

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH & WELLBEING

COUNCILLOR DAMIAN TALBOT

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTORS: DOMINIC HARRISON &
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PEOPLE: A good quality of life for all our residents

Public Health - Mental Health & Suicide Prevention

World Suicide Prevention Day took place on 10th September. This year a BwD task & finish group was formed out of the BwD Mental Wellbeing COVID cell that meets every few weeks. Due to local restrictions, this year's campaign had to be predominately digital. The focus was to support Healthier Lancashire & South Cumbria campaigns as well as promoting local services and Public Health commissions. Content for the campaign included Phase 2 of the Lets Talk campaign, Zero Suicide Alliance Training, 40-second silence and the launch of the Orange Button Campaign. We also promoted our local commissioned services such as Together All, Kooth, Time to Change and Realign Futures as well as signposting services such as Samaritans, Papyrus and Every Mind Matters. Internally we promoted the Zero Suicide Alliance Training, Together all, Employee Assistance Programme and Employee support information.

Other activities on the day included, shops in the Mall putting up posters prompting WSPD and the support available, the HARRI bus parked up outside of the town hall and gave out information, Adult Learning ran a suicide awareness workshop, support services were displayed on the big digital screen in the town centre and teams from across the council recorded messages of hope that went out across our digital platforms. We also promoted the free to watch launch of the film "I made this for you" that was inspired by the loss of Billy Yates from Darwen to suicide a few years ago. The most popular post on facebook had a reach of over 9000 and the local press ran several articles in support of the campaign and the importance of Suicide Prevention across the borough, so although this year's campaign was restrictive we still managed to get the information out there for people.

Leisure Services

Leisure Services staff have been returning to the service as centres are reopening after supporting a broad range of council services in recent months.

Darwen Leisure Centre reopened on 1st September 2020 with Blackburn Sports and Leisure Centre and Witton Park Arena opening on 14th September 2020. Phased planning is key to the safe reopening of activities and this means a different approach is being taken for each facility. To ensure numbers are controlled phase one is available for direct debit and annual members only. The programming will be developed as we move forward. Customer engagement for all reopening plans is taking place via direct email messaging, letters where needed and across all social media.

Witton Park Arena will initially be used for targeted health and wellbeing programmes such as exercise referral, cardiac, stroke and COPD rehabilitation, weight

management, falls prevention, physical and learning disabilities, ante and post natal and a range of other sessions. The space inside the building is restrictive and only suitable to run very small sessions with social distancing in place.

Witton Park 3G pitches are back in use for pre-booked organisations and clubs, in line with covid-secure government requirements and adhering to Football Association guidance and the Sport England Return to Play framework.

Healthy Lifestyles & Wellbeing Service

The Wellbeing Service continues to be the point of contact for the public and partners to access any and all health and wellbeing support locally. Teams continue to deliver a broad range of live streaming and online support sessions to accompany restarting in-person delivery.

Wellbeing Service managers are leading the Council's integrated contact tracing service, supported by Health Trainers, neighbourhood teams and HR colleagues. This approach has connected residents to important wraparound services offered through the Wellbeing Service and Help Hub.

Venues

The new ticketing system and BwD Venues website went live at the end of September. These will improve the profile KGH & DLT and make the booking process easier for customers.

The programming team is working hard with agents and promoters to reschedule events into 2021 and book new events into the 2021 calendar too. Unfortunately, like so many other shows and events this year's pantomimes won't be taking place but plans are already in hand for 2021.

As part of a national campaign #SaveOurTheatres supported by The Theatres Trust both KGH and DLT have launched crowdfunding campaigns to support the return of artists even with vastly reduced audiences due to social distancing restrictions. Early progress is positive with DLT securing 35% of its £3,000 target in the first week.

Libraries

Summer Reading Challenge: With so much national uncertainty at the start of lockdown as to when libraries would be able to reopen, the Summer Reading Challenge was launched this year in a digital format. The challenge ran online from early June until the end of September 2020. Changes to eBooks online registration allowed children to carry on reading and enjoying books at a time when temporary opening hours, social distancing and maximum limits in buildings made physical access to library resources much more challenging for everyone.

Summer activities programme – On-line and physical activities were offered as libraries began to reopen in July. Sessions included Zoolab's virtual animal handling, 'Crazy Crew' on our library Facebook page and professional storyteller John Kirk sent us videos of his unforgettable lockdown performances of 'Princess Rapunzel' and

'Anansi'. Blackburn Library and Darwen Library also offered craft kits to take away and make from home.

Children's Literature Festival - Originally due to be held 'live' in April, the 2020 Blackburn Children's Literature Festival took place virtually this year on 17th to 19th September inclusive. The Thursday and Friday sessions were streamed live from Blackburn Library in to the Borough's primary schools via Microsoft Teams, and although children weren't able to participate 'in person', the digital element has enabled some schools who wouldn't otherwise have been able to take part to get on board, resulting in a higher than usual 'attendance'. The Saturday event enabled families to view the range of performances, including storytelling, author chats, poetry, rap and illustrator sessions by tuning in to the Children's Literature Festival Facebook page.

Arts & Heritage

Kick down the Barriers - Over the past 12 months artists and writers have been working in and with communities to redefine the stories about them and represent those communities as they see themselves. This include Saima Hussain who lives and works in Audley and paints street scenes of the area, Karen Mathieson a photographer who has studied and pictured the communities, in particular in lockdown of Ewood and Mill Hill where she lives as well as internationally renowned photographer Craig Easton who has worked with communities at Bank Top. It also includes a series of self-portraits from school children as well as a people's gallery featuring objects that local people would put in their own museum. This project was funded by Arts Council England and takes over the whole of Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery from 30th September until the end of November.