

## **CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**17 November 2020**

### **COUNCILLOR V GAY - CABINET MEMBER FOR LEISURE, WELLBEING AND CULTURE.**

For the period up to and including October 2021

#### **1 Progress on Portfolio Matters**

##### **Leisure Facilities**

Since reopening the Council owned leisure facilities on 25 July the return to participation remains very strong. The current cumulative figures since April remain at 85% of pre-Covid numbers.

The three dual use facilities based at Cromer, North Walsham and Stalham reopened to the public on 1 October.

The new Reef Leisure Centre will open very soon, and anticipation is growing. Officers remain confident that participation will accelerate sufficiently to soon meet our original throughput estimates.

##### **Countryside**

The Council has retained its three Green Flags at Sadler's Wood North Walsham, Pretty Corner Woods Sheringham and Holt Country Park. Holt Country Park has been awarded a Green Flag for seventeen consecutive years.

The Countryside team organised some excellent Halloween events during the October half term break. There were a total of 103 adults and 94 children attending two Halloween trail events.

There are five Christmas wreath making workshops taking place in early December, and nearly all of the places are sold out.

Plans are now in place for the annual Father Christmas trails which will take place on 20th and 21st December at Holt Country Park.

Our volunteer groups remain vibrant, and the Holt group regularly attracts between 15 - 20 volunteers each week.

There are four volunteer tree planting days planned for December, two at Holt Country Park and two at Pretty Corner Woods.

The Countryside team has recently taken on the management of another site in Erpingham, Eagle Road. Officers are busy writing management plan for that site.

Plans are in place to complete works to the Holt Sensory Garden plus a new 'Reptile & Amphibian Area' before the end of the year. This will be followed by the installation of two new waymarked trails at Pretty Corner Woods.

### **Parkrun**

Sheringham parkrun celebrated its 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Saturday 6 November. The event remains really popular and is one of the finest examples of how a sports development project can operate in a long term sustainable way.

To date there has been a total of 394 events, with 11,315 finishers, and an average of 147.7 runners representing 997 different clubs with 486 different people volunteering.

### **Pier Contract**

The Summer Show finished the season with greater numbers than previously reported. The total number of visitors this summer was 19,497. Which represents 64% of the pre-Covid numbers in 2019. This is higher than our Operator (Openwide Coastal) targeted and given the demographic of the audience and the fact that it is an indoor venue the numbers are very strong and comparable with other theatres nationwide.

### **Beaches**

The Council's 'Save the Seal' campaign this proved very successful. The aim of the scheme was to promote the use of solid bamboo made Frisbees in place of the rings that sometimes get caught around the neck of a seal. The Leisure team set up pop up stall on the main beach promenades as part of our Blue Flag initiative. The scheme was very well received by members of the public and approximately 142 Frisbees were handed out.

Whilst the Council won't receive official results until January 2022, based on current data Officers believe that the water quality results have once again been 'Excellent' across our six Blue Flag beaches this year. Therefore all things being equal, we should be able to apply for the six Blue Flags once again in 2022.

The Council's beach wheelchairs have been a big hit this summer. Our social media post promoting the scheme reached thousands of people, and the wheelchairs were fully booked out during August and most of September. Feedback from customers has been really positive, with many families quoting that it was the first time their disabled member of the family had been on the beach for over 10 years.

## **2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.**

The Leisure Service is always at work improving its offer to our residents. It is examining ways of extending what it does in our woodlands and on our beaches. It is also preparing for the Mammoth Marathon in May 2022.

## **3 Meetings attended**

In addition to regular briefings from the Leisure service, I have attended all meetings of the project board for The Reef. I visited The Reef again on 4/11/21.

By the time you read this I shall have attended a meeting about sports development with Active Norfolk on 9/11/21 and a meeting with the Cromer Lawn Tennis and Squash Association on 12/11/21.