

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 1 November 2016

Subject: Leisure & Community Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Kane

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

Community Services

I am pleased to provide my monthly report to Council, which, as usual, contains several very interesting and innovative projects, which have been developed by our Community Services staff, for people of all ages in the Epping Forest District.

Community, Health and Wellbeing

Compass Club makes 'Best of West' Final:

I am delighted to advise members that our Primary School Compass Club project was a proud finalist at the recent 'Best of West Awards' 2016. The NHS West Essex CCG received over 100 nominations for this year's awards and the Compass Club was ecstatic to make the finals, having been nominated for Best Team/Project.

Chief Officer at NHS West Essex CCG, Deborah Fielding, said: "The Best of West Awards celebrates the exceptional work being done in West Essex to keep people well. The finalists for these awards come from all sectors of the community, demonstrating the commitment and enthusiasm local people have to deliver the best health and care services".

The Compass Club is run in various primary schools across the district and operates as a 10 week project, working with children in Years 3 & 4 with Special Educational Needs. The project uses a mix of theory work and physical activity to help the children with their confidence, social skills and behaviour management. Now in its second year, it has been delivered to 148 children in 12 of the district's Primary Schools. The project is currently free for schools and is funded by the Epping Forest Schools' Local Delivery Group.

Active Epping Forest Engagement Event – 19th October:

Working in conjunction with colleagues from Essex County Council Active Essex team, our staff organised an Active Epping Forest Engagement event in October, which was held at Loughton Cricket Club and was opened by the star guest, former British 100m record holder, Commonwealth gold medal winner and Olympian, Montell Douglas.

The aim of the event was to give people of all ages and abilities with an interest in health and wellbeing, the opportunity to have their say on the development of sport, physical activity and leisure in the Epping Forest District.

The key priority for Active Epping Forest is to try and encourage more people in the district to become more active and the attendees had some very good ideas on how this could be

done. The plan is to have a constituted group that is independent and representative of the local population, who will be able to drive forward Active Epping Forest and to shape the development of local sport, physical activity and leisure provision by applying for funding, delivering new projects locally, and sharing good practice.

Epping Forest Youth Council Elections:

We have already started the election of our new cohort of Youth Councillors and the deadline for nominations closed on Friday 14th October. All nine secondary schools within the district, were visited our Community Services staff and received promotional assemblies/lunch time visits, to highlight the benefits and rewards for being a member of the Epping Forest Youth Council.

The actual Youth Council elections are currently taking place and will finish on Friday 11th November. These have been organised and are being delivered with support of the Democratic services team, to provide the young people with the full voting experience including candidate booklets, ballot papers and polling booths. The election results will be declared on 16th November 2016.

The successful candidates will then undertake a programme of induction and training during November, so that they can take handover from our existing Youth Councillors, who have done such an excellent job.

MiLife Emotional Health and Wellbeing Project for young people:

I was looking forward to attending the first roll out, of a fantastic new mental health project that was piloted at Epping St Johns School in October.

The MiLife Project has been developed as a result of Epping Forest Youth Councillors highlighting the very real concerns of young people with regard to mental health. Using the Youth Council project budget that was agreed by Cabinet following the Task and Finish Review of Youth Engagement in the District, Community Services and the Youth Council have developed MiLife in partnership with NELFT (North East London Foundation Trust) health organisation.

Utilising the local skills of the Red Balloon Family and the professional expertise from NELFT, the MiLife project provides hour-long workshops for young people in years 7 – 11. Workshops are delivered through theatre performance, videos and practical demonstrations, which focus on real life scenarios and testimonials from local young people. The students from St John's were informed about different aspects of mental health, how everyone is different and the importance of positive mental health and being given the strategies to cope. It was essential that the young people were left with the confidence and knowledge of how to get help if they need it and they were therefore provided with details of safe and confidential contacts.

The professionalism of the workshop and performances and the powerful and positive messages that it gave to young people and the feedback that our staff have received from the professional advisors, on the way MiLife has been developed, has been tremendous.

The need for this type of support work which was identified by our Youth Council through their Youth Conference, was completely validated through the number of young people who asked for further information and support. This is an issue which is not unique to Epping Forest, but endemic across the country.

Following the pilot, additional workshops will be delivered within the school and a website has been developed for students, parents and teachers to go to for information – www.milife.org.uk.

The plan is for MiLife to be delivered in all of our state secondary schools in the district.

Grant Aid notifications

As Members are aware, the Council awards grants to voluntary and community organisations to support them in provision of a range of community services, from sports and social clubs, to charities and support organisations. These are identified as making a valuable contribution to the social and physical wellbeing of our residents and include major national charities and other smaller entities which enrich the tapestry of community activities that make our district such an enjoyable place to live.

From the last cohort of applications, the following groups have been approved for receiving grant aid:

- Hertfordshire Boat Rescue, which will receive funds to assist them with insurance costs for their rescue boats and equipment. This is an invaluable service, run by volunteers, in terms of emergency water rescue and training in water safety;
- Hastingwood Village Hall, which will receive funds towards refurbishment works. The hall provides much needed facilities within a rural location; and,
- Ongar and Villages Voluntary Care Association, which recently received funds to support its core costs. This organisation supports older people living independently, by arranging transport to take them to medical appointments.

Museum, Heritage and Culture (MHC)

King Harold 950 Festival £15k HLF grant approved

Our MHC team were successful in securing funding as part of a partnership application, for a grant of £14,900 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, to deliver a range of events and activities to commemorate the 950th anniversary of the Battle the of Hastings and the death of King Harold II.

The celebrations around the battle of Hastings and King Harold have been taking place all over the country and began in September in Waltham Abbey, with the opening of the new exhibition, *Harold II: the Life, legend and legacy of England's last Anglo Saxon king* at the museum until 21st December. The exhibition features a major loan from the British Library of a group of important medieval manuscripts from Waltham Abbey (this loan was made possible by the new security arrangements at the museum). The exhibition has also been supported with material from the British Museum and Bayeux in France, as well as Chelmsford and Saffron Walden Museums. Other Festival events included King Harold Day, the annual community event, held in the Abbey Gardens and on the 12th November the Museum Service has organised a major day school to be held at Waltham Abbey Town Hall, which will explore current research on King Harold and his links to Waltham Abbey.

Meridian Line Mosaic

Members may be aware that we have a Meridian Line that runs through Sun Street in Waltham Abbey. Our MHC staff have been working with Waltham Abbey Town Partnership and Waltham Abbey Town Council, on the commissioning of a new mosaic, which will be

installed in Sun Street, to mark the position of the Meridian line and the plans to celebrate this magnificent project.

Lowewood Museum

As reported previously, MHC was successful with an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop an exhibition on the subject of the nationally important story of the Pulham's of Broxbourne. Working with B3Living, this project includes work to improve the care of the Pulham factory scheduled monument. The exhibition and a range of related events will take place early in 2017.

We have a special '*Storybook*' exhibition in situ at Lowewood Museum, which is part of the 2016 Literary Anniversary. Linked to the exhibition, our Cultural Engagement officers led '*Storybook*' readings with various groups, working in partnership with care homes: B3 Living (Waltham Cross), Sherrell House (Chigwell), Hanover Court, (Waltham Abbey) and with Epping Youth Theatre.

Workshops were also run in September with older participants to generate material for the exhibition. Participants read out loud to camera from books by authors featured in the exhibition. The resulting films will be accessible on an interactive video screen in a story corner, encouraging visitors to enjoy being read some classic favourite stories.

The exhibition explores a range of much loved authors and runs until 23rd December.

Museum Redevelopment Project Award Nominations

The major refurbishment and extension of our Museum, has attracted a national profile in building and design circles, where it has been nominated for a range of awards including an Architect's Journal Retrofit Award.

The Awards evening which was held in September, saw Epping Forest District Museum pitched amongst some very big players in the museum world, with work undertaken by architects Hawkins Brown, up against other shortlisted entries including the Victoria and Albert Museum. The District Museum was shortlisted in the Visitor Centres, Libraries and Museums Category, alongside projects at the V&A, Wellcome Collection and Gagosian Gallery. The Wellcome Collection was presented with the overall award in this particular category, but we and our architects, were delighted to be shortlisted with such a range of high profile museums.

The following evening saw another nomination for work undertaken at the museum, in the National Construction Manager of the Year Awards. The building contractor for the museum, Coniston Ltd., was a finalist in the New Build & Refurbishment £0-3 million category. Peter Griffiths, Coniston's construction manager on the Epping Forest District Museum project, was delighted to take home the silver award in this category, which featured eight other finalists.

Arts Council England Grant for the Arts £15k Award Approved

Our Cultural Team has been successful in securing a grant of £15,000 to support a multi-arts project for Epping Forest District in 2017, which will involve people from a range of age groups and abilities across the district.

The project, which is entitled '*Paths Unseen*', will see the development of new poems and associated illustrations produced by a range of media, that will be inspired by stories from the Epping Forest District. The project will include work with The Ongar Academy, with 100

pupils aged 13-14; 100 post 16 Epping Forest College students and 2 local adult writers' groups, in a programme of artist-led workshops on writing poetic work, performing poetic work and illustration. This will build to a public sharing of the work created, by an exhibition at the Museum, with supporting public programmes.

Paths Unseen will be led by local artists Keely Mills (Performance Poetry) and illustrator Jeff Winter, who will work with our stakeholder groups to encourage engagement in local heritage themes through their creativity. Keely Mills is a passionate advocate of poetry as a performative art form that can appeal to anyone and encourages all ages to discover their own poetic voice, sharing their work through performance. By working with Keely Mills, we aim to discover and tell some new stories about the Epping Forest District and encourage wider participation in local history and the arts.

Active Assemblies

Our Active Assemblies programme, which encourages Primary School children to be active, goes from strength to strength and is bringing a new income to the Council, through teacher training programmes delivered to Primary Schools outside of the district. This is the first step towards rolling the Active Assemblies project out to 'the rest of Essex' and other neighbouring boroughs. The training enables teachers to deliver the assemblies themselves supported by a resource pack with full filmed dance routines loaded onto a USB flash drive created by EFDC. In this way the teachers can use the toolkit to suit the needs of their pupils and adapt to the classroom as well as delivering in an assembly.

There is still the option for any school, education authority or health provider to buy in our officer or a trained dance artist to deliver the project and we will be targeting other regions of Essex to purchase this programme and deliver more training to teachers.

Leisure Management

I can report that all three shortlisted companies returned tenders for the new Leisure Management Contract. Currently, these are being evaluated to identify the Council's preferred partner on the basis of cost and quality. A key factor of the new contract, which is being offered for 20 years, is to design, build, operate and manage a new Leisure Centre to replace Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool. The proposed location for the new facility is at Hillhouse, Ninefields, Waltham Abbey, as part of the partnership scheme with NHS England and Essex County Council. The outline planning provision for the new facilities is due to be considered by District Development Management Committee at the end of November. It is planned to take a report to Cabinet and Council in December to award the new Leisure Management Contract. If a successful appointment is made, the new contract is due to start from the 1st April 2017.