

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Date: 1 November 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 Services**

### Community, Health & Wellbeing

In my report this month, I am pleased to be able to provide a range of qualitative data and feedback related to some of the provision that is provided by our Community, Health and Wellbeing team. This will hopefully give Members an insight into the great benefits of our work and improved quality of life, for people of all ages living in our communities.

### **Epping Forest Inclusion Project – Visit to Leyton Orient Football Club:**

On Saturday 15th September 16 participants from the Epping Forest Inclusion Project were invited along to Leyton Orient's home game versus Barnet FC. The group were hosted in the Diversity Hub, where Theo (the Orient mascot) popped in to say hello. The group then made it pitch side to be pre-match flag bearers and a guard of honour for the players as they came out of the tunnel! For many of the children this was their very first experience of a live football game. The project is a vital service for many of the parents that use it and they were all very grateful to everyone at Leyton Orient for giving their children a brilliant opportunity. Parents said:

"The experience gave Freya my daughter confidence to stand out in front of a large crowd. She was important for a moment. The day lifted our spirits. Thank you. Great seeing Orient win so spectacularly too. We all left on a high."

"I think what you & the club facilitated was absolutely fantastic & I really appreciate you including kids of all abilities and letting them experience different things."

"Please convey our appreciation to Leyton Orient Football Club and all those involved for creating such a welcoming atmosphere. It was so well organised and everyone was so enthusiastic it was the very best introduction to football for my little boy. Aadi has proudly worn his cap every day since we returned from the game."

Due to the success of this visit Leyton Orient has invited participants from the project to attend a future game and take penalties on the pitch at half time. The Epping Forest Inclusion Project provides a variety of sport and leisure opportunities for children, young people and adults with various disabilities in the Epping Forest district. The project currently runs 25 sessions a week, as well as an extensive school holiday activity programme.

**Active Living:** Active living is a free, lifestyle change programme aimed at helping people that are inactive get active with friendly one to one support every step of the way. To date the Community, health & Wellbeing Team has had 166 referrals. 70 local residents are currently

actively participating in weekly sessions. Participants who have been attending for a year report that they have increased their activity from no activity to at least 3 x 30 minute sessions per week. Confidence levels have been improved and participants are now attending classes such as Yoga, Pilates and Keep. Key results include:

- 87% improved wellbeing score at 3 months
- 95% increased activity levels at 3 months
- 90% increased wellbeing at 6 months
- 100% increased activity levels at 6 months
- 91% improved wellbeing at 1 year.
- 100% increased activity levels at 1 year

Comments received about the Active Living programme include:

“Brilliant programme and I don't feel so gloomy anymore. Nice to be in a network of people trying to get moving. Couldn't walk 3 months ago so pleased with the progress. Taking it slow but built up so much.”

“I deal with a lot of stress in my week and coming to the class always makes me feel better and has helped to improve my confidence in a group setting and with my everyday life.”

“Found new friends who have encouraged me to join a Zumba class once a week and I actually enjoy it!.

**Stay Well This Winter Events:** As the colder months close in, the Community, Health & Wellbeing Team is working with the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group to help residents prepare for winter by providing a series of free health and wellbeing events across the district. These informative events are an opportunity for residents to come along and speak to local pharmacists, community nurses and specialist healthcare advisors and learn more about how to keep themselves healthy throughout the winter months. Events this year will take place in:

**Nazeing:** St Giles C of E, St Giles Church Hall, Nazeing, Essex, EN9 2JL. Thursday 8 November, from 10am – 2.30pm.

**Ongar:** Jubilee Park Pavilion, Love Lane, Ongar, Essex, CM5 9BL. Thursday 15 November 10am – 2.30pm

**Epping:** Epping Hall, St Johns Road, Epping, Essex, CM16 5JU. Thursday 22 November 10am – 2.30pm

**Fyfield:** Fyfield Village Hall, Houchin Drive, Fyfield, Essex, CM5 0RG. Wednesday 28 November 10am – 2.30pm

**Women like Us Festival:** In partnership with Active Essex, our staff supported Sport England's 'This Girl Can' campaign with a 'Women Like Us' festival on Sunday 7 October at Zinc Arts, Ongar and I was delighted to be able to attend.

The aim of the festival was to encourage women of all ages and abilities to have fun, be active and improve their wellbeing. A variety of excellent, free activities were delivered by the Council's team and other local providers for women to participate in, including Bounce sessions, netball, rowing, kick boxing, yoga, pilates and dance. There were also weaving workshops, life skills and wellbeing sessions. The festival was well attended and feedback was extremely positive. We hope to build upon this success with Active Essex to deliver a similar festival elsewhere in the district in 2019.

**Epping Forest Community Champions :** I'm delighted to report that the first nine Epping Forest Community Champions have been recruited and have attended an induction event and

Dementia Friends Awareness session. The first cohort of Community Champions are from Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell, Loughton, Nazeing, Ongar, Theydon Bois and Willingale.

The Community Champions programme builds on the skills and knowledge of local communities. The project aims to bring local people and services together to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents, build community capacity and reduce loneliness and social isolation.

Our Community, Health and Wellbeing Team is leading on the development of the project and recruitment, training and on-going support of the Community Champions. The Champions are being recruited from the 24 town/parish areas through an advertisement campaign involving; fliers, posters, banner stands, social media, news articles and press releases.

**#consequences Project:** A complete review of the Year 9 Reality Roadshow schools programme has been undertaken involving; comprehensive feedback from pupils, teachers and provider agencies. Consideration was also given to the current and emerging issues facing our local young people and an enhanced, more targeted project has been developed and is called #consequences. The project concentrates on the key priorities of healthy relationships and consent, Child Sexual Exploitation, gangs, youth violence and County (drugs) Lines.

The Council will continue to work with two excellent agencies; ARC Theatre and Spark2Life. #Consequences involves a 1 ½ hour interactive theatre production, information session and Q & A. The production has been redesigned to be delivered in an assembly format following feedback from schools. Initial feedback from pilot secondary schools has been excellent and extremely well received by pupils.

**Epping Forest Youth Council:** Our Youth Council meeting held on 9th October was the final official duty of the 2016-18 cohort of Youth Councillors. It has been a busy two years for the young people and has involved; a Drug Project, the MiLife mental health project, numerous consultations, a Youth Conference and, of course, the 10 year anniversary event at the Houses of Parliament.

The new Youth Councillors have now completed their training and take up the challenge of providing a voice for the young people in the district. The MiLife project continues to play an important part of our young people's growth and development and the Youth Councillors were recently involved in filming the theatre aspects of the workshops. With MiLife digitalised, the scope to reach and help even more young people is possible and this could not be achieved without the continued support of Members. MiLife now enters year three of delivery to local secondary schools and in total over 8000 young people have been given valuable information and support. And as Members know the success of MiLife was endorsed by winning the National Crimebeat Award earlier this year. The Epping Forest Youth Council is now starting to work on their next project which will focus on how to keep young people safe.

**Young Citizen of the Year:** Nominations have opened for Epping Forest Young Citizen of the Year Award 2019. The award, presented annually, recognises young people's exceptional contributions to the Epping Forest District. This can be in terms of outstanding courage, service to the community or showing extraordinary commitment, energy and effort in a particular cause or achieving a particular goal. 11-18 year-olds living in Epping Forest district are eligible for nomination.

#### Museums, Heritage and Culture

**Singing in the Wilderness:** A major celebration event took place on Saturday 29 September at St John's C of E Primary School in Buckhurst Hill, next to the site of Walter Spradbery's

former home, 'The Wilderness' in Epping Forest. Pupils from the school recreated the 1938 Open Air Social that artist Walter Spradbery held in the garden of his home. Tours of 'The Wilderness' site were provided and the event also offered a variety of stalls and art displays organised by a number of local community groups, along with projections of Spradbery's work. Pupils from the school performed a specially commissioned dance choreographed by Flux Dance Collective, and Impropera - the World's Only Improvised Opera Company closed the event. Some 350 people visited this special event, which formed part of the museum's First World War commemorative exhibition on the artist Walter Spradbery. We were delighted that the Chairman of Epping Forest District Council was able to attend as well as descendants of the artist. The event was made possible through funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund

**St Catherine's Exhibition at Lowewood:** Following a successful application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £9,700, the MHC team have been working with St Catherine's School in Hoddesdon on a project celebrating 200 years since the school was founded. The project has seen every school pupil participate in back in time sessions exploring life and school 200 years ago, they have also created an art piece recording their memories of school life. The teachers have been trained in oral history interviews with 10 past pupils recording their memories of the school for us. The oral history interviews and art piece will form part of an exhibition opening at Lowewood Museum on 20 October. The foundation stone of the school has been replaced and will be unveiled as part of a special birthday celebration on 22 October, where a church service will be followed by a whole school procession through Hoddesdon's town centre.

**Gifted and Talented Day of Dance at Roding Valley School:** On 12 October up to 50 Year 7 pupils from Roding Valley High School were given the opportunity to work with some leading dance professionals. Working with MHC, the school chose to champion dance for the day, giving pupils a day off their regular timetable to explore taster workshops of various dance styles (including Musical Theatre, Contemporary, Whacking or Popping and Street Dance). Informal performances were shared at the end of the day. A Question and Answer session with the professional dancers was incredibly inspiring to the students.

**Education and Outreach:** September 2018 was the busiest month for school visits on record for the Museum, Heritage & Culture Service, with the team working with 1076 children. Along with our popular programme of formal education sessions, our work with two primary schools on two of the museums temporary exhibitions, has contributed to this significant number.

**Volunteering:** MHC continues to have very high level, valued input from volunteers. In September alone the volunteer contribution totalled 382 hours which equates to £3330 of 'in-kind' funding. Volunteer duties combine a mix of Collection support, Museum Garden volunteers, Front of House and The Singing in the Wilderness event which comprised a variety of duties such as working on stalls, photography, tours of the Wilderness, refreshments, information and dance.

**Museum Movers:** With support from the Epping Forest Public Health Community Grant Fund, the museum has been able to continue with its popular Museum Movers sessions. Museum Movers focus on Dance for health and takes place every Friday at the museum, with 17 people taking part. The Public Health Community Grant Fund has been fantastic in supporting people with transport issues, and due to this we have regular visitors from Hyde Mead House in Nazeing. The Sheltered Housing Managers have been very supportive in marketing the sessions.

## **Epping Sports Centre**

At the time of writing, 'snagging' works at Epping Sports Centre is largely complete subject to final inspections. The centre continues to receive lots of praise from centre users. This has been reflected in an increase in memberships and casual users.

No further major works are scheduled at the centre in the foreseeable future. The two remaining Squash courts are being refurbished to replaster and repaint the walls. The Squash court floors are being replaced and relined at the same time.

The car parking management scheme will be implemented in September following the remarking of the car park bays. It is hoped that this will prevent the car park being used by commuters and shoppers. Centre users will get two and a half hours free parking per visit. The sports hall continues to be a concern. There are significant cracks in the walls which have been made worse by the hot weather over the Summer. Significant Winter rainfall could see further structural movement and damage.

### **Ongar Leisure Centre**

The Ongar centre continues to perform well especially over the Summer with the pool inflatable sessions being very popular. The gym is also proving popular since the refurbishment works last year.

Several issues with the building mechanical and electrical plant have arisen recently. The boilers are in need of a complete overhaul but we are hoping to put this off until the 2019/20 Financial Year. We will be scavenging parts from the Waltham Abbey Pool site when it closes in November.

The pool tank is suffering from subsidence in one corner. This movement causes the pool and wall tiles to 'pop' which therefore require regular repairs. As with Epping, any prolonged rainfall may increase ground movement and result in more damage.

The lift mechanism and shaft at Ongar has recently had a number of problems requiring urgent repair. It is hoped that this is not a structural issue!

### **Loughton Leisure Centre**

The extension to the front of Loughton Leisure Centre is now largely complete subject to snagging works and final inspections. There are some outstanding external works to the footpaths and planted areas which will be completed in early September.

The new gym areas opened on August 18<sup>th</sup> and there has been a good deal of positive comment from users and staff.

The changing village works is scheduled to complete mid to late September for the final tiling works.

With regard to the noise complaint, the sound limiters have been installed in the studio PA systems and the acoustic engineer survey has been undertaken. The report should be available within a few weeks when we will be able to make a judgement on what additional work may be required (if any).

### **Waltham Abbey Pool**

Planning for the closure of Waltham Abbey Pool and relocation to the new centre is well under way. As mentioned above, we are intending to salvage as many usable parts as we can for use at Epping and/or Ongar.

The Waltham Abbey Pool staff are all moving across to the new site and have taken the opportunity of the Loughton gym opening to cross train on the new equipment.

## **Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre**

Following some very challenging legal issues with the electricity companies, I am pleased to say that they are now resolved. Mains power will be switched on to the site in early September. As a result we can now say that the centre will open slightly ahead of schedule on Saturday 17th November.

Internal works are moving on at pace and external works such as the carpark areas and surrounding landscaping are underway.