

Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Lynne Bowen, Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder	Council	28 October 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. Environmental Health Update

- 2.1** Covid-19 continues to impact on our communities, the focus for the Wyre task force is to continue to encourage the uptake of vaccinations within the borough. We have worked with Lancashire County Council Public Health teams to identify areas within our Borough where the uptake is lowest and we have worked with Blackpool Council to ensure that walk-in facilities are available during October. It is not too late to get vaccinated and this still remains the best protection against contracting a serious illness. At the same time in order to reduce the amount of infections in our area we should all have regard to government guidance, to ventilate rooms and maintain good hand hygiene, this will have the added bonus of reducing the spread of other respiratory illnesses at the same time. The Council is also continuing to support the national test and trace team, to make sure that people who should be self-isolating are doing so.

3. Finding Fleetwood Heritage Trails

- 3.1** Finding Fleetwood, a heritage action zone and coastal community funded project has started with a series of workshops and drop-ins. The project will see a year long programme of community engagement in the design and skills development of digital walking trails around Fleetwood town centre. The project draws from multi agency and resident collaboration to bring the town's heritage to life through online apps and way markers creating an interactive experience for visitors and locals. The aim is to encourage people to connect with more areas of the town centre and to dwell longer and visit local shops and businesses. The digital aspects of the project will also improve digital skills for young and old alike. Five themed trails are being developed, one being a festive

trail, which is to be delivered for the end of November 2021. Next year will see themes for nature and climate, arts and health and wellbeing as well as a youth developed trail. As part of the Welcome Back fund, for Garstang, established trails are being digitised and we are also exploring the potential for something similar along the coast in Cleveleys.

4. Men's Shed Over Wyre

4.1 This exciting project will hopefully lead to the development of a new Men's Shed project for Over Wyre. Initial meetings have been held to take this forward supported by Councillor Robinson in her role as Mental Health Champion. Representatives from Fleetwood's Men's Shed are generously supporting the project and are talking with the new group about how to get started and what worked for them. The Over Wyre group's focus will be led by the wishes of the attendees and we will continue to support the group as they get going.

5. Arts and Health Activities

5.1 A number of successful arts sessions have been held recently. These included a children's arts and crafts session at the outdoor classroom at Wyre Estuary County Park where children collaborated to make leaf/nature artworks. There have also been regular arts and health sessions run by local artists at Fleetwood Market. These sessions are going really well and we have received fantastic positive feedback from participants about how attending the sessions is making them feel so much better about themselves and is enabling them to get out and about again.

6. Leisure Centre Update

6.1 The re-opening of Poulton Health and Fitness Centre has gone very well with the gym, pool and classes now back open for business. School swimming and lessons at Poulton swimming pool have been running for a number of weeks now and on 11 October the first public swimming sessions started back up. Demand and bookings are good at the centre and it has been great to welcome members back. I would like to thank the Poulton YMCA staff for the smooth re-opening and for the important role they played in operating a Lateral Flow Test centre from the centre, and at other locations, throughout lockdown.

6.2 Across all the centres the numbers of members returning are good with recent membership offers resulting in memberships across all centres standing at well over 6,000 at the end of September. During September alone there were over 43,000 visits across the centres and with more services coming on stream over recent weeks at Poulton, visitor numbers are expected to increase further.

7. Tourism

- 7.1** Officers attended the British Travel Trade Show with Fylde Coast colleagues (Blackpool and Fylde) to promote things to see and do in Wyre for coach groups and group travel decision makers. Officers spoke to around 60 people during the event. Key areas of interest were Fleetwood Market, Cleveleys shopping and events and Fleetwood Museum. We have collated a database of companies that would be pleased to receive further information and this has been shared with colleagues at various local attractions. This was also an opportunity to promote the 'Welcome Back' coach familiarisation visits to interested groups, including the Coach Passenger Transport Federation, which will take place in February 2022.
- 7.2** The first Discover Wyre podcast took place at the end of September. Working with Market House Studios at Fleetwood Market, it was another opportunity to promote Wyre and raise awareness of the borough to visitors and local people. Activities at the Market House Studios and discussions regarding forthcoming events were held.

8. Marine Hall and Thornton Little Theatre

- 8.1** A diverse and exciting programme of Autumn and Winter shows launched in September at Marine Hall. Customer confidence and support has been growing and as a result ticket sales are now increasing steadily. Full details about all of the shows currently on sale can be found at www.wyretheatres.co.uk.
- 8.2** Torentum Primary Care Network have restarted their vaccination programme at Thornton Little Theatre – with Covid Booster and Flu jabs which will continue into December. Covid vaccinations are also being offered at Marine Hall during October. Drop in clinics for first or second doses are taking place on various dates with no appointment necessary.
- 8.3** Arrangements are well underway for this year's Christmas Festival which will take place over two days on the weekend of 27/28 November. On the Saturday evening the festival will incorporate Fleetwood's Christmas Lights Switch On outside Marine Hall. For the first time also, The Mount Pavilion will become Santa's Grotto from the Sunday and on following weekends into December.

9. Market House Studios

- 9.1** After many months of renovation and a global pandemic to deal with the new creative hub 'Market House Studios' is finally up and running for business and projects. "In House" is our official launch exhibition presenting artworks by our eight residential artists that have taken up studios. The launch event took place on 23 and 24 October and the studios were officially opened by the Mayor.

10. Comments and questions

- 10.1** 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.

dem/cou/cr/21/2810 Leisure