

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE and CULTURE  
COUNCILLOR DAMIAN TALBOT PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTORS: DOMINIC HARRISON &  
MARTIN EDEN  
DATE: 28th MARCH 2019**

## **LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES**

### **DARWEN LIBRARY**

Work has begun to transform a redundant back office area at Darwen Library to enable delivery of a gambling counselling service and other community based activities. By day the multi-purpose, flexible space will provide accommodation for partner agencies, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations and community groups to offer surgeries, appointments, workshops, training and social prescribing activities. Outside of school hours and during the holidays the space will offer a much needed safe environment where teenagers can gather to learn, be creative and socialise.

### **BLACKBURN LIBRARY DIGITAL HEALTH HUB**

As referred to in the Executive Member for Resources report the ground floor space in the Central Library will be adapted to create a new digital health capability to encourage engagement and provide support for all residents to support improved digital health literacy by enabling people to access relevant services and self-manage their conditions and well-being. A successful expression of interest has secured £20k funding from NHS Digital and expert digital inclusion support from The Good Things Foundation as part of the Widening Digital Participation Programme. Working with a range of health providers including local GP's, 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations, support groups etc. the library space will offer an informal, 'front door', approach to digital healthcare interactions and social prescribing. Work to develop the Digital Health Hub is ongoing.

### **ROOFTOP BEES COMMUNITY PROJECT**

Opportunities to set-up and develop a community apiary and outdoor learning centre at Livesey Library are being explored following the success of the Town Hall Rooftop Bees project. Initial discussions with the volunteers at the library and interested parties have been very positive and judging from the success of similar community bee projects the installation and programme development would be a great local asset. The next monthly meeting of the Rooftop Bees will be held at the library.

## **VENUES**

### **SHOWS**

January saw an excellent sell out gig from Kaiser Chiefs. The mix of live music, Club Nights and spoken word continues with performances at KGH from Lee Mead, a Quadrophenia experience, as well as Bez and Roweta from the Happy Mondays. International comedians continue to bring their shows to Blackburn including Dara O Briain and Tom Stude and the much anticipated and sell out tour of Rhod Gilbert.

DLT entertains with the Britain's Got Talent favourite DNA and Comedian Mark Thomas.

## **LEISURE**

### **BETTER AGEING REPORT: RAISING THE BAR ON STRENGTH AND BALANCE**

The re:refresh health and wellbeing team feature in a report published by the Centre for Better Ageing on February 12<sup>th</sup> 2019. Despite common misconceptions, falls are not an inevitable part of ageing and can be prevented; the report raises the importance of community-based provision and cites Blackburn with Darwen as a great example of where community based strength and balance classes work really well and reflects the role of re:refresh volunteers.

<https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/publications/raising-bar-strength-balance>

### **FREE HALF TERM AT WITTON PARK**

A successful and popular week of FUN FREE FAMILY activities was on offer during half term. The programme included a Family Scavenger Hunt, Bike Doctor (learn how to repair your bike), bike hire to use in the park, inclusive cycle sessions with adapted bikes, Biker Tots (balance bikes for younger children to learn on indoors) and Electric Bike led rides around the park. It was great to see so many young people and families enjoying being active.

### **LADIES AND GIRL DANCE EVENT**

Looking forward the re:refresh team are planning a free, fun dance session to engage with women and girls who maybe don't take part in leisure activities currently. The social event on 11<sup>th</sup> April at Blackburn Sports and Leisure Centre (6pm – 8pm) will include different dance styles from Clubbercise and Bollywood to Zumba, Salsa and Bokwa. There will be refreshments provided and awards for best fancy dress.