

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Subject: Leisure & Community Services

Date: 25 September 2018

Portfolio Holder: Councillor H. Kane

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

Community, Health and Wellbeing

Epping Forest Inclusion Project

I am delighted to report that the Epping Forest Inclusion Project has secured further funding of £37,600 from Action for Children. This funding will enable the Community, Health & Wellbeing Team to continue to provide a wide range of sport and leisure activities for children and young people with disabilities until October 2019. The Inclusion Project not only benefits the child with a disability but the whole family, enabling siblings to take part in summer holiday programmes too. To date approximately 1,000 individual children and young people with disabilities have benefited from the Epping Forest Inclusion Project.

Day trip to Southend for people living with Dementia

Organised by the Council's Older Peoples' Engagement Officer, this very successful day trip for people with dementia and their partners/carers, was provided in partnership with Epping Rotary Club, who paid for the coach and supplied volunteers to support the day-trippers. Thirty five participants took part and feedback received included comments such as:

"It was the first time my wife has felt able to have a day out on a coach for a long time. It was such a relief to know that there were people on hand to help if needed. It also meant that I could sit back and not have to worry about where to park and accessibility to all amenities. So in all it was a very successful day out."

"Thank you so much for such a lovely day at Southend, it's a long time since I visited a seaside, due to trains etc. are too much for me as have to have a stroller for walking."

"Just wanted to say a very big thank you for a great trip. Very well organised and the leaders were brilliant, helping the less able on and off the coach. So thoroughly enjoyable. Thank you again."

Summer Activity Programme

This year's Summer Holiday Activity Programme saw over local 2,000 children and young people participate in a wide range of exciting activity days, family workshops, children's shows and multi-sport camps. Multi-sports camps were delivered in Epping, Loughton and Waltham Abbey with 689 children attending throughout the summer. The ever popular, free, family Play in the Park sessions were delivered throughout the district, in partnership with Town and Parish Councils, and saw 1,298 children attending. There was also a fabulous range of creative workshops on offer such as; cake decorating, "Customise your Shoes" and

“Funky Seed Head Sculptures” and sports sessions such as: Street Tennis and Basketball and these all proved very popular.

Active Essex Funding

I am pleased to report that the team has successfully secured funding of £12,360 from Active Essex for a range of additional physical activity projects targeting inactive adults. The projects include a “This Girl Can Festival” on Sunday 7th October 10am – 2pm at Zinc in Ongar. The Festival will offer free taster sessions and workshops to encourage women and girls to be more active.

We are also building on the success of the Active Living Project, by launching two new bespoke programmes; Active Living for Adults with Special Educational Needs (SEN) will work with disability groups to encourage them to be more active and an Active Living Mental Health Project will work with the Open Door Friendship Group and Cherry Tree Therapy Group, to give people experiencing poor mental health the opportunity to be more active and improve their wellbeing. In addition, a project will be delivered in partnership with the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and local care homes focusing on improving the strength and balance of residents. The funding will also be used to deliver two “Get Back into Netball” programmes in partnership with England Netball.

Epping Forest Youth Council

The Youth Council’s Drugs Awareness Project has further evolved as the needs and complexities of the subject have been established. The awareness campaign – ‘Don’t Open the Gate to Gateway Drugs’ continues and there are currently five Arriva buses promoting this message throughout the district, by displaying the Youth Council’s promotional banner on their vehicles. Adult Members have suggested that the Youth Council should lobby central Government to introduce legislation to overcome the issues in relation to the purchase and use of Nitrous Oxide canisters and the Youth Council has taken this suggestion on-board.

Health & Wellbeing Thematic Action Groups

Following the launch of the Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy, the three multi-agency Action Groups, facilitated by the Council, are becoming well established. Key partners including; the West Essex CCG, Essex County Council, Virgin Care, Barnardo’s, local health providers and a range of Third Sector organisations are all contributing towards the delivery of local initiatives to enhance the health and wellbeing of local residents. Funding of £17,256 from Public Health has been allocated towards the work of the three thematic groups to date this year. This has enabled projects such as the MiLife Adolescent Mental Health programme to be further rolled out to every primary school in the district, and also funded the setup of a new local Park Run and a planned dance programme for older residents.

Museums, Heritage and Culture

Family Summer Activities

A wide range of creative workshops and sessions were provided across the district over the summer holiday, including 6 new drop in sessions called ‘Drop In and Draw’ at both museum sites; and this year, our ‘How to Draw’ workshops, which we run at 4 different sites, focused on drawing portraits and landscapes. Over 100 people took part in these activities. A ‘Musical in 2 Days’ workshop took place at North Weald, where the cast of 23 children worked incredibly hard to learn songs, a number of scenes and choreography from Bugsy Malone to perform in just two days.

At the Little Storytellers in Ongar, Michael Rosen's classic tale 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' was used as inspiration for a lively workshop, where MHC worked with the council's Inclusion Project to deliver a session for children with additional needs. New for this year was a Family Fun drop in session at the Limes Centre, providing opportunity to take our usual family art and craft session, out of the museum, to a different audience. New families learnt more about our service while making Anglo-Saxon helmets and Roman mosaics.

Also new for 2018 was Comedy Club 4 Kids at Chigwell Hall; set out like any other comedy show but all the jokes are tailored for children aged 6 years and older. This was the first time MHC had provided this event in the district and it was well received by the young audience and the adults who came with them.

In August, over 450 children and their families enjoyed drop in art and craft activities on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Many of the activities were themed around the First World War exhibitions, with the opportunity to make their own medals and clay poppies. Over 400 people also attended the Family Fun Days at each museum. At Epping Forest District Museum, puppet shows and willow weaving drew a crowd of people of all ages. At Lowewood, families enjoyed making tissue paper poppies and First World War postcards.

Exhibition at EFDM: Walter Spradbery, Artist in War and Peace

Our Chairman of Council opened the exhibition on Friday 20th July and the exhibition, which also commemorates the centenary of the end of the First World War, is part of a project which received a grant of £49,950 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This funding has also been used to undertake promotion in the Epping Forest Guardian and at Epping and Loughton Underground Stations and has enabled the purchase of new plan chests to store Spradbery's art at the museum. The next stage of the project will be the major celebration event on Saturday 29 September 2018, at St John's C of E Primary School in Buckhurst Hill, next to the site of Spradbery's former home, 'The Wilderness' in Epping Forest. Pupils from the school will recreate the 1938 Open Air Social that Spradbery held in the garden of his home. There will be tours to the site of 'The Wilderness', stalls, art displays and projections of Spradbery's work. Pupils from the school will perform a specially commissioned dance choreographed by Flux Dance Collective, and Impropera - the World's Only Improvised Opera Company will perform to close the event.

Education and Outreach

September is a very busy month for school workshops, with many local schools taking advantage of the museum's outreach service to give pupils the opportunity to handle original museum objects and learn about the past in their classrooms. Local schools are also visiting the museum to take part in workshops and see the displays. Talks about the museum and the Spradbery exhibition have been delivered to several specialist interest and U3A groups around the district and beyond. Over 70 pupils from St Johns, Buckhurst Hill took part in dance workshops run by MHC. 33 of these pupils performed their work to an audience of over 300 at the Keeping Dance Alive event at Loughton Family Fun Day on Sunday 15 July.

Museum Collections

A number of new items have come into the Council's Museum collection including an early medieval pendant found in Matching, that had been adapted from a Byzantine gold coin, and a Medieval Ring from Abess Roding. Walter Spradbery's daughter-in-law has also donated a number of items from the families private collection including his Distinguished Conduct Medal, British War Medal and Victory Medal. Funding from SHARE East of England has enabled the purchase of a new high security display case to exhibit high value items and this

has been installed in the Museum's Core Gallery and contains a changing display of these items acquired through the Treasure Process.

Volunteers continue to work on the museum collections. During July and August a total of 489 volunteer hours were recorded, which in monetary value equates to around £4,500. The museum is currently undergoing a review of its costume collection and has recruited 4 new volunteers to support this project.

We Will Remember Them

The museum was successful with its bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £16,140 for its WW1 Community Remembrance Project 'We Will Remember Them'. This project is based at our partner museum, Lowewood Museum, exploring the stories of Broxbourne servicemen during WW1, ensuring that commemoration of these soldier's lives on past the remembrance period. A project officer has been recruited.

The Culture Without Borders Development Trust

The trust is working with the museum on an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund's Resilient Heritage programme for funding to recruit a member of staff to support the work of the trust. If successful, the funding will also enable some start up support for individual giving campaigns and other fundraising events to support the work of the Museums, Heritage and Culture team.

Leisure Management

Construction work on the new leisure centre at Waltham Abbey is now in the final stages and on target to achieve the opening date of 17 November. A Member visit to the site took place on Tuesday 11 September. Members were able to tour the under construction site and Council officers and contractor staff were able to provide more information about the new centre. The new facilities are very impressive and will be of tremendous benefit to the residents of the District.

The majority of the extension of Loughton Leisure centre was completed on time and the centre formally opened on 9 September by the Chairman of Council, where I was very pleased to be present. The new 150 station fitness facility is already proving very popular with customers of all ages and abilities, with a large uptake of memberships in the first month of opening. At the time of submission of this report the last remaining work of refurbishing the changing village was planned to be completed by late September. This level of investment is unusual in many Local Authorities and is testament to the proactive stance of this Council and the success of our partnership with Places for People.

As reported at the last meeting refurbishment of the Epping Sports Centre has resulted in an increase in usage figures especially for the gym. No further major works are planned for this site. Two squash courts are being refurbished by plastering and repainting of the walls and sealing of the floors. A new car park management system has been introduced which will prevent the abuse of the gym car park by commuters and non-Sports Centre users.