

Report to the Council

Subject: Leisure & Wellbeing Portfolio

Date: 26 September 2013

Portfolio Holder: Councillor E Webster

Recommending:

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

Leisure Centres

The three swimming pools recently participated in the Amateur Swimming Association Swimathon which raises money for a number of national charities. Altogether, the pools raised £12,000 whilst over £189,000 was raised at SLM sites throughout the country

Epping Sports Centre also hosted the annual Rhys Daniels Fun run which helps raise money for the Rhys Daniels Trust, a local based charity which raises money to provide a 'home from home' for families of seriously ill children who are in hospital.

The leisure centres continue to perform well financially but early indications are they will not generate sufficient income to allow the Council to receive a share of the above target income.

Young People's Summer Programme

An exciting and successful summer programme for young people throughout the District was delivered this year by Community Services. This summer saw an increase in the number of young people attending Community Services' summer activity programme. Popular activities included Playschemes, SX Urban Games, HealthWorks gym and swim Sessions, play in the park, disability sports sessions, active story telling, theatre shows and workshops, and dance events.

In addition, the Museum held an extremely successful summer activities programme delivered across our two sites and in partnership with community services. Five drop-in activities and a Family fun day event were held at the museum in Waltham Abbey attracting some 643 participants and a similar programme at Lowewood Museum was attended by over 500 people. Visitor comments were full of praise for the programme.

The current temporary exhibition at the district museum on the Tudors has been well received and three accompanying events (a Tudor music event and two historical re-enactment events) were made possible with some external funding and received very good feedback from visitors.

Disability Inclusion Project

Community Services' Disability Inclusion Project which provides sports and leisure activities for disabled children and young people throughout the district has secured additional funding from Essex County Council to provide swimming sessions for disabled children and young people. The sessions will start in October at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool.

Museum Redevelopment Project

The museum is moving forward with its HLF funded development project 'The Museum at the Core', project start up documentation and the appointment of key design consultants to take the project forward is currently on going. This is alongside the appointment of two new project staff to enable the museum to develop new audiences and increase audience and community engagement with the work of the museum through expanded volunteering opportunities and supporting stakeholders, in helping to shape the museum's programmes of work.

The museum will be staging a celebratory event on 1 November 2013 to mark the beginning of the exciting new phase of museum provision in the district. After this the museum will be closed to the public until spring 2015 to allow for the emptying of the building and of the major building works.

During our closure period the museum will continue to provide a public service to the public through our 'Museum on the Move' programme, which will include events held in library buildings across the district and at many of the town shows across the district in 2014.

Outreach services to schools and adult education and community groups will also be maintained during this period.

The public will also be able to access the museum service through the Lowewood Museum in Hoddesdon, which we operate on behalf of Broxbourne Borough Council.

The expanded Epping Forest District Museum which will re-open in Spring 2015, will put the collections held by the service at the heart of the museum and include completely new displays and gallery space, step free access across the whole of the museum (which includes a grade 2* listed building), improved visitor facilities including a room for community and educational activities.

Arts Award

The Museum Education and Outreach officer lead on a project with St. John's C of E Primary School, Buckhurst Hill. Fifteen children, aged between 8 and 9 years took part in a special Arts Award project based on the work of artist Walter Spradbery.

The children worked with a current practicing artist, Valerie Osment, to create prints based on Spradbery's work. This also helped them achieve the Discover level of Arts Award, a national programme which aims to inspire young people to engage with the arts and develop their talents.

An exhibition of the children's work and the presentation of their awards was undertaken by the Chairman of Council at an event held at the museum on the 16 July 2013.

Lowewood Museum, Broxbourne (SLA Arrangement)

The management of the Lowewood Museum for Broxbourne Borough Council by the Epping Forest District Museum continues to be viewed positively by Broxbourne members, officers and other stakeholders.

The Museum's current temporary exhibition is Picture This, showcasing local art from Lowewood's collection and has been curated by one of the museum's youth volunteers. Over 500 people attended the family craft workshops on Thursday afternoons over the summer. Museum staff and volunteers are currently auditing the museum's collection, ensuring all documentation is up to date, to help with the transfer of information to a new collections management system. The new collections management system will be installed early 2014 and will allow for greater access of the collection. It is being funded

as part of Epping Forest District Museum's Heritage Lottery Funded project. Museum staff are liaising with the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds for the return of a 14th century dagger found in Cheshunt in 1918, which has been on loan to the Armouries since the 1950s. The dagger will form part of the collection in the proposed re-display of Lowewood's Braham Gallery, showcasing the borough's early history. Museum staff are currently looking into the possibilities of museum room hire for interested groups, as well as using the pottery workshop for booked pottery classes.

The Museum's recent temporary exhibition was China in the East which showcased Chinese collections from local museums. A grant of £1,700 has been achieved from the East Anglian Regional Archive Council, and with support from the Friends of Lowewood and the Hoddesdon Society we are able to digitise the Hoddesdon Newsreel film collection, making the films publicly accessible. The Museum continues to develop new audiences, working with the U3A to provide study days as well as developing a youth panel for 16–23 year olds.