

Trowbridge Urged to Expand Youth Services to Curb Disorder

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A Wiltshire business owner is warning local authorities that without immediate investment in youth facilities, Trowbridge could see a rise in anti-social behaviour and social decay among its younger population.

Michelle Witter, co-founder of the Food Amore restaurant in Trowbridge, has raised the alarm over frequent incidents of disruptive behaviour involving local teenagers. According

to Witter, the lack of accessible, engaging spaces for young people, especially during the summer holidays, is fueling a dangerous trend that could spiral out of control if left unaddressed. “Apart from the skate park, where is there for these children to go?” she asked, adding that idle time and lack of direction were drawing “good kids into bad trouble.”

The town recently hosted a meeting between residents, business owners, local officials, and Wiltshire’s Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Philip Wilkinson, to address growing concerns about community safety. Wilkinson committed to tackling the issue head-on and is considering a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) as part of his response strategy. A PSPO allows local authorities to place restrictions on certain behaviours within public areas to reduce crime and disorder.

Witter also criticised how public funds have been allocated, suggesting that a portion of the money used to refurbish the town hall would have been better invested in building a modern community centre. Her concerns were echoed by 18-year-old local resident Kowann O’Neill, who noted a visible increase in underage drinking and drug use. “There’s not enough entertainment or any fun activities,” he said. “These kids are going to grow up with the worst reputation.”

Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Harry Brain, who patrols the town centre regularly, acknowledged the presence of substance abuse and anti-social behaviour, though he noted a recent dip in such incidents. However, he also emphasised the importance of reporting concerns, stating that effective police deployment depends on accurate, consistent community feedback.

Wiltshire Councillor Jo Trigg, who also serves as a trustee for the charity Trowbridge Future, highlighted the progress made through youth-focused initiatives. A dedicated youth venue on Mill Street, funded by over £430,000 from the National Lottery, has become a growing hub for teenagers seeking a safe and constructive place to gather. “We just need more resources, more grants, and more money to do more,” Trigg said.

The message from residents is clear: proactive investment in youth engagement is not only a moral imperative but a practical solution to maintaining order and preserving the fabric of the local community. Without action, locals fear that minor behavioural issues could escalate into long-term social problems with costly consequences.