

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE
AND THE GROUP MANAGER, PLANNING****SERVICE UPDATE FOR THE PERIOD UP TO 7 OCTOBER 2012****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update the Committee on a range of initiatives being undertaken which help to improve and enhance the quality of life for Nottinghamshire people.

Information and Advice**LIBRARIES****Summer Reading Challenge 2012**

2. This year's Summer Reading Challenge was launched on 14 July with special launch events at Mansfield, Newark and Worksop Libraries, attended by over 300 children. The Summer Reading Challenge, run by independent charity The Reading Agency, challenges children aged between four and 11 years old to read six books from their local library during the summer holidays. The Reading Agency provides fun, collectable incentives and rewards, plus a certificate and medal for every child who completes the Challenge. Children just need to visit their local library to sign up.
3. Now in its fourteenth year, the Summer Reading Challenge has proved extremely popular. Last year 8,950 children took part through libraries across Nottinghamshire.
4. UK Literacy Association research on the impact of the Summer Reading Challenge found that as well as stemming the "summer holiday dip" in children's reading achievements, teachers interviewed noted the social benefits of involvement with the Challenge, and praised the materials and website resources.
5. This year's theme for the Challenge is *Story Lab* which features four characters Lex, Rani, Will and Evie. Along with Aesop, the ginger lab cat, they will help Professor Cortex collect and share stories to fire up young imaginations. There has been considerable interest in the challenge from Nottinghamshire children and the number of children signing up has exceeded last year's figures at several libraries. The challenge ran until 9 September 2012.

Calverton Library

6. Calverton Library has re-opened after a make over. The refurbishment cost just over £50,000 and the work undertaken consisted of complete internal re-decoration, new shelving, furniture and carpet. The aim was to modernise and improve the environment for the library customers, with particular emphasis on improving the children's area to encourage new members. £20,000 was also spent on new books for the library.
7. On Saturday 6 October, the Chairman of the County Council officially re-opened the library with over 400 members of the local community attending the ceremony and the family fun event.
8. There have been many favourable comments on the changes from our customers.

"The Library is lighter, brighter and looks far bigger, fresher and modern"

"It's warmer, brighter and there are lots and lots and lots of new books! There's so many there's almost too many to choose from, it's brilliant!" (a comment from a child)

"A vast improvement, a pleasure to come, and the staff are fantastic!"

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ARCHIVES

Nottinghamshire Heritage Awards, 2012

9. The Nottinghamshire Heritage Awards, run by the Nottinghamshire Heritage Forum, celebrate excellence in the County's museums, archives and heritage attractions. The awards evening was held at the Djanogly Art Gallery and Recital Hall, University of Nottingham, on 18 July 2012, sponsored by Nottingham Trent University and compèred by Andy Whittaker of BBC Radio Nottingham.
10. Nottinghamshire Archives won two awards:
 - The Inspiration Award for Best Special Project for the Gertrude Savile Twitter Diary
 - Judges' Special Acknowledgement of Outstanding Achievement.
11. The diaries of Gertrude Savile, 1721-1757, form part of the family and estate records of the Saviles of Rufford Abbey. The brevity of the diary lends itself to Twitter and daily entries are tweeted throughout the week. The project was designed to attract new audiences to archives through social media and Gertrude now has over 500 followers following her melancholic life, family arguments and inappropriate servant management techniques.
12. In addition Nottinghamshire Archives was short-listed for three other awards:
 - Collections Care and Development for the Southwell Minster Archives Project
 - Work with Children and Young People for the 'Olympiad Journals Group: Nottingham's Parks and Gardens - Past and Present'
 - Best Exhibition for the virtual exhibition 'Getting Your Indentures - The Life and Times of the Poor Apprentice'.

13. The Leader of the Council was present at the ceremony and presented the Best Exhibition award.

Make History Happen! Youth Heritage Conference

14. History Happen! was the County's first ever Youth Heritage Conference. Organised by Nottinghamshire Archives and held at Lakeside Arts Centre, University of Nottingham, it was supported by the University of Nottingham and the Nottinghamshire Local History Association. It aimed to engage young people between 16 and 21 years and heritage professionals who are actively working with young people. The Conference represented another development by the Archives service in its long-term goal to reach new and under-represented audiences.
15. The event attracted 50 attendees who participated in workshops that ranged from archaeology to conservation, museums, photography and quill pen writing. There were also talks on '*When Did Youth Happen?*', '*A Load of Old Rubbish!*' and the '*Life & Loves of Billy Richards*', a Nottingham teenager. The surprise arrival of the 1948 London Olympic torch at lunchtime added to the excitement of the day!
16. There was a great 'buzz' about the day and the involvement of a community group from Leicester, a Nottingham school, young work experience individuals and youth volunteers created a unique Conference experience.
17. One young person wrote: "I loved the workshops! I thought they were brilliant, interesting and extremely fun to do! The conservation workshop was really fun and interesting and helped me experience something totally new. The archaeology workshop was really interesting too and I loved holding the artefacts. Everybody was friendly and gave me a lot of careers advice!"

GREEN ESTATE

Programme of improvements to Manton Tip Woods

18. The Finance and Property Committee meeting on 17 September 2012 approved a report recommending acceptance of new external funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) so that works can commence on this site as soon as contracts have been completed.
19. The reclaimed waste tips of the former Manton colliery were transferred to Nottinghamshire County Council's ownership as part of 'The British Coal' programme of land acquisition and restoration. The 100ha site was reclaimed to a mixture of woodland, grassland and other habitats from 1996, using external funding and is now managed by the Country Parks and Green Estate Services.
20. However, in the intervening years, the site has become seriously degraded by increasing levels of vandalism, anti-social behaviour, and illegal motor-bike activity. Levels of legitimate public use have been further limited by the lack of car park provision.
21. The site has, however, significant potential to be an attractive and popular recreational forest park. It is strategically located at the southern approach to Worksop, adjacent to

Manton, and just north of Clumber Park. It is easily accessed by the local community and can function as a gateway site to the core Sherwood Forest to the south. The woods also contain valuable heath land and woodland habitats, including those highlighted for restoration in the Nottinghamshire Biological Action Plan.

22. A programme of works is now proposed to realise the full potential of the site in terms of recreation and ecology, reversing the culture of neglect and reducing future County Council revenue liability. These outline works include:

- Construction of a car park and formal vehicular access
- Enhancement of site security and boundary treatment
- Upgrading of routes around the site and linkages to wider path and cycleway network
- Fencing works, hedge planting, habitat mitigation works.

23. A funding package has been prepared combining external and internal sources as set out below:

Source	Status	12/13	13/14	Total
ERDF	Funding offered		£131,700	£131,700
Natural England	Application being appraised	£14,000		£14,000
NCC /LTP	12/13 allocated	£5000		
	13/14 allocated in provisional budget		£50,000	£55,000
NCC /British Coal	Allocated	£20,000	0	£20,000
Total		£39,000	£181,700	£220,700

CULTURAL AND ENRICHMENT SERVICES

National Water Sports Centre Events 2012

24. 2012 has been a special year for events at the National Water Sports Centre with close to 50 major events organised or hosted.
25. Alongside the day to day business at the Centre the following have taken place:
- 15 National Governing Body training camps
 - 3 National Governing Body trials events
 - 12 National Regattas
 - 5 National and regional triathlons
 - 2 National Dragon Boat events
26. In addition to the events listed above, a number of major events are worthy of more detailed recognition:

- Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations Event**
 6,000 Nottinghamshire people enjoyed a Bank Holiday evening of entertainment and fun culminating in a stunning firework display and the only floating beacon in the United Kingdom.
- Olympic torch relay**
 As part of the Olympic Torch's journey throughout the UK, it arrived at the National Water Sports Centre to a jubilant welcome. The torch crossed the 2000m regatta lake on a boat paddled by young Nottinghamshire paddlers, followed by a flotilla of boats representing all the activities of the National Water Sports Centre. The flotilla was cheered by over 2,000 people, including 400 school children, invited from areas of the County not on the torch route.
- The Outlaw Triathlon**
 This annual event once again excelled with 1,200 competitors taking on a 2km swim, 110 mile bike ride followed by a full marathon. Competitors and spectators arrived from across the UK and Europe, giving a boost to local hotels and restaurants. This year the event was filmed by Channel 4 giving a very positive image of both the facilities at the National Water Sports Centre and Nottinghamshire's overall passion for sport.
- Chinese Olympic Team**
 In the days preceding the 2012 Games the National Water Sports Centre hosted the Chinese white water racing team. Under the banner of an official training venue of the 2012 Games, the team accessed the white water course and used the onsite accommodation at the Centre. All the team reported having enjoyed their stay in Nottinghamshire.
- Splash Dance**
 As part of the Cultural Olympiad the East Midlands Regional 'Big Dance' event took place at the National Water Sports Centre. Unfortunately, the name was all too true, with many of the planned activities having to be cancelled due to the bad weather conditions. However, the Centre was able to demonstrate its flexibility by converting, overnight, the Sports Hall into a 250 seat theatre, allowing 600 people to enjoy an iconic collaboration of community and professional dance.
- European Dragon Boat Championship**
 15 countries entered multiple teams at the European Championships. This event reaffirmed the Centre's position as an international event venue with the organisers commenting on the excellent service provide by the events team at the Centre.
- World Championship Powerboat Grand Prix**
 Returning to the UK and Nottinghamshire for the first time since 2002, the final round of the Formula 2 World Powerboat Championships took place at the Centre in September. This exciting event was watched by 2,000 spectators in a weekend of world class racing. Representatives from 10 countries competed at the blue ribbon event. All drivers and team managers expressed their delight with the facilities and are intending to return in 2013.

CONSERVATION

Biodiversity Offsetting

27. The County Council is continuing to lead work on the national Biodiversity Offsetting pilot in Nottinghamshire and is working closely with Natural England and the local planning authorities to identify opportunities to test the proposals. A number of different models for biodiversity opportunity mapping are being investigated and work is progressing on collating habitat data. Interest from developers in using offsetting and from groups and organisations able to provide suitable land and ongoing management of the offsets is now emerging.

Local Nature Partnership

28. On 28 September 2012, we received formal confirmation from Richard Benyon MP, Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries, of Government's recognition of the Lowland Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire partnership as a Local Nature Partnership. Work is now underway to establish a Board to provide the strategic direction for the Partnership and to drive forward the priority actions identified by partners from the health, education, land management, business, community and environment sectors. The work of the LD&NLNP will be the subject of further reports to this Committee.

Supporting local conservation volunteers

29. The Biodiversity Officer has been working with local volunteers to undertake survey work to establish the distribution of the native white-clawed crayfish in Nottinghamshire and to identify the extent of the threat posed by the non-native signal crayfish.
30. This is part of an ongoing project which started in 2010 and is looking to establish a self-supporting Nottinghamshire Crayfish Group. The County Council has been working with Crayfish specialists to provide volunteers with the skills and experience required to enable them to obtain a Natural England licence to undertake research and monitoring of this European protected species and UK biodiversity priority species. The first volunteers achieved their licences in August.
31. In addition to surveying and monitoring priority biodiversity species, the County Council has been supporting communities in tackling the problems of invasive non-native species. I am pleased to report that we have successfully obtained funding from DEFRA to provide training and support for local groups in five catchments, with a focus particularly on Himalayan Balsam.
32. Himalayan Balsam was introduced to this country by Victorian plant collectors and in recent years has become widespread on water courses in Nottinghamshire. It forms dense stands which are detrimental to native wildlife and is known to exacerbate flooding problems locally. The project is seeking to tackle the problem by using a strategic catchment-based approach, identifying the source of the problem in each catchment and then working systematically downstream.

Time Travel Trent Vale

33. Newark Castle came to life on Saturday 28 July with the third and most successful so far of the Community Archaeology team's Time Travel Trent Vale events. The County Council co-ordinated the event, with the support of small army of willing volunteers, as part of the Trent Vale Landscape Partnership project, a three-year Heritage Lottery funded programme.
34. Queen Victoria glided through the grounds, while soldiers from Cromwell's New Model army fired muskets on the Castle walls as they had in 1645. Roman soldiers described the punishment for a colleague who had fallen asleep while on sentry duty, while members of an Anglo-Saxon family spun wool, and cooked food and talked about their lives.
35. There were weapons from Roman short swords through medieval bodkin arrows, up to a Bren gun from WWII. Dungeon tours were as popular as ever, and rooms of the castle that are usually closed to visitors could be explored. Re-enactors who are experts in their fields talked with visitors and demonstrated Mediaeval fighting skills to enthusiastic crowds.
36. Over 6,000 people of all ages came through the gates of the Castle to take part in this free event. In addition to boosting visitor numbers on the day, evidence from previous events has shown significant increases in visitor numbers in the following weeks.

Mons Pool Excavation

37. In August the County Council's Community Archaeologists were at Mons Pool, near Collingham. With funding from the Trent Vale Landscape Partnership, they ran a week's field school enabling 15 people per day to learn specialist archaeological skills and techniques as part of an excavation in advance of quarrying works. This was followed by a two-week community excavation where volunteers of all ages were able to work alongside professional archaeologists from the County Council and Salford University.
38. On Saturday 18 August nearly 200 people from the local communities and beyond attended an open day on the site, where they were able to talk to experts and look at the work undertaken by the specialists and volunteers. Finds from the site have included tweezers, a shoe and a glass bead from the Roman period, human burials and pottery from the Roman period and earlier.

Greenwood Community Awards

39. 140 people gathered at the Newstead Centre on the evening of 29 August for the Greenwood Community Awards. Colin Barson, Chairman of the Friends of Greenwood Community Forum, hosted the event which celebrates the achievements of volunteers and friends groups over the past year. Award winners are nominated by their peers and by officers and in 2012 there were 23 nominations, the highest response ever received, for the 12 awards. The awards include categories for teams or Friends Groups, adult volunteers, young people and schools.

Community Celebration

40. On Saturday 22 September, members of the Conservation Team attended the County Council's Community Celebration Event. The Team provided a photographic quiz on Nottinghamshire's Heritage as part of the entertainment for guests as they arrived in the Assembly Hall. They also provided interactive displays of the County's natural and historic environment with a Rivers and Royalty theme in the Civic Suite. These included archaeological finds, an opportunity for guests to discover their local heritage on the Historic Environment Record, wildlife and "table-top habitat" displays, historic building materials and examples of community projects.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That the report be noted.

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