



Sawston Youth Group Ltd

Chairman: Paul Whitmell, 82b High Street, Sawston, Cambs, CB22 3HJ

CHURCH AGM REPORT – SAWSTON YOUTH GROUP

This report covers the year from April 2021 to April 2022.

This is a big and exciting year for SYG as it marks our 20th Anniversary of when we first started in September 2001 with the help of Rev Giles Kendall, Kevin McMullen (then Principal at SVC) and Gerry Holloway.

The group went ahead with a summer residential at Foxlease in the New Forest in July 2021 which was attended by Kathryn. Although numbers were lower everyone that attended had a great time.

The group restarted Monday night face to face activities in September 2021. We also restarted our band on a Thursday night.

When we restarted in September 2021 our numbers were much lower than pre lockdown as we restarted with around 40 young people (we went into lockdown with 52) but since then we have had many new members join so today (March 2022) we have 59 young people in membership across school years 1 to 12.

We have also gained some new leaders in both general activities as well as band staff and in total we now have 24 volunteer leaders on the role.

Our enrolment service was held at church on the 4th October with a full church. We gave every member a 20th Year Anniversary metal badge.

In October 2021 we planned and led a band tour to Manchester and Blackpool. In total we organised a 5 day event with many bands and young people with a parade through Manchester City Centre to a service at Manchester Cathedral. Over 400 people attended. We also played on the Blackpool Comedy Carpet by the Blackpool Tower to many hundreds of people. The aim of the tour was to restart band work in the Boys' Brigade and the tour included over 10 different groups from across the UK.

Our Carol Service was held in December 2021 to a full church.

We meet every Monday evening at the Marven Centre with a variety of programme activities including games, crafts and nights out and each week includes a devotional time of 20mins.

We held our 20th anniversary dinner in Ely Cathedral in January 2022 which was attended by just under 100 people including Rev Alan Partridge and Liz, our vicar and her husband, the Superintendent Minister of the Ely Methodist Circuit and of course Bishop Stephen. Also supporting the group was Mark Chennells from the Royal British Legion, Gerry Holloway and Kevin McMullen, Tony Collett from the Rotary Club and Jonathan Russell, Principle from SVC. In addition, the dinner was

attended by former leaders of the group, current leaders and supporting parents and friends. It was a marvellous occasion with music co-ordinated by Will Farrant including Pipers from London and a brass accompaniment.

The speeches were led by myself, followed by Oliver Borley (a former member), Rev Alan Partridge who also read a statement from Rev Giles Kendall (now retired and living in Newcastle) and finally by Bishop Stephen. All praised the group for what it does week on week and gave thanks to God for its Christian witness in the Sawston area.

Since SYG was formed in Sept 2001 we have awarded 35 Bronze, 24 Silver and 19 Gold DofE Awards which is something we are all very proud of.

Our 20th Anniversary show was held on Saturday March 12th at the Marven Centre which was full. All who came to watch were inspired by what we do and all enjoyed the show. The feedback to the show was very positive from all that came. The guest of honour was Kevin McMullen who spoke of the good work the group has done over the past 20yrs. The band gave an excellent performance and the show included a tribute to those who have supported the group but who are no longer with us.

Our band continues to meet every Thursday at SVC and is also increasing in numbers. We are booked to play this summer at the Kedington Fete, near Haverhill and to lead the Saffron Walden Carnival on Saturday July 9th. The band will also perform at the Sawston Fun Run in May.

Looking to the future we are holding our annual residential at The Vauxhaul Christian Centre, Suffolk in July 2022 which will be led by Paul Cain. We are now also planning our outdoor summer programme of activities which will include canoeing and archery.

This has been a very busy and exciting year for SYG.

All the events for our 20th Anniversary have gone well and the group is in very good shape to grow and develop in the future. Given where we started from back in September 2021 this is quite remarkable. My belief is that this is a tribute to prayer and God's love for the group as He has been holding our hand in all our events and activities. For me it resembles the poem "Footprints in the Sand" as many of us feel God has carried us through the bad times and is now walking side by side with us as we now develop and grow.

Today SYG is one of the largest voluntary youth groups in Sawston and probably in South Cambs and I hope something St Mary's can be very proud of.

If you know of anyone in school years 1 upwards who would like to give us a try, please encourage them to come along on a Monday evening.

Paul Whitmell
Chairman
