

PRECIOUS MEMORIES

Under this section we include written and verbal memories and reflections passed on as part of this project. We will continue this process as the centre develops especially with the growing number of adults, across all ages that now attend New Images.

Many of these memories and reflections have taken place on the streets, in the pubs and shops or at events and wherever we meet ex users and that is not just in Winsford.

Although opened in the summer of 1969 the first 6 months were dedicated to building snags and ensuring that operationally the centre was fit for purpose and that the new team of part time youth workers were in place to support the new full-time workers.

The full-time structure used then was based around three Youth Tutors, with a split role of teaching in the Verdin High School and at night delivery of youth provision. One Youth Tutor taking the lead role, the other two as deputies.

The 70s

Minutes from this period indicate a regular change of staffing at all levels, with a focus on sporting activity which included use of the school gym. One of those sports was boxing which by 1972 was so popular it was moved to Knights Grange, which had the space and capacity to deliver a regular programme.

Specific girls' activities focused around use of what was labelled the 'Powder Room'. The first junior club was instigated in 1971 aimed at the U14s. Seniors were for those over 14.

Boxing was one of the first activities to have a regular slot in the Centre's events, however, this soon eclipsed the space available and moved initially to the Knights Grange barn, then to Royle St (still active) It was still being supported in the early 1980s by this Centre, prior to becoming completely independent.

In 1972 the first coloured T.V set was obtained - members were charged 1p for watching! That was whenever the centre was opened, as during that year there was a major fuel crisis and therefore the centre had to be closed at night for long periods!

General admission in 1973 was increased to 10p for members.
This increased to 15p for visitors in 1975 and for those still at school 5p

The first alteration to the centre was carried out over the 1973 and 74 period when the bar in the social area was reconfigured which remains the same to this day. Most of the building work and repairs for this period was dedicated to repairing windows and damage caused via break ins. Graffiti was another major issue. A burglar alarm was not installed until early 80s

Staffing structure in the seventies included ancillary staff those who manned the door and cafe, part-time youth workers and activity workers all supported by a Youth Tutor, Teacher and Leader as well as a part-time key Youth Leader.

From early 1974 - late 1975 the Youth Workers role became a Full Time Youth Workers post (FTYW) as a consequence of re-structuring and reorganising of the Youth Service. The first FTYW role embraced every role imaginable that was needed to run the Centre as well as actively being involved in youth work delivery.

That position lasted a year, a year which included many requests for additional help. Then as now the centres demands were and are for a minimum of two full time workers.

1976 witnessed the growing numbers of unemployed people and the need for daytime provision for them.

In April 1977 the FTYW resigned, along with the Teacher and Leader post and the Youth Tutor role becoming a full-time Teacher.

From July 1977 a new FTYW Leader and a Deputy FTYW were appointed, both dedicated solely to the Centres development, (no teacher role) a complete change of delivery via a new direction service.

With two FTW both opening times and sessions increased and so did attendances, with the new Junior club attracting 200 on one night. Joint Community Group formed "Wheels" which had its own minibus, this made planning for trips easier. Later "Wheels" owned 2 minibuses

In 1978 the Lunchtime Club, for school pupils opened three days per week, later this extended to five days.

There was a large increase in `User` groups during 1979, all specific to young people's clubs and projects.

Weekly lunchtime club attendance averaging 600. One of these groups was the newly formed Winsford Playscheme Association, who run six schemes throughout Winsford as well as a summer camp, one being at the Centre which attracted 1,800 attendees' in 1979. We were involved in the formation of W.P.A which still operates today under W.Y.C.F.

Footfall for the whole of 1979, which includes all groups listed as being 27,269.

The 80s

The decade when live music reigned at the Centre. Not only with 2 - 3 bands rehearsing here most nights, increasing to 4 on Sunday evenings but also gigs every other month involving those local bands playing in support of a touring band.

The touring bands would cost up to £100 to play - a lot of money for a youth club to find, normally via the pool table takings! Staging was our own self made and designed to suit our needs, later replaced by borrowing the school's portable sections. But costs for the public address and lighting could not be avoided.

Keeping entrance fees to a minimum was key, along with giving our local bands the opportunity to perform. Memories include spending hours setting up and converting the main hall for these events, installing our own stage and disco lighting systems and not getting home until 3 a.m.

Memories include - turning down as too expensive Duran Duran, who wanted £120 to play, then choosing at £10 less, but critically from Liverpool The Flock of Seagulls. Who played to a half empty Centre, while Duran Duran were number six in the hit parade!

The Crass - consequence of the punk era played here 2 or 3 times always to a full house. Their local following instigated these gigs - and that connection and influence continued in to the 2019 period. For those youngsters turned into promoters delivering gigs here from 2013, including a reunion gig with the lead singer of Crass. In 2020 this group organised the Band Reunion Gig as part of our Open Day Celebrations.

Crass themselves always engaged verbally with their audience and were not the typical punk band as stereotyped by the press. These were highly intelligent, politically motivated individuals who would stay and talk to members about social issues until 2 a.m. in the morning - while staff talked and informed parents of their child's safety!!

Political awareness became a highly visible topic prompted by those young people being unemployed or on training schemes – the Crass capitalised on this to enhance their popularity, as well as sharing their views. Views that had to be countered from other perspectives. This resulted, after lengthy consultations with the Management Committee, with planned visits and discussions with members from all political groups.

It was not always a happy memory - many youngsters came from all over Mid - Cheshire to watch the bands. At one packed gig a lad from Middlewich was attacked by a group of four lads, in the middle of the main hall, resulting in him having a broken arm. All four were later convicted of assault. His girlfriend and a member of staff were key witnesses.

Gigs and Bands were male orientated so when the 'Boy Band' era arrived a decision was made to actively take girls into Manchester and Liverpool to watch these. Having access to a minibus was a big bonus. Every boy band of that period and into the nineties was seen, some more times than others. All except one Take That. All very positive memories, apart from the constant screaming, much of this from accompanying mothers and one night when we got back to the minibus to find the interior light had been left on and we had a flat battery. You cannot push start a diesel so we had to wait until emergency mechanics arrived at 1 a.m. Thankfully by then some young people had mobiles.

The highlighted need for a cinema in Winsford was also met by the Centre during the early 80s. This was a time consuming and expensive project not just in the delivery but also in getting the necessary licence etc. But this was also the period of technological development with the introduction of video tapes which led to a change in delivery.

1981 was the year of the Toxteth riots, put down to young people's unemployment, opportunities and disaffection within our society. The potential for a similar event in Winsford occurred early one Saturday afternoon when an estimated 500 young people gathered on the town centre. Shoppers and families retreated but not some of the local community and youth workers who were by chance on the scene.

They intervened and defused the situation. That week a partner agency meeting was held at the centre and Winsford Youth Forum was formed and constituted in 1986

Initial response from that meeting was to develop a team of Detached Youth Workers (new concept) to work on the town centre. From that we found that the need for a young person's venue was needed on the town. With help from a local cafe, that cafe was opened at night solely for their use, with the support from the Detached Team.

Other immediate actions included the formation of a Junior Football League for U11s, U 13s and U16s and the Winsford Playscheme Association. Long term the WYF aimed to improve and increase opportunities across the town for youngsters. We were given the opportunity to do this via the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) This was a job creation programme supported by the Government as a response to the unemployed situation at that time.

WYF was funded to employ around 30 people on a variety of hours over a three-year period to support, manage and operate a number of projects. One being within this Centre, basically extending our delivery, opening times and programme, another was to develop a youth club at Wharton (still operational in 2020) but now used for live music, the other being the Marina Outdoor Centre. Again, this is still operational but in a different building.

Both of these buildings at this period were derelict and surplus to need by the local council, one has since renovated the other replaced.

In 1989 we were awarded another grant from the Home Office of £50,000 to support WYF through the next year.

The FTYW Leader resigned at the end of 1983 which left the Centre being run by just one full time worker and that continued until 2003.

The early 80s was also a growth period for pool, always connected to pubs and youth clubs this sport was particular popular in Winsford. So much so that our own players wanted to play in the local league, at that time it meant taking young people into a pub for the away games, but more importantly it meant adults playing in a youth club, something some adults found hard to do! First we had to get admitted into the League, which was not easy – we had to give

assurances to all landlords that our team would be supervised at all times and would not be drinking. The bigger issue was those adults coming to the Centre and not being able to drink – it was not uncommon for their team captain to ring all 8 players, at given times, waiting in the team's local pub and call them down individually to play.

One of our team members later emigrated to Australia and became a player in their National Team, he later came back to the UK to play with the Aussie team.

Memories - Alan's are of the pool competitions, one for the seniors one for the juniors. Bunking off school to go to the Unemployed Club, (daytime provision) being caught on the roof, one of the leaders with his Graeme Souness moustache the other wearing socks with sandals. He also remembers with fondness getting black eyes while playing Bulldog. This was a favourite within the Junior Club, albeit exhausting for the staff but loved by all. However, the number of accidents and injuries and the emphasis now on Child Protection meant that had to stop.

Memories— Sandra's are winning a couples dancing competition with a Michael Jackson LP as the prize. Taking part in the many sporting activities that were on offer, being part of a team was very important for her. She still has happy memories –and still attends as a parent, at the Chatterbox Cafe whenever she is back home in Winsford. The Centre has always tried to vary and introduce new or different activities and sports etc, all part of expanding experiences

In 1984 a new FTYW was appointed, not specific to the work within the Centre although he was based here but as a Community Youth Worker. The initiatives instigated by the Winsford Youth Forum around the town with the many interest groups and projects required additional support so this post was to help support those plus develop anything else according to need. The main need was to develop the detached youth work throughout the town.

In 1985 we had our first computer! Plus-

Under 18s football team went to Amsterdam to compete in a football tournament, organised by a company sanctioned by Youth Clubs UK. Teams Youth Hostel double booked, team transferred to a hotel in the city centre, which turned out to be a brothel and with what appeared to be criminal activity going on. Complaint made and our full costs recovered.

Boxing club became independent, long term lease which would enable an extension to be built. We supported that development until fully compliant with regs etc. The club continues to this day – now due for a new lease and in need of further development. Open most nights for a variety of keep fit activities not just boxing.

In 1986 the first Princes Trust Work Sport and Leisure a week long project for unemployed young people took place at Caister-on-Sea. Group taken by the Community Youth Worker. This was (CWY) annual event for 4 years. This was the inspiration for the existing Team Programme now run by the Fire Service, and until very recently at this centre.

Other delivery from the CYW was assisting with the Spanish Youth Exchange which went on for several years, developing an issue-based comic especially for teenagers, a drama group, work within schools and eventually Youth 2000 a members committee.

Memories - from Sam, member of the first group to attend. Sam made a two-page report to the Management Committee. Included reference to the 3 national sports personalities that participated, how he did not like the Norfolk Broads as it was boring, being involved in a mix of skills workshops, and social activities and competitions in which he won two events, which later meant he could meet Prince Charles. The event was also attended by Phil Collins who led on the music workshops and played supported by some of the attendees.

What Sam did not like, along with many others was the intrusion by the Press, and the blame put upon the whole group to the damage caused around the camp. Known that local youngsters tried to gate crash the event.

Sam went on to become a volunteer using his skills whenever required. Recently returned after an absence of many years and is back contributing.

Roof re-felted in 1987 due to leaks!
Clerical Assistant – appointed in 1989

1990-1999

A new decade with a new Strategic Policy for the County Youth Service, this included the recruitment of clerical workers, albeit on restricted hours to support the full-time workers and the management of the Centres. The CYW role remained the same but delivery of some of that work was now achieved via a drop in base on the High Street.

Throughout the 80s and the 90s the Centre maintenance and repair work was guided by the Councils Building Inspectors, this included external appearance as well as making improvement to the centre, if those improvements were deemed beneficial. One being the replacement of the windows which at that time formed one side of the main hall, which had a glasshouse effect on sunny days, and was a major safety concern with any ball games. The resulting wall replacement was a major improvement.

Other improvements were sometimes at the suggestion of the building inspector, all of course down to financial constraints and long-term planning dictated by the attendances during this decade.

Other major improvements were identified and hoped for:-

In 1990 the FTW attended a year long one day release BTEC Course on Business and Management during which a detailed report was made on what was needed with all the supporting evidence. Part of that report was accepted by the Council and funding given for what was a complete rebuild of the front of the Centre focused around the office and entrance section.

The major element of the report of converting the courtyard into a room by adding a roof was to follow in 2003 influenced by other factors.

‘Wheels’ continued to function in 1990 with 2 minibuses – both parked to the rear of the Centre. One was stolen in the autumn and found on Knights Grange severely damaged and consequently written off.

'Wheels' itself was an amalgamation of Community groups all paying an annual fee and registering etc allowing access to the minibuses all users were then invoiced monthly dependant on use. Repairs and maintenance were a constant issue, both financially and time wise. The replacement vehicle itself was taken without permission and severely damaged. In Oct 1995 both vehicles, parked to the rear of the centre were used as dodge cars and completely wrecked and written off, ending this particular Community asset. So, after 9 years direct access to a minibus external trips etc were seriously curtailed.

Troupe Dancing played a major part of this period, with training and attending competitions, some being at New Images. During which the centre and the surrounding roads were overwhelmed with cars and coaches – girls rehearsing in any outside area that was available. Getting into the Centre was a real challenge!

The increase in female attendance helped to create and extend other activities primarily aimed at them e.g. dancing competitions both internally and within the County.

Later two sisters were to qualify to reach the National Association of Youth Clubs final, held in Great Yarmouth. Becoming models in fashion shows again became an annual event. We were to hold our own event, converting the main hall for this took a week, plus utilising all of the side rooms for changing, hair and make up etc, for both sexes. These skills were acquired via students from Mid Cheshire College as part of their Community Involvement. Brilliant event supported by a full house of parents and guests.

The other spin off from the above was supporting the Winsford Carnival with a float celebrating the work and activities at the Centre. Although these events only covered a few years, they overtook all other delivery in the preceding week

In the early 90s the Boxing Club, now located in Royle Street became a separate organisation and obtained a 33 year lease on what was an old scout building. Ongoing support from the early 70s was then removed and reports to the Management Committee of the Centre of the Boxing Club events/work ceased.

In 1993 the CYW along with another FTYW were redeployed back to the Centre on a full-time basis, as part of the Youth Service restructuring. The new FTYW post was designated as supporting daytime work and direct support to the school. However, this was only a short-term post prior to the worker retiring on the grounds of ill health.

The office extension was also completed in 1993 with the centre closing for two months. In July of 1994 Winsford experienced an unusual amount of rain resulting in flooding to the bottom half of Nixon Drive, the drains being overwhelmed with the volume of water, the new office was flooded and we had an enforced closure for a week until we had dried out, and new carpets installed.

This was followed by a suggestion that we should celebrate the new look with a new name for the Centre. So, a huge exercise in member and parental involvement in selecting and deciding the new name was instigated. Eventually the name `Images` was agreed, then amended to its existing name New Images this change was due to a massage parlour in Northwich being named Images!

1993 was the start of the Probation Service`s input into the Centre with a weekly day of decorating and gardening and repair work which was to continue for 10 years, to the period when ownership of the Centre reverted to the Verdin H.S. That relationship was then re-established in 2013 and has remained ever since.

In the late 80s into the early 90s we recorded a high number of break-ins, resulting damage and loss was a constant financial concern, plus hours of unplanned work to keep the Centre functioning. Costs for a burglar alarm were finally secured in 1994. Two lads were later convicted and sent to a detention centre for 6 months.

In 1994 Winsford Youth Forum itself went through many changes, mainly through staff reductions and lack of secure funding. Funding was secured later in the year via a commitment from Vale Royal Borough Council, which turned into an annual agreement to deliver provision mainly in the Wharton and Over areas.

In 1995 18 months` work started refurbishing Wharton Youth Centre which eventually re –opened in February 1996. Work cost around £35,000. The state of the Marina now become the next WYCF priority.

1995 witnessed further changes in Youth Service delivery, with finances changing from a centre controlled style to an area and locality style. Meaning that another layer of management controlled this key aspect. Simply this meant detailed long-term planning, with no avenue to respond to any needs as when required.

Staffing costs were reduced, requiring the centre to be closed for a full 6 weeks annually. These were scheduled to coincide with the school holidays, when attendances were comparatively low but also at periods when there was either no other or limited provision. Something that many parents noted.

The overriding memory of 1995 happened in late December, when sadly a member of our open age football team died on the football pitch, from a heart attack, caused by an unknown heart defect. All Christmas events were cancelled and thoughts and time were spent supporting family and friends and our staff who were on the scene.

The player involved had been involved throughout his life with the centre from the Junior Club, playing in Junior Football teams, Senior helper then Volunteer in the Junior Club as well as helping at events and doing any odd job in the Centre- all of the family were well known to the Centre. He was standing in for missing players when he had the heart attack – a further example of him helping us out whenever he could.

Youth 2000 – members group started led by the CYW, embracing youngsters from throughout Winsford. This became a County wide project, which eventually morphed into the Youth Parliament which continues to this day Supported by Cheshire West & Chester Council.

The early detached work as supported by the WYF was also resurrected With dedicated teams working throughout Winsford again led by the CYW. Once again these continue today via CWAC Youth Service.

Other new major projects starting in 1996

Driving Lessons – aimed at supporting youngsters primarily to access work, mobility etc. 12 lessons were part funded subject to them attending supporting sessions based around alcohol and drugs awareness, basic mechanics maintenance and highway code and theory support. Scheme was to continue until 2001.

‘Army Look at Life’ week was a taster of army life for those thinking of joining up. These proved to be very popular, 2 – 3 weeks scheduled each year for the next 7 or 8 years.

Music continued to dominate the centre with up to four gigs a year throughout the decade, numerous trips to concerts and festivals, and bands rehearsing most nights. We also started a series of music tuition, singing and technical knowledge weekend workshops in conjunction with a music org from Northwich.

The concert trips however were sometimes memorable for other reasons. When one trip to Liverpool the minibus (borrowed from the Verdin H.S) was involved in an accident caused by an oncoming car driving the wrong way on a dual carriage way. Later we learnt that this was a stolen car coming to the aid of another broken down car on the slipway, which had false number plates. Fortunately, no one was injured. The minibus and the other innocent affected car were both written off. The Police transported the group into Liverpool to the venue – while the necessary phone calls were made to parents and for support. We were informed 2 months later by the Police that there was an armed gang operating around stolen cars and that we were fortunate not to have confronted them!

Concerts and gigs were still being organised throughout this decade, throughout the town. Venues included Winsford United Football Club, Over Community Centre and the old Civic Hall. The first event at the Civic resulted in the mains electrics blowing during rehearsals the power supply insufficient for the demand!

Alcohol drinking by young people throughout the decade was a major issue and concern for all organisations especially at these concerts. One lad passed out in the Civic toilet, at one of these events, waking around 1.30 am and then setting off the alarm!

Band nights did not appeal to all youngsters, the growth of boy and girl singing groups nationally had their own audience. We had been involved with several trips to concerts by such performers, soon we were asked to organise gigs targeting bedroom singers. These were planned and delivered at Knights Grange Barn, with 14 acts performing at the first event.

The 90s summers were dedicated to New Images continuing to have the four week annual Playscheme, plus an annual camping trip in partnership with the Youth Federation. Trips for the seniors plus numerous summer activities specifically fishing, cricket, canoeing from the Marina plus the odd sailing session and trip.

In 1999 talk of replacing the existing building used as a Marina with a purpose built building started in earnest.

The 90s winters were dedicated to having 'Inflatable' nights – with gladiatorial challenges and other activities. Roadshows held the imagination for a short period. These discos incorporated a spectacular wall of lights.

Memories – Louise started as a junior member, she stayed on to become a Senior Helper (from the 80's we always had a steady stream of youngsters willing and able to help and contribute to the Junior section- many went on the Young Leaders Courses; some took youth related career paths) from which she became a Mental Health Peer Educator. (issue in those days) Louise was also involved in the lighter side of Centre life taking part performing in many dancing and singing competitions some County wide. Always looking for a challenge she was one of the first girls to attend the 'Army Look at Life' week. Another challenge was a week with the Sail Training Association helping to crew this on a trip to Amsterdam. (There is full report on this in our archives) Many years later her professional life bought her back to the Centre, Still working and supporting young adults.

Another lad was to go on a Sail Training Association trip which did not go quite so smoothly! But the most impressive was the 2 special needs lads, one a permanent wheel chair user the other with severe walking issues who went on their specially adapted boat, who then wanted to offer their services as volunteers on the next trip!

2000 -2014

The future of the Youth Service from the start of the new millennium was uncertain, changes were definitely coming rumours were rife but the exact direction was unclear. The talk was all about having a district Hub from which FTYW were to operate from in various guises – the future of Council supported Youth Centres was unclear, but they were not going to be financed by the Council. So, their existence if possible was primarily reliant on the voluntary sector. This centre has always had a strong relationship with the voluntary sector, stronger than most and that itself led to misgivings in some parts of the Council. Initially there was a volunteer group prepared to share that responsibility and the building with WYF. However, when Senior Officers arrived at the Centre one night as part of their pre-engagement, community awareness, consultation process they were taken aback by the number of parents and others waiting for them, the consultation was clearly going down

badly and not being accepted! From this an action group and campaign developed to stop any changes, with one coach full of parents going to County Hall and a series of articles in the Guardian and other publications.

This stopped any partnership but the Youth Service and Council were determined to off load the expense of this Youth Centre and needed to support the cost of a Hub. At that point the Verdin High School stepped in, since their need was for additional daytime space, since the school was going from a two site complex to one site, and additional classroom space was needed in the interim since the two senior schools at that time were planning to merge into one super school on one site.

The school responded to the needs of the Community and agreed that youth provision could continue on four nights per week. (later went to five) One of these nights was dedicated to the Junior Club, which was then taken over by WYF, supported by Winsford Town Council who agreed to fund it for the next ten years. (still ongoing) The other three nights were for seniors and were delivered ironically by the Cheshire Youth Service!

Memories – Danielle was another junior club member who stayed on to become a long serving Senior Helper in the junior club, encouraged by her long serving mother who was by then convinced of the value of the Junior Club and had herself started to Volunteer. Danielle was totally immersed in the creative side of the Centre, with dancing and performing etc plus attending events and training courses and helping with the annual camping trips. Still a regular attendee at our Christmas staff parties, when she is not working as a Headteacher in Yorkshire. She puts her success down to some of the influences from her days at this Centre.

A further agreement was made with the school for the continuation of the school 'Lunchtime Club' which was by then run by WYF, later taken over by the school.

A condition requested of the school by the Action Group was that the school replace the space that was normally used by the youth club, which they did. In the reconfiguration of the centre which was to follow, the rear section was changed from a four-room facility to one large classroom as per the requirements of their Art Dept, with an additional rear entrance for school use.

To recoup that space a roof was installed over the courtyard area for youth club use. In practical terms the rear rooms were for school use – the front for the Youth Club. The school however still had access and use of the front section for other daytime use, namely small activity groups in the main hall.

This was all to change several years later when it was deemed necessary to use the whole of the rear – with access to the front as their inclusion unit.

From 2002 and for the next ten years the school had building responsibilities, costs etc plus the running and service costs to cover which they did for all users. Again, in practical terms the youth provision was supported throughout with this expense by the school, which Cheshire Youth Service and then later Connexions never appreciated! WYF did, the school later added to that expense when in 2010 they allowed us to use the front office as our base, for which we are very thankful. During 2012 when the next phase of the Centres survival arrived, we were in a position to justify that need.

The final Cheshire County Council Management Meeting for the Centre, under Youth Service use was on the 1/7/2003. That was primarily around the change over procedures, clearing out equipment and materials specifically to the Centres rear and helping those additional user groups to relocate and organise. The development of the Hub and how FTY Workers were to operate and support The work here was also discussed, but it was only the work with no one taking building or other essential support issues into account, which would become an ongoing issue.

From July 2003 – 2013 records of the delivery at the centre exist only for the Junior Club, which was controlled by WYF. Senior delivery by Cheshire Youth Service- records no longer exist due to the Cheshire West/East split that was to come and the change of the Youth Service to Connexions in 2012. Then, later back into Cheshire West Children's Services. The changes within the Local Authority meant that the only continual link within the centre has been through the WYF.

Linking the delivery together, the sharing of resources, the maintenance of resources, financial control, coffee bar control etc has always been a distant thought or concern for the local authority so WYF assumed that responsibility. Efforts to form a user group type management group failed, as it was deemed unnecessary even though the Centre was generating income and banked via the Centres

Members Fund. This was then transferred into the WYF accounts for use by and for the clubs needs and we continued with any supportive cross actions. This was helped when in 2011 the school agreed to allow WYF use of the Office on a daily basis (without charge)

Additional Info

2006 – 2009

Lunchtime Club funded by the school, but run by WYF for 5 days per week.

2010 – 2012

Lunchtime Club run by the school (staff TUPE(Transferred) over) Connexions – Refurbished the Coffee Bar and Reception area.

2012

Playschemes returned.

New Academy being built – rumours of the centre being a 6th form
Pre demolition inspection of the centre specific to asbestos
WYF submit a letter to Cheshire West & Chester Council (CWAC) regarding asset transfer.

2013

School ask CWAC for an extension to keep use of the Centre for another Year. WYF actively involved in redeveloping the Centre aided by the Lord Lieutenant, who prefers a new build and site closer to the town centre, gains funding promises of 1.5 million under the `Onside` scheme, who have built a number of mega inner-city youth centres in the North West. Wants to use this approach with a smaller scaled version. CWAC refuse to support, site or any running costs.

From 2013 WYF was affectively controlling the centre with the focus on making The Centre fully usable for youth and community needs. Decorating and general refurbishment work was carried out most Saturdays primarily by the Probation Teams Community Payback Team, but others supported namely the Princes Trust and TATA `s Volunteers group. Funding for this was raised, or gained via small grant allocations, noticeably via CWAC Councillors.

2014

Tenancy at Will signed – annual agreement with CWAC for WYF to run and operate from New Images. Ongoing until 2019.

Work intensified to include the rear classrooms, which had to be completely gutted for a complete change of use, which became immediate with the demolition of the Woodford Lodge School and Sports site and therefore groups looking to relocate.

The toilets became the next target with complete retiling, followed by soundproofing two rooms and the construction of two storerooms. But the biggest issues were and still remain the constant leaks from the roof, and the resulting damage internally.

To date the roof, external doors and some windows remain our main concern and local CWAC Officers are fully aware of this issue and the need for funding to remedy the situation.

Our situation, we believe has been hindered by the collapse of another local organisation who themselves took over a redundant CWAC building but could not survive due to others actions. CWAC then had to get involved at a cost, which then impacted on future decision making. Since then we have had to prove to CWAC that we are capable and have the infrastructure to succeed and that has taken nearly seven years. To help that process we have produced a 5-year Business Plan and have supported CWAC Officers with their submission to Council on our needs. To date this process is still active.

2016

Trustees realised from the start that we needed to generate enough income to pay both operating and running costs so alongside the refurb, which was and still is ongoing, began a campaign to maximise usage of the Centre.

To facilitate this, we had to expand our impact beyond young people, for at this point we had a centre that was empty during the day, however we could demonstrate we had a tremendous resource that could benefit the whole community. To show our intent we changed the organisational name from Winsford Youth Forum to Winsford Youth and Community Forum, still retaining the Centres name of New Images but now promoting it as a Youth & Community Centre

With the demise of Connexions, senior youth provision was reduced to just one night under the new Early Intervention and Youth Service and that was specifically for the SEN group. Other delivery for seniors was via grant and commissioned work from CWAC which WYCF applied for, and has continued to apply for, and that will fund Saturday night provision.

The Junior club continues to be funded by Winsford Town Council, now for all the staff. Other youth provision is provided by specialised groups every other week.

The focus as already indicated was now on adult provision and through the Community Organiser we were successful in getting a Lottery grant to start up a Community Cafe which continues to this day – but only through the continued Support of 5 volunteers.