

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE

SERVICE UPDATE FOR THE PERIOD 12 OCTOBER TO 15 NOVEMBER 2015

Purpose of the Report

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

Information and Advice

LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES, ARTS, INFORMATION AND COMMUNITY LEARNING

Tuxford Community Partnership Library

2. The re-opening of Tuxford Library in its new location within Tuxford Primary Academy on Tuesday 3 November marked the second Nottinghamshire Library to become a Community Partnership Library and the first within an academy. The library moved from its old premises within a listed Grade 2* eighteenth century former Grammar School and reopened in its new, shared and refurbished premises after just one week of a closure period.
3. The Library Service has invested in new shelving, carpeting and some furniture, all of which have increased the accessibility of library materials and enhanced the overall customer experience. In addition, the Academy has redesigned its entrance and integrated a new reception area to welcome library customers and increase accessibility for customers with mobility concerns.
4. On the opening day six class visits took place, over 200 people visited and by the end of its first full week of opening the numbers of new members equalled 25% of the library's 2014-15 total. Since reopening, several lapsed customers have also returned and re-joined. There have been very many positive comments including:
 - *It's an excellent idea that you have moved onto a site where you can do so much good and it will promote the reading habit from a young age*
 - *Isn't it lovely and warm in here – it's lovely, much better than the old place!*
5. This move will initially save on building and maintenance costs and in addition the Library Service is working on enhancing the volunteer offer to increase volunteering opportunities and reduce associated staffing costs.

The 12th Annual Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Libraries' Readers' Day

6. Some 128 adult readers spent the day celebrating books and reading at our annual Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Libraries' Readers' Day on Saturday 7 November.
7. Hosted this year at County Hall, and run in partnership with the City Council, this well-established and much-loved event gives people the opportunity to hear from high profile authors and enjoy reading-related talks and workshops.
8. The event featured writers including Judith Allnatt, author of *The Poet's Wife* and *The Silk Factory*, and the Orange prize-winning and Man Booker shortlisted writer Linda Grant, author of *When I Lived in Modern Times* and *Upstairs at the Party*. Talks were enjoyed on a variety of reading topics including PG Wodehouse, Harper Lee, *Literary Lies and Hoaxes* and Alan Sillitoe. The event also featured stalls, including those selling literary-related gifts from the County Libraries' gift shop range and our local heritage publications.

9. Audience comments about the day included:

"The whole day was very special, thought-provoking and stimulating."

"A joyful event."

"Loved hearing from authors and becoming interested in books I never would have thought of reading."

"Can't wait to come back next year."

Performances in libraries

10. October half term saw the second season of productions touring libraries in Nottinghamshire as part of the Arts Council England funded Children's Pop Up Theatre project. Norwich Puppet Theatre visited Beeston, Mansfield Central, Newark, Worksop and West Bridgford libraries. They presented a puppet show based on the children's picture book *Oddly* written by Joyce Dunbar.
11. Over 400 people attended performances and were very positive about the production and valued being able to see theatre performances in their library. Audience comments included:

"Brilliant to have this culture come to us"

"Brilliant. Innovative performance engaging for both children and adults "

"Wonderfully inventive and immersive for the kids. Makes me feel very lucky to have our library."
12. A further 200 people took part in supporting puppet-making workshops that took place in 12 libraries across the County. Children and adults worked together to create puppets inspired by the *Oddly* story.

13. The author of the book, Joyce Dunbar, also visited Mansfield Central library in advance of the performances and talked to three classes of children from a local school about her writing and entertained them with a reading from her latest book.
14. A further three seasons of performances are planned before April 2016. The project aims to provide high quality and accessible theatre performances for children and families and build on the strong links between reading and theatre, allowing children to see how stories can be brought to life.

COUNTRY PARKS AND GREEN ESTATES

Country Parks

15. Rufford Abbey and Sherwood Forest Country Parks traditionally offer low cost family activities for the October Half Term, and as ever this year's activities were well supported.
16. Nearly 3,000 children enjoyed Rufford's week long Halloween Trail around the park and 350 participants braved the dark to take part in Sherwood Forest's Halloween spooky woodland walk, with another 50 taking part in free half term 'make it' sessions.
17. "Seed Hunt Sunday" at Sherwood attracted over 200 people, collecting acorns which youngsters will take home and grow into mini Sherwood oak trees.
18. Meanwhile, a party of some 30 employees of Boots PLC carried out a day of hands on conservation work at Cotgrave Country Park, in a work party organised by the County's Green Estates team.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That the update on a range of initiatives being undertaken to improve and enhance the quality of life for Nottinghamshire people be noted.

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