

Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Lynne Bowen, Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder	Council	26 January 2023

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

- 2.1 Avian Flu** - Britain is in the throes of its largest ever outbreak of Avian Flu. There are ongoing fears about poultry and egg shortages hitting both businesses and domestic consumers with over four million birds already being culled in the UK and nearly 260 confirmed cases in England alone since the start of the outbreak. The responsibility for dealing with the outbreak in Lancashire is largely falling to colleagues at Lancashire County Council, veterinarians and the various relevant government departments, such as DEFRA, the animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and the Food Standard Agency (FSA). In October the whole country was declared an Avian influenza Prevention Zone, with strict biosecurity. This has included mandating that all poultry and domestic birds be kept indoors, cleaning and disinfecting protocols and that personnel movements be restricted to essential purposes. The agencies listed previously are primarily responsible for identifying, establishing and enforcing the 3km protection zones and 10km surveillance zones around infected premises and ensuring all poultry is then humanely culled.

- 2.2** Our Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) have important secondary roles and one that may increase if (or when) the crisis deepens. Fortunately at present there are very few direct food safety issues with regards to avian flu and its transmission through eggs and meat. If good kitchen hygiene is practised, and eggs are handled correctly and meats cooked properly, it is low risk. There is no evidence to suggest that avian flu can be transmitted to humans through consumption of contaminated products. However what it may bring is a shortage of eggs and poultry, and so EHOs are looking at:-

- Date coding, and if people are using eggs past their best.
- Looking for the potential of food being the subject of crime and fraud.
- Identifying where businesses are getting their eggs, if they can't get them through their normal route.
- Ensuring that businesses are reading and understanding storage instructions.

3. Tourism and Events

- 3.1** The tourist information point in Garstang has moved over to Garstang Library. We are working with Lancashire County Council to install leaflet racking and an interactive digital screen. Staff or a volunteer from the council will be at the library on Tuesdays from 11am – 3pm as we lead up to Garstang Walking Festival to answer queries and help with event bookings.
- 3.2** The 2023 Wyre Great Outdoors Programme of activities is now available for residents and visitors to pick up from council and community venues; event information is also available on the updated 'what's on' section of the council website and the Discover Wyre website. A new online booking system will also be used for the first time. The Great Outdoors programme features over 650 different activities from short walks, rides, beach cleans, conservation days, gardening demonstrations, health and wellbeing and environmental education initiatives.
- 3.3** On 7 December 2022, the council hosted its first Older Person's Fayre at Poulton Community Hall. The event was a great success and was attended by around 150 of our more senior residents who enjoyed music and dancing, flower arranging, bridge playing and talking to local community groups as well as teams from across the council. The feedback was excellent and visitors were grateful for the opportunity to socialise and find out what's available in the local area.
- 3.4** Following the success of the free performances of Twitchy Witch at Halloween we have once again booked the production company for February half-term. This time they will be performing a World of Roald Dahl at St Michael's Village Hall on 16 February and Pilling Village Hall on 17 February. Tickets are available at www.discoverwyre.co.uk

4. Marine Hall and Thornton Little Theatre

- 4.1** Hundreds of happy visitors came to see Santa at the Mount Pavilion in November and December, with lots of fabulous feedback about the experience. Chris Allen Garages sponsored the Grotto this year.
- 4.2** A new theatres brochure is currently being prepared to promote the programme of events taking place at our Theatres in 2023. This year's programme will feature some international artistes visiting for the first time, alongside returning favourites. As ever, it will also showcase local and emerging talent in the shows produced by our regular community hirers.

- 4.3** The Mount Pavilion is a finalist for Wedding Venue of the Year in the Lancashire Tourism Awards. The winner will be announced at Blackpool Conference and Exhibition Centre on Tuesday 7 February.
- 4.4** There has been a review of the opening hours of the theatres and in order to help reduce running costs, the theatres will now be closed on Mondays. The box office will be open 10am-4pm, Tuesday – Friday, and one hour before each show at evenings and weekends. Bookings can also be made online at www.wyretheatres.co.uk.

5. Active Lives and Community Engagement

- 5.1 Holiday Activity and Food Programme:** We worked with six different holiday club providers this Christmas to provide ten holiday activity and food club offers for children and young people aged 5-16, most being on benefits related free school meals. The clubs took place at venues including leisure centres, community centres and schools and provided a free hot meal as part of their offer each day and wherever possible each child received a Christmas present. Activities on offer included boxing, swimming, ten pin bowling and dodgeball as well as arts and crafts and workshops trying different healthy foods. A special activity this year was a pantomime which was very well received.
- 5.2 New Health and Wellbeing Activities:** Utilising covid recovery funding we have been able to fund a number of new health and wellbeing activities. These included two new beginners exercise classes in the Cleveleys and Fleetwood areas, two new arts and health programmes at Market House Studios in Fleetwood as well as support for LPM Dance to provide two dance sessions for people with long term conditions such as Parkinson's Disease and a class for people with Learning Disabilities in Fleetwood. These classes, as well as helping people to socialise, have led to improvements in mental health and physical activity levels.
- 5.3 Leisure Centre and swimming pool visits:** the monthly average number of total visits to our leisure centres and swimming pools this financial year currently stands at over 55,000 visits per month. These numbers indicate a strong appetite for members to keep active and we are currently promoting and encouraging new memberships after the Christmas excesses.

6. Comments and questions

- 6.1** 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.