

## ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Council  
**Date:** 20 February 2024  
**Subject:** Community Health & Wellbeing  
**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Smruti Patel

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### **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Community, Health & Wellbeing Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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#### "Let's Get Together" - Civic Offices Community Hub

The Community Development & Wellbeing (CDW) Team launched a new weekly activity session, 'Let's Get Together,' on 23 January in the Community Hub. The free sessions offer the opportunity for local residents to drop in and socialise, play games, learn a new skill or simply relax and chat to others over a hot drink. Running every Tuesday from 2.30pm – 4.30pm, the sessions provide a different activity to enjoy each week as part of the Council's Warm Places initiative.

The first knitting session proved popular with 11 people attending. Several attendees shared that they struggled with mental health issues but really felt the benefit of coming along to an activity where they could learn new skills and get to know new people in a safe and welcoming environment.

#### Civic Offices Community Hub

November saw yet another increase in usage with the busiest month since the Hub opened with 597 visitors, rising from 539 in October. Barclays, the Warm Places initiative, plus the Council's Homelessness service and Epping Foodbank saw the highest usage.

#### Youth Council secure funding for secondary school safety programme

Epping Forest Youth Council has been successful in securing £8,800 via Essex County Council's Local Community Fund. The money will enable the Broadcast Roadshow to be delivered in nine secondary schools across the Epping Forest district.

Arc Theatre's Broadcast production has been developed to tackle the issue of sexual harassment and is aimed at young people in Years 7 to 9. Broadcast uses a range of activities and techniques, including Arc's highly engaging forum theatre approach and short films, to reinforce positive messages, supporting young people to develop new and counter narratives to challenge issues such as violence against women and girls, misogyny, and domestic abuse. The programme is devised to support schools to successfully deliver the new RSHE (Relationships, Sex and Health Education) agenda.

In addition to the secondary school programme, funding totalling £10,450 from the Community Safety Partnership has enabled Broadcast Junior, the primary school version of the theatre production, to be delivered in 15 primary schools across the district to over 1200 Year 5 and 6 pupils.

### Epping Forest Youth Council Elections

Youth Council elections will be held in 2024. Pre-election promotion and campaigning is being delivered in all secondary schools, with the closing date for nominations set for 16th February. The online nomination form is available at [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/EFYCNomination](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/EFYCNomination). The elections will be held in schools from Monday 26 February until Friday 22 March 2024. Election results will be announced by Georgina Blakemore on Tue 26 March. The newly elected cohort of Youth Councillors will take up office on Monday 8 April.

### Limes Farm Youth Club

Facilitated by the CDW Team, Youth Unity CIC has been successful in its Violence & Vulnerability Community Safety Grant application totalling £10,910, to continue the running of the Limes Farm Youth Club for 2024/25. This will also include the provision of additional skills sessions for young people in the local community.

### Limes Farm Colts Football Sessions

As part of the community offer in Chigwell, Limes Farm Colts Football Club continues to provide free football sessions for children living on the Limes Farm Estate, with over 40 children attending each week. Work is underway to secure external funding to sustain the project longer term.

### Thursday Ninefields Youth Group

A poet revisited the Ninefields Youth Group on 25 January to deliver a workshop exploring poetry in song lyrics, with an opportunity for the young people write their own material. Baloo, a Belgian Mallinois dog who was tragically injured whilst deployed with Essex Police, also visited the Youth Group before Christmas to help the young people think about mental wellbeing and encourage discussion around disability.

### Epping Forest Dementia Friendly Communities

A new Epping Forest Dementia Friendly Community Group logo has been created in conjunction with a group of local school children to mark the change in name from the Epping Forest Dementia Action Alliance.

Supported by the Council's CDW Team, a partnership bid involving Buckhurst Hill Parish Council, Loughton and Epping Town Councils has been submitted to Essex County Council's Carers Community Fund. If successful, a project called 'Dementia Friendly Community Carers' will be delivered for a year and ensure residents living with dementia, and their Carers, continue to have access to local services supporting them to live healthy, safe and independent lives.

### Multiply Programme

The district-wide maths project continues through partner engagement, working closely with Harlow College and The International Education Group, expanding the project to deliver courses such as Gardening Maths Magic and Cooking by Numbers. The new courses are in addition to the core programmes of financial and budget management and parent support courses. The CDW Team's role in this government funded project is to act as an advocate and coordinator to ensure partners are working together, and resident groups have access to the delivery partners, ensuring those in need have the opportunity to engage in the initiative.

### Epping Forest Community Champions

A new Waltham Abbey Community Champion has been recruited meaning there are now 6 Community Champions based in Waltham Abbey alone, and 25 Community Champions in total across the district.

A new section has been established on the Frontline on-line portal to enable Community Champions to refer and signpost residents to organisations via the App. Setting up the Community Champion group on Frontline allows the Team to record how many referrals are made via the Community Champions initiative.

Ongar and Chigwell Community Champions are supporting the Operation Minerva Project which is tackling violence against women and girls.

Events have offered information to residents in Debden, Ongar and Roydon in respect of general crime prevention matters and improving personal safety including the provision of free self-defence classes.

Community Champions completed 296 voluntary hours in the community in December 2023.

### Epping Forest Community Lottery coming soon.

The Council has been successful in its application to secure a Remote Society Licence from the Gambling Commission, with nominated officers and named licence holders having undertaken all relevant training. The Council is currently in the process of applying for membership of the Lotteries Council with a view to launching an exciting new Community Lottery platform later in the year.

### Museum Exhibitions

December saw the successful "Greater in Spirit, Larger in Outlook" exhibition, which was funded by the Arts Council, draw to a close.

The next exciting display will involve the re-imagining of the temporary exhibition gallery with a wonderful display called 'Towns Through Time' on show. Photographs featuring towns around the district including Ongar, Waltham Abbey, Chigwell, Loughton, and Epping will be displayed, many of which date back to the early 1900s.

### What's On Brochure

The latest edition of "What's On in Epping Forest" January-March is available to pick up from the Civic Offices, Epping Forest District Museum, all district libraries, Waltham Abbey Tourist Information office and wider venues across the district. Alternatively, the online edition is available via: <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Whats-On-Jan-24.pdf>

### Complaints Team

The Complaints Team is seeing a stable volume of complaints, with waste-service related complaints significantly reducing. Teams across the Council are receiving direct support from Customer Service's staff to help them address the root causes of the complaints being seen, and to assist in the implementation of improvement plans.

## Waste

Customer Service staff are supporting the new waste service project with a review of existing procedures to identify efficiencies and simplification of online services.