

- (A) What are the plans for the Youth Centre at Bowes Lyon House? Will this affect the Youth Council?**

Answer (Councillor Richard Henry):

Bowes Lyon House is owned and maintained by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and is currently the base for YC Herts as a centre for youth service. Stevenage Borough Council is not aware of any immediate plans the County Council have for the building however officers have held discussions with their HCC counterparts concerning the opportunity to build a brand new state of the art leisure centre, including a swimming pool on or near the existing swimming centre site on St. Georges Way funded in part through the Towns Fund scheme. There is an opportunity to include youth service provision within the new building, but this is yet to be determined with the County Council. Regardless of this decision, the support for the Youth Council will continue, as will this Council's ongoing advocacy for effective youth work and places for young people to meet across the town.

- (B) Are the Council supporting Young People to get a house or learn more about housing?**

Answer (Councillor Jeannette Thomas):

The Council's Housing Options service works closely with colleagues at Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) to ensure young people receive the support they need. We have a joint housing protocol to ensure that homeless young people or those faced with homelessness receive the best possible support. You have been sent some leaflets and information in respect of the Hertfordshire Joint Housing Protocol that you may find interesting and there's some links below to Centrepoin for further reading.

The Council also makes referrals to charities and partners, such as Herts Young Homeless, who can offer specialised support.

Applicants can join the Council's housing register for social housing in Stevenage at 16. The Council has an ambitious programme to develop more social and affordable housing, having completed 300 homes already with a further 300 currently under construction. However, the Council cannot address the town's housing needs on its own, hence why we are working very hard with partners such as MACE and the Guinness Trust amongst others, whilst also securing further affordable home provision through the Planning process. The information on our website may also be of interest to you:

<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/housing-register>

<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/housing/homelessness-and-housing-advice>

The part of your question concerning helping young people learn more about housing is really interesting and something which could be discussed further with colleagues at HCC. I agree it is vital for young people to have realistic expectations of the housing options available to them in the future. Training on managing of bills and the understanding of tenancy agreements is all vital and would no doubt reduce the challenges many young people face.

Centrepoint is the UK's leading youth homeless charity, providing housing and support for young people across the country. In 2021, they launched their strategy to end youth homelessness by 2037.

Ed Tytherleigh is the *Director of Support and Housing at Centrepoint*, and is responsible for the delivery of their frontline services across the country.

Ed spoke to **MyGovCentral.com** recently about:

- What needs to be done to end homelessness in the UK, and the 2037 Centrepoint strategy
- How the Government can provide better support to organisations working to end homelessness
- The impact of the 2018 Rough Sleeping Strategy so far

You can hear, and read, what Ed had to say in his interview at **MyGovCentral.com**, which is an online resource highlighting shared learning opportunities and best practice.

(C) The Youth Council have noticed a high amount of litter in Stevenage. How are the Council looking to resolve this? The Youth Council would love to support a campaign on this subject.

Answer (Councillor John Gardner):

Thank you for your question and for taking an interest in the appearance of the town. I am pleased to be able to inform you that there are a number of initiatives in place to help tackle littering in Stevenage:

- (1) The Council already supports residents and community groups who wish to undertake a litter pick in their local area. Advice is available on the Council's web pages - <https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/community-litter-picking> - and the loan of equipment (including litter pickers, high vis jackets, gloves etc) can also be requested from this link.
- (2) A new litter campaign will be launched in March 2022. Last autumn an artwork competition was held, via the Play Centres, to support the litter campaign. From March 2022 two of the Council's refuse trucks will be displaying banners with the winning artwork. This artwork will also be used on posters that will be displayed in notice boards in parks and

neighbourhood centres, and will also be shared via social media - #CleanGreen. Officers will also be providing updates on the campaign via the Council's webpages.

- (3) Each year we support the Great British Spring Clean campaign by Keep Britain Tidy. This year we will be delivering six community litter picks across the town during 25 March – 10 April. If the Youth Council would like to support any of these events please contact Amy Danaher, Environmental Development Officer, who is co-ordinating this year's activities.
- (4) There is also a programme of litter roadshow events taking place in litter hotspots in the town. The first of these was held in the Town Centre in January. These events have a focus on education; informing residents that littering is illegal and could result in a fine, or being prosecuted through the courts.
- (5) To support enforcement action the Council's Community Safety Officers and the Neighbourhood Wardens are having their Police accreditation renewed so that they are able to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for littering.

We will continue to consider opportunities for other events / activities to support the litter campaign and help keep Stevenage Clean, Green and Tidy. If the Youth Council have suggestions for getting involved themselves and/or communicating with and involving young people more widely I would be happy to meet them with our officers to discuss the matter further.