

Wilderness Project: Introduction

“Each of you has been blessed with one of God’s many wonderful gifts to be used in the service of others. So use your gift well.” 1 Peter 4: 10 (CEV)

Welcome to the Wilderness Project. We believe young people are both gifts to the Church and have gifts to share with the Church. The Wilderness Project is designed to encourage, recognize and support their valuable contribution to our church life, worship and mission.

This project is for young people (aged 16-25) who are connected to a church in the Yorkshire Synod, to develop something new in the life and mission of their church. It gives young people the opportunity to explore and offer their gifts to the church, and allows churches to benefit from the contribution that young people can bring.

The scheme will provide young people with a part-time salary (1-3 hours per week) for 6 months, to enable them to work on a new missional project for their church(es). We hope to have a small team across the synod. Alongside their project work, participants will meet regularly with supporters from their church, from the synod, and with other young people who are also on the project in other churches.

How does it work?

A young person (aged 16-25) from a church that is part of the Yorkshire Synod agrees with their church leadership that they would like to be part of the scheme and identifies a project they would like to work on. Together, they apply to the scheme. The project idea does not have to be fixed at this point, it can be developed and adapted in consultation with the synod team, but you must have an idea for something to do.

Through the year, the young person pursues their project in their church, spending up to 3hrs per week on it. They will also attend an induction day and other regular events with other young people who are part of the project. The young person will be employed by the synod and paid at the Real Living Wage rate (£9.90/hr).

The local church will provide a support team for the young person in the form of one person to encourage and ‘manage’ the work, another to act as a spiritual mentor, and a leader from the church to ensure the ‘buy-in’ of the wider congregation. The church will also pay the local costs of the project such as for any resources and other expenses (you may be able to apply to the Synod Mission Fund to cover these).

The Synod Children and Youth team will meet with the church team (including the young person) once a term, lead the project meetings and remain in touch with the young people as they pursue their projects and support them in any other ways that are helpful.

If you are interested in applying, please get in touch with Megan to talk about your ideas before you apply. Email Megan Tillbrook: megancyp@urcyorkshire.org.uk



Wilderness Project: General Information

Who can apply?

You need to be aged 16-25 when the project starts in Feb 2022. You need to be connected to a church that is part of the URC Yorkshire Synod, and the church needs to be willing to support you in your project. You might be at college or university, or working, unemployed or a carer; you just need to be able to commit to the hours each week that your project will take, to meet regularly with the support team from your church and to attend two team days during the project.

What sort of project can I do?

The project needs to be something new that will improve or develop your church's mission. 'Mission' can mean lots of different things to people; we are looking for projects that fit the missional targets of the URC's [Vision2020 priorities](#). But if you have other ideas please get in touch and we will talk about them with you.

In practice, a couple of hours a week may not seem very much, but it is every week for 6 months. Try to take this into account when you are thinking about your idea. What could you do in that much time each week? Is this something that will last for 6 months? It is likely that you will have to work flexibly (your project may need more time some weeks than others), this is fine and to be expected.

A good starting place might be to think about the things you are already doing, and any things that you might be passionate about. How might you connect those things to your faith or church? Or is there a particular need or challenge that you see in your community that you, or your church, want to help with? If you have some general ideas, talk to someone at your church about it and talk to Megan too. Talking to other people can help you to develop your ideas.

You can work with your own church (or group of churches), or on a project with a partner organisation that your church sees as part of their mission.

Ideas for possible projects:

- Developing student outreach and links between local church and university students
- Connecting the church with the local community by offering activities or hospitality
- Developing a church linked football team
- Setting up a Sunday afternoon café for people on their own
- Setting up and running a church music group
- Setting up and helping to run Messy Church activities



Who is paying for this?

The young person will be employed by the Yorkshire Synod and paid monthly for 1-3hrs/week (agreed at the start of the project) at the real Living Wage level of £9.90/hr. The synod will also pay for the costs of the project meeting days, inc. travel.

The local church which the young person is working with will need to pay for any costs involved in making the project happen (eg: room hire, publicity or resources) and any expenses that the young person incurs working on their project (eg: travel or food). You may be able to apply to the Synod Mission Fund to cover this.

What does the church need to do?

The local church plays a vital role in this project. It is the local church which will provide the day to day support and resources for the young person and it is the local church's mission that the project should be supporting. There is a lot that the church should get out of this project. With this in mind the application is a joint process between the young person and the church and it should be worked on together.

The local church will have to show ownership of the project in several ways. The church will need to bring together a small team of people to support the young person in their work. This should include a **Project Enabler** to provide guidance, support and advice on the project as it develops, helping the young person with planning and organisation of the work. Another member of the team, a **Spiritual Mentor** should provide personal and spiritual support for the young person, helping them to deal with and reflect on their experience as they grow and develop during the project (*these two roles are described in more detail below*). Finally the team should include the minister or a senior elder from the church to ensure that the project is properly recognised and integrated as a project of your church. The support team members do not all need to meet the young person all the time, but maintaining regular contact with them will be essential. The whole team will need to meet with the young person and a representative from the synod once a term.

The church should also think about other ways they might support the young person in their project. This could include praying for them, giving them opportunities to talk in church about what they are doing, volunteering to work on the project, and bringing them cake.

What will the synod do?

The Yorkshire Synod will be providing all the payroll and employment admin that is required for the project as well as funding the young people's salaries.

The synod Children and Youth Team will be monitoring and overseeing how each project is developing during the year as well as running the project days, which will be a valuable part of the ongoing development and growth of the young people. The team will also support the local teams in whatever way is helpful.



Step by step guide to applying to the Wilderness Project

Before Applying:

- 1) **Young People:** think of a project idea and talk to your local church leader about whether they would support you.
- 2) **Church:** identify a young person (or young people) who might be interested in the project and ask them to think of some ideas.
- 3) **Together:** develop your project that will benefit the church's mission in some way.
- 4) Speak with Megan about your plans and idea.
- 5) Identify a support team from the local church.
- 6) Seek the approval of the Church Meeting for the idea.
- 7) The young person and a church representative need to complete the application form.

1) Young People: Think of an idea and ask your church to support you

- a) You must be aged between 16 and 25 on Feb 1st 2022.
- b) Would you like to be paid to work a few hours a week for a year, on a project that will develop your church's mission? You will also need to be able to attend an induction day/meeting and a final meeting, as well as regularly meeting with some people from your church.
- c) Do you have any ideas of things that you would like to do to help your church's work? Write down or record any ideas you might have. You might have an idea to start something new. Or you might have an idea for how something that is already happening could develop or grow. Is there something missing in your church or community that you could help make happen?
- d) Talk to someone in your church who you trust about this project. Ask them what they think. Then talk to a minister or elder in your church about whether they would be willing to support you.

2) Church: Identify a Young Person and encourage them to think about the Project

Please remember that the aim is not to find a young person to carry out the church's project, but to help a young person develop their own ideas to enhance the mission and life of the church.

- a) Identify a young person (or young people) connected to your church who you think might benefit from being part of this scheme or who have something to offer your church's mission. At this point you may have a couple of people in mind. Talk to them about the scheme and see how they respond. Do they seem keen? Do they have any ideas already?
- b) They must be aged 16 or older and under 26 years of age on 1st Feb 2022 and available for two other (Saturday) meetings at the beginning and end of the 6 month project. Think about how much time the young person has available to work



on the project. What other commitments (eg: exams) will they have during the year?

- c) The young person does not need to be a URC member, but they need to be connected to your church and willing to explore their faith as part of the project. They also need to be happy to work on a church/faith project.

3) Together: Develop the idea into a project

- a) The next step is to develop your ideas into a possible project. The project will have a better chance of working if it uses a young person's existing skills or interests. It might also be an opportunity to develop new skills.
- b) The project should benefit the church's mission in some way. This might be meeting a need in the community, improving the church's presence or links, or sharing faith in some way. How does the idea support or develop the church's current mission?
- c) Don't try to change the world (yet), this project may be a (first) step on the journey. Try to be realistic about what can be achieved. How does the project connect with other work in the church? (How) will it continue afterwards?
- d) Consider whether the project is achievable in the time available (1-3 hrs a week). Also, is there enough to do so that the project will last for 6 months?

4) Together: Seek advice

- a) We would strongly recommend that you talk to Megan (CYDO) as early as possible in the process. She can help and support you in forming your project and completing the application.
- b) We would be keen to meet with church teams and individual applicants prior to the application being made, so we can ensure that everyone involved is aware of the commitment and what is being expected.

5) Church: Identify a support team

- a) You will need to choose a local 'project enabler' – someone in the local church who can offer the young person support and guidance during the year through regular meetings. This should be someone who can be supportive to a young person as well as having experience of setting up and running a project, and the skills involved (planning, setting targets etc).
- b) The minister or senior elder in the church should also be part of the support team. This is an important expression of the church taking responsibility for the project.
- c) In due course a 'spiritual mentor' also needs to be identified who will assist the young person with their personal and spiritual development through on-going reflection during the year at regular meetings. You do not need to identify this person immediately but be aware of the need to do this. We will provide guidance to assist you in the choice of spiritual mentor at the induction day.

6) Together: Get church approval

- a) The project needs to be taken on board, and approved, by the local church meeting. It can be helpful if the young person makes a short presentation of their project proposal to the meeting.

7) Together: Complete the application form

- a) Both the young person and the local church team should complete their sections of the application form before getting everyone involved to complete the declaration section. The form should then be sent to the Children and Youth Team at the synod office.
- b) Once your application is received someone will contact the Project Enabler and the young person to talk about it before a final decision is made.

Once Accepted onto the Project:

1) Prepare a Job Description for the young person

Work with the young person to create a job description and use this to create a project plan/outline with goals and dates identified. (An example job description is provided below). Don't worry, this is not as complicated as it might sound.

2) Ensure DBS and other documentation is in place.

- a) Depending on the project, the young person may need an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) disclosure. Refer to your church's Safeguarding Policy to see if it does. We recommend you speak to your safeguarding representative about the role and any other training that might be needed.
- b) If the young person is under 18 you will also need to ensure all of the support team has an enhanced DBS disclosure.

3) Complete a Risk Assessment

The support team must ensure a Risk assessment is completed for any working environment the young person may be using and any activities they might be undertaking.

4) Attend Induction day

The Project Enabler and the young person must both attend the Induction day as it will provide a useful start and additional information for the project.

5) Identify a Spiritual mentor

Guidance on finding the right person for this role will be given at the Induction day



Once the Project Starts:

1) Supporting the Young Person

- a) As a church team you are responsible for making sure that regular communication occurs between you, the young person and the synod team. This will involve regular meetings between the project enabler and the young person, and regular times when the young person can meet with their mentor.
- b) A member of the synod team will also come and meet the Church team and the young person once a term to monitor how the project is going.

2) Probationary Period

- a) The young people are required to complete a one-month probationary period. At the end of this time the church team and the young person need to agree if things are fine to continue, or if some changes to the project need to be made.
- b) It is completely acceptable if the project needs to be adapted or developed at this point (or at a later date). Once a project starts it can raise all sorts of other questions and opportunities, and being adaptable is important.
- c) Any changes to the project need to be agreed by the young person, the church team and the synod team.

3) Reporting

- a) The church team will have to complete an 'End of Project' report when the project comes to an end. This should describe how the project has benefitted the young person and the church's mission.
- b) The young person will also report on their own experience of the project and what they have done. They will be guided through this by the synod team.

Project Enabler Role

What does a Project Enabler do?

The project enabler will offer regular (at least monthly) management support to the young person during the project to check how they are progressing. This may involve help in their planning and organisation, ensuring the church is fulfilling its role, and liaising with the synod team as necessary.

The project enabler, with the minister and young person, will agree some initial realistic goals and expectations for the project prior to the scheme starting.

The project enabler should also attend the induction day in January along with the young person.

Specific expectations

With the support of the local minister and synod team, project enablers will be expected to:

- Before the scheme starts, agree goals and expectations for the project with the young person and minister.
- Complete a job description for the young person.
- Identify if a DBS check is necessary under the requirements of the Safeguarding Policy.
- Review the time commitment across the year with the young person, identify holidays and pressure points such as exam times. It may be helpful to plan so the church project work is reduced during these pressured times and increased at quieter times.
- Meet regularly with the young person to (at least monthly):
 - to support and encourage the young person;
 - to offer managerial oversight, helping to set achievable short term goals
 - to monitor the young person's working hours – making sure that neither too few nor too many are undertaken.
- Ensure good communication between the young person and the local church; managing the church's expectations and making sure the young person has opportunities to keep the church informed.
- Connect with the synod team over any issues or potential difficulties. If issues or problems arise during the project, the synod team will work with you to address these and reshape the project as necessary.
- Attend 2 team days/meetings
- After a one month probationary period, review the project to confirm if the young person is suitable for the role and identify any extra support that would help.
- Complete an evaluation form at the end of the project.

Spiritual Mentor Role

What does a spiritual mentor do?

Experience in other similar projects has shown that the young people who gain the most from the project are those who have been able to meet regularly with a spiritual mentor to talk about what they are learning and experiencing. These meetings will offer regular opportunities for reflection and conversation about life, faith and other issues. The synod team will offer guidance in the selection of a spiritual mentor at the induction day in September, and will provide materials that can be used in the monthly meetings as well as on-going support for the role.

Specific expectations:

These will be provided at the Induction day



The Wilderness Project – Application Pack 2022

Example Job Description

This is offered as a guide to what a final job description might look like for your Wilderness Project. It highlights the sort of things you will need to consider when planning a project .

NAME OF POST HOLDER	Jon Steel
LOCATION OF PROJECT	Christ Church
PROJECT OUTLINE	The aim of the project is to support and develop the church's student community.
RESPONSIBLE TO	The Post Holder is immediately responsible to the Project Enabler (name).
RELATIONSHIPS	The post holder will be supported and managed by the Church team consisting of the Project Enabler (name), Spiritual Mentor (name) and minister or senior elder from the church (name). The Yorkshire Synod team will provide additional support to the post holder and the Church team.
ETHOS & WORKING STYLE	As an employee of the Yorkshire Synod, reporting to the local Church, the post holder must be happy to work within a Christian ethos and working environment.
SYNOD EXPECTATIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To attend two synod days (including an Induction day) during the 6 months of the project. 2. To attend a termly joint meeting with a synod representative and the church team. 3. To be willing to attend the Synod Meeting and/or FORUM.
CHURCH EXPECTATIONS	<p>Local Project - 3 Hours Per Week</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To actively welcome new students to Christ Church and help them find their place in the church community 2. To develop opportunities for students to explore their faith through service in the local community. 3. To update the Christ Church student information leaflet 4. To maintain the church facebook page. 5. To attend monthly supervision meetings and produce a termly report on their work. 6. To meet regularly with their Spiritual Mentor.
TERMS & CONDITIONS	The employment will start on Feb 1 st and end on July 31 st 2022
HEALTH & SAFETY	The post holder is subject to the Yorkshire Synod's Health and Safety Policy.
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	The Post Holder is subject to the Yorkshire Synod's Equal Opportunities Policy.



The Wilderness Project – Application Pack 2022

PAY	The participant will be paid £128.70 per month (3hrs/week at the Real Living Wage rate of £9.90/hour) Time spent attending training and other synod meetings will not be paid. Expenses that come from performing this role will be repaid by the church if they have been agreed beforehand.
HOURS	The post holder will be required to work an average of 3hrs per week. This can be worked flexibly by agreement between the post holder and the Church.
PROBATIONARY PERIOD	1 months
DBS DISCLOSURE	This appointment will be made subject to a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check where it is deemed necessary by the project requirements.

