

## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE, CULTURE AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**COUNCILLOR DAMIAN TALBOT**

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### **YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICES**

#### **BwD Youth Forum**

This year's BwD youth elections took place between Monday 29th January and Friday 9th February. All secondary schools, colleges, youth clubs and youth organisations participated. A total of 8,240 young people took to the ballot boxes to choose their next BwD Youth MP, which was a 2,000 vote increase from last year's result. YPS supported schools, colleges and youth organisations over the two week voting period.

The announcement took place in the council chambers on Monday 12th February. Elle Walsh was elected as the BwD Youth MP 2018/2019 with Deputies Sameer Ali and Aliyah Shah. The young people are passionate and dedicated in continuing to raise awareness of the issues they have chosen in their manifestos which include a curriculum to prepare us for life, mental health, increasing support for young carers and votes at 16 to name some.

### **LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES**

#### **Cotton Town development**

January saw the launch of an additional image gallery, The Talbot Collection, which features a selection of the work of Wally and Howard Talbot, the Blackburn based photographers who built an amazing stock of Blackburn and Lancashire based photographs. The images provide a wonderful archive of local life that will increase in value as a vital piece of social documentary photography in a regional and national context.

Cotton Town volunteers have already published over 180 of the digitised images but with thousands to go this will be a lengthy project. The project has already sparked interest and led to more volunteers joining the team to develop this new resource.

#### **Supporting the roll out Universal Credit**

The Council's libraries, with their public access IT facilities and IT skilled staff, are key to supporting residents to get online, access digital services and apply for UC (Universal Credit) and subsequently manage their claims. In preparation for the roll out of UC library staff have attended information sessions and are currently undertaking online UC training made available via the SCL (Society of Chief Librarians) Learning Pool, this is in addition to other digital learning already received covering services offered via Gov.uk.

The library service is also leading the Digital Borough Workstream, working with colleagues from the Customer Services and the Adult Learning Teams to review and document all the Council facilities and support available to citizens to “get online” and to identify what is needed and how best to progress.

### **Venues**

2018 began with 2 sold out Brian Blessed, a sold out Jason and a sold out children’s theatre production during the February half term. The Darwen Comedy Club has enjoyed fantastic audiences with a MC residency by Justin Moorhouse and we have invited the Darwen Comedy Club booker to take over the George’s Comedy Club programming at King George’s Hall.

A Courteeners warm up date is secured for March 2018 which sold out in a record breaking 7 minutes. Both An Evening with Ant Middleton and The Proclaimers for the autumn season also exceeded expectation for their on sale dates and are both close to 50% capacity after only being on sale for 2 weeks.

The Penny Appeal, a faith charity have booked multiple events in the first quarter of the next financial year and the team are currently working with other similar charities to secure additional dates. We have three BME artists performing comedy shows in the Windsor Suite so far during the year which is a positive step towards diversifying our programming, and something that we are working to extend into other entertainment offerings.

### **BwD Wellbeing Service’s national success**

Staff from Blackburn with Darwen’s award-winning Wellbeing Service have been praised in a national report by a leading health think tank.

In its new report: ‘Tackling multiple unhealthy risk factors’, the King’s Fund looks into ways of tackling the risks of unhealthy habits like tobacco use, alcohol consumption, diet or physical activity via integrated health and care services – which it considers the best way of managing demand.

The Wellbeing Service is cited as an example of best practice for its innovative approach to bringing together a wide range of services that support health and wellbeing and making them accessible via a single contact point.

The work of the service’s health trainers were praised in the report; staff who provide face-to-face consultations and personalised sessions as well as follow up meetings and ongoing support.

Last year the Wellbeing Service scooped an award for Transformation in Health and Social Care from public sector improvement organisation iESE (Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise). It was also shortlisted as one of only four finalists for the NICE Shared Learning Award 2017.

The praise for the Wellbeing Service comes as Local Government and NHS organisations, including the Council and Blackburn with Darwen CCG, continue to work together across Pennine Lancashire to improve health and care services in the area.

## **COMMUNITY ASSETS**

### **New Community Activities**

Through the Community hub development grants the community centre volunteers are working hard on planning and delivering a range of new activities in the centres supporting agendas such as worklessness, health & wellbeing and social isolation.

- Accrington Road Community Centre will be starting new healthy cooking classes with a focus on cooking on a budget, supporting local families to develop healthy eating habits and manage budgets.
- Darwen Valley Community Centre aims to start activities for local residents 50 plus to support individuals for confidence building and reducing social isolation.
- Greenfields Community Centre have launched a new job club and the grant has helped contribute towards tutor time as well as some new computers in the centre. Structured support will help local people to gain confidence via volunteering towards the journey to employment.
- Ivy St Community Centre will be holding 'Afternoon get-togethers' for vulnerable older people in the community. Providing a regular opportunity to come to the centre and potentially learn new skills of their interest (i.e. sewing/knitting) or even just have a brew and chat, aiming to reduce social isolation.
- Little Harwood Community Centre will also be holding social clubs for local people helping them to become active physically or mentally, helping to reduce social isolation and provide an opportunity to meet and interact with new people.
- Mill Hill Community Centre have bought additional laptops to help increase the number of people they can support in their job clubs which are well attended, helping to increase employability as well as potentially exploring volunteering and participation in centre activities.