

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Date: July 2018**

**Subject: Leisure & Community Services**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor H. Kane**

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

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## **Community, Health and Wellbeing**

### **10 Year Anniversary of Epping Forest Youth Council:**

I was delighted to take part in the 10 year anniversary of the Youth Council on 4<sup>th</sup> July, at a reception at the Houses of Parliament, Portcullis House. The evening, which highlighted ten years of local youth democracy in the Epping Forest district, was hosted by the Right Honourable Dame Eleanor Laing, MP. Dame Eleanor delivered a key note speech praising the work of the Youth Council and other speakers included our Chairman of Council, Cllr Holly Whitbread, who was one of our first Youth Councillors, Bryan Burrough, High Sheriff of Essex and Roger Hirst, Fire, Police & Crime Commissioner.

A film highlighting the work of the Youth Council was shown on the evening and over 80 Youth Councillors past and present shared their experiences with guests. Photographs spanning the 10 years, along with displays of previous youth-lead projects were all on view.

The prestigious event highlighted how local young people are given a democratic voice and are able to influence the decisions that directly affect their lives. Through consulting with their peers, Youth Councillors over the years have developed and delivered a range of project work covering themes such as; the promotion of local activities for young people, personal safety awareness, drugs education, youth volunteering and positive mental health campaigns.

### **New Youth Councillors take up their roles:**

The latest cohort of Epping Forest Youth Councillors have already started their training and will see the culmination of the youth Drugs Awareness Project which will see a bus advert campaign running during August, September and October. The project highlights the message "Do Not Open the Gate" to gateway drugs. The project has been wide ranging and involved a clean-up day when over 300 Nitrous Oxide canisters were collected and also an anonymous on-line survey collating information about drugs awareness and drug usage by our local young people. To date over 3000 young people have completed the survey and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Roger Hirst has requested to see the results of the survey. Once their training is complete, our new Youth Councillors intend turning their attention to some work around gang awareness.

### **Active Living Children Project:**

Our new Active Living Children Pilot Project has so far been delivered in three primary schools in the district; Ongar Primary, Hill House Primary and Thomas Willingale Primary. The project aims to educate children and their families about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and to empower them to make healthy choices throughout their life. The 20 week programme mixes education with themed physical activity to help children at key stage 2 learn about nutrition, hydration and physical activity. The project concludes in each school with the children delivering an assembly to their parents on a health and wellbeing theme of their choice, with the ultimate aim of influencing parents and families to also make healthier choices. The Active Living Children Project will be added to the menu of opportunities that the West Essex School Sports Partnership offer to primary schools, meaning that schools can select to have this programme delivered in their schools from September.

### **Crucial Crew**

Over 1,400 Year 6 pupils from schools in the Epping Forest District took part in our very successful Crucial Crew initiative, which provides a week of interactive days to educate young people about staying safe, fit and healthy. This year the annual event was hosted at Debden House Centre in Loughton for a week from 11th June 2018 to 15th June 2018. Epping Forest District Council's Apprentices did an excellent job delivering a drugs scenario as part of the week. The High Sheriff of Essex, Bryan Burrough, visited Crucial Crew and commented; 'Crucial Crew is a great way of introducing Year 6 to the issues in a friendly but informative way'.

### **Summer Activities 2018:**

We have so many sporting and creative activities planned for the children's summer holidays this year. As ever our programme offers a wide range of activities for children of all ages, abilities and interests, available from July to September 2018. Activities include; multi-sport camps, Play in the Park and Play in the Forest sessions, some Drop In and Draw days, Little Storytellers, street tennis and basketball and lots more. We are also offering our increasingly popular Disability Inclusion Project activities for children and young people with SEND.

### **Buckhurst Hill Social Isolation Project**

Buckhurst Hill was identified through the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group Neighbourhood meetings as a pilot area for a project focussing on social isolation. Local GP's felt that loneliness and social isolation was a significant issue for many of their patients. Consequently, in line with our corporate objectives, the Council's Community, Health and Wellbeing Team has established a partnership Epping Forest Social Isolation Action Group. The group recognises that both loneliness and social isolation present a key challenge in relation to health, wellbeing and social care. The group is made up of partners from EFDC, West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, VAEF, Buckhurst Hill Parish Council, Community Matrons, Community Agents, Waitrose and Essex Fire and Rescue Service. The purpose of the group is to enable local stakeholders to work together to best support the people and projects that are contributing to community wellbeing and reducing social isolation.

In order to obtain a better understanding of social networks and connections that exist in the neighbourhood of Buckhurst Hill, along with peoples' personal experiences of social isolation, the group has undertaken a door knocking exercise and conducted short interviews with people living in the area. Six streets were identified by the group and partners carried out the exercise

for one week in June. A total of 67 interviews were completed. A report is currently being put together and, following the analysis of the questionnaires, a Task & Finish Action Plan will be developed to address the needs identified by local residents.

Initial feedback was given to residents at a Buckhurst Hill Community Event on Friday 6th July at Roding Valley Hall. The event also provided an opportunity for wider partners to further engage with local people and allow residents to find out what is on offer in Buckhurst Hill and how they can get involved within their local community and the project.

## **Walking Football**

Walking Football is a slow paced version of the beautiful game and is aimed at getting players back playing the sport they love. It is designed to help people have an active life whatever their age or ability. It is a very relaxed session based around socialising with like-minded football fans. The Community, Health and Wellbeing Team is now delivering walking football sessions in Loughton and Waltham Abbey, with approx. 14 people regularly attending each time. A new session will be starting soon in Epping.

## **Museums, Heritage and Culture (MHC)**

**LGA Review:** The externally funded LGA Peer Challenge of MHC took place earlier this summer with the review team meeting with colleagues, stakeholders and partners and undertaking a range of desk research. I am delighted that the headline feedback from the LGA was that 'The service is excellent with demonstrable passion and commitment from councillors, staff and volunteers, and this is clearly demonstrated at all levels'. They also noted that: the service exemplifies good partnership working. More detailed feedback will be presented to the Communities Select Committee in September.

## **Engagement and Events**

**Museums at Night:** On Thursday 17 May, EFDM opened its doors after dark for an evening of social dancing and refreshments. Visitors jived the night away with a DJ playing sounds from the 1940's and 50's with a chance to look around the Beauty and the Beach Exhibition which explored the style, design and inspirations of women's swimwear from the 1940's, 50's and 60's.

**eNgage:** On Friday 29 June Museums Heritage and Culture held its annual dance performance 'eNgage' at the Spotlight Theatre, Hoddesdon. Attended by the Deputy Mayor of Broxbourne, the event welcomed some 270 audience and 130 participants. Performers ranged from 8 to 74 years of age presenting a diverse range of talented performers from Herts, Epping Forest and wider Essex. The showcase was part of the U.Dance network of events which gives young dancers the chance to perform with others at least once a year.

**Cloth Makers Wings:** Our team will shortly be working with 'The Gifted', a Hertfordshire based charity working with vulnerable young women, to research, curate and archive heritage collections which explore women in textiles between 1790-1890 and the textiles industry at large across East/West Hertfordshire. The programme will begin in the autumn with textile workshops at EFDM, culminating in an exhibition at Lowewood, curated by the young women, opening in May 2019.

**Older People's Dance workshops at EFDM:** We have a range of new activities running in our activity space at the Museum including Museum Movers, which are fun, informal dance sessions, designed to promote health, well-being and freedom of movement for older people. People are welcome to do a seated version or can challenge themselves by performing the exercises standing. The sessions provide a range of visual arts and dance and fitness techniques, enabling local residents to express themselves through creativity whilst developing strength and stamina, a sense of wellbeing and social interaction.

**Young Onset Dementia Group:** In June, we launched a special programme of activities for people suffering from young onset and their partners/carers. Run in conjunction with Age UK Hertfordshire. The group were given the opportunity to handle original objects including a mammoth's tooth, Stone Age hand axes, bronze and Iron Age pottery. The objects were chosen for their tactile properties – they had a strong appeal to both the person with dementia and their carer. The topic was also chosen as an alternative to the regular reminiscence type session. Prehistory was a new topic for everyone in the group, so the carers as well as their partners had the opportunity to engage with objects to learn something new about a period of history they had no previous knowledge of. To finish, the group tried simple art and craft activities linked to the objects using charcoal and clay. The response from the group was extremely positive.

**Spradbery:** A new exhibition, 'Walter Spradbery, Artist in War and Peace' opens at the District Museum on Saturday 21st July. The exhibition, which also commemorates the centenary of the end of the First World War, is part of a project which received a grant of £49,950 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The exhibition tells the story of Buckhurst Hill artist, Walter Spradbery, who was a committed pacifist. He served in the Royal Army Medical Corps during the war and received the Distinguished Conduct Medal for going out twice to rescue officers under intense enemy fire. Spradbery also continued to paint during the war. After the war he was one of several artists commissioned to create art for the first exhibition of the Imperial War Museum, which opened at Crystal Palace in 1920. The exhibition features many of the paintings made at the front line in France now in the collections of our Museum. There are also loans from the Imperial War Museum and reproductions from the Wellcome Collection. The project funding also includes the purchase of new plan chests to store Spradbery's art. There will also be a major celebration event on Saturday 29 September 2018 at St John's C of E Primary School in Buckhurst Hill, next to the site of Spradbery's former home, 'The Wilderness' in Epping Forest.

Pupils from St John's will recreate the 1938 Open Air Social that Spradbery held in the garden of his home. There will be tours to the site of 'The Wilderness', stalls, art displays and projections of Spradbery's work and the school will perform a specially commissioned dance choreographed by Flux Dance Collective, and Impropera - the World's Only Improvised Opera Company will perform to close the event.

**Stephen Warner:** Another Heritage Lottery Funded First World War exhibition at Lowewood Museum 'Stephen Warner: One Man's Journey through War' is still open to the public and includes work by students from Hertford Regional College and research undertaken by volunteers. The exhibition is receiving excellent visitor feedback. A second Heritage Lottery Funded partnership project with St. Catherine's school to celebrating its 200 year anniversary is now being undertaken and will lead to an exhibition opening in October.

**Culture Without Borders Development Trust:** Our new Development trust which covers Epping Forest District and Lowewood museums has held four board' meetings to date, whilst it waits to complete registration with the Charities Commission. Trustees have identified their

initial fundraising priorities to link to a formal launch of the trust in the autumn. These will be a campaign to sponsor 15 objects from Lowewood and 15 from EFDM to meet conservation and research costs; developing an unrestricted funds campaign and the start of a major fundraising campaign to support museum development in Broxbourne focused on the opportunity presented by the Spinning Wheel site.

### **Leisure Management**

The new leisure centre build at Waltham Abbey is on schedule and is likely to open as expected on November 20th. The structure of the building is largely complete and the internal mechanical and electrical works are progressing well. The main power supply is scheduled for connection in the next week or so. The external work on the carpark and landscaping will start in late July. Early planning for the transfer of staff and equipment from the existing Waltham Abbey Pool is under way.

All Members of the District Council are invited on a visit to the new Leisure Centre on **Tuesday 11 September 2018 at 10.00 a.m.** The Tour will be an opportunity to view the new facilities at an advanced stage of construction, prior to public opening. If any Member would like to attend, please could you confirm with Peter Charman, Leisure Client Manager by [pcharman@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:pcharman@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

The extension of Loughton Leisure centre is also on schedule for completion in late-August (despite several recent break-ins and thefts from contractors' vehicles). The refurbishment of changing village is progressing well. There have been some complaints from local residents about increased noise coming from the centre and these are being investigated with a view to developing an operational solution.

The refurbishment of the Epping Sports Centre has been received very well with a noticeable increase in usage figures especially for the gym. A carpark charging regime will be implemented from September which will provide several hours free use to centre users while preventing use by non-users.

Across the contract, all centres are showing an increase in gym memberships, group workout classes and swimming visits. Loughton is showing a less marked improvement mostly due to the refurbishment work but this is expected to settle when the work is completed. All pools are now offering the use of pool inflatable sessions to encourage which has proved very popular during the warm weather.