

ANNUAL REPORT ON COMMUNITY SERVICES**Report By: Cabinet Member for Community Services****Wards Affected**

Countywide

Purpose

1. To receive a report from the Cabinet Member (Community Services) on activity in the Community Services programme area for 2005/06.

Financial Implications

2. None

Background**Lifelong Learning**

3. **Start Here Project**

Funding has been received from the Learning and Skills Council, supported by European Social Funding, to deliver Adult and Community learning in Herefordshire. Phase 1, commencing in June 2005, focused on providing a range of learning opportunities from the South Wye and Riverside Community learning centres. Phase 2, commenced in January 2006 is delivered from the four market towns sixth form colleges/schools. Both projects will run to February 2008. 188 learners have been enrolled on the projects during 2005/06.

4. **Widening Access and Participation Project**

The 18 month Werndee Woods project involved taking disadvantaged and disaffected young adults into a woodland site where they engaged in a number of outdoor based informal learning opportunities. Using traditional and basic approaches, courses included wood turning, 'yurt' building and camp cookery. Learners developed confidence and communication skills, as well as having the satisfaction of creating finished articles. During the 18 months, 80 Learners took part and 22 are awaiting accredited certificates. This project came to an end in March 2006.

5. **E-learning**

Funding has been secured to support an initiative to ensure that 'e-learning' is embedded in all curricula supported by the service. The funds have enabled the purchase of computers, digital cameras, projectors and printers to be made available to tutors in the preparation and delivery of their courses. In addition funding has been made available for tutor training to help them develop their course materials and to use the support equipment provided. This will enable a better quality of provision to the benefit of learners and will support continuing improvement of the service.

Tourism

6. Destination Management Partnership

A public private partnership with the aim of delivering a good place to live, work and visit achieved by joint working and getting everyone engaged in promoting the County as one partnership. During the last 18 months a group has been working together to deliver this partnership and it was formed by the 1st April with a board of 15 people (7 public, 7 private and an independent chairman). This organisation will be a membership body and will raise funds for its activities from both within the County and externally. The ultimate aim is to establish a company limited by guarantee that will stand alone but this is a long term objective.

7. Familiarisation Visits to Herefordshire

During 2005/06 Herefordshire Tourism hosted 35 press visits to the County from overseas journalists organised through Visit Britain and domestic journalists. During the year the main theme for the coverage has been food and drink and walking in the County and in excess of £2million worth of coverage in newspapers and magazines has been generated.

Arts

8. Start Up Course for Creative industries

First course received very positive feedback with 14 attendees. Success has resulted in a partnership with Shropshire County Council and the programme being run twice a year - Spring and Autumn to enable increased opportunity to take part.*

9. Mentoring Programme

Four businesses are currently going through the programme. There have been mixed results, so the approach for this part of the programme and the definition of true mentor and mentee is being reviewed. A partnership with Shropshire County Council is also happening for this part of the programme, re-launches for revised programme planned.*

10. Trade Shows

Eight businesses supported with trade show stands and the introduction of 'introductory tours' has proved popular and successful. Feedback from these introductory tours suggests some new people might gain the confidence and necessary knowledge to apply for future stand support.*

** Funded by the Arts Council with match funding from the local authority*

11. Village Artmarkers

Village Artmarkers aims to increase opportunities for people in rural areas to experience and participate in the arts and learn more about their heritage. The Parishes involved are Bosbury, Dorstone, Whitchurch & Ganarew, Kinnersley, Bodenham, Cradley, Ewyas Harold and Brockhampton & Fawley. The project in Whitchurch and Ganarew has been completed and a carved green oak Bell Tower now stands at Whitchurch Primary School. The other seven projects are currently underway and artworks are being produced as a result. The projects are helping to build community cohesion. Workshops have been generally well attended by both young and old, including those who would not normally take part in community or arts activities. In Kinnersley, a third of the population have taken part in the project, showing how great the impact can be on a rural community. The Project is funded by Heritage Lottery, the Arts Council and some funding from the local authority.

Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership

12. Safety and Drugs Booklet

During the summer months of last year, the Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership started to gather information to develop an A5 size Community Safety and Drugs Partnership Booklet. The booklet was funded by advertisements from partner agencies and contained a mix of advertising of services and editorial on key partnership crime reduction and harm minimisation messages. The booklet covers areas of Alcohol; Domestic Violence; Mobile phone security; Road Safety; Crime reduction measures; Hate Crime; Drug awareness and important numbers and useful websites. 74,282 booklets were delivered in January 2006 to every household and local businesses across Herefordshire, through the local free papers.

13. DIP and PPO Schemes

DIP (Drug Intervention Programme) and PPO (Prolific and other Priority Offenders Schemes) were fully established over the last year. DIP engages with drug using offenders and supports them whilst engaging them into treatment, with the aim to keep them in drug services. DIP has taken 126 referrals over the last year and worked directly with 106. PPO scheme focuses on supporting the most prolific offenders in the County, with the aim of reducing their offending behaviour, and so their impact on the wider community. The PPO scheme is currently working with 14 individuals and monitoring approximately 100 offenders.

Parks, Countryside and Community Leisure Facilities

14. North Herefordshire Swimming Pool

The long awaited replacement swimming pool project was completed in the late autumn of 2005 and opened in the first week of the new year. To date (end of May) it has exceeded all expectations for usage. Examples of users include: -

Total visits	54,597
Lesson attendances	10,928
School pupil attendances	10,405
Disabled attendances	812
Public swimming attendances	28,489

Aylestone Park

1. This development of the Parks infrastructure has continued to progress throughout the year with the following milestones created:

- The paths and entrances to the conservation area and informal slopes were completed.
- Seats were purchased and installed on the upper slopes.
- The former RAF Hereford Gates were restored and erected at the entrance of the Park.
- Environment Agency consent was obtained for the clearance of the canal.

16. Lady Hawkins Community Leisure Centre, Kington - Refurbishment Project

After a consultation period over the Autumn and Winter of 2005, work started in February this year to redevelop the existing underutilised squash courts at the Lady Hawkins Community Leisure Centre, Kington. The two squash courts will be redeveloped and reconfigured to provide a multifunctional area which can provide for dance, drama, aerobic exercise and additional meeting space. As part of the redevelopment additional storage space will be created alongside much needed toilet accommodation to support activity in the recently upgraded performance hall. The

project is a partnership between the High School, Herefordshire Council (Children's Services and Leisure Development), Kington Town Council and the Lady Hawkins Community Leisure Trust. The work is due to be completed in early June.

17. **Castle Pool**

After six years of surveys, investigations and negotiations, work on the cleansing and desilting of the Castle Pool took place during April of this year. The work which has been deemed a success was completed in May with the silt having been deposited at Aylestone Park as a soil improver.

Community Regeneration

19. **Project Development**

The service dealt with 512 enquiries in 2005-6, up from 495 in 2004-5 and an increase of 32.3% on enquiries in the last two years. Notable successes included a Phase 3 Heritage Lottery Bid for the Museum and Learning Resource Centre Project in Hereford, plus successful Lottery bids developed with Burley Gate Pre-School, Vowchurch Village Hall and Hereford Shopmobility, along with several successful Awards For All bids. Internally, successful bids were developed with other departments for LSC Adult Learning, Leominster Pavilion (through MTI) and Halo for Adopt-A-School. The service helped develop 49 projects for the Small Project Fund with local voluntary and community groups as well as issuing two Funding Directories and the 5th Herefordshire Funding Fair, attended by over 150 people with 27 information stalls.

Other outreach events included a Big Lottery presentation plus 1-1 sessions, 2 Heritage Lottery 1-1 Project Development Days and two funding seminars run in conjunction with the Football Foundation at Herefordshire FA.

20. **South Wye Development Trust (SWDT)**

A Trust is in the process of being established to continue the development of a range of regeneration activities in the South Wye area and to develop a local community business owned and managed by the South Wye community. The area adopted by the Trust will be similar to that of the South Wye Regeneration Partnership but will now include the Rotherwas Industrial Estate and the residential area which includes Northolme Road and is bounded by Belmont Road to the south and the Wye to the north. SWDT plans to harness the good work that has evolved from the South Wye Regeneration Partnerships work build on this and introduce a new and entrepreneurial approach which will in the long term create wealth in the South Wye Community and keep it there for the purposes of re-investment in community infrastructure.

21. **Hinton Community Centre**

The refurbished Hinton Youth Centre was launched in 2005 as Hinton Community Centre. The centre was created to provide a focus for residents of the area to provide additional activities for sport, arts and community use. The centre is now in community management and the refurbished building now provides a sports hall, main hall for arts activities including a community film club, an upgraded community café and information point and offices to rent all of which are fully accessible.

Library Service

22. **Free Reservations**

The Library Service removed the charge for reserving any item already listed on our catalogue - removing another barrier to using library services across the County.

This service is also now available online. At the same time a suggestions scheme was introduced for books, music and films not in stock. In the first nine months over 1240 suggestions were made by the public - resulting in 830 titles being ordered - both new and old. Including titles already in stock or on order 85% of suggestions were satisfied.

23. **Reader Development work**

The library service made significant advances in promoting books and reading including employing a Writer in Residence; increasing the number of Reading Groups supported to over 50 including two with MIND; putting full details of the 106 titles available in multi-copy sets on our website; Murder in the Library event at Ross; various author visits arranged; new Chatterbooks group at Bromyard Centre.

24. **Mobiles**

A new mobile library van was purchased in December 2005, and delivered in April 2006. It is a low floor vehicle with access for all customers via a simple ramp. It is easy to clean, has efficient heating and air conditioning for both staff and customers and a table and seating for other Council services that may also use the van. It has a very attractive awning and display boards that fit over the shelving to enable the van to be used as a mobile exhibition. It is currently stored at Rotherwas whilst consultation on the new routes takes place and a second van is being built.

25. **Kington**

Kington library is being refurbished and the current library service is being run from a portacabin. The portacabin has all the main facilities including Internet access and has been well received by customers. The newly refurbished Kington Library is on schedule for opening in Autumn 2006 incorporating an Info Shop.

Heritage

26. **Museum Resource and Learning Centre**

2005/2006 saw the completed Phase 2 starting to be used extensively by visitors for collection research, by pre-booked behind-the-scenes tours and on four public open days. With good working conditions, volunteers and work placement students have been able to work alongside our own staff in safety and comfort and collections are now well ordered and accessible. During the financial year 1110 individuals visited the centre, comprising of 355 researchers, 407 people on pre-booked tours (38 tours in total) and 334 visitors to the open days. 1169 hours of volunteer time were given to collections care work at the centre and 14 work placements were supervised at the centre.

The Heritage Lottery Fund made a provisional offer of £1.23 million of funding for phase 3 of the project (the new build extension to house the learning centre, art store, staff facilities and a small display area) in the spring of 2005 which required a detailed stage 2 bid to be worked up and presented at the end of July 2005. At the end of May 2006 construction work started on site at the Museum Resource and Learning Centre specifically realigning some of the internal spaces and building on an extra allocation for the education facility.

27. **Every object tells a story**

One of the major outcomes of the progress with the Museum Resource Centre has been improved access to collections and this was a major factor in being able to create "Every Object Tells a Story", the January to March exhibition for 2006. This was an in-house show entirely created by Officers and included a wide ranging selection of items from the collections held by the local authority. Items were chosen

for the exhibition based on information gathered by the non-visitor survey undertaken in 2005. The exhibition involved some conservation work, for example on the Judges Coach interior, the sedan chair and the sturgeon. Good publicity helped in attracting the most visitors of any show in a month since October 2002 (which was a high profile Photographic exhibition) with close to 7,000 visitors at what is traditionally a quiet time of the year.

The Judges Coach and related items were displayed in the Cathedral in a partnership extension of the exhibition.

A lecture prepared to be delivered as part of the programme of events linked to the exhibition has been adapted and has already been requested by four groups as part of their evening lecture programme.

Sports Development and Physical Activity

28. Olympics

Herefordshire has been working with a range of partners looking at the lasting legacy for Herefordshire of the Olympics being in London in 2012. The group are considering all aspects including, impact on business, tourism, health, volunteers and opportunities for young people in sport. The group has recently has their logo agreed by LOCOG (London Organising Committee for the Games), the first one in the West Midlands.

29. Herefordshire Youth Games 2006

The Council is working closely with the Herefordshire School Sports Partnership on the youth games for 2006, to be held in July 2006. The games this year particularly targets work that has been done with the special schools in Herefordshire and includes the introduction of a new game, floor lacrosse. Funding has been secured from the Local Network Fund and Sport Relief to help provide a wider range of activities and also to support some travel grants to enable the more rural schools to attend.

30. SHAPES Training – (South Herefordshire Activity Promotion Education Scheme)

19 students have completed their OCN's (Open College Network) in fitness and have been submitted to an external verifier. Two students are near completion on their Gym Instructor training and one student has successfully completed her EXTEND training. One student is undertaking her exercise to music course and is expected to complete in September. The total number of new participants since start of project is 390. The classes are held in a wide range of community facilities including a rural fire station, Ross Hospital and the Sports Centre at Ross (managed by Halo Leisure).

31. Sports Referral Project

The total number of referrals made to the project up until the end of March 2006 has been 142. Out of these 142 referrals, 118 clients have engaged with the project co-ordinator and have been referred through 12 different agencies, including the Youth Offending Team (YOT), Drug Service Hereford (DASH) and Drug Intervention Programme (DIP). The range of sports that the clients have been engaged with include; golf, angling, tai chi, swimming and the gym. The clients are supported to integrate into local clubs or activity programmes.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None Identified