

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

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 30 September 2014

**Subject:** Leisure & Community Services

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Helen Kane

---

### **Recommending:**

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

---

### **Community Services**

**Summer holiday activities a huge success** – Over 1025 children, young people and their families / carers took part in the excellent range of summer holiday activities and schemes provided by the Council's Community services teams, over the six weeks of the summer holidays.

As a new Portfolio Holder for Community Services, I was delighted to visit some of the activities provided and I was particularly impressed with the work that the teams provide for families with children of mixed ability and additional needs. On speaking to some of the parents, I found that as local residents, they find this provision as a fantastic help to overall family wellbeing. Many of the children attending the sessions go to school outside of the district, as their needs cannot be catered for locally, but the Council's Inclusion programme is an excellent opportunity for the families to feel part of their community, meet other people and be much less isolated.

I also visited a Play in the Park session, which was part of a 'free' outdoor family activity scheme available over the summer, part funded by local Town and Parish Councils, which targets areas of disadvantage in the district. The session was taking place on Roding Valley Recreation Ground and around 100 children, adolescents and parents/carers were participating in the various activities available. (Over 1000 people took part in the full programme available). This is an excellent example of us working with our local partners to address the diverse needs of Epping Forest residents.

Staff also worked closely with the local schools delivery groups (LDG's) to support local children in need and over 60 x children from the urban and rural areas were provided with free places at the holiday playschemes, funded through the LDG's with support of the Council.

I would urge members to find out more about the excellent range of services provided at holiday times and term-time throughout the year, which cater for the needs of all children, young people and families in the district.

**Epping Forest Youth Council** - Members of the EF Youth Council lead by example when they participated in a full day of volunteering at 'The View' in August. The day, which was supported by the City of London, involved the young people cutting back shrubs and trees to

clear an area to the rear of the Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge. The aim of the day was to promote the Council's Youth Volunteering programme and encourage as many young people to give something back to their community and all youth councillors reported that they felt a real sense of achievement from participating in the day.

**District Museum Service** – Even though our district museum is closed due to the redevelopment project, we have still had an excellent programme of activities available over the summer period, through utilizing other accommodation including the Library in Waltham Abbey. Although there was limited space, we had an average of 50 attendees per afternoon at the museum's family activities during the summer holidays and several new contacts were made with families.

The museum has also attended a number of outreach events around the District with displays about the museum's redevelopment project. These have been managed and mainly delivered by our Audience Development Officer who is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of the wider re-development bid. We have also provided Museum stands at Epping Town Show, North Weald Airfield Community Day, Lopping Hall in Loughton, Waltham Abbey Holy Cross weekend and around 100 people have visited the museum stall at each of these events. Other delivery by Museum staff included clay modelling activities at four Playschemes sites and the launch of the first 'Community Cabinet' exhibition at the Civic Offices, which was a display of objects connected with the First World War, which had been loaned by members of the public. The objects had been found at a First World War community event, organised by the Audience Development Officer, held at Budworth Hall in Ongar, in partnership with Ongar Historical Society.

**Lowewood Museum** - At our sister museum in Hoddesdon, which we have been managing for two years now, over 150 people took part in the Summer Family Fun Day and the regular family activities on Thursday afternoons at Lowewood have been really successful, with a growing family audience. As part of the development work at Lowewood, our Education Officer has been expanding work in the Broxbourne borough, including providing an activity at the CHIPS playscheme in Hoddesdon, which is for children with emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties plus their siblings.

**Rural Roots** – As part of a new programme to work in collaboration with rural communities, staff worked with a range of partners in Fyfield in the development and staging of a 'Rural Roots' event, which involved local Scouts, church, WI and Dr Walkers School. Work was undertaken in the lead up to the community event including 'Art in Windows', which commemorated local people involved in World War 1. The day was attended by over 500 local people of all ages from the village and was a tremendous success. It is planned to continue with the partnerships built through Rural Roots in Fyfield and to work with other rural communities on a rolling programme.

**Leisure and Cultural Strategy** – The Portfolio Holder Advisory Group on the preparation of the Leisure and Cultural Strategy, is due to consider the draft Strategy on the 2 October. The Strategy will also address the level of provision of future leisure facilities provided by the District Council, and the best means of procuring their management.