

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 4 April 2023
Subject: Wellbeing & Community Partnerships Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Aniket Patel

Recommending:

That the report of the Wellbeing & Community Partnerships Portfolio Holder be noted.

Warm Places Initiative

The Warm Places initiative, lead by the Community & Wellbeing service area, saw 12 community spaces established across the district over the colder Autumn and Winter months. The Warm Places initiative provided a range of welcoming venues where residents could drop in, have a free hot drink, socialise and relax, whilst also being offered signposting to a variety of wider support services.

Each Warm Place was allocated £200 from the Epping Forest Public Health Community Fund as a small contribution towards costs. The Council, along with a plethora of voluntary groups, clubs and churches came together collaboratively in support of the initiative.

Two community-based lunches and a Safe & Well information day were also facilitated.

Such was the success of the scheme that, in many cases, plans are underway to continue these settings with the district's "Warm Places" being redesignated "Social Spaces" moving forwards. Whilst each venue will continue to have its own unique offer, these Social Spaces will continue to provide a warm welcome to local residents to encourage positive wellbeing and tackle loneliness and social isolation.

West Essex Adult Inclusion Buddy Up Project

The Adult Inclusion Buddy Up Project marked its one-year anniversary in March 2023. The Project, which supports neurodiverse adults into social activities through the support of volunteers or peer led groups, has successfully worked with 45 residents from across West Essex.

Some of the highlights of the Project over the past 12 months have included; supporting service users to volunteer with local businesses, developing a disability specific gym session with partners from Places Leisure and work towards organising a Reverse Jobs Fair specifically for neurodiverse residents.

Community Development in Waltham Abbey

The Thursday evening Youth Club on Ninefields estate in Waltham Abbey goes from strength to strength with a multitude of activities and opportunities for young participants to experience. Recently 16 young people took part in bespoke self-defence sessions. Funding of £1,319 was secured from Essex County Council for a

Food Education Project which commenced on 9 March. Partner agency, Youth Unity, has worked with the Team to enable delivery of 8 weeks of Boxing tuition during the same period.

Additionally, Youth Unity commenced outreach work on 17 March in an attempt to tackle anti-social behaviour on the estate through the provision of diversionary activities for young people. This is something new and exciting for those who may not normally attend a youth club setting. The project is run by specialist Youth Workers who engage with the young people and signposting them to services as appropriate. Two vehicles containing sports equipment and kit to enable podcasting and music workshops regularly attend as part of this project, which will run into the school summer holidays.

For Key Stage 2 children, Broadcast Junior, an interactive theatre production delivered by Arc Theatre was commissioned and successfully delivered in four Waltham Abbey Primary Schools the week commencing 6 March. The Healthy Relationships strand of the Safer Streets Project engaged Year 5 and 6 pupils, who learned about online safety, consent and the law. The roadshow was extremely well received in all the schools.

Stay Safe and Well This Spring

On Friday 24 March, the Community Development & Wellbeing Team delivered another successful Stay Well & Safe event, this time at The Limes Centre in Chigwell.

This informative event is aimed at engaging older people within the community and focusses on tools, strategies, and activities to stay safe and well. There were a variety of partner information stands, talks from blue light services, Crimestoppers, a local pharmacist and the Alzheimer's Society.

Health checks were offered by the Essex Wellbeing Service and a seated exercise session suitable for all abilities took place, along with a free lunch, information bag and an interactive performance about scamming from Arc Theatre Company.

Funding

The newly configured Community Development & Wellbeing Team seeks to support the community in applying for funding which, in turn, enables local groups to deliver programmes which support residents to lead healthy and active lives. The following has been awarded locally in the last two months:

£4500 High Sheriff funding to the Limes Farm Community Group for the Limes Farm Colts Football Project. This has supported transport to and from Power League 4G pitches, the purchase of equipment for goal posts, football boots and hall hire costs. Another diversionary activity covered by the funding included working with Essex Police around drug and knife awareness. St Johns Ambulance raised awareness of knife crime injuries, defibrillator, and CPR. Self-defence classes are planned for the future. Representatives from the Limes Farm Community Group and Council Team attended the High Sheriff Awards evening on Wednesday 8th March in recognition of this highly valued community work.

£3000 has been awarded by the CSP to Youth Unity to assist in extending the Limes Youth Club and associated outreach work for a further 3 months. Since the launch on 27 January, 24 young people are now regularly attending sessions each week.

The new Sheering Community Champion has secured £1,296 Locality Funding from ECC to extend the Warm Place / Community Coffee and Chatter sessions for 6 months up to October 2023. The initiative is run in the Village Hall where there is also a playgroup, and the funding will be used to pay for the hire of portaloos to keep the two activities separate and prevent any safeguarding issues.

The Nazeing Community Champion has secured £750 Locality Funding from ECC to pay for transport to an alternative venue for the local social group whilst the normal setting of Hyde Mead House is refurbished.

Epping Forest District Museum

The pop-up display on Homelessness is being well received by visitors to the Museum. The positive impact of the associated art workshops at Norway House have been recognised with resident families continuing to engage with activities.

Museum staff have been approached with a view to facilitating a display in 2024 relating to the anniversary of Winston Churchill becoming MP for Epping.

The Museum's Heritage Education Programme has had one of its most successful years to date with income exceeding in excess of £10,000 and over 8000 pupils reached up until February 2023.