

Report of:	To:	Date of Publication	Item No.
Cllr Lynne Bowen, Leisure & Culture Portfolio Holder	Council	14 July 2011	10(f)

EXECUTIVE REPORT: LEISURE AND CULTURE 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 and Culture Portfolio.

2. Current and Future Issues

- 2.1** Summary information is included in Appendix 1 on the following key outcomes.

- Reduction in health inequalities
- Healthier lifestyles and participation in physical effort.
- Protection of biodiversity and the natural environment.
- A vibrant visitor economy.
- Increased community involvement.
- Young people involved in positive activities.

- 3.** In accordance with Procedure Rule 10.3 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 10.5.

LEISURE AND CULTURE PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE – 14 July 2011

1. Reduction in health inequalities

- 1.1** As part of the YMCA annual marketing campaign, a series of membership offers are promoted to increase usage of the leisure centres. The “Fitness Festival” campaign was successful last year and encourages new customers to get fit for summer. The package is once again being promoted in 2011. The offer provides two months membership to all the facilities managed by the YMCA at £50 and £40 for students.
- 1.2** A year-end analysis of the Y Active GP referral programme for 2010/11 has now been concluded. The total number of referrals in 2010/11 totals 1452, an increase of 3% from the previous year. On average improvements for clients completing the 14-week intervention programme has seen a reduction of -2.34 in Body Mass Index, -3 in Blood Pressure and a reduction of -3.6cm in waist circumference. In addition, mental wellbeing, which is measured through the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale indicates a 13.6% improvement.

2. Healthier lifestyles and participation in physical effort

- 2.1** The annual Garstang Walking Festival has 3 main objectives to encourage and provide opportunities for local people to take part in healthy outdoor physical activity, promote rural tourism to visitors and raise awareness about the value of Wyre`s Biodiversity and Landscape. The initial evaluation of the Garstang Walking Festival shows that 296 people took part in the week long Festival. 64 % were female, 7% stated that they had a disability and 74% were over 45. 18% of the customers who took part were “new to the activity they attended”. There were high levels of satisfaction from the customers to the festival. The festival delivered 60 themed walks and activities of various levels of difficulty from Health Walks to Trumper Treks to 4-day long-distance challenges in a variety of locations from the Wyre Estuary to high fells above Bleasdale. It also promoted a sense of camaraderie amongst the customers who met new people and enjoyed the friendly and knowledgeable company of the walk leaders, many of whom were volunteers.

3. Protection of biodiversity and the natural environment

- 3.1** The 2nd Annual Wyre Wildlife and Landscape Photographic Competition was judged and exhibited at the Wyre Estuary Country Park Spring Open Day. The high quality photograph entries from local amateur photographers have helped to show the variety of landscapes and wildlife in Wyre.

3.2 A survey of the Wyre Estuary by the Ranger Service from Stanah to Skippool has shown that there has been an increase in Reedbed, which is a Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan Target Habitat. This habitat supports breeding birds such as Reed Bunting, Reed and Sedge Warbler.

4. A vibrant visitor economy

4.1 The first Wyre Tourism Association (WTA) meeting of the financial year took place on 24 May at Wyre Estuary Country Park. At the meeting the newly formed committee adopted their roles and responsibilities. A representative for Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board (LBTB) was present at the meeting and stated that grant funding of £985 was available to the association for tourism development purposes.

4.2 An exhibition of 10 sculptures reflecting the maritime history of Fleetwood by artist in residence Louise Wood took place on Saturday 18th June at the Mount in Fleetwood. This was also an opportunity to promote the Fleetwood Seachange work to visitors on the day.

4.3 Improvements are now complete on the www.visitwyre.co.uk website; with enhanced features, links to pages to our key tourism towns and additional WTA members pages. Current statistics show that we had 6,500 visitors to our website between 18 May and 14 June 2011. Most popular pages have been relating to our towns - Fleetwood, Cleveleys and Garstang

4.4 Working with the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board and partners across the Fylde Coast we are developing projects focusing on the 2012 Open Golf Championships, The Olympics and the Seachange Project. Preparations are currently underway to promote the Fylde Coast Districts and 2012 Event at the 2011 Open Golf Championships in Sandwich, Kent.

4.5 Poulton-le-Fylde Historic Market Town Boundary signs have now been erected and some of the road directional signage is now also in place. The signage which has brown tourism symbols on a white sign will support both traffic and visitor management to Poulton-le-Fylde.

5. Increased community involvement

5.1 Forty five volunteers (25 Wyre Volunteers and 20 local community representatives) have given their time to plan and deliver the Garstang Walking Festival. Their help included leading and co-leading walks, researching the natural and cultural heritage of the area, footpath improvements and administration support for the festival.

5.2 In the last 6 weeks, 3 volunteers have been placed through the Try Volunteering Programme. In addition the programme is currently running a ten-week community sports leadership award based at Fleetwood High

School. This is a nationally recognised qualification that enables successful candidates to lead groups of people in sport/activity, under indirect supervision. The qualification teaches generic leadership skills such as organisation, planning, communication and teamwork through the medium of sport. Sixteen people are on the course and the volunteering element of the course will provide placements within the Trysport Programme.

6. Young people involved in positive activities

- 6.1** A new national programme titled 'sportivate' has been developed to try to increase participation in 14-25 year olds. After a successful grant application to Sport England of £9,700, a taster programme for 'semi-sporty' people will take place in Wyre. The 6-8 week programme involving local clubs, the Council and the YMCA will commence in September. Activities include Football, Boxing, Archery, Badminton, Basketball and Keep Fit.
- 6.2** Sessions for Try Sport and Try Football continue to take place from Monday - Friday each evening in Fleetwood, Thornton, Poulton, Preesall and Garstang. Participants gain information on the programme through regular updates on the Try Sport facebook page. Nearly 400 people are now linked into the page.
- 6.3** The schools bowling programme has started with 4 primary schools involved this year and 4 bowling clubs. A 5-week introductory programme delivered by volunteers will teach the game of bowls to young people. The programme will conclude with a bowls festival for all schools and clubs involved.