

Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Lynne Bowen, Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder	Council	8 July 2021

Executive Report: Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform Council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio, as set out below.

2. Wyre Community Hub

- 2.1 Over the past fifteen months the council has stepped up in ways never seen before in order to meet the challenges faced by the community owing to Covid. Our staff have supported the clinically extremely vulnerable and others who have reached out for support. This has included support to address complex welfare needs including sickness, bereavement, job loss, shielding, isolation and mental health issues. Other support included the provision of food and the delivery of essential medication.
- 2.2 From April 2020 to start of June, the Hub has dealt with almost 17,000 contacts. We have worked very closely with local food banks to help distribute food parcels to feed over 52,000 people. The majority of the parcels have been provided through Fleetwood Together but also by other smaller groups including the Garstang Volunteer Force, Preesall and Knott End Help Group, The Bellflower Public House and a number of local church groups. The council could not have achieved what it did without the commitment and skills of its staff and the support of the community, charity and voluntary sector that mobilised so quickly. We are now working with community groups, partners and local NHS social prescribers to look at and implement reassurance and reintegration of residents back into activities that seek to improve health and wellbeing and community spirit.
- 2.3 The Wyre Community Hub was supported by the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership whose volunteers continue to support over 90 people so that they have a friendly person to chat with regularly. Many other successful relationships have been developed with both statutory and the voluntary, community and faith sectors. We worked closely with NHS Responders

and set up a hub referral dashboard to monitor and check that all residents referred were picked up by a responder when required. This service was particularly useful for helping with transport to and from medical appointments.

3. Wyre Test and Trace

3.1 The council continues to support NHS Test and Trace to ensure everyone testing positive for covid gets a call to ensure they are isolating and are ok. We are passed contacts that NHS Test and Trace have been unable to contact after 24 hours. We have now contacted over 1050 residents who have tested positive to run through the contact tracing process with a 58% completion rate, 18% we were unable to contact and we found about 10% were in hospital. 30% of the cases were followed up with a door knock by the Environmental Health Team. This has been a great team effort across the council with staff from across the services making calls. This work has helped to keep the positive rates in Wyre as low as possible. We have also been supporting approximately 400 residents (those with positive cases and also their contacts) to self isolate by ringing and texting them regularly throughout the ten day isolation period.

4. Environmental Health

4.1 The Environmental Health Service has been heavily involved in the policing of the Covid-19 Regulations within businesses, ensuring that businesses that should be shut remained closed and that when they were allowed to be open they followed the legislation and guidance as far as possible. On the whole businesses have responded extremely well and been compliant and encouraged the public to follow the guidance and I would like to thank them for their efforts.

4.2 District Local Authorities have been the operational arm for the Director of Public Health, Lancashire County Council, throughout the response. As a result of the pandemic the links between District Environmental Health teams and the Lancashire Public Health team has been strengthened. Wyre Council, utilising staff from all services have provided community support working with volunteers, outbreak management support in work settings, introduced a local test and trace team, introduced Covid Marshalls, supported Lancashire County Council in increasing community testing and throughout provided effective communication on the current situation.

5. Health and Wellbeing Activities

5.1 Since March, we have been re-starting many of our health and wellbeing sessions, particularly those outdoor sessions – Health Rides, Bump & buggy, TRY Sports, Wyre wheels, etc. Wyre wheels, the disability cycling programme has re-launched in Memorial Park, with help from the disability charity – Together We Can Do and the team at Cycling Projects. The session is popular and we hope to increase the number and variety of activities available for people with disabilities in the future. The Health rides programme has now expanded to Over Wyre, with potentially Knott End and Garstang also being considered. There are

approximately five rides a month with up to seven participants per ride. We have been working with local health professionals to ensure they are aware of the variety of health and wellbeing activities that they can signpost patients to. We have provided a referral form, a regular e-newsletter and have set up new social media accounts under our Healthier Wyre banner to ensure that our messages reach people – residents and professionals.

6. Wyre Weight Management Programme

6.1 The Wyre Weight Management Programme successfully launched in February 2021. The programme, which is provided by Slimming World and funded by Lancashire County Council (Public Health), was planned and commissioned by our officers. We have already supported 85 people to start on their free 12 weeks of Slimming World. This is one of the largest intakes so far across Lancashire and we are very pleased with progress. The programme is funded for three years and we have recently been told that our funding will double for this year, so we look forward to offering further support to residents to lose weight.

7. Leisure Centre Update

7.1 On 12 April Thornton and Garstang Leisure Centres both reopened. This was followed by the reopening of Fleetwood Leisure Centre, including the pool and the pool at Garstang on 1 May. The phased re-openings across the gyms, swimming and classes have gone very well and a recent promotional offer of 12 months membership for £199 has proven very popular and has now been extended to the end of June. Where waiting lists have developed for the most popular classes and activities the YMCA has adjusted programmes to accommodate more participants whenever social distancing has allowed. Feedback from members is very positive and we really do appreciate their understanding and support whilst the impact of covid measures on leisure centre operations continue.

7.2 Poulton Leisure Centre continues to operate as a Lateral Flow Test site but plans are underway for its re-opening later in the summer. Total memberships across all Wyre leisure centres were 5,848 at the end of May 21 and so the organisation has gained good ground towards recovering its membership levels which were 6,415 in May 2019.

8. Tourism and Visitor Services

8.1 Wyre has been a popular filming location in the last six months and this is something that we want to continue to support and develop as part of our tourism recovery:-

- Sky One filmed for an episode of the next series of COBRA with Robert Carlyle in November 2020 and February 2021. The location used was Fleetwood Seafront and the RNLI station.
- Disney filmed in Cleveleys in May 2021. The area used was Cleveleys promenade from Café Cove to Cleveleys Plaza.
- BBC 2 filmed in Fleetwood for the Saving Lives at Sea programme. Using the RNLI and Coast Watch at Rossall Point.

- Marketing Lancashire as part of the City of Culture 2025 Bid, filmed the CoastWatch Team at Rossall Point, RNLI at Fleetwood and Fleetwood Beach Kiosk.

8.2 The benefits of filming in Wyre to local people and businesses cannot be underestimated. These activities employ many local people, crew who are from further afield are also staying locally, everyone is eating and drinking locally, and rooms/buildings have been rented that may well have been underutilised as this time. All of which will have a positive effect on the local economy. Statistics from Creative England NW advise that a major blockbuster pumps £40,000 per week into the local economy. This filming will also have a positive effect on tourism once it's released as viewers want to visit the locations.

8.3 We have been working with our Fylde Coast partners to support tourism recovery with a particular focus on attracting coaches back to the Fylde Coast. We did a joint presentation with 40 members of the Coach Passenger Transport Federation (Coach Drivers and Operators) to promote visits to the area and showcase incentives. We are planning a presence at the British Travel Trade Fair in Birmingham in September to showcase itineraries and promote Wyre's visitor assets and are preparing a joint online publication with Fylde to promote a set of 8 rural walks each, 16 in total.

9. Marine Hall and Thornton Little Theatre

9.1 The theatres have been well utilised during the pandemic. The Fleetwood Together Foodbank moved back into Marine Hall in November 2020 and moved out again just after Easter 2021. Thornton Little Theatre has been well used by the Torentum Primary Care Network for Covid-19 vaccinations.

9.2 Theatres were legally allowed to reopen from 17 May 2021, with social distancing in place. We therefore reopened Marine Hall Box Office and TIC for in person visits from 19 May. A telephone and online service was maintained throughout the Pandemic. Many shows and events which were planned for the first part of this year have been postponed, rescheduled or cancelled, owing to uncertainty around dates for the lifting of restrictions. This has involved contacting hundreds of customers to reallocate tickets and refunds.

9.3 We have been able to host regular Sunday morning bookings at Marine Hall since 23 May. Prior to the Pandemic, 'Light and Life' hired Thornton Little Theatre. However, they have been unable to return there owing to the current restrictions. We have been able to accommodate this booking at Marine Hall with social distancing and other Covid safety measures in place. The bookings have been a useful pilot for reopening the Theatre safely.

9.4 Following on from the Prime Minister's announcement on 14 June, weddings are now allowed to go ahead with higher numbers, provided a risk assessment is put in place and subject to some specific measures. The first reopening Wedding Ceremony and Reception will take place at Marine Hall on 26 June. This is closely followed by another three wedding ceremonies at The Mount Pavilion over the next week. Two further weddings are booked in for August. Most other large weddings have rescheduled for 2022.

9.5 Unfortunately there has been a significant amount of vandalism around Marine Hall and The Mount Pavilion over the last few months. In particular, there have been many smashed windows, resulting in expensive repairs, and also delaying the reopening of our bars. We are working with the Police and our partners to try and address these issues.

10. Bereavement Services

10.1 I am pleased to say that the Bereavement Service was once again shortlisted in the annual Association of Public Service excellence (APSE) for a best performing service. The team are to be congratulated on their hard work at a particularly difficult time.

11. Comments and questions

11.1 In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of Council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with Procedure Rule 11.5.