

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH & WELLBEING  
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DIRECTORS: DOMINIC HARRISON &  
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**CLEAN AIR DAY**

Public Health England (PHE) estimates that around 4% of all deaths across Lancashire and Cumbria are attributable to poor air quality, from conditions such as heart and chest disease, stroke and cancer. Air pollution disproportionately impacts those who live in less affluent areas, affecting the young, older people and those with underlying heart and chest conditions, leading to increased health inequalities. On 20th June 2019 Public Health collaborated with colleagues from across the organisation to celebrate **National Clean Air Day**. The purpose of the day is to raise awareness of air quality and the risks air pollution poses for health. Our focus this year was on idling (switching off your engine whilst stationary) and people across the Borough took part in a range of activities to coincide with the day.

The Council collaborated with Lammack School and a local residents group to highlight the issue of idling including. This included information for families in the run up to Clean Air Day, Elected Member air quality champions leading a whole school assembly on the topic, special lessons throughout the week, an anti-idling event (speaking with parents about the effects of air pollution and the benefits of switching off their engine while stationary) and attendance the school fete to promote road safety and active travel. A short video of the day can be viewed here <https://vimeo.com/351157107/b5c4843044>. In addition, people from across the Borough pledged to take action on Clean Air Day to improve air quality and shared their pledge via social media.

**NEW PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT FOCUSES ON CHILD POVERTY**

Blackburn with Darwen's 2018/19 Public Health Annual Report focuses on Child Poverty as one of the most potent drivers of lifelong ill-health and health inequalities. It explains how poverty is defined and measured, and highlights the rising UK trend in child poverty, which has been described as a 'disgrace' by the United Nations' leading expert. The report goes on to explore the causes and effects of child poverty, and the mechanisms by which it exerts its impact on health and wellbeing.

Even as the report was being written, new estimates were published by the Child Poverty Action Group which indicated that 46.9% of Blackburn with Darwen children were living in relative poverty - the fifth highest rate out of all the boroughs in the UK. Most shocking of all was the estimate that the former Bastwell ward had *the* highest rate (69.6%) out of all wards in the UK, closely followed by Audley on 68.8%. These are only modelled estimates, but they illustrate the extent of the problem to which some areas of Blackburn with Darwen are pre-disposed.

The Public Health Annual Report summarises the work already being undertaken to combat child poverty in the borough, and the further steps that could be taken. For greatest effect, these should be framed within an 'inclusive growth' approach to promoting the economic prosperity of the borough as a whole. At its September meeting, the Health and Wellbeing Board pledged to champion partnership efforts to tackle child poverty, with the aim of reducing the local rate to the national average by 2030. The report can be found at <https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/health/public-health-report>

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

The ground floor space is shaping up as the town centre's community focussed digital health asset; a place providing access to a range of technologies and support to enable the self-management of health and wellbeing using digital. The programme includes sessions focussing on Mental Health Support, Cancer Awareness, Dementia and Reminiscence, Diabetes, Diet, Mindfulness, Sugar Content and Weight Management. This community health pathfinder project is ideally placed to encourage take up of digital health initiatives, including weekly myGP support drop-ins designed to help people to register and use the app which is now available across Blackburn with Darwen. This online tool allows patients to book and cancel appointments, set medication reminders, monitor their health and make use of a secure instant messaging service. Following interest from residents in the Darwen area we will now offer myGP sessions at Darwen Library from the newly refurbished Community Room.

### **BUREAU CENTRE FOR THE ARTS**

It is six months since the terrible fire at the St Johns Church building and the Bureau have been rehomed by Thwaites in the old visitor centre. In the time they have been there they have been rebuilding the programme and activities as well as raising funds for new projects. They have opened a mending café, hosted the summer parade and workshops, and are home to a dance school, a gallery, 3 community bands and a refurbished community darkroom. They have been successful in gaining funding from Arts Council England and Awards for all which will help replace some lost items from the fire and developing the programme going forward. For more information on their busy programme [www.bureaublackburn.co.uk](http://www.bureaublackburn.co.uk)

### **BRITISH TEXTILE BIENNIAL (BTB)**

The BTB opens on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October and runs across Pennine Lancashire for a full month with a wide range of exhibitions and programmes of work. The heart of it is based around Blackburn Town centre with the Adidas spezils exhibition at the Exchange; Cult, Culture and Subversion an exhibition of slogan T-shirts from the 1980s to current day at the Cathedral, Gujarati Quilt exhibition, community clothing with a film in the Museum as well as a photography exhibition which will feature in the Observer as well as the town centre. There is also work being shown across the Pennine Lancashire venues. The programme ends on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November for more information [www.britishtextilesbiennial.co.uk](http://www.britishtextilesbiennial.co.uk)

## **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY and RE:FRESH**

This year the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) has published a landmark review of the evidence base for improving rates of physical activity in the UK population and Blackburn with Darwen's re:refresh programme is highlighted as a case study in this review – a fantastic endorsement of the great work that takes place in the borough to improve the health and wellbeing of residents. Academic research on the effectiveness and efficiency in both improving physical activity rates in the general population and improving health inequalities by generating “significantly greater impacts for more disadvantaged socioeconomic group” was central to re:refresh being included within the guidance. The Leisure, Health and Wellbeing annual report for 2018/19 is now available on [www.refreshbwd.com](http://www.refreshbwd.com). The report encapsulates physical activity, behaviour changes and health improvement services from a universal and targeted perspective and includes a mixture of outcomes and outputs along with real life case studies and testimonials which help to highlight the impact teams and services have for local people. The NIHR Guidance says: “Being active matters because it is an important way of staying healthy. We know that people can reduce their risk of many serious diseases by staying physically active and it is also important for mental wellbeing and keeping socially connected. Finding enjoyable ways to be active can benefit people in so many ways, but it is often hard for people to start and keep the habit of regular activity.

Together an Active Future, Sport England's innovative funding programme will work with individuals and partners over the next 5 years to try different way of helping people be more active Moving from nothing to something and something to more.

## **ROYAL SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH (RSPH) ACCREDITATION**

The Health and Wellbeing team has successfully completed accreditation and are an approved RSPH Training Centre. This recognised status enables us to provide our own staff/volunteers/other council teams/voluntary sector colleagues and wider partners with access to accredited courses and training to increase knowledge and awareness about health and wellbeing so that we all share a consistent approach/message to support local people.

The following training qualifications will initially be offered:

- ♦ Level 1 Award in Health Awareness, ♦ Level 2 Encouraging Physical Activity,
- ♦ Level 2 Understanding Health Improvement, ♦ Level 3 Certificate in Health and Wellbeing Improvement.

## **WITTON PARK 3G Pitches**

The two state-of-the-art 3G football pitches are now open and in use at Witton Park following a £1.2m transformation. The Council worked with the FA to secure the externally funded scheme which also includes new floodlighting and fencing plus and bespoke spectator areas. The former changing rooms have also undergone a total refurbishment bringing them up to 2019 FA standards. Blackburn with Darwen now has one of the best football facilities in the whole of Lancashire.

## **VENUES**

King Georges Hall already has 7 sold out Concert Hall stand-up comedy shows this financial year with performers including James Acaster, Romesh Ranganathan and Rhod Gilbert. As part of the British Textiles Biennial Launch KGH will host a concert by Primal Scream in October. The closure of Preston Guild Halls has boosted enquiries from promoters and bookings including the British Darts Organisation World Trophy competition which was broadcast live on Eurosport for three days over the August bank holiday. The organisers were so impressed they have confirmed dates for the next two years.

Darwen Library Theatre continues to attract strong audiences for shows such as Steve Harley and China Crisis as well as regular events like the Comedy Club and Afternoon Variety Shows. The community cinema programme is growing. The Billy Connolly event sold out 6 weeks in advance and with encouraging sales for Placido Domingo and Northern Ballet there is a positive, diverse cultural offering across the borough.