

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 24 February 2022  
**Subject:** Community and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder  
**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor A Patel

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## **Recommending:**

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

## **Community, Culture & Wellbeing**

### Funding secured for the WorkSpace Health Programme

The Health, Wellbeing & Grants Team has secured £2,150 from Active Essex to support the further development and implementation of a programme of wellbeing activities for employees. Three local businesses have been recruited to pilot a Working Well Accreditation scheme in partnership with the Essex Wellbeing Service.

### Active Epping Forest given a cash injection

Active Essex has awarded the CCW service £10,000 towards development of the Epping Forest Active Network, with funds earmarked to support local delivery partners to encourage physical activity as a response to Covid recovery. The funding can also be used as a lever to secure wider resources.

### Crucial Crew

The Crucial Crew Project reached 1,002 Year 6 pupils from 23 primary schools across Epping Forest district this year. Partnering with other councils across Essex, a multi-award-winning theatre production company Hyperfusion (TickTok productions) was jointly commissioned to develop a bespoke piece inspired by a true story focussing on child exploitation and personal safety. The film produced was called 'Lines' and dramatically unravels the story of a young boy who was groomed and criminally exploited by a gang. The aim was to raise awareness of crucial personal safety issues, empowering pupils as they transition into secondary school and helping them to recognise potentially exploitative friendship or relationships via the powerful theatrical performance and associated interactive workshop. Evaluation of the new style Crucial Crew Project has been extremely positive with pupils and schools reporting excellent interaction, and powerful and engaging discussions as a result of participating.

### Project You

Project You, the six-week programme co-facilitated by the Council's Community, Culture & Wellbeing service and the Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) has been awarded £3,240 external funding from the "Find Your Active" fund. The funding will enable the combined physical activity and mental health workshops to be further rolled out across the district.

### Epping Forest Inclusion Programme

Following the success of the summer programme this year, the Council's Disability Inclusion Programme, continues to go from strength to strength. The programme of activities on offer

includes; tennis, trampolining, boxing, football and horse-riding sessions, to name a few. Since resuming face-to-face delivery, Disability Inclusion staff have actively engaged with 22 new families as part of the term time and holiday activity programmes. The new participants and their families have all reported being made to feel welcome and comfortable attending sessions. The October half term programme included an exciting “sleep over” at the Epping Forest District Museum, when great fun was had by all!

Further funding was secured from Essex County Council to support the multi-agency “Holiday Activity Food” (HAF) initiative and facilitate 15 spaces for the holiday activities and food for those most in need.

Disability Inclusion Programme participants continue to develop their social and communication skills with many becoming confident enough to attend CCW’s mainstream sports sessions, particularly the Saturday morning tennis and athletics sessions. These are huge success stories and demonstrates how the programme supports children and families to develop key skills and increases their social interaction with the wider community.

#### Falls Prevention funding success

The CCW team has secured further funding totalling £110,685 from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for the continuation of the “Social Active Strong” falls prevention programme across West Essex. The programme in Epping Forest will be led by Council’s new Falls Prevention Officer, Lucinda Harvey, and will aim to engage even more residents who have been referred for support to build their strength and confident in order to improve their health and wellbeing.

#### Epping Forest Youth Conference

On 19<sup>th</sup> November the Epping Forest Youth Council hosted its bi-annual Youth Conference. The full day event saw 100 local teenagers from the district’s secondary schools attend the Civic Offices for a day focussed on climate change issues and youth democracy. A fabulous array of guest speakers, including past Youth Councillors Cllr Holly Whitbread and Cllr Jaymey Mclvor, delivered informative presentations to the delegates, with the highlight of the day being a heated debate on the topic of climate change protest. Captivating films were shown to spark ideas, interactive voting tools were employed, and awareness was raised in respect of climate action projects for local secondary schools to participate in.

The day, which was webcast live, was a huge success with the energy and passion of the young people shining through. It was noted that the Epping Forest Youth Council was a model of good practice across Essex and beyond in terms of youth voice and enabling local youth democracy.

#### Limes Farm community initiatives

Continuing to utilise funding totalling £8,966 from the BBC, the Community & Culture Team has organised a programme of festive activities for residents living on the Limes Farm Estate in Chigwell. Lights have been purchased for a community Christmas tree and a Christmas Craft Camp has been organised for local school children and families. Plans to progress the community football programme, in partnership with Colebrook Royals FC, are well underway and support will be given to build capacity through offering training and qualifications to local volunteers.

#### Community Champions and Limes Farm Community Cafe

Community Engagement Officers, supported by Ward Members, have recruited two new Community Champions from the Limes Farm estate in Chigwell bringing the current total to 22 across the district. The Community & Culture Team supported the Residents Association and Community Champions to set up a Community Café in The Limes Centre on a Monday which is going from strength to strength.

### Ongar Puzzle and Games Club

Since the opening on 16 September, the Ongar Puzzle and Games Club established by the Community & Culture Team has attracted 68 visitors. Participants and volunteers have worked hard to raise £63.95 to re-invest in the club. The group is developing a growing loyal fan base and has the support of the local Church. The relationship with Epping Forest Foodbank is excellent with volunteers helping at sessions.

### Community Gardening Initiatives

With support from local residents and the Ninefields Residents Association, the lavender from the sensory gardens in Ninefields Square, Waltham Abbey was harvested for the Grand Lavender Harvest in October. The event was well attended by 66 residents who came along to make lavender wreaths, figurines and lavender bags in the Leisure Centre.

The Wheelers Farm allotment now has enough volunteers working on the plot to make the project sustainable and able to run without direct support from staff.

The most recent work with the Council's Sheltered Housing Schemes has been at Leonard Davis House & Buckhurst Court where new hexagonal raised beds have been installed for the residents.

### Dementia Friends Awareness Training

Dementia Friends Awareness Training has been organised for all staff in the Community & Wellbeing Directorate, the People Team and the Council's Mental Health First Aiders, to raise corporate awareness and support the concept behind the forthcoming Georgie Meadows Exhibition at Epping Forest District Museum. Members will shortly also be invited participate in a training session during the period the exhibition is open between January – April 2022.

### October Half Term

To celebrate the opening of the Game Plan Exhibition at Epping Forest District Museum, a range of activities inspired by "the games we know and love", alongside CCW's usual spooky offering, took place over October half-term. 155 children took part in activities such as Play in the Forest, a Games Galore Craft Camp and Cup Cake decorating. 150 lantern-making kits were also put together ahead of the Waltham Abbey Festival and Cavalcade of Light. Resources were also made available on the Museum website. In addition, CCW facilitated pupils from Hill House Primary School, Upshire Primary School and High Beech Primary School to take part in the lantern-making event.

### Creativity & Sports Awards and Young Citizen of the Year

Applications for the Creativity and Sports Awards closed on 12th December and those for the Young Citizen of the Year closed on 26<sup>th</sup> November. Some fantastic nominations have been received and winners will be announced at the Civic Awards event in the New Year.

### Arts Award Bronze

Arts Award graduates received their certificates from the Chairman of Council at the Museum in October. Arts Award is a nationally recognised qualification in the arts for young people age 7 – 25 years and all participants passed with flying colours.

### Takeover Day at Epping Forest District Museum

Friday 12 November saw Epping Forest District Museum participate in the national "Kids in Museums Takeover Day" initiative. The atmosphere in the Museum was fantastic as secondary school pupils from King Harold Academy in Waltham Abbey took over the running of the Museum for the whole day. Pupils facilitated tours for members of the public, 60 pupils from Upshire Primary School and special guests. Museum education staff and members of the Community & Culture Team worked with pupils in advance of the day to plan interactive activities and informative presentations which were all well received, with a real buzz in every gallery! Takeover Day is a national initiative encouraging engagement in museums for children

and young people of all ages. A representative from the national Kids in Museums team visited on the day and highlighted Epping Forest as an exemplar in this work.

The Museum also hosted a separate virtual takeover with students from Cardiff University and Essex University facilitating career sessions, Q&A's and practical training on collections care as part of this initiative.

### Museum Education and Outreach

The Museum's education service has been in high demand with schools. In person sessions at the Museum have been taking place every Thursday as well as sessions also taking place in schools. In total, since April 2021, the service has engaged with over 6000 pupils.

### Collections Rationalisation Project

To date the Rationalisation Project Team has reviewed all items at the Museum in Store 1 and Store 2, the North Weald store and the Crate offsite store. This means these items have all been photographed, condition checked and assessed as part of the first phase of the project. The Museum currently has agreement from other museums to take approximately 30 items which are more relevant to their collections from the selection of items that have been through the Council's Portfolio Holder decision process to date. The Museum has secured an additional £2,000 to support this project from SHARE Museums East focusing on the photography collection. A pilot will be undertaken to digitize, review and gather more information on 700 photographs in the collection.

### Exhibitions

The Museum is delighted to have opened the 'Game Plan' exhibition, which is on loan from the Victoria and Albert Museum of Childhood and explores the history of boardgames in a highly interactive display. Following this the Museum will host the Wellcome Collections exhibition 'Georgie Meadows: Stitched Drawings' which brings together 24 textile artworks exploring personal experiences of ageing and dementia. The exhibition will be accompanied by a full programme of public engagement as well as professional development and training. The Museum itself has been recognised by the Epping Forest Dementia Action Alliance as working toward being a Dementia Friendly venue with a clear action plan to support this work. Part of this will include Dementia Friends information session for partners, local businesses and other colleagues in the Council as well as ensuring all staff at the Museum are Dementia Friends Awareness trained.

### Interfaith Week

To mark Interfaith Week, the community display case based in the Museum's Core Gallery is showcasing a display of objects selected by religious denominations in the district which groups feel reflect key attributes of their religious practice and community. The display aims to celebrate, increase awareness, promote discourse and build relationships between multiple faith groups, the Museum and visitors. Interfaith week ran from 14<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> November but the display will remain on view to the public until February 2022.

### Holocaust Memorial Day

To commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, the Museum took part in a special virtual event on 31 January 2022 organised by South West Essex Reform Synagogue commemorating the Loughton Boys, the Holocaust survivors who came to the district as part of their journey to recovery. The Museum's highly acclaimed 2021 exhibition and associated projects were highlighted and participants heard from the daughter of Harry Spiro, one of the Loughton Boys, about her father's experiences and from Dr Chris Pond on the history of Holmehurst, the house in Loughton where the boys stayed.