

HOLMES PLACE PROGRESS REPORT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Members to receive the attached progress report from Holmes Place Leisure Management on the progress and development of the leisure management contract. (Appendix B). Carl Bentley, Operations Manager for Holmes Place will be present at the meeting to give a further verbal presentation to back up this report and also answer any questions that Members may have.

2 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLCATIONS

- 2.1 Police Dispersal Orders took effect on 16 July 2004 and it is hoped this will assist in eradicating youth nuisance at leisure facilities. Clements Hall also has an alcohol free exclusion zone in operation. Details of both the Police Dispersal Orders and Alcohol Exclusion Zone are included as Appendix A.
- 2.2 Members are advised that enquiries were made with two contractors, to seek an arrangement to collect burnt out vehicles (that could potentially cause an obstruction) from the Council's leisure sites, outside of normal working hours (Monday to Friday). For vehicles that are reported before close of play on a Friday, arrangements can be made for an emergency removal. However, neither contractor is able to offer a weekend removal service at the present time.

3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That Members consider the contents of the Holmes Place progress report in relation to the leisure management contract.

Roger Crofts

Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)

Background Papers:

None

For further information please contact Jeremy Bourne on:-

Tel:- 01702 318163

E-Mail:- jeremy.bourne@rochford.gov.uk

APPENDIX A

Police Dispersal Orders took effect on Friday 16 July in specific areas within the District, one of which being Clements Hall.

Any Constable or Community Support Officer (CSO) believing that the presence or behaviour of a group of two or more persons in any public place in the relevant locality has resulted, or is likely to result, in any members of the public being intimidated, harassed, alarmed or distressed, may make:

- a direction requiring the persons in the group to disperse (either immediately or at a specified time)
- a direction requiring those persons who do not live within the relevant locality to leave the relevant locality or any part of the relevant locality (either immediately or at a specified time)
- a direction prohibiting the return of those persons who do live within the relevant locality from returning to the relevant area for a period as stated when giving the direction, but not exceeding 24 hours.

An alcohol Exclusion Zone is also in operation on the site of Clements Hall and it gives the police extra powers under Section 12 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001, which states a constable may require the person concerned:

- Not to consume in that place anything which is, or which the constable reasonably believes to be, intoxicating liquor.
- To surrender anything in his/her possession which is, or which the constable reasonably believes to be, intoxicating liquor or a container for such liquor (other than a sealed container).

APPENDIX B

**Holmes Place Leisure Management – Rochford Contract Progress
Report March 2004 – September 2004**

Introduction

The following reports the progress of the Rochford Contract and the key developments and activities within each of the sites during the period March 2004 – September 2004. In addition the marketing and communication effort is highlighted for each Centre and for the overall contract.

Clements Hall Leisure Centre

Staffing

- As part of a new and significant Company strategy based on Service, Standards and Sales, 'Energy Hours' have been introduced to the Centre. On given hours each day, when the Centre is particularly busy, every member of staff who is not involved with a specific task gets onto the floor to deliver fantastic customer service. Initiatives include meeting and greeting at reception, happy hours/top ups in the café, free water and squash given to spectators in the pool hall, blitz cleaning of the changing rooms and various team activities in the gym. The feedback has been excellent, plus gym staff are now offering more of the same during other hours.
- Several new receptionists have been recruited since the last report and the good news is that one who joined Virgin has now returned to work on a casual basis.
- The gym team is currently very stable. They are enjoying their new surroundings and passing that enjoyment onto the customers.
- With the opening of the new bar/café 15 staff were recruited to work with Dot Richardson, the café supervisor. Carl Watson of Squires at The Mill is providing additional management support.
- Michelle Savill joined the lifeguard team recently as did Phil Beale who had been working at The Mill. Currently we have a full complement of full time lifeguards topped up with some very useful part time and casual staff.
- Lifeguard training continues on a monthly basis alongside quarterly workshops for our studio instructors. Customer Service and Member Interaction modules have been delivered to receptionists and the gym team. Line managers are included on Time Management and Interview Skills seminars.

Activities and Events

- RADS have held 4 Saturday evening galas and the annual Junior Schools Gala was successfully held in July.
- 9 junior schools and 1 guide pack opted to hold activity days at the Centre. They are extremely successful as they give the children the opportunity to experience additional activities outside the school environment.
- The Too Smart for Drugs Roadshow was held in the main hall in June. Students from local secondary schools were bussed in to be entertained with the underlying message of saying 'no' to drugs.
- Local taxi drivers organised an afternoon to remember for 300+ local underprivileged children on the same day as Rochford Rotary tried to beat their record for the number of blood pressure checks given in a day.
- Other events have included a national karate tournament, Festival of Sport badminton tournament, over 50's volleyball evening and an all day event for Rochford and Castle Point Early Years Development and Childcare.
- Outdoor Action is now in its 10th year and proving to be as popular as ever. Many sessions are a sell out but as the cost is so small many children do not turn up on the day. Consideration should be given to a price rise for next year.

Maintenance

- Phase 2 of the refurbishment is now complete with the opening of reception, bar/café and crèche. These areas have been very well received by the majority of customers although we are still working to create a more intimate atmosphere in the bar in the evening.
- Phase 3 is developing well with the completion date for the whole project due early in October although the dry sports changing area is due to open at the end of August. This will ease the current congestion in the wet side changing village.
- The final phase of the gym opened early on 9th August. It is a fabulous facility and is without doubt the best in the area. Members are very, very pleased with the result.
- Due to problems with the ingress of water via the damp course, water flooded into the squash courts, which has delayed their renovation. Action is being taken to resolve the problem but unfortunately the specialist plasterers cannot return until September. This means the squash court refurbishment will be completed early October in time for the official opening and 25th anniversary celebrations set for 29 October 2004.

- External CCTV and the barrier in reception have greatly improved customer security and whilst youngsters still congregate outside the Centre at certain times we have not had any incidents recently.

Freight House

Staffing

- The newest addition to the management team, Anthony Rodd has now completed his first aid training so we have a full complement of First Aid and Health and Safety trained staff.
- Due to the increase in delegate functions I have now given Michelle Belton the responsibility of organising the requirements for all relevant business, minimising confusion and maximising customer service.

Activities and Events

- An increased level of business is still being shown, especially with our delegate business. We now have regular bookings from Dedman Estate Agents with eight meetings being held in the last 2/3 months. We have also had an increase in commercial business through the introduction of the International School of Natural Therapies hiring the Great Eastern Room five times a year in fortnightly slots.
- After a break last year, we are re-introducing our Christmas Party nights with three dates in December. We are hoping for a renewed interest in these nights and have commenced marketing activity around these nights.
- The Company is now using Freight House for some of its meetings and training. It recently launched its Sales, Service, Standards initiative to over 80 senior managers in the Great Eastern room. Further dates have been booked for follow up sessions.

Catering

- Catering is still successful, with only two complaints in the last 6 months, both of which were dealt with satisfactorily. The first complaint in March, related to off cream being served to two tables at one function and the other was regarding some food being removed early by the catering staff. These matters were discussed and resolved with the caterers.

Maintenance

- The entire building excluding the staircase area to the Carriage Room and the Carriage Room toilets has been redecorated. We have not changed the style of decoration merely refreshed the original décor.

- Major works carried out in August have insulated the roof in the Great Eastern Room. The main benefit from these works is to help reduce heat gain during the summer and limit the heat loss in the winter.
- Air conditioning will be installed as part of a programme of works which are due to commence within the next two weeks, with the works being fitted around existing bookings.
- The age old issue of window vandalism seems to have retuned. In June 20 windows were broken. This cost in the region of £500 to repair.
- In July within the space of one week two cars were dumped and burnt out in the car park. If this type of event occurs in the week the Council's response at removing them is very good. However there is no provision for removing them at weekends when this type of event normally takes place. This does give us some problems if there is a wedding after a car has been left in the car park on a Friday night.

The Mill Arts & Events Centre

Staffing

- We have 2 new additions to the Management Team, David Eastty & David Lundrigan. Both candidates will be starting with us the week commencing the 2nd August 2004 and will undergo a through induction process. Both candidates are booked to go on First Aid training courses in the beginning of October and will also attend internal Health and Safety training and an external Licensee course.
- We now have a new full time receptionist/administrator Donna Eadie, covering reception from 0900-1700 Monday – Friday. She is currently training in all areas of reception and the administrative tasks. Donna is an excellent face for the Centre contributing to improvement in our customer service and interaction with clients.

Activities and Events

- Our block bookings are still going strong throughout 2004 on towards 2005. Both halls are in use for various age groups and types of events from Monday – Friday, but we are always keen for more people to book with us. There is a high concentration on customer service to help increase positive word of mouth amongst our customer base.
- Caroline Coates, the Arts Development Officer and Liz Hughes, Centre Manager, are working to find more artists in the local area to display art in our gallery. The aim is to have a variety of changing displays throughout the year attracting new visitors to The Mill.

- Caroline Coates & Liz Hughes are working on a Music Week festival looking at different ways to involve people of all ages to enjoy making music.
- The Mill is currently supporting the Council in running a Saturday morning art school for children. We will be working on increasing the attendance of this group through in house advertising.

Catering

- John Waller Catering continues to provide us with a good service. Prices have increased for 2004. The service from the Caterers is good with only two complaints received in this period, both being resolved satisfactorily.

Maintenance

- We are still experiencing vandalism, resulting in the male toilet cubicles being burned with cigarettes and covered in graffiti. During the holiday periods the urinals are often being blocked with toilet paper.
- The mirrors, walls and windows are still being scratched and vandalised. We contact the police and also have an incident book that has now been put in place to help us to keep a record of how often incidents are occurring. We are now replacing 2 of the 4 mirrors in the Men's toilets with advertising boards to try and combat the costs of continually replacing mirrors.

Great Waking Sports Centre

Staffing

Jon Stansfield, Duty Manager, has recently left the centre and has been replaced by Paul Horwood. There is now a full team in place at the centre, with Dan Griffiths as Manager, Ben Hudson as part time Duty Manager and Laura Appleyard as Receptionist/Duty Manager.

Activities

- The success of the 'Hyper' activities continues with football and rounders outside during the evenings for teenagers and Frankie Banks and his team from Southend United's Football in the Community scheme. An average of forty youths attend each session.
- 'Hyper' activities for teenage girls in the Centre include Street Dance, DJing and Drama.
- An organised paintball trip for the teenagers proved to be an excellent day out and was fully subscribed with around thirty youngsters attending.

- The 'safer environment' being created around the Centre is attracting new customers and a general increase in the number of users. Badminton, football and children's parties continue to be the most popular activities.
- A new Friday evening football coaching session for 5-11 year olds is attracting 20 plus youngsters each week.
- A one week, Centre organised, soccer school in July for children between 5-11 yrs was very successful with 38 attendances each day. It generated a great response from the children and the parents.

Maintenance

- There are no significant issues under this section aside from noting that only one incident of vandalism occurred during this period with one window being smashed.

Park Sports Centre

- A planning application has now been submitted for the new Centre with an anticipated opening early in 2006. We believe consideration should be given to the name of the Centre. Whilst it was known as the Park Sports Centre, due to its location in the school, we would suggest that a more appropriate and marketable name would be 'The Rayleigh Leisure Centre'. It is intended that Carl Bentley will expand on this point during his presentation to the Committee on 9th September.

Advertising and Marketing

General Communication

- Press releases sent to the key publications in the area updating progress of developments including coverage on the Sauna, Steam & Spa opening, new opening and launch of reception, crèche, gym & café-bar.
- Production & distribution of Rochford District Matters (32,000 x 2).
- Production and distribution of Focus Newsletters (32,000 x 1).
- Up dating of contract-wide leaflets and presentation materials.
- New contract website now in final stages.

Clements Hall

ACE (Activity, Care, Education)– Children's Activities

- Design, production and distribution of half term brochure –April.
- Design, production and distribution of half term brochure –June.
- Design, production and distribution of summer holiday brochure – July/August.
(Distributed to all schools in the District).
- Presentation Board updated regularly.
- Inclusion of site activities in RDM/Focus newspapers.

- Britvic now sponsor ACE activities including brochures, flyers and new swimming pool inflatable.
- Activity days for local schools.
- New sessions of Gym Tots and Jumping Bean classes for the under 5's has been introduced.

Health & Fitness

- Internal challenges / promotions have included a rowing challenge to coincide with the Oxford/Cambridge Boat Race.
- Half page ad in the Echo announcing opening of new gym.

H2O Swim School

Promotional material has been created and distributed for the swimming programme and includes:

- Class Schedules
- Achievement Certificates
- Newsletters
- Swimming Gala
- Presentation Board updated regularly
- Inclusion in RDM/Focus

NEW – Teen Scene

- A new gym session for 12yrs-14yrs has been introduced on Wednesday afternoons.

Membership Campaigns

- Mothers Day Cards distributed to local schools offering mums a free one week membership.
- Bigger, Better, Brand New Facilities campaign advertised through Direct Mailers (distributed to 32,000 households), RDM, fliers and banners. Advertised through Focus (distributed to 32,000 households) with 50% off the joining fee plus 13 months membership for the price of 10 on all annual payments.
- Come Back – April Mail shot to all ex members with no joining fee & preferential membership incentive to rejoin.
- Bigger, Better, Brand New... February - April campaign to advertise new facilities opening soon. Members who join prior to the completion of the new gym will benefit from preferential membership prices. Poster displays internally, banners around the District, plus posters and flyers sent out to corporations.

- Fit Street – Distribution of leaflets, customised to selected Streets, inviting residents to join as Preferential Members.
- Centre Member Letter – Monthly Letter sent to all Centre Members with an incentive to trade in their Centre Membership against Health and Fitness Membership joining fee, for a limited period only.
- Corporate Fact Finding Calls - Proactive calls to prospective companies with incentive to set up Corporate Membership Schemes within their company.
- Corporate Member Email - Update on refurbishment progress and CTGF offer.
- Membership drive through publicity surrounding the Clements Hall developments, through RDM, Focus, the Evening Echo plus The Southend & Rayleigh Times.
- Buddy Letters - Sent Monthly to new members offering them a 7 day fitness pass to give to a friend, family member or work colleagues.
- 7 Day Passes - To be issued to all 'Fitness Buddy's' to give to corporate contacts to increase Corporate Membership.
- Commit To Get Fit - 6-week campaign offering 6 weeks membership for £42 (equivalent to 2 weeks free), advertised in RDM, Focus Newsletter and onsite.

Other

Presentation of development plans and new facilities in temporary walk way.

- Distributed new Sports Course brochure to all schools in the District.
- New Saturday Sports Night flyer produced and distributed.
- Welcome & Thank You postcards produced for new Health & Fitness Members and enquiries.
- Presentation Frames - 3 x A1 frames in foyer to promote Health & Fitness Membership. A4 Silver Aluminium frames to advertise events on the back of toilet doors. A1 Silver Aluminium frame in café for updates on football league

Leisure Card Scheme

- The new IT management system is now in place at Clements Hall and the new 'Rochford Leisure Card' has been distributed to all members to 'swipe in' with every visit to the Centre, with the scheme being fully implemented by March 2005.

- The Leisure Card scheme currently has 20 local companies offering discounts of approximately 10% on goods and services. New companies will now be approached to increase the benefits for our customers with a target of 50 companies on the scheme by the end of this year.

Refurbishment Opening and 25th Birthday Celebrations

Plans are now being made for the official opening of the Clements Hall refurbishments that will coincide with the Centre's 25th Birthday Party. The official opening is scheduled to take place on the evening of Friday 29th October with a number of activities at the Centre on Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st. These will include;

Children to swim for 25p
Various Gym challenges
Membership offers
Squash, badminton and football tournaments
Aerobics master classes
Children's activities
Trophy presentation party on Sunday evening

Members would be very welcome to visit the Centre over the weekend at anytime to see the activities and to attend the presentation party on the Sunday evening.

The Mill Arts and Events Centre

General promotional activity has included:

- Advertisement in Jewish community news.
- ½ page advert in Essex Wedding Guide.
- New general information flyer designed & produced.
- Events Display in foyer.
- Inclusion in RDM/Focus – developments.
- Events listed in 'What's On & Where'.
- Creation of database to target bands and entertainment agencies with mail shots with a view to increase bookings.
- General ad designed and produced to appear weekly in the Echo and Southend stand to increase function bookings.
- A4 Silver Aluminium frames to advertise events on the back of toilet doors.
- A1 Silver Aluminium frames to replace mirrors in toilets to reduce vandalism and advertise events.
- Stands on café tables to advertise/increase awareness of events.

Movies at The Mill

- Developed & distributed new programme for 2004 May, June, July & August.
 - Inclusion in RDM/Focus.

Freight House

- ½ page advert in Essex Wedding Guide.
- ½ page advert in Essex County Council Conference Venue Guide.
- Advertisement in Jewish community news.
- Regular weekly advert in The Business Echo.
- Inclusion in RDM/Focus.
- Events listed in 'What's On & Where'.
- Corporate Open Day on March 9th 04.
- Letters sent to all Clements Hall members to remind them of their milestone Birthday and to book Freight House as a party venue.
- Xmas flyers designed, produced and mailed to corporates.
- Wedding Fayre fliers designed & produced for event in October.

Great Wakering Sports Centre

- Centre is included in RDM/Focus.