SEPARATELY CIRCULATED REPORTS TO COUNCIL
9 APRIL 2015

(Agenda Item 11 Refers)

11. Annual Reports from Councillors Appointed to Outside Bodies

(a) European New Towns Platform
Councillor Tony Durcan

I was elected to be the president of this group for the 2015/16 period. This group is undergoing some changes due to funding from the EU which has resulted in a number of redundancies and a relocation of the office in Brussels. Harlow isn’t currently active in any EU funded projects but I’m hoping to put in a bid for a project either linked to the Enterprise Zone around access to local skills or around the regeneration of the town centre about a cultural quarter. I am pleased to confirm that due to a joint request by Harlow and Basildon the ENTP will be hiring space in the East of England office in Brussels. This will enable Harlow to have a wider profile in Europe especially around the Enterprise Zone.

(b) Essex Police and Crime Panel
Councillor Mike Danvers

There have been five meetings and a training session of the Essex Police and Crime Panel. Nick Alston, the Police Commissioner, is always in attendance and sometimes he brings the Chief Constable. However panel members cannot question about policing matters in Essex only questions to the Commissioner, which is not always satisfactory.

The Commissioner has been able to address a number of public meetings in Essex including two in Harlow, dealing with general matters and the travellers issue in particular. The meetings are normally well attended by most district and borough representatives in Essex.

During the year I was invited with the chair of the panel, Councillor John Jowers, to give evidence to the Home Office review panel.

(c) Fawbert & Barnard Educational Foundation
Councillor Muriel Jolles

This year has seen our new Head Teacher, David Burles, well and truly settled into his role. The former head teacher, Pav Saunders took retirement a year ago after many years as head teacher of the school.

David Burles was the previous deputy head teacher and he brought music and IT as well as many other subjects to prominence. He was the natural successor to take headship.
The school is a happy and successful school and is much sought after by parents for their children.

A new monitoring system has been introduced this year whereby every child is assessed. Successes and problems are recorded so that parents can know how their children are progressing in any subject at any one time. Where there are difficulties help is given until success or improvement is achieved. Good practice is shared among staff for the benefit of the pupils.

Fawbert and Barnard is a happy school and pupils are very much involved in the community events in Old Harlow.

(d) Harlow Arts Council
Councillor Jean Clark

We have recently been discussing the potential for an Arts Development Officer. The Council had highlighted the need for an outside body to appoint someone who could gain access to funding streams, link up with schools/colleges and play an important part in co-ordinating arts activities generally across the town. We pointed out that Harlow Arts Council is not a registered charity, which is an obstacle. Nor do we have enough funding. However, there was agreement that the role itself could make a valuable contribution to the development of the arts in our culturally rich town. It is possible that a team is needed, with a basic infrastructure. Ways forward are being explored by members of Harlow Arts Council.

The treasurer has been working hard to raise funds, especially for the Arts Festival, culminating in a Garden Party on July 5th. So far, sadly, grant applications have largely been unsuccessful. The scope of the Festival will probably have to be scaled down more, as a result.

A website serving the whole town has been established to publicise and support the arts and has already generated much interest.

(e) Harlow Occupational Health Service
Councillor Tony Durcan

I have attended two board meetings since being appointed. I have also spent some time with staff and the CEO. Business is strong and I was delighted to be on the board when we agreed a 2% increase in staff pay.

(f) Leisurezone Partnership Committee
Councillor Maggie Hulcoop

It has been a very positive year for the Leisurezone. One of the targets made was to play a prominent role in developing the Healthy Living agenda in Harlow by introducing appropriate initiatives. Tonia Gosling, Chief Executive of Harlow & District Sports Trust who manages
Leisurezone, has been working with Active Harlow Strategic Wellbeing Group, Harlow Council and Anglian Community Enterprise and has been able to introduce an NHS weight management programme which started in January 2015 (six months pilot). Clients with obesity are encouraged to change their lifestyle habits and lose weight. Access to exercise is provided at reduced rates for a year, helping to support them in the early stages of lifestyle changes.

Another of the successful changes in the Leisurezone introduced in 2014 was "Kidzz Kingdom" based in an area next to the tennis courts. It is proving very popular with children with its soft play area (with Birthday party availability).

Supervised Gym sessions put in place two years ago is also a growth area. Introduced for those who have had cardiac rehab programmes. Sessions have grown in time and now include those with respiratory, joint replacement, and limb amputations.

Harlow College are now using gym twice weekly for practical element of their instructor courses. About 20 students attend.

Leisurezone has a partnership with Social Services that started a few years ago. Individuals use the gym regularly to improve wellbeing and health. Great benefits have been gained by this partnership and it is growing steadily.

Adults from St Elizabeth's specialised school based locally are using the gym under supervision.

A group of 8-10 students use this gym work as part of their lessons and experience a new way of gaining fitness, strength and stamina. Another way in incorporating wellbeing.

This past year has seen a healthy increase for Leisurezone financially, in numbers attending, and type of facilities available. Different partnerships are working well, with Harlow Council, Social Services, Harlow College and all the Wellbeing projects. The Partnership Board and its members work as a team extremely well together. Many thanks must also go to all staff at Leisurezone who play their part in helping it to have another successful year.

(g) South Anglia Housing Association
Councillor Tony Durcan

Since being appointed I have attended two board meetings as well as a day conference to discuss future planning. In this time we have made progress with two Harlow regeneration projects, Wissants and the old YMCA sites. I have agreed to sit on two task and finish panels around repairs and support for elderly residents.