

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 26 September 2017

Subject: Leisure & Community Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Kane

Recommending:

That the report of the Leisure & Community Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

Community, Health & Wellbeing

Summer Activities Programme 2017

Once again, the Council's Community Services Team co-ordinated and delivered another successful summer holiday activities programme this year. The comprehensive programme provided a wide range of activities to engage children, young people and their families. This year, over 2,500 local residents participated in the extensive range of activities on offer which included physical activities such as; Multi-Sports Camps, Tennis, Basketball, Play in the Park and Play in the Forest sessions and dance programmes. Creative activities included; "A Musical in 2 days", "How to...Draw", "How to Paint", "Be an Animator" and "Be a Textile Artist" workshops. Museum family-days and sessions were also provided and there was a comprehensive disability inclusion programme on offer for children and young people with additional needs.

Disability Inclusion Project

The Epping Forest Inclusion Project has secured funding of £38,110 from Action for Children to provide a wide range of sport, physical and leisure activities for children and young people with disabilities until Oct 2018. This funding will enable the co-ordination and delivery of a range of sessions and activities meaning we have been able to engage with children and young people with a wide range of interests. The project not only benefits the child with a disability but the whole family. The inclusion of siblings at our holiday activities has been crucial for parents. Many parents do not often have the choice or opportunity to send siblings to the same activity as their child with disabilities. Having a child with a disability can often stretch the family unit; small things like being able to take part in activities together can prevent this.

Additionally we have also successfully secured £12,312 capital funding from Essex County Council to purchase trampolines that will be placed at Debden Park High School and used to support further sessions for children and young people with disabilities.

Active Living Programme

The Active Living initiative targets people who are at risk of developing health issues (both mental or physical) as a result of physical inactivity or poor lifestyle choices, as well as those who have a stable medical condition that being physically active can help manage. The aim is to help people improve their health and wellbeing through physical activity. Community,

Health & Wellbeing staff work together with participants to develop and agree a personal plan of action that will make it simple for participants to find ways to fit physical activity into their daily life. The project pilot is currently running in Waltham Abbey and Epping. Once the person has been referred, the individual is contacted to arrange an initial face to face consultation. Following the consultation, people are invited to attend a 12 week programme. The programme aims to begin the process of behaviour change within the participants through the delivery of;

- Small amounts of physical activity
- Health and nutrition advice
- Behaviour change advice (Coaching and mentoring)

On completion of the 12-week induction participants will then be offered a 3 month pass to all CHW activities as well as local partner activities.

Participants in Waltham Abbey have recently had their three month catch up and initial results have shown they have all not only increased their activity levels but also sustained them. Below are some direct quotes from two participants;

Participant 1 - "I have gained the confidence to get kick-started. I am really enjoying the sessions. I have achieved my 3-month goal of 10,000 steps on average per day, I have started Karate again on Fridays with grandson. I am doing Aqua Aerobics once a week Monday morning. I have had an induction at the gym with the machines (this was 12-month goal). I am still doing bowls, pool and walks with U3A."

Participant 2 - "I've got my confidence back, feel so much better, running up the stairs, can't thank you enough I am buzzing. Love the sessions everyone is so nice and supportive. I have achieved my 3-month goal to wear dresses on my cruise and I've already achieved my 1 year goal to drop a dress size! I go on the ski machine every day for 10 mins and I couldn't do 1 minute three months ago. I'm aiming for 30 mins by 1 year. I play bowls still twice a week and I'm walking at lunch time with husband 15 mins 4 times per week."

Active Living in Epping has begun to grow and a new programme begins in Buckhurst Hill on the 6th September. We have also secured Public health funding to deliver Active Living in Loughton (Oakwood Hill) and Ongar (Shelley) over the coming months.

Norway House Garden Project

The Community, Health and Wellbeing Team have worked with staff and residents at Norway House to bring the garden on site back to life. The project took 20 weeks to complete and was funded by the Housing Providers Fund. Residents came forward with their ideas for the design of the garden and were involved at every stage of its development and installation. Residents spread shingle and chippings, built benches, painted fences and play equipment and also planted a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, trees, flowers and seeds for the enjoyment of future generations.

Stay Well this Winter

Once again, the Community, Health & Wellbeing Team will deliver free "Stay Well this Winter" events for our older residents. Delivered in partnership with the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, the days provide interactive health and wellbeing information highlighting the great services available throughout the winter. Each event involves informative talks from Pharmacists, Community Nurses and specialist health advisors. There will also be information stands from provided by the Alzheimer's Society, VAEF, Essex Road Safety, Essex Fire & Rescue Service, Provide, EFDC and many more.

The events will take place on:

3rd October – Waltham Abbey Town Hall

25th October Theydon Bois Village Hall

10th November – Roding Valley Hall, Buckhurst Hill

EFYC Drugs Project:

On Friday 1st September Epping Forest Youth Councillors donned safety clothing and set out to clear up areas of the district that had been highlighted as a concern in respect of discarded nitrous oxide (laughing gas) canisters. Youth Councillors have been appalled by the increase in the use of laughing gas and wanted to raise awareness of the extent of the problem through their clean-up campaign. Working closely with staff from the Neighbourhoods Team and in partnership with the City of London, over 250 nitrous oxide canisters were collected and disposed of.

Youth Councillors are now actively working on a project to educate young people on the dangers of nitrous oxide and similar New Psychoactive Substances (formally known as Legal Highs.)

Youth Conference

On Friday 3rd November, the Epping Forest Youth Council will welcome 90 young people from the district's secondary schools to a Youth Conference. Hosted in the Council Chamber the young people will learn about local democracy and take part in a debate. The young delegates will also hear from guest speakers Eleanor Laing and Alex Burghart, along with the Leader of the Council, Cllr Chris Whitbread. The conference will also see the launch of the Youth Council's Drugs Awareness initiative.

Museums, Heritage & Culture

It has been a busy summer for Museums, Heritage and Culture with over 6,000 people visiting our services during July and August, and over 80,000 people accessing our services remotely, through our online platforms and museum research enquiries. During July and August our service was supported by volunteers working 643 hours, equating to almost £5,000 in monetary value.

Epping Forest District and Lowewood Museum Exhibitions and Future Projects:

The two summer temporary exhibitions, 'Paths Unseen' at Epping Forest District Museum and 'Sea of Glass' at Lowewood Museum received positive feedback from visitors. The next exhibition to open at Epping Forest District Museum will be 'A Sense of Rural Life', opening on 21 October. This exhibit will tell the story of the district's agricultural heritage and will include loans from the Horniman Museum.

Epping Forest District Museum is currently working on an application to the Esme Fairbairn collections Fund for £99,000 to support work on its costume collection. If successful, the project, titled 'Handbags & Gladbags: Secrets of the Essex Wardrobe', will launch in April 2018, and will conclude with a major costume exhibition at the museum in 2020.

Both museums continue to work on their WW1 commemorative programme for 2018. Lowewood Museum's HLF funded project continues to explore the story of serviceman Stephen Warner working in partnership with the Essex Regiment Museum. Epping Forest District Museum is also applying to HLF to support its project 'SpradFest', which explores the life and work of artist Walter Spradbery. SpradFest will be Epping Forest District Museum's principle WW1 commemorative programme for 2018, and will include a major exhibition of

Spradberys art and life with loans from the Imperial War Museum and the Welcome Collection along with a performance festival showcase at the site of his former home, 'The Wilderness' in Buckhurst Hill for which a number of local groups have already indicated their support.

No Borders project:

Arts Council funded No Borders project with Chelmsford Museum and Lowewood Museum continues to progress very well in supporting commercial, fundraising and audience development. Key progress has been made in the establishment of our new cultural development trust and an important milestone has been achieved as Culture without Borders Development Trust has been incorporated as a company. We have been overwhelmed with the response to our first round of trustee recruitment and are currently in the process of confirming five external trustees with a strong mix of skills, knowledge and experience, to the Trust Board. Following the first round of recruitment and are delighted that Cllr. Dee Hart, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture for Broxbourne Borough Council will join me as the Local Authority representatives on the Board. A second round of recruitment will be taking place in November and the proposal is that that Trust will be operating to support funding initiatives for the service in the new year. Officers are being supported in the establishment of the trust by legal specialists Winkworth Sherwood, through funding provided by Arts Council England.

Leisure Management Contract

The Council's new Leisure Management Contract partner, Places for People Leisure Ltd, have been operating the Council's facilities since the start of the contract in April 2017. Members may recall that the Council had a number of key objectives it was seeking to deliver through the new contract to not only include a reduction in the overall revenue costs to the Council (which Places for People will deliver an average of £1m of savings per year over the 20-year life of the contract) but also to significantly increase participation and invest external capital in new and refurbished facilities.

I am pleased to report that the investment programme has commenced with the start on site earlier last month of the new Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre at Hillhouse. This modern state of the art facility will not only provide both new swimming pools and fitness / movement facilities but also a new community facility to replace the redundant community centre. I was also pleased on Saturday 9th September to officially open the new extensively refurbished fitness suite and movement studios to include a new virtual cycle spinning room at Ongar Leisure Centre. At a cost in excess of £450,000 the refurbishment testifies to the Council's ongoing commitment to providing quality leisure opportunities for people in Ongar and the surrounding area.

Work on the new fitness facilities at Epping Sports Centre is due to commence in a month's time and the major extension to the health and fitness facilities at Loughton Leisure Centre are also due to begin before the end of the year.

As highlighted previously, in order to achieve the increases in participation sought the Council, in conjunction with Places for People, have had to critically review the types of facilities and programmes it will deliver in the future. As such compromises have to be reached, for example at Epping Sports Centre the squash programme has had to be consolidated into two courts from four courts to allow for the very high demand from fitness users.

At Loughton Leisure Centre, there are current concerns about the ability to provide crèche facilities. It should be noted that the Council in its previous contract with SLM and the

current contract with Places for People have not compelled the management partner to provide crèche facilities. Where they have been provided has been at the discretion of the contractor in response to local circumstances and temporary demand. There has never been a purpose-built crèche at Loughton Leisure Centre and crèche facilities have been provided in the small hall (which is being redeveloped as part of the new build). Although the demand for the crèche has not been high, there are a number of regular users and a comprehensive review of options to include hiring external venues was undertaken to establish if the facility could still be provided during the construction works. Unfortunately for safeguarding and other potential health and safety considerations this will not prove possible. I have held numerous meetings and have exhausted all possible alternative ideas for potential sites, during the construction period, but I am concerned about the safety of young children in a land-based job, which will include demolition and building.

Going forward, an alternative approach which has the potential not only to encourage participation for parents of young children but also young children themselves is Places for People's planned new extensive Under 5 activity sessions to be held during the quieter afternoon periods. This exciting initiative should increase overall participation which, coupled with Places for People's intention to allow parents with particularly young children in carrycots to be allowed, in a controlled manner, into certain exercise classes should compensate for the loss of the traditional crèche arrangements.