

# Council Meeting – 8 October 2019

## Report of Councillor Richard Lees – Sports, Parks and Leisure

Good sports, parks and leisure facilities improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities.

### Section 1 - Events

#### 1.1 Staffing Changes

We have recently appointed Georgie Andrews, Case Manager – Event Management.

#### 1.2 Events

Taunton and the wider area has enjoyed an amazing summer of great events. Thousands of people enjoyed the Live in Somerset Concerts in July which took place in Vivary Park, the Provider has already booked to return in 2020. This is fantastic news for Taunton and the wider area.

The Cricket World Cup went very well with local, national and global reach, promoting Taunton to nearly 2 billion people. Castle Green was the focal point to watch the games on a large screen. Closing down Castle Green and Fore Street to traffic, supported an incredible atmosphere for all to enjoy. Taunton in a poll compiled by the ECB, was voted best ground with the best volunteers. Our thanks goes out to all involved.

Fake Festival returned to Longrun Meadow and was sold out for another year. Watchet Summertime and Watchet Festival was a great success for the area, attracting thousands of people.

Somerfest was delivered by Fuse Performance for its fourth year utilising Castle Green, Goodland Gardens, High Street, Fore Street and Orchard Shopping Centre. Their four year contract expires in 2019 and we will look to tender this event for 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Active friends of groups, hosting community events in Comeytrove, Victoria Park and Wellington Park have all proved popular and we thank them for their hard work and continued efforts in maintaining those spaces.

Taunton Flower Show, the Steam Rally, Taunton Armed Forces and Veterans Day, Eat Taunton and Wellington have all taken place over recent months attracting great crowds. With two funfairs, an inflatable theme park and a circus in Taunton this year, we've had an exceptional mix of events on offer. A significant number of community events across the Somerset West and Taunton area ranging from belly dancing and Arabic drumming to an Armed and

Emergency Services Day and the Sunday Bandstand Concerts in both Taunton and Minehead. We will continue to work together with event organisers across the area to provide a vibrant and varied year-long event programme.

## **Section 2 – Everyone Active**

### **Community Sport and Health**

#### **2.1 Walk Well in Taunton and Wellington**

September has seen the launch of the Autumn walk programme, across Taunton, Wellington, Creech St Michael, Ruishton and Kingston St Mary. With up to 10 walks now available each week of varying lengths, there is something for everyone. New walkers are very welcome to join the programme at any time. The walks continue to grow, and Taunton regularly has 55 people attending each walk, with Wellington now achieving 35 – 40 per walk, a great achievement for our volunteers, to provide such great activity for our local community. We are currently recruiting new volunteers to support our walk programme, and leader training will be held later this month.

#### **2.2 Wacky Wednesdays**

Wacky Wednesdays are a community event held in Wellington, and driven by the local partners across Wellington, including Churches Together, SW and T, Everyone Active, Reminiscence Learning, Devon and Somerset Fire Brigade, Somerset and Avon Police, Livewest and Courtfields Pre-School. The events are held on Wednesdays in local parks across Wellington, throughout the school holidays, and this summer we have seen record number of over 1000 participants attending. All partners provide a variety of activities for the local children to get involved in, and it has been a fabulous opportunity for us all to get to know local families. Plans are now in place for the next event during October half term, and Christmas.

#### **2.3 Health and Wellbeing Cancer event**

Everyone Active attended this event, in September run by staff from Musgrove Park Hospital's Beacon Centre. The event gives us an opportunity to talk to patients, who might be considering participating in physical activity post treatment, and offering free taster sessions.

#### **2.4 Max Whitlock Gymnastics Programme**

On the 9<sup>th</sup> August, Everyone Active launched their Max Whitlock Gymnastics Programme, at Wellsprings Leisure Centre, Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Wellington Sports Centre. The programme provides opportunities for children to improve their balance, strength and coordination in a fun programme with qualified instructors. The programme is tailored to meet the needs of children aged 3 to 12 years and regularly recognises their achievements with awards.

## **2.5 Wellsprings Leisure Centre Holiday Activity Programme**

Staff at Wellsprings Leisure Centre led a great holiday activity programme for children and working parents across the long summer holidays, providing amazing opportunities like gymnastics, trampolining, football, nerf, arts, crafts, and games. Across the 6 ½ weeks holiday, 610 participations were recorded.

## **2.6 Flexercise**

Healthy Halls a seated exercise programme, which has been running throughout 2019, is currently taking place at Hope Corner Lane Community Hall, Kilkenny Court, Wellesley Street Community Hall, and Heathfield Drive Community Hall. SWT tenants and other local residents are continuing to enjoy their weekly Flexercise session of physical activity, as well as making new friends and reducing the risk of social isolation.

Led by Everyone Active trained instructors, the programme consists of seated exercise, seated sports, as well as games and lots of laughter.

## **2.7 National Dementia Carers' Day**

Everyone Active offered people who live with dementia and their carers complimentary access to its leisure centres on September 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. With a choice of gym, swim, racquet sports or golf, it was a great opportunity to use the centres in Taunton and Wellington at no additional cost.

## **Section 3 - Parks and Open Spaces**

### **3.1 Green Flag**

The Localities Team have been working very hard this year, they have now recruited into the roles and I am very happy to say Somerset West and Taunton have been awarded 6 x Green Flag awards, 1 of which was a new Community Green Flag. The Green Flag Award scheme recognizes and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.

Green Flag Awards have been given for the following locations: French Weir, Victoria Park, Vivary Park, Wellington Park, Swains Lane and Comeytrowe Park (Community Green Flag)

Thanks must be given to all staff, community groups and volunteers for all of their help and support. The great new relationship that has been made with Comeytrowe Park Friends Group has helped to achieve this Community Award.

The Open Spaces Team are already planning and working on next year's entries, when Blenheim Gardens in Minehead will be included, so they have been working with Minehead Town Council and the volunteers in preparation for this.

## **Section 4 – Property**

### **4.1 Wellsprings**

The curvature of glass curtain wall that surrounds the two floors of gyms is now complete with thermal property glass, which will improve both the energy efficiency of the building and the aesthetics externally. This has given the facility a new look and a canvass for our leisure provider to wrap an eye-catching vinyl around the lower glass to give an immediate impact on arrival.

The glass roof in the school's link corridor has been replaced with Polycarb Thermal panels. Work will be undertaken, in the school's half term, to the school corridor floor, which provides access to the changing rooms from the school, which will complete work in this facility.

### **4.2 Vivary Park Golf Course**

Due to the extreme weather we have experienced in September, there has been additional tree damage which has required work by our tree surgeons. To improve security, a security cage screen is being manufactured to cover the rear access door, also an internal office door has been replaced to improve security.

### **4.3 Wellington Sports Centre**

Currently SLM is carrying out work to upgrade this facility. SWT's Procurement Team are continuing their preparatory work for the replacement of the centre's air handling unit to provide an efficient heating system for the pool area.

### **4.4 Blackbrook Sports Centre**

Blackbrook Sports Centre has undergone extensive works by SLM and rebranded, and SWT have ensured any works for which the Authority was completed. We continue to have responsibility for some elements of the site so the main road boundary fencing repairs arranged for week commencing 30<sup>th</sup> September.