

COUNCIL

Monday 15 July 2019

Agenda Item 7

Questions from Members

Unanswered Questions – Responses sent subsequent to Meeting

8. Question from Councillor Ms J Wassell to the Cabinet Member for Community

How many public events does Wycombe District Council support each year through funding, staffing or use of premises, can a list be provided?

Thank you Cllr Wassell for your question. I much enjoyed completing the research for the answer and I was very encouraged by the statistics that emerged. There is significant social isolation and loneliness within Buckinghamshire and social, sporting, musical and other local events are a very important element in reducing that issue, improving wellbeing and strengthening communities.

We maintain around 20 significant Green Spaces that are used for many local events including the 3 major parks that we are very proud of that have been awarded Green Flag status again this year, Higginson Park, The Rye and Hughenden Park.

A simple answer to your question is that over the past two years, a total of 107 events have been formally notified to WDC that have taken place on 7 of our Green Spaces, Higginson Park, The Rye, Hughenden Park, Desborough Rec, Hazlemere, Holmers Farm and Desborough Castle.

Of these 107 events, 38 were commercial events that were charged for the use of the space, 62 were charity events that were not charged and 7 were subsidised community events.

Over the same 2 year time frame, a total of £84,983 was awarded in grants supporting local events using the open spaces, Swan Theatre, village halls and other venues. These were in four different categories, Annual Revenue Grants, Community and Arts Grants, Venue Grants and High Wycombe Town Committee Support Grants.

This of course does not include the many hundreds and probably several thousands of informal events such as impromptu rounders matches, preseason training events for local football teams, family picnics, treasure hunts, school events etc. etc. that happily take place across the entire portfolio of open spaces that WDC maintain.

And the events continue this year too. I have been provided with 7 pages of statistics and I would be pleased to drill down further into these if you were to indicate your particular interest.

9. Question from Councillor Ms A Baughan to the Cabinet Member for Community

The multi-use games area at Ash Hill Primary School was recently refurbished using CIL funding of £30,000. The Micklefield Neighbourhood Action Group felt that it not being used enough by the community and so my colleague Cllr Julia Wassell enlisted the support of Guy Britton of High Wycombe Lawn Tennis Club to deliver free tennis training for local young people. This has been a great success, engaging over 20 young people in sport and physical activity. There are now plans to run similar sessions on the Rye.

This is a wonderful example of bringing together different funding streams and local organisations to deliver opportunities to the community and particularly to young people. Will you join me in congratulating all those involved in this successful project?

Thank you Cllr Baughan for highlighting the success of this tennis coaching project that brought together many young people from Micklefield on to the recently refurbished multi use games area at Ash Hill Primary School together with Coach Guy Brittan from Wycombe Tennis Club.

This is a really good example of what can be achieved when local community groups and schools come together to create a new opportunity and activity for young people to enjoy and learn from.

It is not only an obvious benefit to physical fitness of young people but of equal importance is the benefit of social interaction.

I believe that Friends of Ash Hill and other local partners are now working hard to expand this project so more young people can enjoy being active and learning to play tennis. And I would like to congratulate all on the achievements so far and wish the project every success going forward. This is an excellent example of the good work being done members behind the scenes in every ward of the Wycombe District.

We are very fortunate in Wycombe district as it is possible for young and older people to participate in almost any sport locally, at any level and at modest cost. Many of the sports facilities have been actively supported by this Council.

10. Question from Councillor R Raja to the Leader of the Council (answered by Councillor D Johncock (Cabinet Member for Planning)).

Would the Leader of the Council like to give us an update on the housing front as far as the number of dwellings to have been built under the Local Plan by now?

Thank you for the Question Cllr Raja. However, I wasn't sure which Local Plan you were referring to. The existing one or the new one. As the New Local Plan has yet to be formally adopted – hopefully next month - I am basing my answer on the existing Core Strategy which has its Housing Target set at 402.5 per annum.

The planning policy team maintains a comprehensive record of dwelling completions as it is required to submit regular housing returns and maintain a 5 year housing land supply. The most recent data that is publicly available covers the period up to March 31st 2018 and this shows that the number of housing completions since 2006 in total was 5,863. Whilst the annual figure has varied between 223 and 788, the average number of completions works out at over 480 well in excess of our Housing Target.