Broxbourne Youth Council Minutes

21 October (Week 5/11)

Participants: Youth Mayor Zara Djemal, Deputy Youth Mayor Thomas Vaciago, Health Officer Lily-Rose Blackford, Social Media Officer Monroe Clarke, Tanisha Balasingham, Dylan Djemal, Chase Hall, Declan Twum, Grace Watts, Ayan Maradia, Gabrielle Robinson

Facilitators: Linton Sutherland (Services for Young People), Alessandro Principato (Broxbourne Borough Council)

Minutes by Alessandro Principato

1. Buddies Activity

The Youth Council took part in a 'Buddies' icebreaker activity, where members paired up and introduced each other to the group by sharing a few facts they had learned. The activity focused on supporting members to get to know one another better and strengthen relationships across the Youth Council.

2. What's Important Activity

Members took part in a group discussion to review and consider key responses received from Cllr Hart regarding concerns raised by Youth Council members during the Golf with Councillors event on 3 October.

The group then split into two to discuss the topics of Mobile Phones in Schools and Relationships and Health. One group presented their views on the use of mobile phones in schools with arguments both for and against restrictions.

Points raised in favour of restrictions included concerns around non-consensual photos, distractions during lessons, cyberbullying, access to inappropriate content, and the use of AI to complete schoolwork. Members also discussed how phones can be used to listen to music, which some felt can both support and distract learning.

Points raised against restrictions included the lack of direct contact with parents during the school day, concerns that restrictions do not tackle cyberbullying outside of school, potential privacy issues, delays caused by unlocking phone pouches at the end of the day, and the cost of purchasing pouches where these are required. Members also felt that the restrictions simply do not work as intended.

The other group discussed Relationships and Health Education in schools. Members felt that teaching can sometimes overlook the realities of young people's relationships and that there should be greater focus on areas such as conflict resolution. The group also agreed that education around relationships and consent should be a shared responsibility between parents, relatives and schools, rather than relying on one source alone.

3. **Upcoming Dates**

Members discussed upcoming dates, which are the following:

- 11 November – Anti-bullying Workshop / Meeting with Tony Catarinicchia (Community Engagement Officer) regarding *Futureproofing Our Community's Heritage (FPOCH).*
- 18 November – Youth Mayor Zara Djemal and Deputy Youth Mayor Thomas Vaciago to attend Mayor's Debate at Council Offices.

4. **Remembrance Sunday Parade**

The Youth Council expressed interest in becoming more involved with Remembrance activities, including attending a Remembrance Sunday Parade and taking part in arts and crafts projects linked to remembrance. Ideas discussed included creating poppies from recycled plastic bottles, producing remembrance-themed poems, making poppy wreaths from recycled materials, and developing artwork that could be displayed in local town centres.

Action: Youth Council members to explore opportunities for future involvement in Remembrance Sunday Parades and related community remembrance projects.

5. **Social Media Content**

Members discussed social media content and 'Meet the Youth Council Team' posts, along with videos to meet different Youth Councillors.

Group explored different social media content ideas.

6. **National Youth Work Week 2026**

The Youth Council watched the National Youth Agency (NYA) short film for National Youth Work Week and described the impacts of local youth projects.

7. **Podcast and Quiz**

Members took part in a podcast, as well as participating in a general knowledge quiz.