

**CABINET MEMBER OF THE MONTH: Mark Nuti****Your Fund Surrey**

I am pleased to announce that Your Fund Surrey approved two new projects in June totalling £800k. WR Sports Club in Ashford North will receive £300,000 funding to transform their clubhouse into a modern, multifunctional space for the local community. We have also given Leatherhead and Dorking Gymnastic Club £500,000 to extend their current facilities to provide a sensory room to support participation in gymnastics for people living with disabilities.

To date, Your Fund Surrey has received over 240 applications, equating to approximately £118 million. We have funded 10 projects totalling c£2.5million and are due to assess another 6 projects requesting over £5m in July. Before the end of the year, we anticipate at least another 13 projects completing their final applications and being assessed. Another 56 projects are in the pipeline but are waiting for permissions such as planning consent before completing their submission.

The Fund has recently been through a process review and several quick fixes have been implemented to improve the process. A key improvement for the Fund is the adoption of Advisory Panel meetings via email for low-value, low-risk applications. This has allowed smaller projects to be discussed by Panel in good time, without having to wait for the bi-monthly meetings. The YFS team were available at Woodhatch during the last two Full Council Meetings for discussions with Members.

**Libraries**

Surrey libraries are the second most visited in the country with 550,000 visits (UK CIPFA Data) and between the 1st April 2022 to 30th May 2022 there were 828 library events, including Jubilee celebrations, 85 Jubilee events and 46 Big Lunch events. As a result overall libraries attracted 18,002 attendees and 333 new library members. Wi-Fi printing from personal devices is now available in every Surrey Library for residents. We have also joined the Libraries Consortium enabling Surrey residents to access over 9 million resources in libraries across 18 London boroughs and Essex.

We'll soon be getting new flexible shelving for 10 of our libraries by December 2022 and we're currently looking at implementing self-service operating technology to improve access to libraries across Surrey complete. 14 schools are confirmed to take place in the National Summer Reading Challenge Extension Pilot including schools in key deprived areas. We have also initiated the Libraries Welfare Offer project for residents with recruitment underway for two Digital Welfare Support Officers. 62% of people surveyed reported that the library helps to reduce feelings of loneliness/isolation (Surrey County Council CIPFA plus survey, 2022).

As part of the transformation programme, we are improving our use of data and evidence to help shape our offer and to capture and communicate how we are making a difference. We are introducing new initiatives to support people at all points of life. One example is the Death Café where we have partnered with The Brigitte Trust to encourage honest conversations about death and dying (with coffee and cake). We sold out at Horley library as soon as it was introduced with more sessions to come across Surrey libraries.

Customer Services recently launched a new telephone and digital welfare information and advice service for residents who are struggling and need financial, welfare or wellbeing support, including newly arrived Ukrainian refugees. This is being complemented by the face-to-face support being provided in our libraries. The two services have been working closely together to provide a more joined up experience for residents, helping them access help and information about key services within the library environment. This includes offering digital support where needed. This enhanced customer offer will be rolled out to all libraries by this autumn.

We are changing our physical spaces to ensure they're fit for purpose and adaptable. We have been and will continue to capture how users feel about these changes. We know that currently:

- 97% of respondents reported that they receive a good or very good standard of care when visiting our Libraries (SCC/CIPFA plus survey 2022)
- Overall satisfaction was also impressively high with 93% feeling good or very good about the Library they visited (SCC/CIPFA plus survey 2022)
- 70% of people surveyed thought the activities or events in the library were either very good or good (SCC/CIPFA plus survey 2022)

## Community Engagement

A face-to-face workshop to launch the Council's new approach to Community Engagement was held for Members at Woodhatch on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June.

This interactive session provided Members with a chance see some of our case studies and *Make It Happen* props in action and to learn of some of the practical tools and support which is in place. We also had the chance to hear and learn from both [Wigan](#) and [Essex](#), and the journeys they have been on, the need to 'Be BRAVE – not perfect' being one stand out quote. The session had some great feedback captured in this short [video](#). For Members unable to attend, follow up sessions are planned in July.

Many of our of our newly recruited team of 10 dedicated [Community Link Officers](#) (CLOs) joined the June event, and are now starting to work alongside councillors to help join up people, partners, funding, and opportunities, making better use of resources and supporting the ambitions of our communities.

CLOs will be the glue in each community, joining in with what is happening and joining up people, funding, resources, assets to *Make It Happen*. They are there to learn about and share the story of each community, taking your insight, engagement insight, meeting stakeholders, understanding opportunities (projects, assets and resources) and holding conversations to help us see clearly what each community is aiming for and supporting them to *Make It Happen*.

Our Community Events Team has been busy working in conjunction with CLOs and Libraries staff supporting events across the County focused on improving and increasing resident participation.

We are aware that many people – particularly younger residents and those more at risk of being left behind welcome different methods of engagement to enable them to have their say.

Recent events include Bookham Village Day 18<sup>th</sup> June, where we used games and props to engage with an estimated 2,500 visitors, we asked those residents in attendance what their most and least favourite thing is about where they live, what makes them feel part of their community and also, what keeps them feeling happy and well. The Team also had a strong presence at the Black Cherry Fair on 9<sup>th</sup> July, to find out how residents feel about living in Chertsey and their ambitions for the community and area in general.

Overarching feedback is that it is nice to see Surrey County Council out and about talking to residents. They will also be attending the Pride Festival again as well as planning several 'Let's Talk' events alongside CLOs where we will be trialling different ways of holding open conversations with our communities.

### Supporting residents in their local community

We now have three Local Area Coordinators (LACs) working alongside local communities in Maybury/Sheerwater, Horley (Central/West) and Hurst Green, and are just about to recruit a fourth to work in Old Dean / St Michael's. This has been achieved in collaboration with district & borough council colleagues.

LACs are based in the local community *for* the local community and offer a unique type of individual support at a very local level. They help people of all ages become stronger, healthier, happier and more connected members of their community. Their job is to build relationships and make connections with local people, before offering practical help to anyone who may need it. With no thresholds or time limits, they can walk alongside people for as long as they need, helping them explore how they can achieve their vision of a good life and to find non-service solutions.

Two of our LACs are now actively taking introductions (10 introductions already in Maybury/Sheerwater) and are walking alongside residents who need support. Positive stories are already emerging about how this approach is complementing existing support and services by virtue of being locally based and having no eligibility criteria or time limits. We look forward to sharing some of these stories in the coming months. We were also delighted to have the opportunity to share Surrey's journey in implementing Local Area Coordination at the recent LGA Innovation Zone in Harrogate.