were able to identify the young people we could involve in the project. Spaces are limited and young people were encouraged to sign-up prior to the event to gain an idea of numbers; however, more young people than anticipated did turn up on the day.

Once the project began we got all the young people, staff and project leaders together. The aim was to explain the format for the 2 days, what was involved and what they could do with their bikes. They first needed to work with the bike mechanic to identify how much work each bike would need before they could get on and spray them. Their bikes were serviced, 'pimped', and then taken home.

The second day saw many young people arrive early and many were at the stage of sanding down and spraying their bikes. They worked with graffiti artists and learned techniques they could use to achieve different effects. Once the bikes were dry they then worked on putting stencils or tags on their bikes before being lacquered to protect their artwork.

The project ran over 2 days, with young people eager to work on their bikes or participate with Mirror Mirror. The local Fire Service and Road Safety Team came to speak to the young people about bike safety during a lunchtime break.

Outcomes

Towards the end of the project we began to talk to the young people to evaluate how the project went. Not one of them had a bad comment to make and for many this project had given them new skills. The young people were very hands-on and were surprised that they were, in fact, doing their own bikes rather than the graffiti artists.

At the end we interviewed young people and filled in an evaluation form with them. This was a great opportunity to get feedback from all of them and comments included:

- "Better than staying indoors and playing on the computer..."
- "The most fun in the holidays I have ever had!"
- "An amazing day of fun and experimentation. I learnt to customise clothes and that you don't have to break the bank for something pretty".

The partnership would like to continue to develop youth projects in the town. The Parish Council supported by advertising the project, as well as showcasing the photos. Witney TV also came to do some filming at the project and interviewed the various partners.

Funding

The young people in Eynsham applied for funding from the Positive Activities Fund at Oxfordshire County Council. Following a successful presentation they secured the majority of the funding required. It was great for them to do this and created a real sense of achievement for them. Cottsway funded the remaining costs from their Community Safety budget.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Positive Activities Fund	£3,500.00
Cottsway Housing	£1,500.00
Total cost of project	£4,500.00