

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** December 2015

**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**

Our Community Services team continue to provide an exceptional variety of activities on an ongoing basis and I am pleased to highlight some of these in this report.

**Epping Forest Commoners Project:** Officers have been working with an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation called 'Up Projects', to develop a visual arts project in the Epping Forest District for 2016-17. The Epping Forest Commoners Project will build on previous work with Artist Ruth Beale and Up Projects on *The People's Forest*, in 2014-15, and involves a range of local community groups who will explore how they think of and use Epping Forest. We are applying for funding to support the project from Arts Council England and Essex County Council.

**Active Assemblies:** These special assemblies form part of our programme to help combat obesity amongst primary age children, which is particularly high in the Epping Forest District in comparison to other areas in Essex. The programme will be delivered in seven Primary Schools across the District from January 2016 and includes safe and effective dance movement and play related to food recipes, with the aim of encouraging physical activity and healthy eating for wellbeing. To ensure sustainability of the programme within schools, we have created a comprehensive resource pack, which is left with the school, to be used regularly as part of the school programme.

**Limes Centre Dance:** Earlier in the year, a local freelance dance artist, Rebecca Barnard, was commissioned by Community Services to run a series of dance classes for children and young people at The Limes Centre in Chigwell, as part of the externally funded 'Get Active Epping Forest' project. I am pleased to say, that when the funding period finished, Rebecca was able to continue to run the classes on a weekly basis at Limes Farm and more recently in November, using external funding from Royal Opera House Bridge, she produced a dance show at Epping Forest College, where Limes Dancers performed alongside Moreton Primary School after School Dance Club and her young adult groups. Moreton dance is also governed by EFDC and therefore two of our young groups had been given a wonderful performance opportunity.

**Sherrell House and Tallis House (Older People dance & art workshops):** Our Dance and Cultural Engagement Officers have recently been commissioned to deliver creative dance and visual art workshops at Sherrell House in Chigwell. This work has been specifically designed for residents with dementia and will continue into 2016. During this

period, new staff will be recruited and trained to take over the sessions, so that our own officers can then begin delivering classes to residents of Tallis House in Waltham Abbey. is

This specially designed model of work builds on learning from a previous project called Transitions that was developed by the Council in 2012/13, where staff worked directly with care staff in residential homes to devise activities that meaningfully engage people living with dementia. The Council has been recognised for this incredibly innovative work and is thought to be one of the leaders in this field, with a member of staff being invited to speak at the British Embassy in Berlin in 2013, for the UK Science and Innovation network at a conference entitled "Addressing dementia: innovative approaches in research and care".

**CPD for PE Teachers in teaching dance to KS2 pupils:** As part of Community Services work with local schools, staff are developing training workshops for PE teachers to give them ideas and a foundation in teaching dance to KS2 pupils. The first workshop was very well received on November 23<sup>rd</sup> and we have been asked to repeat the session in the New Year to more teachers. This model can be rolled out and developed to suit individual school's needs on a regular basis if required.

**Work with residents of Hanover Court, Waltham Abbey:** Hanover Court is the sheltered housing scheme adjacent to the District Museum and during the redevelopment of the museum facilities officers have been liaising with the residents on an ongoing basis, to keep them informed of the works in progress and to maintain good relations. Further to this, staff are now in the process of developing initial engagement opportunities around reminiscence that will aim to encourage an ongoing relationship between residents, and the museum and its collection. Sessions will be held in the Abbey Gardens Centre from mid Feb 2016 until the museum is back in action, when there will be Tea & Chat sessions every Wednesday in the community space.

**Mapping Memories:** A new and exciting, reminiscence project is currently underway, which will involve talking to local people about their memories of 'place' in the Epping Forest District, and recording these details to be cross referenced with maps of the district. The long term aim of the project is to eventually set up an online museum resource, and feed into marketing. This will be an ongoing project which will be rolled out at fairs, open days and other local events and will involve volunteers, such as U3A and other groups, in collecting memories.

**Community, Health and Well-being events for older people:** Our Community Services staff have recently worked with NHS West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to provide three very successful events to help older people keep safe and well over the winter months. The three events were spread across the district to enable as many people to access as possible and were staged at Buckhurst Hill Library, Epping Hall and Waltham Abbey Town Hall. Around 40 people attended each event where they were given a range of presentations and workshops to strengthen their knowledge about electrical safety, use of and checking and falls prevention. A mix of public and voluntary organisations supported the events, including Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, Voluntary Action Epping Forest, Trading Standards, who spoke about scams and bogus callers, Neighbourhood Watch and Community Agents, who spoke about their services to support older people in living in their own homes. Community nurses were also present to carry out health checks and following the information workshops, attendees were invited to take part in a fun and energetic seated exercise session, which was followed by lunch and bingo. Everyone attending also received a goody bag with segment timer and information about services and

activities for older people, including exercises for older people to improve mobility, flexibility and general health and well-being.

**Six for All (adult disability sports project):** This externally funded project continues to expand and a number of new activity sessions have recently been developed and are being delivered across the District for disabled adults. The activities which are provided at a range of venues inside and outside of the district (where facilities are available) vary from trampolining & athletics to football and boccia and cater for all additional needs. In order to help sustain this activity programme over the long term, a 'How to coach disabled people in Sport' coaches workshop has also been delivered with 16 coaches attending. It is planned to run more of these, as the project continues.

**Reality Roadshow:** Community Services were recently successful in a bid for £5,400 to the Police & Crime Commissioner, to fund the delivery of an interactive drama production delivered by the Arc Theatre Company, which tackles the high level priority of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and the law around producing and distributing indecent images of people under the age of consent. This bespoke production has been developed specifically for Epping Forest Reality Roadshow in line with emerging concerns and trends reported by schools in the area. The funding will also be used to deliver anti-gang workshops as part of Reality Roadshow which is delivered to every secondary school in Epping Forest District.

**First Aid Training Course provided at The Limes Centre:** Community Services, in partnership with Spurgeon's Children's Centre, hosted a one day certified basic first aid course at The Limes Centre, Chigwell. Nine people took part in the course which included people from the local community and volunteers from the Children's Centre. At the end of the day, all the candidates sat a short exam with a 100% pass rate. Each candidate will receive a certificate which will certify them for 3 years. The feedback from the course was really positive and the day was enjoyed by all those that attended and more significantly they left with the confidence to deal with any first aid incidences that may arise at home or in their locality. Since the course we have had a number of enquiries regarding future community first aid courses.

**Leisure Management Contract:** Further to the Cabinet agreeing the Business Case and Procurement Strategy for the new Leisure Management Contract in September, the opportunity has been advertised in accordance with the relevant European Regulations. The Pre-Qualification Questionnaires are due to be returned on the 6 December and the shortlist of Tenderers will be considered by the Portfolio Holder Advisory Group at their meeting on the 14 January 2016. The Council's current contractor SLM, have confirmed their willingness to accept a contract extension of up to one year to facilitate the procurement timetable.