

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY, 22 APRIL 2021
IN VIRTUAL MEETING ON ZOOM
AT 7.00 - 8.40 PM**

Members Present: D Sunger (Chairman), J McIvor (Vice-Chairman), A Beales, I Hadley, J Lea, S Rackham, J Share-Bernia, J H Whitehouse and D Wixley

Other members present: S Heap, S Murray, R Brookes, H Whitbread, A Patel, N Avey and S Kane

Apologies for Absence: A Mitchell and D Plummer

Officers Present N Dawe (Chief Operating Officer), J Gould (Service Director (Community & Wellbeing)), S Kits (Lead Corporate Communications Officer - People), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer), R Perrin (Democratic and Electoral Services Officer), G Wallis (Community, Culture & Wellbeing Service Manager) and R Pavey (Service Director (Customer Services))

41. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman made a short address to remind all present that the virtual meeting would be broadcast on the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

42. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor S Heap had been appointed as substitute for Councillor D Plummer.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor S Murray declared a non-pecuniary, non-prejudicial interest in item 7 Universal Credit Impact update – Establishment of the Epping Community Hub, as a Trustee for the Citizen advice Bureau Reuse and as a volunteer at the Foodbank.

(b) Pursuant to the Council's Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor J H Whitehouse declared a non-pecuniary, non-prejudicial interest in item 7 Universal Credit Impact update – Establishment of the Epping Community Hub, as she was a Trustee of the Epping Reuse Centre.

44. TERMS OF REFERENCE & WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the terms of reference and work programme.

45. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

The Chairman sought agreement from the Committee to bring forward item 8. Overview of social recovery initiatives and projects delivered to support residents as a result of Covid 19.

RESOLVED:

The Committee agreed to bring Item 8. forward.

46. OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL RECOVERY INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS DELIVERED TO SUPPORT RESIDENTS AS A RESULT OF COVID 19

The Community, Culture and Wellbeing Service Manager, G Wallis presented a report on the initiatives and projects that had been developed and delivered via the Council's Community, Culture and Wellbeing service as a result of Covid-19, contributing towards the continuing social recovery of the District.

These included;

- the establishment of the Covid Community Hub, to provide emergency support for the district's most vulnerable residents;
- Community initiatives and projects which were identified under the themes of Positive Communities, Positive Activity and Positive Mental Health;
- Place-based engagement in Paternoster & Shelley Wards that built a picture of the needs of residents as they emerged from lock-down and laid the foundations for tackling health inequalities. This would develop a model of best practice that could then be replicated in other parts of the District.
- A Disability Inclusion Project for children and young people with disabilities and their families and welfare calls to support families and online training for families providing strategies to cope with the pressures of lockdown.
- Fall Prevention project called the Social, Active, Strong Project;
- Physical Activity programmes adapted and delivered virtually including Walking Football, Athletics, Tennis Activators, Wild Cats Girls Football, Get Active sessions and the Active Living Programme for older residents;
- Cultural Activity programmes including the Epping Forest Festival of Culture;
- The election of the Epping Forest Youth Council and virtual MiLife C19 Mental Health Project;
- The creation of older peoples' resource packs for "Stay Well This Winter", "Senior Safety Day" events and a "Little Book of Big Scams" booklet giving advice about fraud;
- The virtual delivery of the Epping Forest District Museum and Educational Outreach services;
- To establish a Waltham Abbey Community & Cultural Centre in the heart of the Town;
- The 'More Than Bricks & Mortar' initiative which ensures the Housing & Property Services work with residents in respect of the Council's capital investment programme priority estates across the District;
- Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Board including the Start Well Action Group (Pre-birth to 19); Be Well Action Group (19 – 65 years); and Age Well Action Group (65 years +); and
- West Essex Health Inequalities & Prevention Committee.

In conclusion, the residents continued to be placed at the heart of the health and wellbeing agenda with staff using the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) techniques to support the social recovery of the Epping Forest District, building strong, resilient, cohesive and healthy communities in for the future.

The Committee made the following comments;

- Were there plans to start the using other media again to advertise the various projects? G Wallis advised that yes there were, as the Team were aware of their users and how they engaged with the services provided.
- How could Members get more involved in these projects; How were the projects and initiatives advertised; and what will change as the Country come out of lockdown? G Wallis advised that a lot of projects and work were spread by word of mouth and Members could act as ambassadors for these projects because they worked closely with residents. Promotion of the projects came through various methods including Instagram, Facebook, the Council's Website, YouTube, news papers, printed leaflets and by users bringing friends. She advised that looking forward, there was a strategic overview of the data collected and the Council worked closely with Essex County Council, the NHS and Primary Care networks.
- Were there opportunities for the more rural locations in the District? G Wallis advised that the Council was looking increase their Community Champions across the District. These people would act as anchors in their communities to set up community groups. The Council also visited many locations with the District providing services and roadshows events as well.
- What projects had taken place in Buckhurst Hill? G Wallis advised that the projects mentioned with regards to Paternoster & Shelley Wards, originated from pilots' schemes in Buckhurst Hill which included a 'Knit and natter' group and flowering arranging.
- What were the following; the Warwick-Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale; Tennis Activators; and Wild Cats Girls Football? G Wallis advised that the Warwick-Edinburgh Welling Being Scale was a recognized method of recording the impact of the project on people's wellbeing. Tennis Activators was a street based programme to introduce young people into tennis and introduce them to local clubs and Wild Cats was a girl's football club.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted the overview of social recovery initiatives and projects delivered to support residents over and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic.

47. CUSTOMER SERVICE UPDATE

The Customer Services Director, R Pavey gave an update on the Council's Customer Service KPI's for overall customer satisfaction, first point resolution, complaints, call volumes and the Customer Strategy.

He reported that throughout the lockdown period many customers had channel shifted to self-service help, which had been assisted by removing 'contact us' and encouraging customers to use the online forms or completing a general contact form. The automated scripts developed for the customers and the Call Centre Officers also reduced the call waiting times and resolutions to 47% for 2020/21. Areas that had been affected by the closure of face to face contact had been the cash offices, although the payments teams had supported customers by taking payment over the telephone.

The Customer Strategy would continue to drive the single point of contact through the remaining service areas into the contact centre and would focus the following;

- Gaining a better understanding of the customer and their needs;

- How and why the customer contact the Council;
- Utilisation of modern technology, to enhance the customer contact experience;
- Service delivery improvements;
- Customer shoes cultural training; and
- Digital buddies support for residents.

In the first quarter of 2021/22, focus would be given to a new welcome lounge and plans for a partnership hub, the development of in-house customer shoes training, promotion of Service Superstars, the cash office re-opening in The Broadway and payment kiosk in Waltham Abbey and the Civic Offices, the continuation of Webcasting with new hybrid webcasting capability, the promotion of Digital buddies in the community and a member technology and contact process review to improve the ICT for members.

The Committee asked the following questions;

- Could further details be given on electric charging points in the District? R Pavey advised that the Transport Strategy fell under another service area, but he would request that the relevant officer gets in touch.
- Were there issues with contacting Officers by telephone and what did the reference to resourcing issues in Customer Strategy reference to? R Pavey advised that Members should contact the Customer Contact Team directly, who could log and monitor and ensure responses were given. If there were any particular services that members were not receiving a response from, then they should email R Pavey directly. In regards to resourcing issues, there was currently a Team Manager Vacancy with reduced the capacity by 50%, although they were in the process of recruitment.
- There appeared to be issues with the response times to planning enforcement enquiries, could the officer give any further information? And whether the face-to-face cash collection services had been affected by the shift change in payment methods? R Pavey advised that a need for a cash collection service was still required, although going forward it would need further consideration and he would supply the monetary figures to members via the Members Bulletin.

The Customer & Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor S Kane advised that they were investigating the issues mentioned by Members about the phone service and IT systems were being investigated.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee Noted the updates given on 'what our customers are telling us' and the Customer Strategy.

48. UNIVERSAL CREDIT IMPACT UPDATE - ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EPPING COMMUNITY HUB

The Customer Services Director, R Pavey advised that following the work of the Universal Credit Impact Working Group and development of a Multi-Agency Hub in Waltham Abbey Museum in 2020, the Cabinet approved the concept of a Community Hub in the newly refurbished Civic Offices.

The vision for the Community Hub was to be a place that offered core advice, access to a range of information, support and guidance and created a community space and programme of community activities, where residents had:

- Better and more connected services;
- An inclusive multi-agency approach;
- The focus on their needs and to improved lives;
- excellent touchpoint and handoff arrangements;
- community organisations coming together to meet specific needs whether it be activities or events to strengthen community bonds;
- Partners collaborate for the benefit and enhancement of the individual services they all provided;
- There were benefits for all partners that would lead to service improvements that were understood and acknowledged by all;
- Community Insight Data and engagement would identify community needs and inform future service delivery; and
- There were complementary aims and activities with other community hubs within the District.

The next steps were to discuss the opening of the hub on or about the 21st June 2021 dependant on Covid-19 restrictions.

The Committee made the following comments;

- How would the Hub work , if not all the external partners were present everyday especially in relation to voluntary organisation? R Pavey advised that where the Council was aware of an individual families needs; arrangements would be made to ensure all the relevant organisations were available. It would be a process of developing the Hub and how it would work to the benefit of the partners and this was continually discussed by the Steering Group involved in helping inform the Hub's development and priorities.
- That this type of Hub should be rolled out across the District and that hopefully it would be rolled out to Loughton within the next two year. R Pavey advised that discussion had started, although he was unable to commit to any time scales.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted the progress on the establishment of a Community Hub at the Epping Civic Offices.

49. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted that the date of the next meeting would be held in the new municipal year on 15 June 2021.

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Social Recovery: Initiatives & Projects

Stronger
Communities Select
Committee

22 April 2021

Epping Forest Covid Community Hub

- The Council's Community, Culture & Wellbeing (CCW) service established a multi-agency Community Hub in March 2020 in order to provide emergency support for the district's most vulnerable residents.
- Working with local Third Sector partners services including shopping, emergency prescription collection and befriending were made readily available to those in need.
- Numbers on Epping Forest's CEV list fluctuated over the year but, at its height, around 5,300 residents in the district were actively shielding for specific health reasons.
- 195 doorstep welfare checks undertaken. Staff linked residents to befriending schemes, virtual clubs, activities or special interest groups.



Community Initiatives & Projects

- Well established Health & Wellbeing Board in Epping Forest and excellent working relationships with key partners
- Three overarching themes identified which would become the basis of a **Social Recovery Map** for the district:
 - Positive Communities
 - Positive Activity
 - Positive Mental



Community Engagement



Disability Inclusion Project



Strength & Balance – Falls Prevention Project

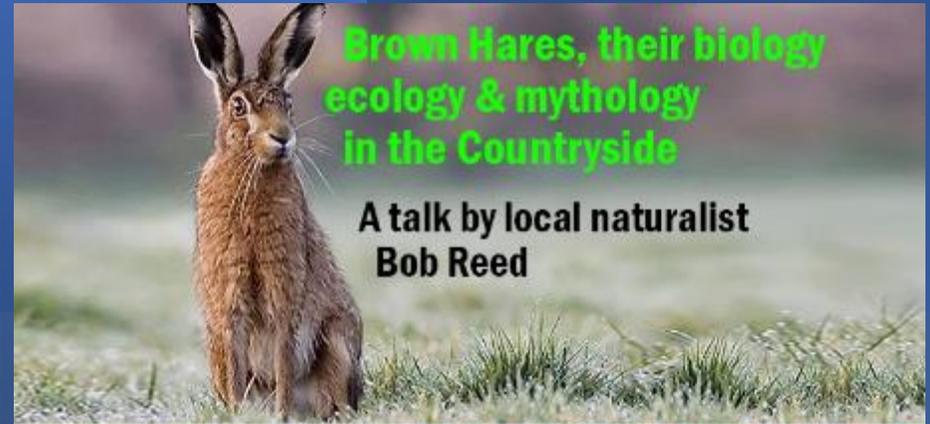


Community Physical Activity Programmes



EPPING FOREST DISTRICT FESTIVAL OF CULTURE 2021

Made possible by Epping Forest District Council



**Brown Hares, their biology
ecology & mythology
in the Countryside**

**A talk by local naturalist
Bob Reed**



EPPING FOREST DISTRICT FESTIVAL OF CULTURE



**Doorstep
Discovery:
Wildlife
Photography
Competition**



MiLife C19

MiLife C19 is a brand new resource developed by young people, for young people in response to the effects of COVID19 on mental health and emotional wellbeing.

It is based on a ten session teaching guide designed for use at school and at home to help young people understand what effects COVID19 might have had on their mental health and how they can build their resilience in response to those effects.

MiLife C19

What is Mental Health?	Why Me & Why Us?	Are We Really Safe?	Challenging Thoughts & Stories	Asking For and Giving Help	What if it Happens Again?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the personal impersonal • How to effectively share our story with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coping strategies for anxiety • Journaling, mindfulness and building emotional stamina 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorting thoughts into real and not real • Turning negative experiences into positive opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where to access help and support • How to support friends without getting dragged down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to apply principles learned to new traumatic incidents • Setting targets for the 'new normal'

How might this look in your school...?

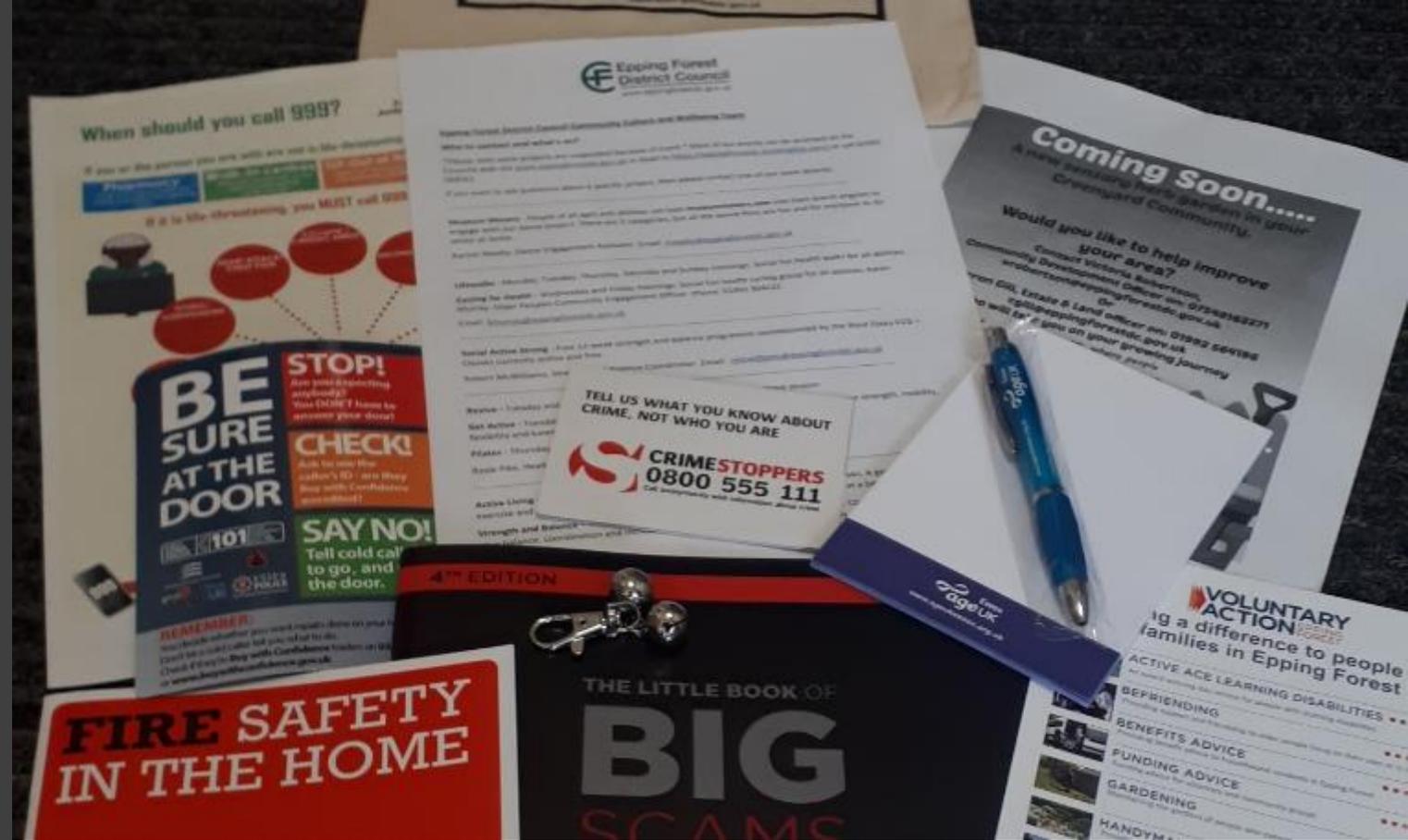
**MiLife C19
for
Young People**

**MiLife C19
for
Teachers**

MiLife C19



Page 15



Resource Packs Distributed

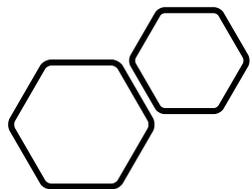


Page 16



Epping Forest District Museum Waltham Abbey





Epping Forest
Health &
Wellbeing Board



West Essex Health
Inequalities Committee

Building strong, resilient, cohesive and healthy communities

The ethos and methodology adopted by the CCW team continues to be that of a whole-systems approach with the Council, as a core anchor institution, being central to the success of far reaching partnership initiatives and “place-shaping”.

Residents themselves continue to be placed at the heart of the health and wellbeing agenda with staff using Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) techniques to support the social recovery of the Epping Forest district, building strong, resilient, cohesive and healthy communities in Covid-19 times and beyond.

