

Report title	Foxhills Community Camp
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Department	Community Development, Community Services
Exempt	No

Purpose of report:
For Information.

Synopsis of report:
In 2019, The Hayton Trust (Foxhills Country Club and Resort) committed £100k of funding over three years to support children’s summer activity provision in Runnymede. In 2022, The Hayton Trust committed a further three years of funding to the value of £100k. Essential elements to this summer provision include being free (or low cost) at the point of access, food provision and the offering of engaging activities. This report details the summary of the fourth year of the Foxhills Community Camp.

Recommendation(s):
None. This report is for information.

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 In 2019, Councillor Dolsie Clarke and Mr Marc Hayton discussed the idea of Foxhills supporting a summer holiday camp in Runnymede. To support this, Community Development were approached to lead on the organisation of the summer camp with funding initially committed by The Hayton Trust over three years (£100k). The funding has now been committed for a further three years. This is the fourth year that the camp has taken place
- 1.2 The purpose of the summer camp is to support residents in Runnymede over the long summer holiday period where parents often find it difficult to find affordable childcare and to fill the time. Providing three meals a day ensured the children were well fed and a variety of activities were organised to keep the children entertained.
- 1.3 The camp was open to children seven to 15 years old and ran from 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday. From Monday 31 July to Friday 11 August the camp was held at the Egham Orbit, and from Monday 14 to Friday 25 the camp was held the Big Hat Bushcamp in Lyne. The children could be booked on for one or two weeks via referral only.

2. Report and, where applicable, options considered and recommended

- 2.1 In total there were 61 children registered on the summer camp. Referrals were received by at least seven different organisations or departments including Surrey Young Carers and the Runnymede Family Centre. Other agencies were contacted but either did not respond or did not put anyone forward for the camps. Referrals were accepted on a first come first serve basis.
- 2.2 Most children who attended the camp came from complex family environments and included children who were witnesses to domestic abuse, children of parents who were in debt, young carers and/or had behavioural issues or mental health issues (typically anxiety). General demographic information of children registered on the camp is available in Appendix 'A'.
- 2.3 The capacity was 20 children from across the age range. In the previous year the age range was split. However, due to the high drop-out rate the groups were merged most days anyway. This capacity was set due to the need of the children being registered on the camps, which requires a high staff:child ratio, the capacity restrictions on venue hire and the activity providers. The camps were over booked by two spaces where possible to account for drop-outs.
- 2.4 There were nine external activities that were run across the four weeks, engaging six local activity providers and groups. More activity providers were contacted but either didn't respond or were unable to provide an activity during the month owing to other commitments.
- 2.5 In total, five playworker staff were recruited via an external advertisement and two play supervisors. Staff were asked to complete an online NSPCC safeguarding course and attend a first aid training course if they didn't already have a first aid qualification.
- 2.6 An in-house training day was arranged on Monday 24 July (9.30am to 12.30pm) for staff to meet one another, conduct a site visit, to run through risk assessments and have the opportunity to ask any questions. Staff were also given (and sent via email) a comprehensive staff training manual.
- 2.7 No promotional marketing material was created as the camps were via referral only. Summary information was written up to send to referring agencies and parents. Photographs were taken by staff on the work devices.
- 2.8 The drop-out rate was a concern as it has been each year. This year, the attendance was slightly improved from previous years due to over booking. Attendance was at a rate of 72% (week 1), 90% (week 2), 90% (week 3), 70% (week 4). The reasons for the no-shows and drop-outs vary including other commitments such as holidays and family visits, or as a result of unforeseeable situations such as car trouble, were ill or there was parental or child anxiety about attending camp.
- 2.9 Parents were asked their feedback via MS forms. Children attending the scheme were asked for their feedback during their time there. This asked about the organisation of the clubs, whether there was sufficient communication and how to improve for the future.
- 2.10 Full feedback results are available in Appendix 'B'. Below are some notable comments received:
 - "Both children enjoyed every single day, first camp they have done where they were excited to go on each morning. Thanks so much!" (*parent*)

- “My son was really nervous at first to join, but straight after day 1 he couldn’t wait to go back. We noticed a really positive change in his behaviour over the week and he couldn’t wait to go back each day, as he was engaging with others and making new friendships” *(parent)*
 - “The kids have enjoyed it so much, it’s a really special and lovely thing to do and much better quality than other camps we have experienced in the past. The kids loved the staff members & the activities, the food, all of it” *(parent)*
 - “This camp was brilliant! I have asked my son who is usually reluctant to attend ones at his school if he would go again and received a big smile and thumbs up” *(parent)*
 - “This camp has been really good for my child. In the past two weeks he has come out of his shell at home and has spoken non stop about how much he has enjoyed it” *(parent)*
 - “My favourite part of the Foxhills Camp was Archery and I really want to do it again in the future” *(child)*
 - “The staff are really friendly and I enjoyed all the activities” *(child)*
- 2.11 The referring agencies know how vital low-cost childcare provision is for their families and what a benefit it was for their families this summer. The camps not only allowed their children to participate in fun activities, but the time they had to themselves allow the parents and carers to attend appointments or care for other children. What repeatedly came up was that if the children weren’t at the camp, they would be stuck inside ‘playing video games’ or otherwise ‘not doing a lot’.
- 2.12 Leftover food from the summer camps was minimal but it was used by the Club4 Camp (a free summer camp) which ran at the Orbit specifically for children on free school meals.
- 2.13 Equipment bought from the summer camps is being stored in a secure garage at the Runnymede Depot in Chertsey and at the Civic Offices.
- 2.14 Future delivery options are being considered, including the possible use of a company to deliver the activities and cover the staffing, and using Council owned buildings to reduce venue costs. Additionally, Officers will look at alternative transport options, including the Council’s Community Transport service once the outcome of its service review is determined, and have discussions with relevant partners around investment in attendance to reduce dropout rate.
- 2.15 Hayton Charitable Trust have committed to two more years of funding. A review and planning meeting took place November 2023.

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 The Foxhills Community Camp supports aims within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

4 Resource implications/Value for Money (where applicable)

- 4.1 A total of £33,300 was received from the Hayton Charitable Trust. As of November 2023, approximately £22,000 has come out of the budget. A full budget breakdown is set out below:

Staff	£4,276
Training	£926
External Activities	£1,920
Food	£2,249
Uniforms	£139
Equipment	£528
Bushcraft staff/activities/food	£8,000
Venue costs	£4,152
Total	£22,190

The £33,000 allocated for the year was not fully spent, which was known in advance due to the capacity limitations of the venue and some activities. Any underspend will be used to subsidise half term activities.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 This project complied with requirements regarding first aid, Ofsted and safeguarding, through training.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 The project complies with the Council's Equalities Policy and supports vulnerable families.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 7.1 Reducing plastic waste (from the meals provided) was a key action from the 2019 camp. A venue with a café/kitchen was sought for this year's camp in order to reduce the amount of single use plastic waste.
- 7.2 At the start of the camps the children were provided with a reusable branded water bottle.

8. Risk Implications

- 8.1 As this is a report reviewing the performance of the summer camps in 2023, there are no specific risks associated with this report. However, Members are advised that with only two years left of committed funding available, in the event of further funding not being committed, the ability to deliver a school holiday programme may prove unviable for the Council, given its current financial position.

9. Background papers

None stated.

10. Appendices

Appendix 'A' Demographic information of children
Appendix 'B' Feedback