

Report to the Council

Subject: Leisure & Wellbeing Portfolio

Date: 20 February 2014

Portfolio Holder: Councillor E Webster

Recommending:

That the report of the Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder be noted.

Leisure

Work is now well underway on arrangements for the Tour de France, which, as I set out in my last report, will pass through the District on 7 July 2014. The County Council led steering group has been meeting and this Council has held its first meeting of the parish councils through which Le Tour will pass. This is a very prestigious event which will bring with it worldwide coverage and interest. Although most of the technical planning for the event will be undertaken by the organisers themselves, there will still be much for the Council to do, especially regarding local information and communication for those who live or work on the route, or use the route to get to work etc. I expect to be mentioning Le Tour in every report to Council between now and 7 July when it comes through.

Leisure & Cultural Strategy

I chaired the first meeting of my Portfolio Holder Advisory Group on 13 January. This was a very useful meeting in establishing the parameters for the review and to get a better understanding of what the strategy should encompass. At the meeting officers from the Community Services Group gave presentations on the work they do, and I am sure that the Advisory Group Members were surprised by the breadth of activities provided and undertaken. The Advisory Group will undertake a tour of the Council's leisure facilities on 7 February, to gain a better understanding of the facilities and courses on offer to our residents, and to see the buildings in action. I will continue to report to Members on the progress of developing the overall strategy.

Community Services

Epping Forest Youth Council: Youth Councillors are busy promoting the forthcoming Youth Council elections in their schools. In total, Youth Councillors will support staff to deliver 25 separate assemblies across all year groups in every secondary school over a three week period! Early indications are that many young people intend to put themselves forward for election in March.

Aiming Higher for Young People': A second programme of Aiming Higher workshops is currently being delivered to pupils in Year 9 and 10 who have been identified as at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training). Following a very successful pilot in West Hatch School, groups of young people from Debden Park and Roding Valley High School are participating in a series of engaging sessions which focus on building confidence & self - esteem and challenging negative behaviour and attitudes. The project forms part of the EF Youth Futures initiative and results fed back from teachers at West Hatch School, highlight fantastic improvements in young people's behaviour and application to their school work.

After School Dance Clubs: Community Services Arts are working with two new schools to support the development of after school dance clubs. Nazeing Primary and Coopersale and Theydon Garnon Primary have both signed up and will be starting sessions this term. In the first term, as well as finding the teachers, EFDC supports with the set up and administration of the sessions. After this initial period, support is less frequent until the club is sustained by the school. In total nine clubs have been set up with the support of EFDC. Over 150 children participate each term, across the district.

Transitions Training Programme: The Transitions skills development programme, which was launched in the Epping Forest District in 2012/13 to support care workers and professionals in local residential and nursing homes, has now been expanded across the rest of Essex, with funding from Essex County Council. Recent training has been attended by artists and professionals from across the County and due to the high level of demand, several more sessions have been requested.

The Museum at the Core project: Museum staff and volunteers have been busy preparing to clear the museum building ahead of the project construction works due to begin in the spring. At the same time, the lead design team for the project have been appointed and all are keen to start work as soon as the lease purchase of 37 Sun Street has been finalised.

Grant aid for projects: The museum has been successful with two oversubscribed competitive funding bids from the Museum Development Fund; £2000 to purchase IT equipment to assist in collections digitization projects, which will allow more of the collections at EFDM and Lowewood to be available online. £1000 of Funding has also been secured to support a display initiative to provide opportunities for community groups to display objects in two 'community cases' at Lowewood Museum and at the museum showcase in the Civic Offices.

Museum Acquisitions: Whilst limiting the amount of new acquisitions for the museum during the building development project, the Council has recently made a small number of acquisitions and has received donations, which otherwise, would be lost from the historical record of the district. One item that has been acquired through the portable antiquities scheme is an inscribed silver thimble of 17th century date found in Chigwell, which was acquired with support from the Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Fund.

The Museum has also received as donations, a complete National Service army uniform (late 1940's-1950) from a family in Loughton and a set of decorative Victorian ornamental ceramics from 'the Laurels', Buckhurst Hill.

Hidden Histories: To support the work of the Equalities Officer the Museum has produced a 'Hidden Histories' display panel as part of the Councils' promotion of LGBT history month. The panel, which will be displayed at the civic offices during February and then in eight libraries across the district in March, illustrates how the collections held at the museum show changing attitudes to same sex relations.

History of Epping Town: The Museum is working with Epping Town Council on two projects to support engagement with the history of the town. The Museum has made a first contribution to the Epping Town Council magazine with an article on Lucien Pissarro, his links with the town and how this is reflected in his art, including works held by the Museum. The Museum is also working with Epping Town Council to organise an event on 18th June to commemorate the towns' links with the Second World War submarine HMS Sickle, which the town sponsored. The date is the 70th anniversary of the loss of the submarine and will be marked by an exhibition at the Epping Town Council Offices and other civic events.

Young Curators Project: Museum staff, with funding from Arts Council England and the Royal Opera House Bridges project, have launched a programme to provide young people

experience in practical skills to assist them in curating their own exhibitions. Over the next year the Museum will work with students from Epping Forest and Herts Regional College alongside open taster sessions on; design, photography creative writing and art. The project will culminate in two exhibitions created and curated by the participants. Two members of the Museum team have been trained to provide guidance to participants in the Arts Award scheme to bronze and silver standard.

World War One Commemorations: The Museum is engaged with other officers at EFDC and partner organisations to prepare material to support the centenary commemorations planned in August this year to mark the start of the First World War. This will include an exhibition at the Civic Offices.

VAQAS Award: The Epping Forest District Museum has retained its Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme Award, administered by Visit England and this year, the work that the Museum team has undertaken in developing services on behalf of Broxbourne Borough Council, has seen Lowewood Museum obtain the VAQAS award for the first time.

Thousands of pounds being invested in local sport: Due to the high recognition that Community Services receives for its sports and health development work, it has secured a range of grant awards from £1000 to £3,000 from Active Essex, which is the County's Olympic Legacy Development division, have awarded a range of funding grants to the district for sports and activity development. This includes a variety of sports taster sessions for adults, to encourage them to get back into sport, as well as funding to support local sports clubs with 'inclusion' activity. This had total for April to September has been around £20,000.

Annual Sports Awards have been re-branded: The Council's Sports Awards that are open to individuals and clubs, have four new categories. These include young sports person of the year (£1,000 one-off award), club of the year (£1,000 one-off award) and small group/club grant (up to £250 per application) and coaching bursary (up to £250 per application).

Workplace Challenge: Funding has additionally been secured from Active Essex to operate a series of 'free' work place sports initiatives for Council staff and elected members, in order to promote improved health and well-being. The various sessions are available over the period of 8 x weeks and range from mountain biking to badminton and are all based, or, start from Epping Sports Centre. A limited number of 'loan' bikes can be booked in advance