

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Subject: Leisure & Community Services

Date: February 2018

Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Kane

Recommending:

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

Community, Health and Wellbeing

Launch of the Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2018-28:

I was very pleased to be present at the launch of our District Health & Wellbeing Strategy on 28th March, along with over 70 delegates representing 37 different organisations. To set the scene for the morning, proceedings kicked off with an invigorating “Wake and Shake” session, which was followed by key note speakers from our Leader of Council, Director of Primary Care for the CCG, ECC Public Health Consultant and the Director of Active Essex. Delegates were also shown a film highlighting a range of health and wellbeing activities delivered by our Community, Health & Wellbeing Team across the district, which included interviews with participants of the Council’s Active Living Programme and walking football sessions, who explained the positive impact the sessions have had on their lives and their physical and mental health.

Senior Safety Day in Loughton:

Over 60 senior residents from Loughton took part in a Senior Safety Day at Trinity Church, in March and were reminded how to keep safe in and around their homes. With speakers from Essex Fire & Rescue Service, Essex Police, Crime Stoppers and Neighbourhood Watch who spoke about fraud, scams and fire safety, all attendees went away more aware, and having had a good interaction with their peers and professionals.

Active Living:

Our Active Living programme is proving very successful, with participants stating that they feel supported by their peers and the Active Living team and that they really benefit from the physical activity and social aspect of the sessions. Participants have the opportunity to try different activities each week and are given ideas for how they can keep active without the need for a gym membership. We have some excellent examples of how people’s health has been improved through Active Living, including a gentleman who has managed to reduce his cholesterol levels significantly without medication, to enabling another participant to regain enough strength within six months, to get back to the gym and walk 3-4 miles per day.

Easter Holiday Programme:

As usual, the Council’s Easter activity programme has a range of opportunities for children and young people to take part in, including multi-sport days in Epping and Waltham Abbey, play in the park in partnership with local town and parish councils, play in the forest and ‘customise your own t-shirt’ workshops. There is also a variety of activities on offer for children and young people with disabilities through our Disability Inclusion Project, such as bounce and swim, multi-sports, canal ability, Epping and Ongar Railway Trip and suntrap activity days. Many of these activities are already fully booked,

Walking Football:

The walking football session in Waltham Abbey continues to be very popular and a friendly match has been arranged against another walking football scheme. Due to the success of this session, a new walking football session is due to start at Roding Valley Recreation Ground, Loughton.

Sports Award Winner:

This year's sports award winner is Christianna Vitanova, a rhythmic gymnast who lives in Chigwell and attends Epping St Johns School. Christianna is 3 times British champion in the junior category and is a non-travelling reserve for the Commonwealth Games 2018 and will represent Great Britain at this year's world championship.

Grant Aid Celebration Event:

On Friday 23rd March, I was pleased to host a special celebration event for over 60 volunteers from across the district, to thank them for their dedication and hard **work** on behalf of their community. Groups in attendance represented a variety of projects who had received grant aid and shared details of their projects and how their work impacts so positively on our residents. The Grant Aid Scheme is celebrating 20 years of support to the local voluntary sector and over forty groups applied for grant aid funding in this year alone. Since it was started, the grant aid scheme has financially assisted groups from almost every area in the district, including 1041 volunteer roles.

Museums, Heritage and Culture

Science Week Event:

For British Science Week, the museum hosted a visit from the Essex Rock and Mineral Society. They provided an interactive display showing how the rocks and stones found in the local area reveal the ancient history of the landscape around us. 117 adults and 69 children took part in this event.

Motiv8:

I was able to attend the opening evening and I was very moved by the talented dancers.. The Motiv8 Youth Dance Platform had a new theme for 2018 - 'Celebrating Different Cultures in Epping Forest'. People have always used **dance, music and storytelling** as an everyday means of understanding and self-expression – this event is a great way to continue that exploration. It makes you aware of the different cultures and the diversity in our society, but at the same time it manages to bring everyone together. The groups participating interpreted this creatively, covering a diversity of cultures through dance and song. From Latino, African and Indian inspired moves through to the representation of Street, Youth and Circus Culture, the dancers impressed the audience with their fantastic performances. Over 200 dancers took part and both shows were sold out and the collaboration with the college enabled music, photography, media, fine arts and beauty students to also take part.

Easter Egg Hunt:

Epping Forest District and Lowewood Museums hosted Easter Egg Hunts on Easter Saturday, attracting an additional 200 children and their families across the sites.

First World War Projects:

Lowewood museum's First World War exhibition: "Stephen Warner: One Man's Journey through War" will be open to the public from Saturday 19th May and will include loans from the Museum of Military Medicine, Essex Regiment Museum and the Royal Gunpowder Mills. A series of events are being provided to celebrate the launch of the exhibition and a private view will precede the opening of the exhibition on Friday 18th May, which will be open to councillors, stakeholders, volunteers, Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant and college

students who produced work for the project. On the following night (Saturday 19th May), we are hosting 'Museums at Night', which is part of a nationwide festival with external promotion and publicity. We are tying this event in with the new exhibition and are hosting a themed night about entertainment during the First World War, with a professional dance couple teaching the 'One-Step'. A full day of activities will follow on Saturday 26th May which will include poppy making and talks from a re-enactor.

Royal Opera House Bridge:

MHC has been commissioned by the Royal Opera House Bridge, with a grant of £3000 to undertake a pilot project developing resources and work with a number of schools to support the extension of the Artsmark and Arts week initiatives. Artsmark is the creative quality standard for schools, accredited by Arts Council England.

Save the Willingale Treasure:

I am delighted to advise that our campaign to purchase a medieval gold ring found in the parish of Willingale, was successful. This is the first medieval gem set ring to be found in the district, and the first known finger-ring to be discovered in Willingale. In total £11,500 was needed to save the ring and display it at the museum. We were successful in securing grants from the ACE/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, SHARE Museums East and the Art Fund and our crowdfunding campaign (the first that the Council has tried) attracted £3500 from the public, to complete the total needed to secure the purchase of the ring. Work will now begin on acquiring the ring, creating the associated displays before the ring will go on display at the museum in the coming months.

Museums, Heritage and Culture Peer Review:

As part of our business planning process, Museums, Heritage and Culture have been successful with an application to the Local Government Association (LGA) for them to undertake a peer review of the service. This is part of a scheme funded by Arts Council England. The peer review will take place at the end of April and we shall take the opportunity to discuss our draft five year business plan with the LGA before publication.