

## **The Dreadnought Centre It's History, Ethos and Philosophy**



### **History :**

The seed of an idea that blossomed into 'The Dreadnought Centre' started with Lionel Martin, who was working as a Probation Ancillary with Senior Probation Officer, Frank Raynor, in Truro and Peter Walker. Members of the Truro bench were also asked to become involved. Two people in particular showed great interest, these being the Hon. Mrs D Verney and Mr Donald Vage. Donald Vage became Dreadnought's first chairperson and contributed enthusiastically to its' development. Mrs Varney, who is a descendant of Sir Edward Boscawen of Truro, kindly allowed his nickname 'Old Dreadnought' to be used as a name for the project and The Dreadnought Centre was born.

Dreadnought began to develop. It registered as a Charity in 1976 stating in it's constitution it's aims and objectives as 'in the interests of social welfare to provide, or assist in the provision of, educational, recreational or other leisure time facilities for the beneficiaries, with the object of improving their conditions of life and their physical, mental or moral improvement.' In December 1978 the old Methodist chapel at Pool was purchased and Dreadnought finally had a home of it's own.

A full-time manager was appointed in August 1984 and since then the Charity has undergone much development –adjusting to government policy and sometimes to follow sources of funding - BUT, the ethos of Dreadnought remains at the Centre of **every** piece of work – applying non-discriminatory practice and offering unconditional acceptance of all young people who pass through it's doors.

### **Ethos and Philosophy :**



#### **EMPOWERMENT :**

One of the most important words in Dreadnought's philosophy.

Empowerment within The Dreadnought Centre is about young people taking on more responsibility, more power and more control; making informed decisions for themselves.



### **The Dreadnought centre operates from a child centred perspective.**

The Charity offers non-confrontational, unconditional acceptance to the children and young people who are its service users. Aiming to separate the child from their behaviour and to challenge unacceptable behaviour in a non-confrontational way.

A lot of time is spent training staff and volunteers in the understanding of these practice theories.

Both staff and service users know that the child / young person can leave the project and be taken home at any time and withdraw from the work. On their initial visit to Dreadnought a young person will have this explained to them. Children and young people are not 'sent' to Dreadnought, they come if they want to.



Dreadnought has developed a unique approach to working with young people. This is a holistic approach using a combination of different disciplines.

**Social Work:** Working with young people who have identified needs and who are at risk.

**Youth Work:** Working with young people to help them identify their own needs and become involved in the decisions that affect their lives :empowerment.

**Social Education:** Life skills, self-image, communication with others, enhancing the self.

**Community Arts:** Introducing a philosophy of process work – breaking down the barriers to being creative and celebrating our own imagination and creativity.

## **Confidentiality**

Through work to date it has become clear that it is neither appropriate nor realistic to operate a policy of exclusive confidentiality between volunteers, staff and participants.

There are two reasons for this: Firstly relevant information about a participant needs to be shared within the Charity and at times with the referring agency. Feedback and exchange are essential to supporting and developing our work with young people and, secondly, any member of the team involved in face to face work needs to be able to offload, share their concerns, and receive support.



Staff and volunteers maintain **strict confidentiality** outside the Charity.

Occasionally an agency may call a case conference and request a written or verbal report on a participant. In this instance information may be shared with other professionals at the conference where appropriate.

Dreadnought workers have close contact with children and young people and will be alert for signs of abuse. Dreadnought's work depends on the quality of relationships built with young people and confidentiality is a key area in building these relationships, but ultimately Children, Schools & Families will be informed of suspected or disclosed abuse. This applies also to any issue that appears to put the young person or anyone else at risk of harm.



All young people who attend Dreadnought for any work will be informed of this policy on their first visit.

## **Why The Dreadnought Centre values Volunteers :**

Group work at Dreadnought is supported by trained volunteers who bring their own personal skills and experience to the Charity. Dreadnought aims to put positive adults into children's lives; to offer an alternative and contrasting role model. Children and young people get to experience a variety of different role models to find one that 'fits' them the best.

Volunteers are Dreadnought's most valuable resource. They give their time freely and willingly to help make a difference for children and young people in Cornwall. This can be a powerful tool when confronted with an angry child / young person who accuses you of 'only saying you care' and 'only being there because you're paid to be'!

All volunteers are police checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service to enhanced level as well as having three personal reference checks. Comprehensive training is given to all volunteers prior to working with young people and no-one will

have access to, or contact with, children or young people before receipt of these checks and references.

