

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 14th NOVEMBER 2001

SUMMER PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN - EVALUATION REPORT

Report by Director of Community Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the evaluation process associated with the Summer Activity Programme for Children.
- 1.2 The key aims are to report on performance and to focus on areas which will contribute to the continuous improvement of this well-established programme.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Summer Programme has been delivered in its existing format since 1996. The Programme is co-ordinated by the Recreation Section and is made up of a wide range of Sports and Leisure opportunities, which are targeted at young people living in and around East Ayrshire.
- 2.2 The Summer Programme is delivered in conjunction with a number of internal partners including Libraries, Museums and Arts, Theatre and Entertainment's, Community Safety and the jointly funded Football and Curling posts. In addition extensive input is received from external partners such as the East Ayrshire Coalfield Area Social Inclusion Partnership, Ayrshire and Arran Health Board Health Improvement Fund, The Galleon Centre and Newmilns Dry Ski Slope.
- 2.3 An extensive evaluation process, which is informed by the Best Value Regime and is in line with the Excellence Model, has been incrementally developed over the last four years.
- 2.4 The process employs a range of innovative and traditional techniques to produce quantitative and qualitative results. Utilising a systematic framework it is possible to examine performance trends, share relevant information with funding partners and focus upon the continuous improvement of the service.

3. PERFORMANCE RESULTS

- 3.1 The overall aim of the Community Services Summer Programme is to provide a comprehensive choice of high quality, fun activities for all children and young people throughout East Ayrshire during the school holiday period. In order to fulfil this aim a Summer Activity Guide was developed incorporating the following activities:-
 - 3.1.1 Recreation Led Sessions –
 - 53 sports sessions (curling, football, golf, tennis sportsfest)

- 32 Kids Clubs (Kids Club Network, Travelling Kids Club and CHAMPS Special Needs Club)
- 6 Pre-five clubs (Toddlezone and Activity Sessions)
- 12 Arts Workshops (Balloon Modelling and Native American Arts)
- 13 Fitness Sessions (Krazy Kids, Funky Teens and Active Kids Challenge)
- 2 Wannabe Popstars.

3.1.2 Other Sections/Departments Activities

- Library Services
- Drama Summer Schools
- Countryside Rangers Service
- Galleon Centre Clubs
- Newmilns Ski Slope
- Yipworld.com

3.2 In order to ensure the highest levels of quality a number of key procedures were put into practice:-

- All Kids Clubs were registered under the Children's Act 1989
- All Staff were vetted by Pre-Five Services
- All Staff took part in comprehensive training
- Each team had a designated line manager, who carried out regular checks
- Each team was provided with an extensive range of equipment

3.3 Up to 25 workers attended a specially designed five-day training course prior to the commencement of the Summer Programme. The results of the training evaluation are as follows:-

- 100% of staff who attended rated the majority of sessions as being good to excellent.
- 93% felt that the training co-ordinators were very approachable, knowledgeable and taught them new skills
- 100% felt that training was useful in preparing them to work in teams
- One comment from a member of staff was as follows – “The training week was invaluable and assisted with all aspects of the Travelling Kids Clubs”

3.4 During the six weeks of the programme 18 Kids Club Network Sites received two sessions per week, 12 Travelling Kids Clubs received one visit per week and two CHAMPS Special Needs Clubs had one session per week.

3.4.1 Innovative questionnaire booklets were completed by a range of children who attended Kids Clubs in the final week of the programme, 639 children took part in this group activity and the questionnaire covered the following topics:-

- Publicity
- Venue suitability
- Method of transport
- Activities on offer
- Fitness

- Quality of leaders
- Payment Methods
- Enjoyment

3.4.2 The children were also asked to draw pictures, complete puzzles and write their views of the clubs. A summary of results is as follows:-

95.6% of children took part in a variety of activities

92.3% of children enjoyed the activities

90% of children would like to attend similar activities at weekends

94.6% of children felt that leaders were approachable

3.4.3 The following represent a range of comments which were received:-

“I really enjoyed the Kids Club and am going to miss my leaders. They are the best”.

“It was good fun making stuff and playing games”.

“I want a bigger hall but if they can’t do that I will still come”.

“I am asthmatic and the leaders would always make sure I was alright”.

3.4.4 The overall attendance at Kids Clubs over the last three years is displayed below:-

YEAR	2001	2000	1999
Total Kids Clubs Attendance	4463	5496	4292

Whilst the overall attendance has decreased on last year this can be attributed to a new range of activities in the Department’s eight games halls which attracted over 4000 additional attendances. Details of the new Games Hall programmes will be reported to committee as part of an annual report in January. Other reasons for the general decline include a wider range of choice such as specialist arts and sports workshops and the unavailability of some community centres, which were shut for 3 out of the six weeks.

3.5 Fun Fitness Sessions were run for the first time in 2001. These innovative activities were as follows:-

- 3 Krazy Kids Sessions (8-12 years) per week
- 3 Funky Teens Sessions (12-16 years) per week
- 7 Active Kids Challenges (8-12 years)

3.5.1 Attendance’s are displayed below:-

ACTIVITY	TOTAL ATTENDANCE
Krazy Kids	92
Funky Teens	0
Active Kids Challenge	74
Total	166

3.5.2 Funky Teens classes were cancelled due to lack of interest. The 12-16 age group is a difficult group to target. Next year the Community Health and Fitness Officer will investigate targeting existing projects for this age group such as Yipworld.com, the Newmilns Dairy Project and Community Schools. The other sessions were extremely popular and an attempt will be made to build upon this success during term time.

3.5.3 Questionnaires focused upon assessing the levels of children’s fitness and outputs showed that the sessions resulted in children becoming more physically active in a fun environment.

3.6 The Recreation Section provided a wide range of sports coaching courses throughout East Ayrshire. These included:-

- 3 Golf Courses
- 4 Tennis Courses
- 4 Girls Football Courses
- 25 general Football Courses
- 6 Curling Courses
- Sportsfest Pilot in conjunction with East Ayrshire Coalfield, SIP

3.6.1 Attendance’s for Sports Coaching were as follows:-

YEAR	2001	2000	1999
Total Attendance’s at Sport Courses	401	170	132

Sports attendances have increased incrementally over the three-year period. This can be attributed to the range of joint funded partnership posts and the consistently high quality core Sports Development programme within Recreation Services. The pilot Sportsfest attracted 35, 12-16 year olds and the intention is to build upon this initiative by applying for external funding from the Sports Lottery Fund to focus upon youth sports development.

3.6.2 54 questionnaires were returned and the following outputs are as follows:-

- 96.3% of children thought that the Coaches were good or excellent in terms of enthusiasm, knowledge and teaching new skills
- 89% of children gave the session an excellent enjoyment rating

3.7 Activities were introduced this year for children under the age of five years. Two different types of session were piloted:-

- 3 Toddlezones – free play physical sessions – per week
- 3 Pre-5 activity sessions – structured development activities – per week

3.7.1 The attendances were as follow:-

ACTIVITY	TOTAL ATTENDANCE FIGURES
Toddlezones	108

Pre-5 Activity Sessions	111
Total	219

3.7.2 This initiative will be developed further in response to the successful pilot.

3.7.3 Comments received from parents were as follows:-

“Very good for children. The Staff are very good with the Kids. Only thing is arts and crafts needing re-thought, pre-5’s painting on floor isn’t a good idea”.

“Very good club. Children have enjoyed it lots. Staff doing a good job, it’s hard work looking after pre-5’s. Thanks very much”.

3.8 Building upon the success of previous years the Recreation Section ran the following specialist arts workshops: -

- 6 Native American Arts Workshops
- 6 Balloon Modelling Workshops
- 2 Wannabe Popstars

3.8.1 Attendance figures were as follows:-

YEAR	2001	2000	1999
Total Arts Workshop Attendance	219	127	56

3.8.2 Again the high quality of core provision has resulted in a positive trend over the three-year period.

3.8.3 142 questionnaires were returned detailing the following results:-

- 90% of children rated the instructors as good or excellent in terms of enthusiasm, knowledge and teaching new skills.
- 95% of children gave the sessions a good or excellent enjoyment rating.

3.8.4 The Theatre and Entertainment Section held three week long summer drama schools in Cumnock, Newmilns and Kilmarnock. Up to 60 children took part in each venue and feedback from participants and parents was extremely positive. The Senior Youth Theatre appeared for a week at the Edinburgh Festival raising the national profile of East Ayrshire.

3.8.5 The Museums and Arts Section built upon the success of the Natural High (Drugs Project) drama workshops by running three 2 hour sessions in Dalmellington, Drongan and Cumnock. Facilitated through Borderline Theatre drama was promoted as an enjoyable alternative activity, which offers young people a forum for expressing their views and feelings, in turn promoting self-confidence. Overall 33 young people aged 8 – 18 years participated providing a core for the drama groups which are set to begin Natural High 2 on 23rd October.

3.9 The Library and information Service ran a wide range of initiatives aimed at children, families and the wider East Ayrshire community during the summer months.

- 3.9.1 Held on 23rd June 2001, the Centenary Open Day was a unique opportunity to share with the public, one hundred years of service in the Dick Institute. This event launched the start of centenary celebrations at the Dick Institute.
The day offered the following activities and promotions: chainsaw sculpting, line dancing, dog agility show, falconry, police and fire service vehicles, pool tables, face painting, bouncy castle, children's playground, fitness testing, reflexology & massage, book sale, disco, pony rides, family tree training, puppet shows, new exhibitions. All events were free. Around 3000 visitors came to the Open Day and joined in the celebrations. The Open Day was organised by Libraries, Museums and Arts with the support of: Recreation Services, Cleansing Services, Outdoor Services and many voluntary organisations and groups.
- 3.9.2 A summer reading carnival was held during July and August for young people to encourage use of libraries during the school holiday period. This activity offered at all libraries including the mobile libraries.
Around 300 young people took part in this successful event over the summer. All children taking part received free promotional materials.
- 3.9.3 Four story telling/craft sessions were held at each of the following locations; Dick Institute, Stewarton Library, Drongan Library. Each session attracted around 15 young people to the events.
All sessions enjoyed by the young people and parents appreciative of events held during the holiday period.
- 3.9.4 A wine tasting session was held in the Dick Institute on 31st August, as part of the centenary programme. 43 people turned up for this extremely popular event. Visitors were also able to preview the latest exhibition in the main gallery.
- 3.9.5 The Dick Institute played host to staff, both old and new, to celebrate its Centenary year on Saturday 29th September 2001. Food, drink and music were laid on and all departments were open to allow ex-colleagues the opportunity to wander around their old work areas and reminisce about the "good old days".
Gerard Cairns gave a short speech to welcome all 83 guests, and a Centenary cake (made by a current member of staff) was cut by the furthest travelled guest – this was Mavis Lennox who had journeyed from Lanzarote to attend.
A "Rogues Gallery" of old staff photographs was set up in Gallery 2 – a prize was given to the guest who managed to identify the most "rogues"
A Centenary/reunion booklet had been produced and guests were invited to take a copy as a memento of a very successful evening.
- 3.9.6 National Children's Book Week was a "late" summer event which took place in the first week in October, part of a nation wide focus on children, books and reading.
For 2001 it was decided to promote reading across a wide range of age groups in many different ways. Events included: author visits, poetry day, books for babies, library visits for schools, mother and toddler visits, Events were held across East Ayrshire.
This successful promotion attracted more than 800 young people into libraries during National Children's Book Week.
- 3.10 The Countryside Ranger Service ran over forty events aimed at children and families from May to September. The total attendances for this period were 3064. The major

highlights were the Earl of Loudoun's Regiment of Foote Battle Re-enactment with over 900 attendances and the Fire and Sword Living History Battle Re-enactment group which attracted over 450 people.

3.11 Extensive research was carried out in terms of the publicity and promotion of the Summer Programme. A new range of advertising techniques were piloted or introduced this year to compliment existing approaches as a result of the Recreation Section's Publicity and Marketing Group. These techniques included:-

- Games Hall Summer Saver Cards
- Press releases in local sections of newspapers
- Advert on local radio
- Free fliers
- Poster in shops/libraries/community centres

These techniques were used in conjunction with the distribution of the Summer Activity Guide to all children in East Ayrshire via schools. In addition the SIP funded RICK card scheme (Recreation Inclusion Card for Kids) was in operation in the South of East Ayrshire.

3.11.1 Evaluation results showed that 80% of children attending activities received a summer activity guide at school. This method remains the most effective in terms of raising awareness about the programme. In addition over 50% of respondents used a RICK card and this is particularly encouraging for the SIP and Health Board funded Recreation Partnership Project which operates the scheme. The project, which is managed by the Recreation Section, has recently launched a RAD (Recreation Activity Discount) card in the north of East Ayrshire and this should have a major impact on the summer programme next year.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Summer Programme is funded from existing Recreation Development Budgets, specific section budgets and a cocktail of external funding.

5. LEGAL/AUTHORITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Not applicable

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Summer Programme is delivered within the framework of the Leisure Strategy, the Council Plan, the Community Services Department Action Plan, the Children Service Plan and in line with key social inclusion objectives. In addition the programme is underpinned by key health priorities in relation to improving the mental health and social well being of local children.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The Summer Programme continues to be a success with children receiving a great deal of choice and a range of high quality opportunities.

- 7.2 The Summer Activity Guide distributed to schools continues to be the most effective form of publicity.
- 7.3 Discount/membership cards, such as RICK, tend to be the best incentive to attend clubs.
- 7.4 The extensive range of evaluation feedback will be utilised proactively in order to continuously improve the Summer Programme.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 It is recommended that committee note the contents of this report.

William Stafford
Director of Community Services

WS/KK/JC

22/10/01

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1. Summer Activity Guide 2001
- 2. Evaluation Results, 1998 – 2001
- 3. “About You” children Questionnaire booklet

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Katie Kelly, Leisure Development Officer, Ex. 6722. E-mail – katie.kelly@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

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AGENDA