

Chairs Update Community and Health Committee 20 October 2020

Play Area Strategy and Work

In line with Government Guidance play areas in the Borough re-opened at the beginning of July, this included the refurbished sites at River Road and the new toddler area at King George's Playing Fields. Both these sites have been received extremely well by the public and have seen extensive use during the summer period. Further enhancements are planned at the River Road site including tree planting which is scheduled to take place this winter and the addition of bike racks which will occur imminently. Officers are now moving onto the next phase of the play area strategy which will see the play area at Hutton Recreation Ground fully refurbished and expanded and the second phase of King George's Playing Fields site refurbished

A public consultation has already commenced on the Hutton site to ascertain parents and children's preferences on the type and style of equipment that will be installed, along with details around how the site is used by people and how often they visit. This information has now been gathered via a survey and this is being fed into initial designs by HAG's designers. The design for King George's Playing Fields has already been mocked up on visual renders and is having some final amendments made to it before being confirmed by Officers. It is intended that both sites will be refurbished during the Autumn/Winter period when usage of sites is at its lowest point and to be ready for a spring/Easter opening.

Community Event Programme

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Community Services team have had to deliver the Summer event programme virtually, rather than face to face. Strawberry Fair saw a variety of Strawberry themed activities such as recipes and drinks and crafting activities as well as some physical activities for all the family to enjoy. Residents were also encouraged to post their strawberry themed photos.

The Family Fun Days also took place throughout the six-week Summer Holidays with different themed activities each week.

The Council will be having a virtual Lighting Up Brentwood this year. The Community Services team are working with local groups to provide content for the on-line event.

As part of the planned event there is a Nutcracker Trail in Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone high streets. All the Nutcracker's have been sponsored and there is a chance to win a Nintendo Switch and other prizes for those taking part in the trail.

Holiday Support Programme

Organised by Essex County Council to support working parents the Holiday Support Programme has supported up to 60 children each day throughout the six weeks Summer Holiday. Utilising Bishops Hall Community Centre and Hutton Community Centre the programme has provided a physical activity programme for 5-13year olds. In addition, Manna Meals provided a food bag for the young people to take home. Physical activity kits have also been distributed to the young people.

It is also planned that similar physical activity programme will take place in the October Half Term.

Operation Shield

Whilst people are coming out of shielding, Brentwood is providing some continued support through the Community Support Network for those that feel anxious that COVID-19 has not gone away.

The Government have revised the shielding list as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) and local GPs have shared information with Essex, District Councils and Social Care so that support can be provided when needed, especially if there is a local lockdown.

Community Support Network

Two individuals that are part of the Community Support Network were in receipt of the Prime Ministers Point of Light Award to those that have provided support to the most vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic. Victoria de Coster from Manna Meals and Lisa Wymark from the Daily Bread Café.

Discretionary Funding

Brentwood Community Fund - 17 organisations have applied for almost £57,000 in this year's Brentwood Community Fund round of funding. In a continued partnership with Axis, the Borough Council has just over £36,000 to award in this year's scheme. The funding criteria was adjusted this year to reflect the Council's corporate priorities of Growing our Economy, Protecting our Environment and Developing our Communities. Applications will be scored by a team of officers and recommendations on the allocation of funding will be made to the Community and Health Committee in December.

Mental Health Small Grants Scheme - This year's round of funding specifically for mental health initiatives is currently open for organisations to apply for up to £2,500. Supported by the Health and Wellbeing Board, applicants may apply for funding to suit a range of wellbeing priorities and we particularly welcome bids that deliver Covid-19 recovery initiatives. The scheme closes on 30 October.

Grow Your Own

The Council continues to support vulnerable people through a home gardening initiative. Grow Your Own, delivered by Abberton Rural Training and supported by our community hub network, was launched in September and 100 free garden packs are being distributed to young carers, schools and vulnerable families to increase wellbeing and support residents to grow their own produce. Participants are provided with online tutorials and the option to partake in courses with Adult Community Learning that will increase skills, qualifications and eventually provide a pathway to employment for those that wish to pursue it.

King George's Playing Fields development

The contracts for the works in King George's Playing Fields were reviewed when the Country went into lockdown and a number of additional clauses have been included to minimise the risk to the Council and ensure that the contracts are COVID-19

compliant. These contracts are being finalised, pre commencement works will be undertaken from November-December and construction works are due to commence in January 2021.

Football Hub

The Council is looking at a wider masterplan for the Brentwood Centre site which will encompass the Football Hub development as well as the Brentwood Centre building. The Council is working closely with Brentwood Development Partnership (Joint Venture) to provide a concept masterplan and a report will come back to Community and Health Committee with recommendations for the next steps.