

EDUCATION & YOUNG PEOPLE REPORT UPDATE – SEPTEMBER 2025

Over the summer, activity has been a little quieter with the group due to people's personal and work commitments. However, we are thrilled to share that our funding bid to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, support our first youth-focused event under the Cultural Strategy, the Open Mic Night, has been successful.

The project team is meeting this week to begin progressing the event in earnest, and we'll soon be reaching out to everyone to help spread the word to as many young people and youth-focused groups across Winchester as possible.

It was also great to see several members of the Education & Young People's group at the Culture Connects event on Friday 5th September at the University of Winchester. This excellent "Open Spaces" event explored the question: *What is our collective vision for culture, creativity, and heritage in Hampshire?* It was encouraging to hear discussions that echoed this group's ambition to identify and connect young people with artistic potential and mentorship, to offer pathways into further involvement in the county-wide arts and heritage scene, and to help shape a more inclusive and vibrant cultural landscape for our children and young people across Hampshire.

THE OPEN MIC NIGHT EVENT - FRIDAY 17TH OCTOBER 2025 AT THE NUTSHELL, WINCHESTER

The Open Mic Night for 13-18 year olds will showcase poetry, music, comedy, new writing, and more, with performances in 5–10 minute slots. The event is designed to be inclusive, exciting, and, most importantly, led by young people themselves.

Delivery will be coordinated by a small project team from partner organisations including Discarded Nut, University of Winchester, Play to the Crowd, and Winchester School of Art. However, the emphasis will remain firmly on young people driving the creative vision. Mentorship will be embedded throughout from planning and tech to performance to ensuring participants feel safe, empowered, and capable.

We aim to recruit young people with interests in performance, event management, stage tech, front-of-house, and production support. These young people will receive mentoring and hands-on experience, helping them build skills and confidence through real-world learning.

A review process will also allow participants to give honest feedback on the project, which will be used by this group to inform our next course of action. The core aim is to celebrate the creative talents of Winchester's youth while laying the foundations for a wider, youth-led cultural movement in line with the City Council's Cultural Strategy. This event will serve both as a launchpad and as a statement that young people's voices, ideas, and talents belong at the heart of Winchester's cultural life.