

Report to the Council

Subject: Leisure & Wellbeing Portfolio

Date: 30 July 2013

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Elizabeth Webster

Recommending:

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

Community Services:

Summer Holidays

We have entered a very busy time of year for the Community Services teams with a vast programme of activities and events to keep our local children, young people and families entertained. The summer holiday brochure with details all of the Council's holiday activities was circulated to all local primary schools and secondary school years' 7, 8 and 9 and is available at a range of outlets across the district. This year's programme offers over 170 activities for children and young people aged 3 – 18 including inclusive sessions for young people with additional needs. Several new activities have also been introduced this year in line with Olympic legacy and national trends. Members are welcome to join me for a tour of the activities to see what an extensive programme is available.

Health and Well-being

Community Services continues to provide a range of health improvement initiatives for people of all ages across the whole district and was recently successful in securing £120,000 from Harlow Health Centres Trust for development of a HealthWorks programme in Harlow District. This follows on from a very successful scheme in Waltham Abbey which is now self sustainable through support from young volunteers and other local organisations.

eNgage Performance at Harlow Playhouse

The annual 'eNgage' dance event was staged at the Playhouse in Harlow at the end of June which is a showcase of local community dance groups from the district accompanied by a range of performances from theatre and private dancing schools. The aim of the event is to celebrate local work with school groups and provide inspirational performances by more advanced dancers with the aim of developing aspirations of our young dancers. This year, the showcase attracted groups from as far as Chelmsford and Clacton.

New Astroturf Pitch at Town Mead, Waltham Abbey

I am pleased to report that the new all weather Astroturf pitch is finally completed after a series of delays due to poor weather conditions earlier in the year and the need for extensive environmental testing required by the Environment Agency.

Members will recall that the pitch is provided under a joint management agreement with Waltham Abbey Town Council, who will be responsible for managing and administering bookings. Community Services has ensured a balanced programme of activity on the pitch, which includes commercial 5-a-side league, local clubs and community football provision for young people, and, Norwich City Football Club and Tottenham Hotspur have been attracted to the venue to provide youth development academies open to local youngsters. This is a really exciting facility for the district that will provide an income to the Council of approximately £19,000 per annum.

Youth Conference

On 5 July, I was very pleased to be part of the district Youth Conference which was staged by our Youth Councillors supported by officers, here in the Council Chamber. The event involved young representatives from all secondary schools in the district who took part in a wide range of activities including a Quiz time with Democratic Services and discussion groups about their experiences of living in the Epping Forest District. They were also invited to vote on what they felt should be the key priorities for EF Youth Council over the next year and participated in a debate about the voting age being lowered to 16, which was unanimously agreed. The conference was incredibly well presented by our young councillors and the whole day was vibrant and conducted in a professional and respectful way. We should be very proud of these young people who represent the Council so well.

Primary School Arts Award based on local Artist Walter Spradbery

With support from the District Museum, children from St. John's Church of England Primary School, Buckhurst Hill have achieved a Discover Level Arts Award based around the work of the famous local artist Walter Spradbery. The work produced by the children is being exhibited in the Museum's art gallery space and John Spradbery, Walter's son visited the Museum to present the award in mid July.