

Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Lynne Bowen, Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder	Council	18 April 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. Tourism and Events

- 2.1** During February half-term, we commissioned Gambolling Arena Theatre from Southport to put on five shows of the popular Roald Dahl story 'The Big Friendly Giant' at Stalmine and Scorton Village Halls. This is part of our aim to bring the performing arts to rural areas, as well as enabling venues to income generate by offering tuck shop facilities. The shows were loved by audiences, with 140 tickets sold for each performance, and up to 30 people each night on waiting lists. We have a similar theatre performance by 'Cultrapedia' arranged for 1 June in Pilling and are hoping to soon announce dates for another show in Preesall, Stalmine or Hambleton.
- 2.2** On 9 March we held a 'Celebration of Fleetwood Market' for key stakeholders and the public to learn about the history of the iconic market up to the present day, including the recent £3.94 million refurbishment works to secure the market's future as one of Wyre's key attractions. Refreshments were provided in Market House Studios, alongside an exhibition of the High Streets Heritage Action Zone projects and a brief talk from Historic England's regional director Catherine Dewar. After a guided tour of the market, attendees could watch a short video and visit our 'Just Reminiscing' display of curious old artefacts and scrapbooks. The event was well received by both attendees and traders and paves the way for future Heritage-led events.
- 2.3** Tickets are on sale for Garstang Walking Festival, taking place from 4 to 12 May. The packed programme is coordinated by the Friends of Garstang Walking Festival, supported by the Council. This year marks its 20th anniversary and to celebrate there will be over 40 walks for all ages and abilities. Information sessions are being held at Garstang Library. Last

year saw a significant rise in ticket sales and we expect even more visitors to take part this year to explore Wyre's Great Outdoors.

2.4 Local artist Christian Fenn has been commissioned to produce a mural at Cleveleys bus station. Funded by UKSPF, the mural will raise awareness of the existing Mythic Coast sculpture trail, direct visitors to the Star Wars filming location, bridge the gateway between the high street and the coast and offer a unique photo opportunity for visitors, which in turn will generate passive promotion of the area. We are working in close partnership with local community group Care For Cleveleys, whose volunteers prepared the wall ahead of painting.

2.5 Wander your way to WANDERLAND... Wyre's brand-new Family Festival will be held at Cottam Hall playing fields on 27 July. Celebrate Hey Duggee's 10th Birthday, meet Mr Bloom and the veggies - CBeebies favourite gardener, join in with the live karaoke party with Massaoke – as seen at Glastonbury - PLUS lots more family fun for everyone. This will be Wyre's biggest festival yet with three individually themed fun-filled entertainment zones to explore, interactive workshops, a huge main stage with live music and performances from family favourite stars and even more! Explore Wyldwood, the Dreamfield and the Fun field for even more walkabout acts, accessible activities, selfie stations, rides, games, free gifts to create and take home. There are mermaids to meet, giant inflatables to enjoy, a creepy crawlies roadshow, face painting, giant games to play and so much more! There will also be food concessions and a licensed bar. The event expects to draw upwards of 3,500 visitors and we will be working with local businesses to promote their products, services and offers to attendees. We will also provide a limited shuttle bus service and have clear signposting of car parks. We have a robust campaign plan and are working with local residents and ward councillors to ensure residents' concerns are alleviated.

3. Leisure Centres

3.1 We are delighted to have received news from Sport England that we have been successful in our bid to Phase 2 of the Swimming Pool Support Fund. We have been allocated £141,212 for energy efficiency improvements to Fleetwood Leisure Centre. This is great news and will fund photovoltaics to generate carbon free electrical power for the centre. Water saving shower flow restrictors will also be funded. This is the second round of funding we have secured after we secured £142,000 of revenue funding in November 2023 to offset the increase in utility and chemical costs that occurred over the last two years at Fleetwood, Poulton and Garstang pools.

4. Healthy Lifestyles and Communities

4.1 Weight management - We have secured a contract with Lancashire County Councils Public Health Service to support our work to reduce overweight and obesity levels for adults and children in Wyre. We will receive £74,500 per year for the next five years to enable us to provide the popular PASTA programme for families at four schools in Wyre. Following a tender exercise a local Fylde Coast company, Healthy

Heads, has been awarded the contract. We look forward to working with them to enable families to cook, eat and become more active together. We have awarded the adult weight management contract to Slimming World, who we have worked with very successfully over the last three years. They provide 23 Slimming World groups across Wyre each week, enabling people who have a BMI of over 30 to access funded support for 12 weeks. Slimming World provide an excellent, high quality offer to our residents and we are delighted to partner with them once again.

4.2 SEND Provision - We know from our work in running the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme that there is a lack of funding and provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Wyre, so for the last twelve months we have funded a SEND club at Fleetwood Leisure Centre, where every other Saturday, up to 12 children and young people have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities including swimming, games and walks on the beach. The club is run by the Play Inclusion Project, a team who provide high quality SEND and break time provision across the Fylde Coast. Feedback from parents and children is really positive and there is a waiting list for every club session. We are hoping that the club will continue long term with support from ourselves and a grant from Sport England. We have also recently started to work with another SEND provider, Sportscool. Sportscool work with us on the HAF programme and we have funded them to start an after school club in targeted primary schools with large numbers of SEND children. The clubs have just started once a week at Chaucer Primary School initially and the first week saw nine children attend. We look forward to supporting and developing this much needed provision in Wyre.

4.3 Arts & Health - Just Reminiscing sessions at Fleetwood Market are back up and running on the first Friday of every month. Sessions at Cleveleys library are also proving popular. Creative Wellbeing sessions started at Over Wyre Medical Centre on 21 March with a Fleetwood-based artist commissioned to lead the group for eight weeks of inspiring and relaxing arts and crafts.

5. Marine Hall

5.1 Marine Hall has hosted some wonderful sold-out shows during February and March including Jive Talkin' Bee Gee's in Concert and A Night of Queen – Killer Rhapsody. In particular, the Heritage Cinema Night was a runaway success with over 500 attendees re-enforcing the borough's appetite for all things Heritage. Working with the council, North West Film Archive proudly presented Wyre on Film showcasing the industries, cultures and traditions of Fleetwood and the surrounding areas of the last 120 years.

5.2 On Saturday 13 April, 'Big Country' bring their 'Return to Steeltown' Tour to Marine Hall as part of their 40th Anniversary Celebrations. The Band last performed in Fleetwood back in 1983 at the height of their fame in the eighties.

6. Countryside

- 6.1** Coast and countryside volunteers have led a variety of popular guided short walks over the past three months while preparing for the Garstang Walking Festival – checking walking routes, reporting any faults on public rights of ways, and undertaking risk assessments. Newly recruited volunteers have received the necessary training to enable them to lead walks, as well as attending First Aid and Dementia Awareness Training delivered by a local care provider offering their time freely.
- 6.2** A joint venture between Wyre, Lancashire, and the Westmorland Hedge Laying Association, with the assistance of Wyre Rivers Trust and a local farmer, delivered a hedge laying workshop. Customers benefited from the training and advice given by the craftsman Hedge Layer to learn this traditional method of boundary management in support of our biodiversity and climate change objectives.
- 6.3** The coast and countryside team have undertaken a variety of flood management, woodland management and access improvements in river catchments areas and sites across the borough. Activities included footpath repairs, tree felling and coppicing, dead hedging, and construction of leaky dams. The material from the felled trees (mostly felled due to Ash dieback), is reused to make dead hedges to protect biodiverse areas within our parks and picnic areas and to construct leaky dams to slow the flow in the small rivers and streams to reduce flooding.

7. Comments and questions

- 7.1** 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.