

Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Lynne Bowen, Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder	Council	25 January 2024

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 Protection

- 2.1** The Environmental Protection service deals with a wide range of service requests including anti-social behaviour investigations, noise, insect, light, dust, grit and odour nuisance investigations. They also deal with condition of premise investigations, accumulation of rubbish investigations, drainage investigations, pest control investigations and public health funeral delivery, creating a significant work load for the officers within the team. During the calendar year of 2023, the team had undertaken 985 service requests, which represented an 11% increase on the previous year's total. Anecdotally the expectation of what complainants expect from the service has also increased since the Covid-19 pandemic, which can increase the length of the investigations undertaken especially in cases where the evidence is inconclusive. Where the evidence indicates action is warranted, legal action will always be taken usually by way of a legal notice, but it is worth noting that it is not always the subject of the complaint that is being unreasonable, and each investigation has to be determined on the evidence available.

3. Tourism and Events

- 3.1** Last month we received the great news that 4.4 million people came to visit Wyre in 2022, providing a significant boost to our borough's economy. The Independent STEAM data released by Marketing Lancashire in December showed that visitor numbers for Wyre rose from 3.06 million to 4.4 million in 2022, an increase of 44% year on year. In a return to almost pre-pandemic visitor levels which stood at 4.82 million in 2018, Wyre has had one of the highest percentage increases in visitor numbers in Lancashire over the last year. The report also shows that of

the 4.4 million visitors, 3.75 million came for a day visit with 0.65 million staying overnight as part of a holiday, generating 3.26 million nights in accommodation bookings across the district. We are committed to continuing to work together with our amazing tourism businesses and introduce new events to Wyre to see these numbers increase even further.

- 3.2** On Friday 8 December we held a festive get together for our more senior residents at Poulton Community Hall. Staff from departments across the council came along to chat to visitors about our services and answer any general enquiries. We were also joined by community groups and local clubs. Thank you to Wyre's Mayor, Councillor Julie Robinson who hosted some fun games of bingo on the day! It was really heart-warming to see everyone there chatting to each other and our staff and enjoying a nice social afternoon out.
- 3.3** On Saturday 9 December, we hosted a day of free festive fun for families at Fleetwood Market. Santa was there to greet children along with his trusty reindeers, and the hilarious walkabout act The Brussel Sprouts entertained the crowds with their mischievous humour. Children could also participate in the Christmas crafts which included making tree decorations that they could take home. Great festive fun was had by all.
- 3.4** In the run up to Christmas we have promoted the brilliant range of events being held across Wyre thanks to community groups and volunteers, including light switch ons and Christmas markets and festivals. We were also proud to support the Fleetwood Lights event funded by Historic England as well as UK Shared Prosperity Funding provided by the council. It was a brilliant event which saw amazing light installations pop up across the town's landmarks and was enjoyed by many.

4. Leisure Centres

- 4.1** The New Year promotion of memberships at our leisure centres and pools has been heavily marketed with competitive memberships available. Annual memberships cost just £270 or alternatively monthly direct debits are available at £27 per month. These memberships offer great value for money allowing access to all of our leisure centres and pools, access to over 400+ classes (including fitness, Les Mills, relaxation and aqua) and priority 7 day advanced booking online.

5. Healthy Lifestyles and Communities

- 5.1** Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) bookings for Christmas 2023 were very busy from the outset this year with a huge influx of bookings in the first two weeks of bookings opening. The HAF team have put in a huge effort to ensure everything was in place early, that the enrichment offers were new and exciting and parents had the chance to book on and be as organised as possible for the holidays. We created 13 camps across Wyre this Christmas with 1,300 places available to children and young people, these camps included regulars such as Fylde Coast Holiday Club at Fleetwood High School, Fleetwood Town Community Trust at Poolfoot Farm and various Absolute Futbol camps. Seven professional local artists delivered exciting and inspiring creative activities for the

children. We also continued our partnership with the incredible Play Inclusion Project who work with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) children and this holiday period we created a new SEND camp for children with mild/moderate needs in Thornton with SportsCool. The quality of the HAF programme continues to get better and better and we are confident that 2024 will be a record breaker for the team.

- 5.2** We have been successful in a bid to Lancashire County Council's Active Travel Grant with an award of £30,000 to help increase the number of people regularly cycling and walking across the borough. Active travel offers physical and mental health benefits, reduces traffic congestion as well as helping the environment with better air quality for everyone. To take this work forward we will be forming an Active Travel Steering Group which will include Fleetwood Town Community Trust and Go Velo as our main partners, alongside YMCA Fylde Coast, local community groups, GP practices, NHS social prescribers and others. The project will include cycling, wheeling, scooting and walking opportunities for children and young people as well as adults to take part in. We will also be including an offer of a recycled bike for those that do not have one currently.

6. Marine Hall and Thornton Little Theatre

- 6.1** Over five thousand people attended the Fleetwood Festive Weekend, which included the Christmas Fayre and Christmas Lights Switch On. 436 children and their parents attended Santa's Grotto at The Mount Pavilion over four days. Attendances at the Annual Panto were back to Pre-Pandemic levels with ticket income exceeding £20,000 for the four performances over three days between Christmas and New Year.
- 6.2** Tickets are selling well for the Heritage Cinema night taking place at Marine Hall on Thursday 22 February at 7pm. This project is a partnership between Wyre Council and the North West Film Archive, and will be a chance to see selections from the historic archives collection for Fleetwood and the surrounding Wyre area. The cinema night will highlight the industries, cultures and traditions over the last 120 years, and are drawn from the archive's collection of newsreels, educational and promotional films as well as home movies. Tickets are £5 and can be purchased online at www.wyretheatres.co.uk.

7. Marsh Mill

- 7.1** Marsh Mill Windmill opened its doors to celebrate The Marsh Mill Christmas Event at Marsh Mill Village on Sunday 26 November. This was a great opportunity to support local businesses by opening and delivering tours whilst raising awareness of the Mill to the public. Five tours were delivered during the day and around 60 people attended. There were also around 40 people who did not do a tour but enjoyed exhibitions on the ground floor from Thornton Cleveleys Gala who were celebrating 125 years since its formation, and a display of work from the local artist and watercolourist Maria Bertolone. Thanks to all the volunteers who supported the event through delivering tours and talks.

8. Comments and questions

- 8.1** 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.