

Report to the Council

Subject: Leisure & Community Services **Date:** April 2014

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Mrs Helen Kane **Item:**

Recommending:

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

Community Services:

Changing lives through football: Funding secured from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) through a competitive process, has enabled a two very successful football diversion projects for young people, to be provided in Limes Farm, Chigwell and Town Mead, Waltham Abbey.

The level of participation by young people (boys and girls) at both projects has been excellent, with on average 25 young people at Limes Farm and 40 at Town Mead taking part regularly each week, although I am delighted to say that at the Waltham Abbey sessions, which are held on the new 3G Astroturf pitch, over 80 young people have been attending in the last couple of weeks.

As part of the funding agreement, the Police & Crime Commissioner's office have carried out an independent assessment of the impact of the project in both areas and the findings were so good, that a further grant has been awarded to the Council to cover the cost of an additional six months' provision. The PCC acknowledged that an impressive level of engagement had taken place and that the impact on the attitude of participants was significant. The extra funding from the PCC will also enable the introduction of a new boxing club at the Limes Centre and additional multi-sports sessions each week.

One young man's journey: A particular highlight of the football project over the last six months has been the engagement of a 15 year old lad (who I'll call David for the purpose of this report) who was initially barred from the sessions due to very aggressive behaviour and attitude. The lead football coach saw David sitting outside the football area the following week and spent time with him to try and find out why he was behaving as he was, and found that he came from a broken home and felt a lot of anger towards his father. David also felt that he 'did not fit in' at school and was not attending. The coach encouraged David to take part that evening and his goalkeeping skills were so good that the coach referred him to a friend who ran a Sunday League Team. Surprisingly David went along to the team's training session and before long, he was registered for the team and playing Sunday league football.

Following a meeting with David's mum, the coach also made an appointment with the headmistress of his school and after hearing about the success in David's progress with the football sessions and playing in a football league, a plan was set up to enable David to return. The plan was based on point system, whereby, if David was late for school or behaved inappropriately he was be given a negative point and if he was to reach six negative points he would not be allowed to play football.

This basic discipline has been the making of David. He is continuing to progress at school and he has progressed technically at football. He is now in the run up to his exams, which is excellent considering the position he was in before joining the football project.

Although I have picked out one particular success generated through the football project, there are many others. Before the football started, there was a great deal of youth nuisance at Town Mead and cases of vandalism of the pitch and surrounding areas. This has subsided since the sessions started, which are held on Friday evenings between 6 – 8pm and the young people are really engaged, due to the professionalism of the coaching team and the respect and trust that has been built.

Epping Forest Youth Council: I am delighted to advise Members, that on 18th March I was in attendance at the annual High Sheriffs Awards evening, where the Epping Forest Youth Council was awarded the prestigious High Sheriff's Shield 2015, along with a cheque for £1000. The Essex-wide award was in recognition of the Youth Council's anti-bullying project which involved the design and distribution of 1200 wristband memory sticks promoting their #URNotAlone Bullying Awareness website to every Year 9 pupil in the district. The website promotes support numbers and guidance for young people and parents in respect of bullying.

During the Easter holidays, the Community, Health & Wellbeing Team facilitated an intergenerational event with the help of members of the Youth Council. An afternoon tea for 25 residents of Buckhurst Court Sheltered Accommodation Scheme was held on 30th March which proved to be a resounding success. Old and young took part in an Easter egg hunt and games from "days gone by". One resident aged 100 said she "didn't normally stay out late (!) but was having so much fun she didn't want to go home!"

Tenant Participation: The Tenant Participation Officer, who is now based within the Community, Health & Wellbeing Team, has recruited and trained a group of ten EFDC Housing Tenants to 'Mystery Shop' the Council's services. Each Mystery Shopper will be tasked to carry out three mystery shops within a three-month period using a variety of methods. The first series of "shops" will take place during the period 1st April 2015 – 30th June 2015. The results of the exercise will be fed back to the relevant section managers as part of the Council's continuous improvement process. The Mystery Shopping exercise will then continue on a quarterly basis.

District Museum News: The Museum Collections volunteers have been cataloguing our immediate museum collection backlog since January 2015 alongside the Volunteer Coordinator, Katie Weston. We have welcomed 5 new volunteers who have completed in house training on handling and documentation. They are working quickly and accurately and have fully catalogued 207 items.

Katie has also organised two community volunteer projects at Lowewood museum. A work experience day to learn about collections management, which was held on the 16th March with 12 art students from Hertford Regional College and secondly, a volunteer day on the 20th March involving 12 pupils from King Harold School that was run in partnership with Broxbourne Borough Council, where the students tidied and replanted the Lowewood Museum Garden. This was the first time Lowewood museum has welcomed garden volunteers.

Arts Council England Resilience Fund: The Council has just been awarded £55k from Arts Council England for the District Museum and Lowewood Museum, as part of their new 'Resilience' funding stream. The District Museum which is currently undergoing a major capital redevelopment supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund is one of only two museums

in Essex to have been awarded this funding, which is designed to support museums to become more sustainable and resilient.

The grant will go to support two strands of work. The first is to undertake a feasibility study to explore the possibility of setting up a body or Trust to secure external funding for the delivery of museum, heritage and culture activity in the Epping Forest District and the Borough of Broxbourne. The second strand of work would be to explore other opportunities created by the expanded museum offer and the services provided in order to contribute to the health, wellbeing and economic development of the district in a sustainable way. A further application will be made to support the implementation of any recommendations later this year.

Museum Redevelopment Project: The start date for the main building contract for the Museum has been agreed with the main contractors (Coniston Ltd) as 20th April and the works are expected to take 27 weeks. Over the last few months, a range of work has been undertaken to prepare for the building works, including a Listed Building review, to record key features in the building such as Georgian floor timbers that will need to be removed for the installation of the lift. There has also been a further asbestos survey undertaken and engineering reviews in light of the 'stripping out' process.

New Exhibitions & Projects:

'Mythical creatures': This joint project involving 28 college students, is opening at Epping Forest College on 13th April and is funded by the Arts Council England (ACE) and Royal Opera House Bridges project.

'Local Artist Antony Trollope' - A new exhibition opening on 4th April at Lowewood Museum. This explores the local links of this acclaimed Victorian artist and is an exhibition in partnership with the Trollope Society.

Archaeological Projects in Waltham Abbey – The Museum team has been working with Historic England, Waltham abbey Church and the Waltham abbey Historical Society on a number of archaeological projects in the town.

Motiv8 Dance Showcase: I was very pleased to be part of the audience for the annual Motiv8 dance showcase event, where young people aged 5-19 from across Epping Forest District were given the chance to perform at Epping Forest College in front of an audience of over 250 x people. Over 190 young people performed in the event, which welcomed an audience of over 500 over the two nights, in two 'sold out' shows. The Motiv8 Showcase is delivered in partnership with the College and its pupils involving everyone from student ambassadors to those studying design, media, performing arts as well as hair and makeup.

Active Assemblies: Active Assemblies, a programme designed to engage primary pupils in activity and healthy eating was demonstrated by pupils from Roydon Primary School in the NHS Healthy Schools Award Ceremony in Chelmsford on 20th March. The Epping Forest Dance Engagement Officer, along with the School's Head Teacher and pupils from the school got the audience of over 300 on their feet to take part. Roydon school's involvement in Active Assemblies has contributed to them achieve their Enhanced Healthy Schools Award.

Limes Farm Dance Classes: Free dance classes for young residents of Limes Farm, are being offered for a period of ten weeks between April and June. Two sessions aimed at children from 5years+ are being run on a 'drop-in' basis on Saturdays at the Limes Centre. Average attendance in the first couple of sessions has been around 17 and there are hopes for a dance group to be set up after the programme ends.