

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Date: 26 April 2016**

**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**

### **Friday Night Football at Town Mead, Waltham Abbey**

I am pleased to advise Members, that due to the excellent success of the football programme which takes place on the All Weather Pitch at Town Mead, the Police Crime Commissioner has awarded our Community Health and Wellbeing team an additional £6,280 to continue to deliver these sessions for young people which are held each Friday night.

We have on average 60+ young people that take part each week, who are split into groups depending on ages, which range from 9 – 17 years, with a special mentoring scheme for 15-17 year olds. I reported last year, about a particular case where a 15 year old young mans' life had been turned around by attending the sessions and am delighted to report that nine more young people are now back in full time education, at college or sixth form.

The project is therefore successfully contributing to improving crime prevention and anti-social behaviour, through positively engaging young people in constructive and disciplined activities. In addition, all participants are learning and improving their physical skills and many have demonstrated improved respect through the high quality coaching and mentoring delivery.

### **Senior Safety Day**

I was pleased to be able to attend and take part in a recent 'Senior Safety Day' in Waltham Abbey, which was held at the Town Hall. The event which was organised and developed by the Council's Community Safety and Community Health and Wellbeing teams was provided for our senior residents from right across the Epping Forest District. Participants received a wide range of tips on how to keep themselves safe in and around their homes and were encouraged to share what they have learnt with their families, friends and neighbours.

A mix of public and voluntary organisations supported the events, including Essex Police who gave talks on crime prevention; Essex County Fire and Rescue Service who gave a talk on smoke alarms and making your home safe; Trading Standards, who spoke about scams and bogus callers, and Crime Stoppers, who talked about their service and how to report crime anonymously.

Following the range of presentations, participants were treated to a musical that featured all the issues that had been during the day, which was called 'Scram busters', and was written and performed by Solomon Theatre and was a great hit with the audience. Everyone attending also received a goody bag with information that supported the event and were provided with lunch and refreshments.

The event had really good reviews from participants, with many of those attending learning something new, one resident said 'it was a wake-up call making people aware of scams', another said that she was 'overwhelmed by the speakers and the performance', and other residents commented 'that they thoroughly enjoyed the event'.

### **Limes Farm Clean Up Day**

Our Community Health and Wellbeing Team, along with local residents and members of staff from the True Stars Children's Centre, took part in the Limes Farm 'Spring Community Clean Up'. The event which is designed to encourage residents to come together and take pride in the area where they live, was very well received by everyone that attended.

The group armed with litter pickers, high vis jackets, bin bags and gloves went around the estate and collected any litter they found, helping to make the community a greener, cleaner place to live. One local resident that took part, commented how they enjoyed coming together with other residents for a common cause whilst making the estate cleaner.

The session ended with a well-deserved cup of tea and a slice of cake with everyone reflecting upon a 'good job done'. Other events are planned throughout the year including a Festival for Healthy Living on 28<sup>th</sup> April at the Limes Centre.

### **Museum Re-opening Events**

I was delighted to be part of the fantastic re-launch of our District Museum in Waltham Abbey, over the course of an exciting week in March. Because of the number of people involved in the funding, construction and support of the museum, we had three launch events, where we welcomed representatives from the Heritage Lottery Fund who were our main funders for the re-development of the museum; Arts Council England, who funded two feasibility studies linked to the Council's Museum, Heritage and Culture Service; our main contractors Coniston Ltd., and the many volunteers and staff who have worked so hard to get the museum shipshape for its re-opening to the public, which was on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March.

During the course of the week, we had over 1500 visitors to the museum, who were all enthralled with the transformation of the building and the creation of almost four times as much exhibition space as we had before. A particular favourite of visitors was the 'Core Gallery', which has an 'open storage' design feature, where visitors can view displays through floor to ceiling glass windows and can see into the actual stores where reserve items are kept. This allows for more regular changing of exhibits, therefore offering repeat visitors something different to see. The Core Gallery design is one of only two in the Eastern Region and we have the only museum in Essex with this feature.

I encourage fellow Members to visit our wonderful new facility which is very much 'History meets State of the Art', through clever use of the original Tudor building and the new, spacious modern extension that we now have.

I would like to take this opportunity, to give my sincere thanks to our Museum, Heritage and Culture Manager, Tony O'Connor and his excellent staff team for all of the incredibly hard work that they have undertaken over the last year, and to our Assistant Director, Julie Chandler for being such a great ambassador for the service.

### **Arts Council Resilience Fund**

In conjunction to the re-launch of our Museum Service, officers were successful in securing an additional £55,000 from Arts Council England (ACE), for two feasibility studies to look into

the potential for establishing a Development Trust for the service, and for developing a commercial approach for operation of the Council's own Museum and Lowewood Museum in Hoddesdon, which we manage on behalf of Broxbourne Borough Council.

The findings of the studies were very positive and highlighted the opportunities to be found from implementing a set of recommendations related to the work. Officers were in the process of preparing and reporting these to the Cabinet, when they found that a new round of Resilience funding was going to be launched by ACE. This resulted in the development of an Expression of Interest (first round bid) being submitted to ACE in February this year, for £280,000, which is supported by match funding from EFDC via an Invest to Save sum of £20,000 and £10,000 contribution each from Broxbourne Borough Council and Chelmsford City Council. EFDC already has a Service Level Agreement with Broxbourne BC which is currently under review, and a new partnership arrangement with Chelmsford Council has recently been set up to add strength to the ACE proposal and to assist in overall sustainability of services across the three districts.

I am delighted to advise Council, that we were notified of our success in this initial bid earlier this month and work is now underway to develop a full funding application & proposal, which needs to be submitted by May 5<sup>th</sup>.

Included within this proposal, is a plan to establish a Development Trust that would operate in parallel to the management of the Museum, Heritage and Culture Service and that would be able to access a wide range of new funding opportunities that the Council is prohibited from. It would also allow fundraising through legacy's, donations and a range of other avenues. Any funding raised would then be used to pay for development of new exhibitions, events, activities and innovation. It is proposed for the Trust to cover both the Epping Forest Museum and Lowewood Museum. Other elements of the funding bid include; a range of work to develop a commercial management approach, with pop up cafés, new marketing regime across both sites and potential access to display high profile exhibitions, and development of new audiences and visitors for the wider service.

We will know whether we have been successful with our application in July and if awarded the funding will commence delivery of the proposal from October. However, if unsuccessful in this bid to ACE, we have been advised that the Heritage Lottery Fund will be launching a new Resilience Fund of their own, which will be released in the summer. It is therefore hoped that this will provide an alternative opportunity if necessary.

### **External Funding to provide security and environment control Improvements at the Museum**

The museum has also been successful in obtaining a grant of £20,386 from Arts Council England to allow us undertake further security and environmental control improvements to the District Museum and Lowewood. This is to support our application for display loans from National and Major partner museums as part of our developing programme.

### **Motiv8 Dance Platform 2016**

I and Vice Chairman Jeanne Lea had the opportunity to attend a performance of our annual partnership project with Epping Forest College to showcase the dancing skills of our children and young people. The event took place at the College's theatre on Monday 21 and Tuesday 22 March with 221 children and young people, aged between 5 and 19 years, taking part. The performances were from Epping Forest College students from both the Dance and Performing Arts courses; students from DNA College and other dance groups including some of our very own after school dance clubs, for some of whom, it was their first public performance. This work was supported by a further 40 Epping Forest College

students from the Photography, Hair Make-up & Beauty and Art & Design courses assisting with filming, photography, programme design and theatrical make-up. We've had some great feedback from children, parents and dance leaders, including this from Micheal of The Stadium Theatre School: 'Thank you very much for a fantastic Motiv8!! The kids loved it and I had great feedback from parents saying what a great show it was! So thank you for your hard work and well done!!'

### **Leisure Management**

The procurement of the new Leisure Management Contractor is progressing to timetable, with the 5 short-listed tenders engaged in the initial phase of the competitive dialogue process. Indicative ideas have been brought forward for the design of the potential new Leisure Centre in Waltham Abbey, and a range of improvement proposals for other sites. The process will continue to be overseen by my Portfolio Advisory Group, who will be considering the first round of formal proposals in May. I will keep Council updated.