

Political Literacy

Denton & Westerhope

*Young People
Have Their Say*

2008

What it's all about

With thanks to the Denton & Westerhope Committees for helping fund the project, all the youth and play workers who took part, and to all the councillors - Peter Arnold, Graham Middleton, Sharon Middleton, Marc Donnelly, Neil Hamilton, and Pat Hillicks - for their enthusiasm and participation in the project.



During October 2008 Newcastle City Council's Play Service, Youth Service and Arts Development Team came together in the Denton and Westerhope wards of the outer west of the city to creatively inspire **children and young people** in a full day of engagement activities linked to promoting Local Democracy.

The key focus of the event was to introduce the subject of politics to children and young people, and to encourage as many of them as possible to be more involved in the issues that affect them, to begin stimulating debate and conversation, and to explore the many topics linked to the world of **democracy** and politics.

This was approached in a creative way. Four artists with their own unique specialism delivered engaging and fun workshops themed around politics. Alison Ashton led the **creative mapping** workshops, Lindsay Duncanson led **poster and digital imagery** workshops, Harriett Plewis led **drama** workshops, and Narinder Purba led the **journalism & media** workshops.

Up to **40** children and young people attended the event, coming from a variety of voluntary and community sector projects. The activities went down well with all the groups and there was plenty of laughter, great communication across the board, and an abundance of thoughtful and interesting comments and opinions made throughout the day, testament that children and young people have plenty to say about local and national politics.

Denton and Westerhope councillors were invited to work alongside the children and young people and help encourage and support them to understand local politics. Many of the councillors stayed for the full day, and their energy and eagerness to take part in the creative workshops and chat with children and young people was received well by everyone alike.

This project was part of the region's **Engagement Strategy**, an ongoing drive to ensure that children and young people are actively involved in the decision making process throughout the city and beyond. Both Denton & Westerhope councillors had recognised that children and young people often found politics boring and irrelevant, and were thus keen to fund new, interesting, and fun ways of engaging them in their wards.

The event proved to be a success and many of the young people were not only keen on attending further workshops, but also expressed an interest in forming a **Denton & Westerhope Play and Youth Forum**.

T

he world of politics is not just about boring old, grey men in suits talking about taxes and the law and wearing silly wigs in funny ceremonies. It's about the world you live in and how you play your part in making it a better place.

Tell it just like that to young people that and they'll embrace politics with much more vigour and enthusiasm. Add in a bit of fun, art, drama, and a whole range of other exciting and engaging activities and before you know it, the young people you work with will have produced a radical manifesto that not only makes the area they live in a much prettier, safer, cleaner, and fun place to live in, but also a place they can proudly call home.

Moreover, home is a place where they're always busy, always entertained, and always learning. Home is a springboard to a successful future where each and every young person can be whoever he or she wants to be.

This magazine is a snapshot of some of their thoughts and ideas that they kindly shared with us in and around Political Democracy week in October 2008.

Welcome to politics by young people.

Enjoy.

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U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 42

SCCYP!

the area we live in

We find out the good and the bad about the area young people live in, and ask them for suggestions to make it even better.

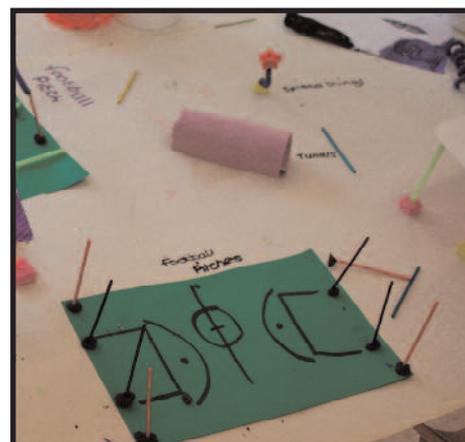
“What do you like about Denton & Westerhope?”

- Churches
- Friends
- Sportie
- Library
- Clubs
- Play Centre



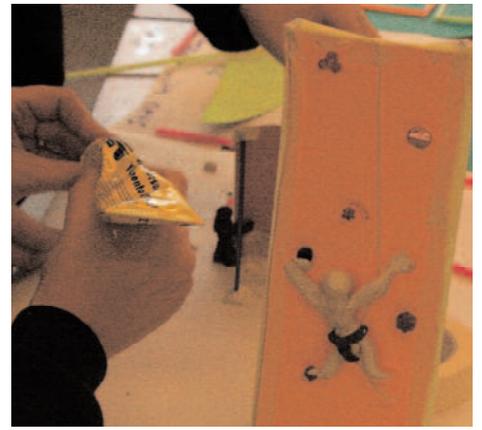
“What do you dislike about Denton & Westerhope?”

- Litter
- Drunks
- Gangs
- The parks
- Charvahs
- Dog muck
- Druggie's
- Dealers
- Fights
- Stabbings
- Fires
- Bullying
- Graffiti



“What should be changed & added in Denton & Westerhope?”

- **Play areas**
- **The shops**
- **Fields**
- **Footie pitches**
- **Sports centre**
- **Football pitches**
- **Swimming baths**
- **Better parks**
- **Bike tracks**
- **Amusements**
- **Places for girls**
- **Safer areas for little kids**
- **Food centres**
- **Arcades**
- **Ice-rink**
- **Museums**
- **Monuments**



The notice board

With lots to say, young people post, stick, and scribble down their thoughts.

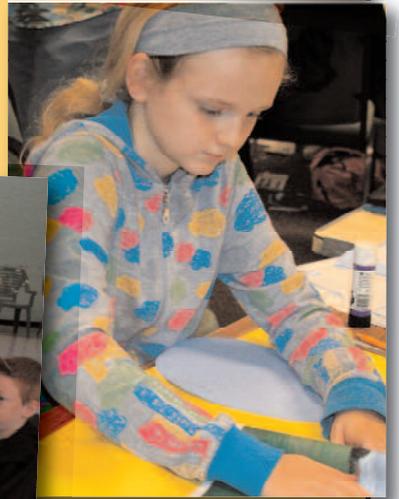
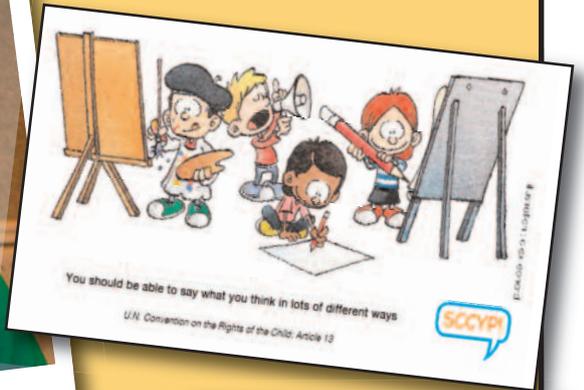


The picture board

Just like the notice board, only with less words!



You can't see me!!!



Keeping up with the news!

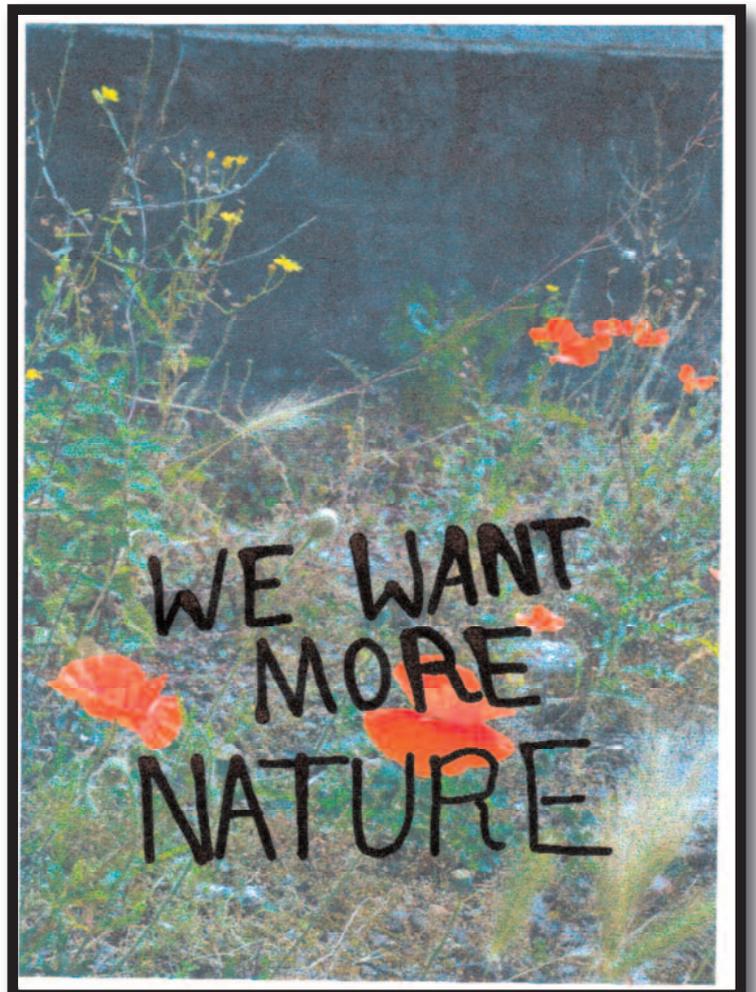
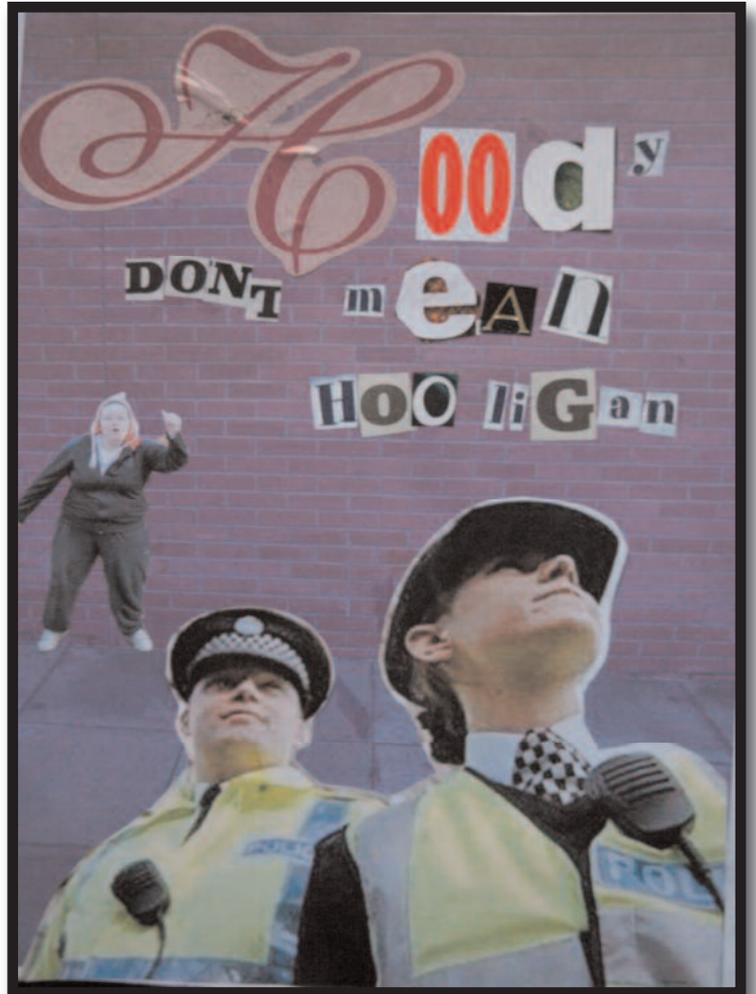


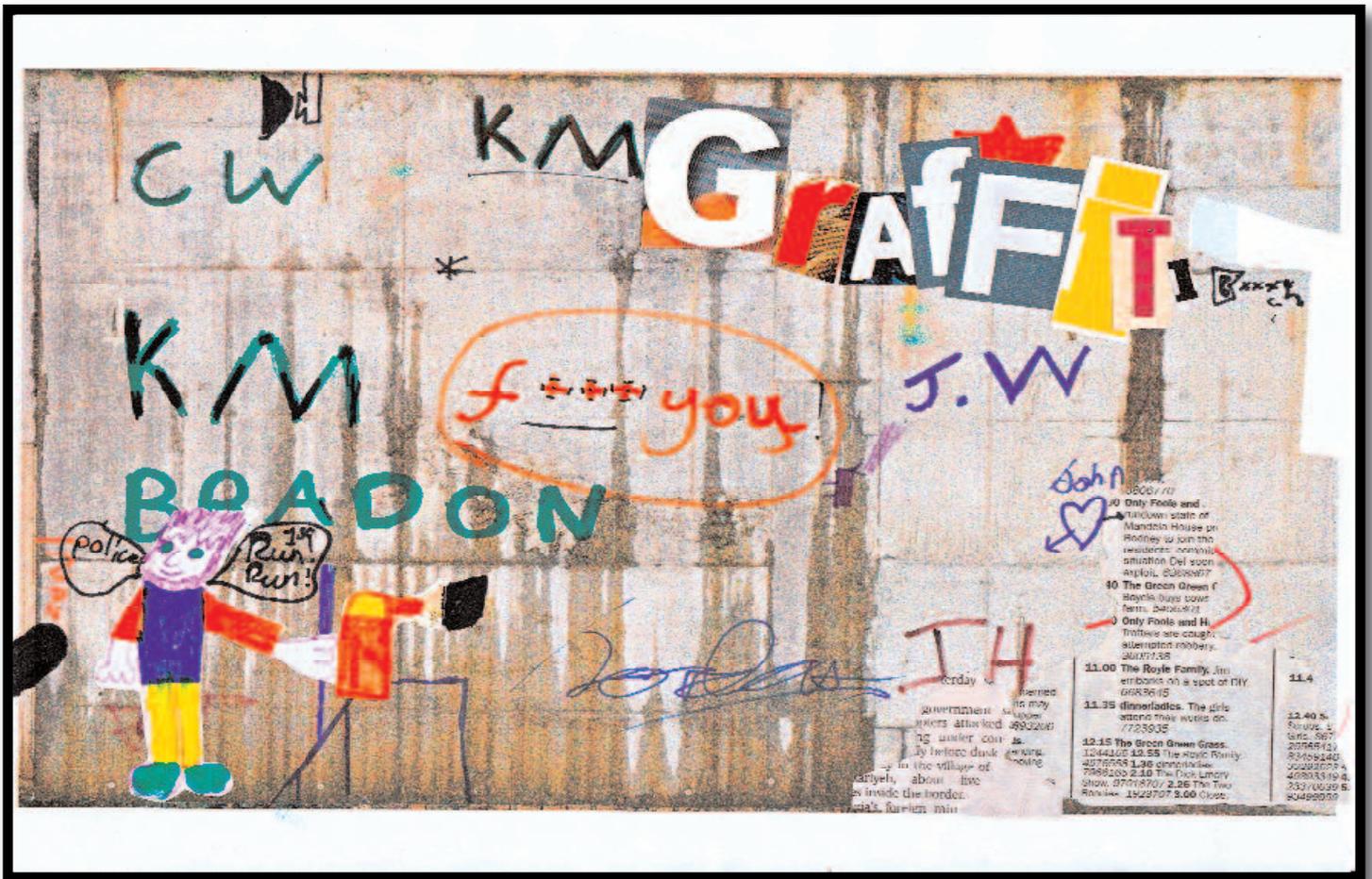
We love Graham's funky t-shirt!



On street walls

Young people, through the power of images and words, present hard-hitting posters about the world they live in.





Some of our ideas

Straight to the point, young people tell us how it is.

The road outside my house is very busy - we need more lights or zebra crossings to make it better.

I want wildlife areas near where I live so I can learn about different animals. It's good for my education.

Help dogs get more food in dog shelters. Cats as well. More lights around the parks. Build bird boxes to help birds lay eggs easier.

I like the area I live in because it's safer than most places.

Clean up all the the dog poo!

Hoodies do nufin' wrong! Not everyone in a hoody has an ASBO!

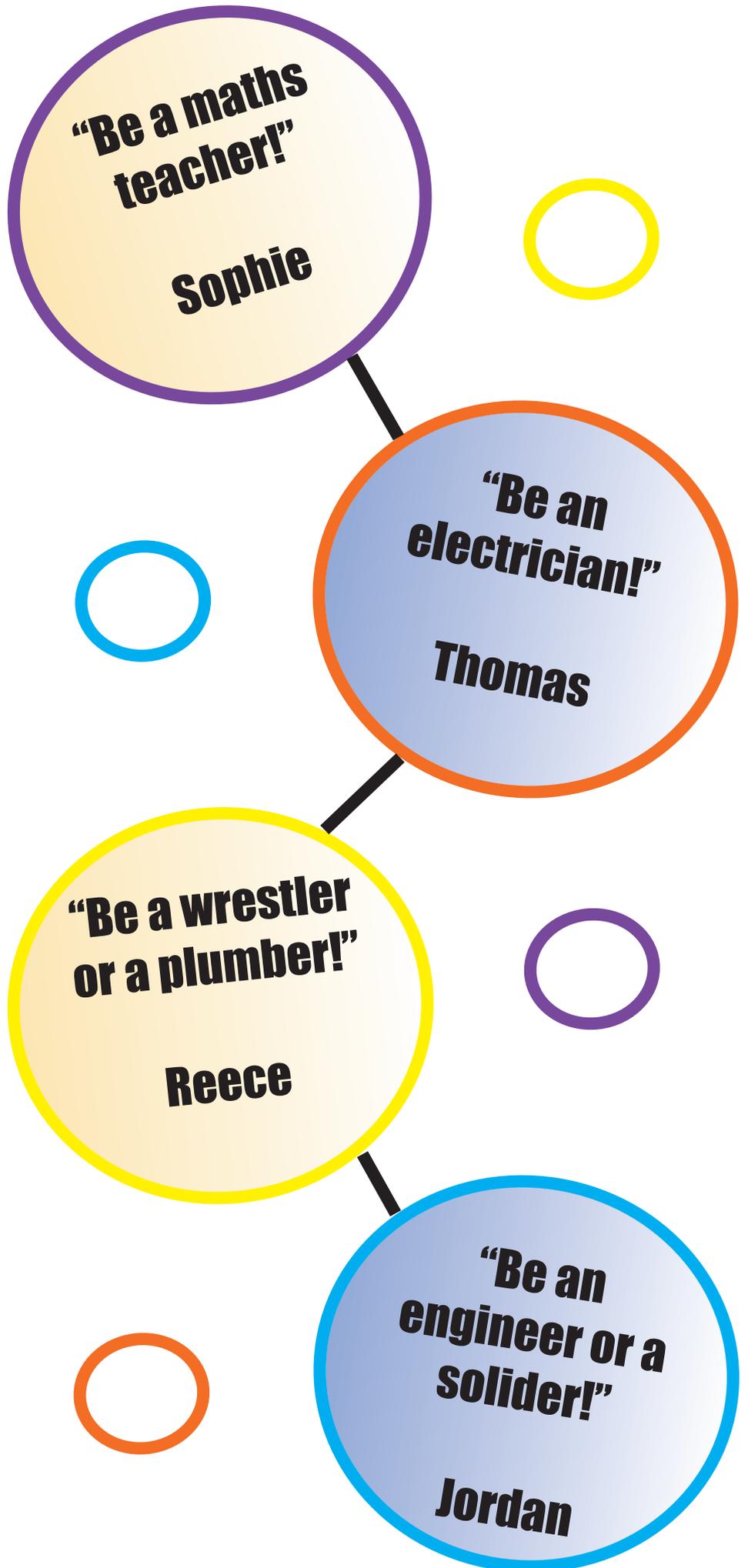
If people keep getting drunk they'll injure themselves. It's important to tackle violence otherwise young people and older people will accept it as normal.

We always stay inside at youth clubs - we don't go out till it's over and we go back home. We should have trips to lots of different places like the coast in the summer.



I want to...

Ambitious, focused, and with one eye on the future, young people tell us what jobs they want in the future.



Buzz words

Listen up and hear what young people have to say: the words that just kept coming up.

paintballing

football pool

dance drama

residential

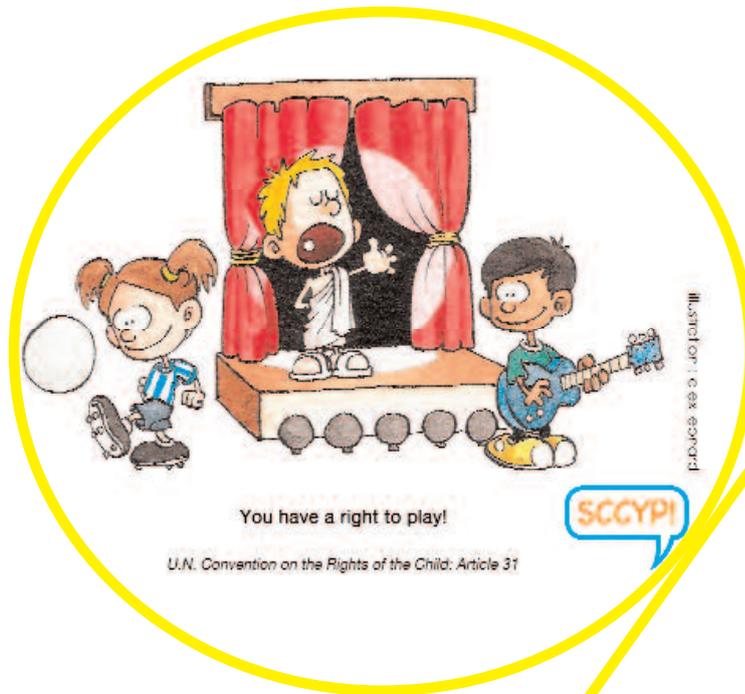
music crafts

outdoor trips

trampolines

climbing art

Some of the things we like



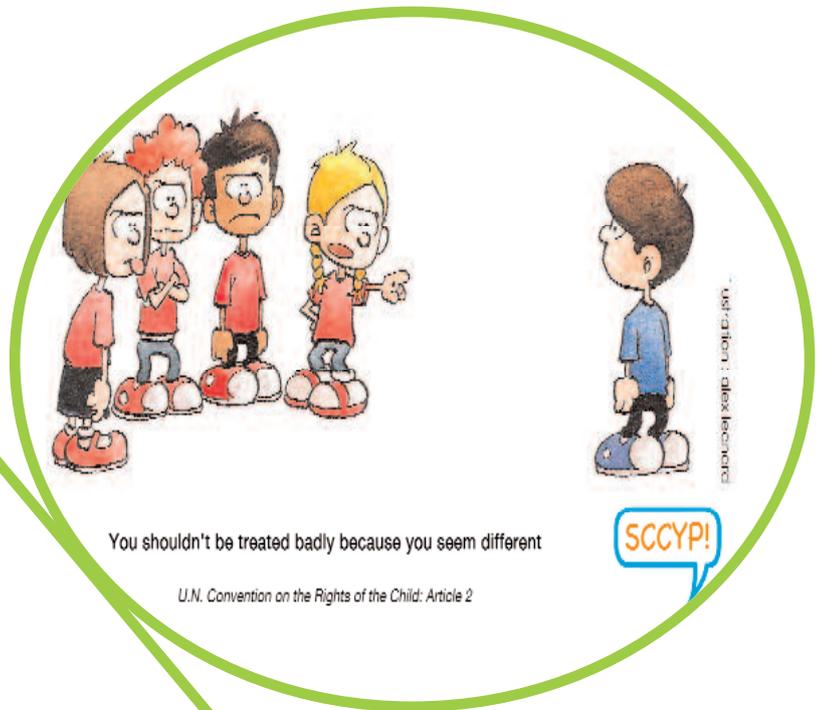
Things that put a smile on the face of most young people.

- Family
- Friends
- Neighbours
- Sports
- DYPP
- Football
- Shops
- Parties
- Youth Workers
- Music
- Pets
- TV
- Matchbox
- Dancing

Some of the things we dislike

Things that sour the mood of young people.

- Fighting
- Drugs
- Our parks
- Gangs
- Homework
- Alcohol
- Litter
- Broken glass
- Dangerous roads
- Police
- Smoking
- Dog poo



QUESTIONS:

- Are you tired of not having a say?
- Do you want more things to do?
- Are you sick of adult statements like **YOBS, HOODIES, ANTI-SOCIAL KIDS, VANDALS** being directed at you?
- Want to be involved in decisions affecting young people?

Well, this is what you can do:

Remember, Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child says that:

YOU have the right to have a say in the decisions that affect you!

It's your right!

Take part in a **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S FORUM** in Denton & Westerhope.

If enough interest is shown, a fun and engaging forum full of interesting activities can be set up to meet several times a year.

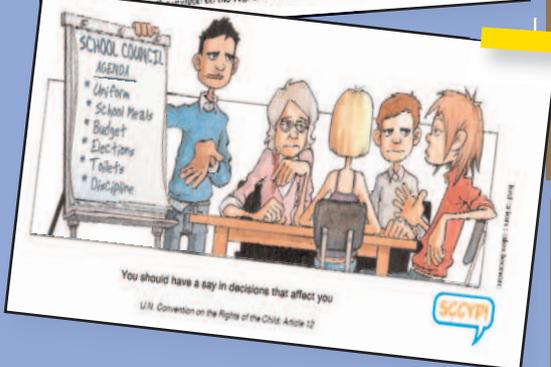
The forum will give you the opportunity to voice your opinions and make changes on the issues that affect you.

For more information, contact one of the guys below:

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