

Borough's young 'Speak Up'

BARKING and Dagenham Progress Project's young people's development forum works with young disabled people aged 8-25 years old in the borough, to give them opportunities to be involved in sporting activities, meeting friends and getting involved in community activities. We empower them to have a voice and make a positive impact in their community.

We have been commissioned by the council to lead a 'Speak Up' project for young people with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities). The project conducts monthly consultations on themes provided by the council/members.

Speak Up started on September 1 and so far, we have consulted with the council on their SEND Local Offer newsletter and have been designing the new Local Offer website with the council, which goes live on December 5, 2023.

This month, we will be having our first group get together at the Vibe Youth Club, Becontree Avenue, on October 19, between 6pm and 7pm.

All young people in the borough have been invited to have the chance to speak up and get their views heard and potentially included on the new Local Offer website.

We've invited young people from AbPhab, Purple Penguins, Future Youth Zone and other groups, the borough's schools and Gigi Kwong, family co-production lead for SEND services at the council.

We also meet fortnightly at the Vibe on a Friday 6.30pm - 8.30pm. Recently we have been working on a new Speak Up

Participation officer at Barking and Dagenham Progress Project, **Andy**

Murphy, reveals how young people of the borough are being invited to have their say on issues around SEND.



..... logo which will be ready to show off on October 19. Join us, meet with friends, make your ideas and views heard and make positive changes in the borough.

Our Speak Up group has delivered their first consultation report to the council, on the borough's library services.

Our young members visited libraries in the borough and recorded their findings on accessibility, opening times and the joining process.

We are actively looking for new members to join our Speak Up group, where you can also join in with all our other activities which include cycling, iCAN run club, coffee shop catch ups, day trips, community-based programmes, art and film projects. We have just finished work on a film titled Flood Barrier by award winning artist Catherine Yass, the film is available to be seen all this month at Valence House Museum.

■ To get involved, contact me on social media, call 07881 247654 or email forum@bdpp.org.uk



Designing a new logo for Speak Up at the Vibe

Picture: BDPP

Serving the local community

SHED Life (a residents-led group of volunteers) have been working closely with residents on the Thames View Estate to develop sustainable relationships, spaces and opportunities through creative activities that engage and support the local community.

Shed Life recently hosted three events at the Thames View Skate Park, which was an underused space until April when the renovated park was launched; designed and supported by Clear Channel UK in partnership with the council and local residents.

We were awarded funding by Barking Riverside London and the borough's 'Park-tivity', programme borough to run 'wheel' activity workshops, 'Bring Your Wheels!'

The first two events were held during the summer holidays, for participants aged five to 12 years+, offering coaching workshops to develop their confidence on wheels, run by experienced skate artist/facilitator George Brooks and professional coach Ebony Inc.

Dr Bike set up a bike surgery, to check the young people's bikes were safe and roadworthy and gave tips on how to maintain them. Meanwhile Shed Life volunteer Manjot ran fun activities making windmills and creating beautiful moving portrait drawings of the skaters, which were later displayed around the skate park as a celebration of community, creativity and imagination.

The feedback from residents was great and they wanted more events that brought residents together in a positive way. Shed Life creates a nurturing and inviting space for all to participate.

Assistant artistic director at Humourisk CIC, **Shenelle**

Thomas, reveals how through their activities Shed Life aims to engage with and support the local community and build sustainable relationships.



..... Through feedback, Shed Life identified that residents felt the park sometimes felt uninviting. We got together with the Shed Life's young volunteers and other members to come up with ideas.

Our third event, facilitated by our horticulturalist Kizzy, supported by our volunteers, taught young residents about which flowers attract pollinators, and why it is so important to look after our bumble bees, in our 'Bring Your Wheels! Autumn Seed Scattering and Rewilding' event.

Shed Life is committed to developing communities, supporting the resident voice and taking practical action. We will continue to develop and deliver activities that serve Thames View in our Shed that is due to be completed by the end of this year!

Our Black History Event is on Wednesday, October 25. 'Finish the Lyric' is a celebration of music of black origin, 10.30am at Thames Community Hub.

■ For more information email humourisk@gmail.com



Shed Life's 'Bring Your Wheels!' autumn seed scattering and rewilding at Thames View skatepark

Picture: HUMOURISK CIC