



**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE  
AND THE GROUP MANAGER, PLANNING**

**SERVICE UPDATE FOR THE PERIOD 11 FEBRUARY TO 3 MARCH 2013**

**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 AND INFORMATION**

**Records Management Service Customer Survey**

2. The Records Management Service (RMS) provides the County Council with a corporate records management service including:
  - secure storage facilities for semi-current records at two record centres
  - a remotely accessible records management database
  - retrieval and delivery services to all departments
  - review and retention processes
  - facilities for confidential destruction of records or transfer to Archives
  - training and professional records management advice.
3. RMS has recently conducted a survey of its customers and received an overall very good or good rating of 93% and ratings of 95.3% for the helpfulness and friendliness of staff and 94.5% for the file retrieval service. This a tribute to the hard work and professionalism of the staff at a time when demands placed on the service by the Ways of Working project are increasing. The survey has also provided valuable information to improve the Wisdom database and the training offered.
4. Customers made the following comments:
  - on the file retrieval service: "Very efficient, make the request one day and we have the file the next day - brilliant."
  - on staff advice: "A wealth of knowledge and always willing to help."
  - on the helpfulness and friendliness of staff: "Customer Service very good and always to a high standard. Always willing to assist."

- on RMS overall: "I think the RMS team provide an excellent service, helpful, willing to go above and beyond what is required. In all areas in RMS very good service delivery and support."

5. RMS staff are to be congratulated on this excellent result.

### **Picture the Past**

6. On 13 February 2013 an event took place at Nottinghamshire Archives to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Picture the Past website ([www.picturethepast.org.uk](http://www.picturethepast.org.uk)).
7. The North East Midland Photographic Record is a partnership between four local authorities: Nottinghamshire, Nottingham, Derbyshire and Derby to preserve and provide public access to historic images from library, archives and museum collections.
8. Professor John Beckett, of the School of History at the University of Nottingham, spoke of the importance of preserving photographs for the historian and providing digital access to them for the public.
9. The event also saw the 100,000<sup>th</sup> image added to the site. This was a photograph of a Whit march in Arnold in 1890 taken from the collections at Arnold Library.

### **Libraries, Archives and Information publications**

10. The latest local history publication was launched at Worksop Library by the Chairman of the County Council, Councillor Carol Pepper, on 21 February 2013.
11. *Emma's Sketchbook, Scenes of Nottinghamshire Life in the 1840's* has been edited by Dr Richard Gaunt of the University of Nottingham.
12. Emma Wilmot (1820-1898) was the wife of the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Newcastle's agent. Her sketches cover such diverse subjects as architecture, nature, animals and rural life. Together they offer an evocative insight into Nottinghamshire during the early-Victorian period. The book reproduces over fifty drawings which include Clumber Park, Welbeck Abbey, Newstead Abbey, Creswell Crags, Worksop Church, Manor and Priory and Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire.

### **Once Upon A Stage Week in Nottinghamshire Libraries 18 – 23 February 2013**

13. Nottinghamshire libraries presented a selection of children's theatre shows during February half term week. The events aimed to provide opportunities for children to enjoy live theatre, to promote the love of stories and reading and to increase library visits and book issues.
14. Six theatre companies delivered 12 performances of adaptations of well-known children's stories or books including *The Selfish Crocodile* and *Tales from the Brothers Grimm*. These took place in eight of our major libraries and were all free performances apart from two held in the auditorium at Mansfield where a charge was made. At each event children were invited to decorate a masquerade mask and borrow specially selected books on the show's theme.

15. Attendances were good with a total of 676 children and 380 adults attending performances. Feedback was very positive; comments included:
  - *Epic (Isabella age 8)*
  - *I came to watch 3 shows during half-term holiday. All of these were interesting, enjoyable and excellent*
  - *Absolutely brilliant. My children enjoyed this very much and would like to see more of these events for all ages.*
  - *Brilliant show for adults and children alike. Great that it is free and accessible for all. Would love more events like this in the library.*
  - *Lovely half term activity where we can be part of our community and enjoy books too.*
16. Watching and participating in drama supports language learning development in a fun and enjoyable way. Sharing in the experience enables parents to extend their children's vocabulary through a real life shared experience.

### **Creative project with young people at Mansfield Library**

17. The Library Service is working with The Mighty Creatives (TMC), an East Midlands based charity to develop a vibrant and relevant programme of activity for young people at Mansfield Library during November 2012 - March 2013, which focuses on words, reading, language and the arts. TMC is part of a national network of 10 Bridge organisations, funded by Arts Council England to help more children and young people access art and culture.
18. A small group of young people were recruited and have been meeting weekly at the library where they have experienced a range of art experiences including working with a stand-up comedian and creating a piece of music from sounds sampled in the library. They are now working with TMC and library staff to organise and deliver a promotional day to encourage other young people to engage with the library.
19. The planned legacy for the project is to continue to involve young people in shaping and delivering arts and literacy based events in Mansfield Library.

### **COUNTRY PARKS**

#### **Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre update**

20. Negotiations are continuing with Discovery Attractions with a view to completing the contractual documentation at the earliest opportunity.
21. As part of the design and planning process, there are some specific site surveys which impact upon the overall site layout and design which have taken longer to carry out than originally envisaged.
22. A report to the Committee will be made when all the information is available.

## **Natural England Accreditation for Rufford Abbey Country Park**

23. In February 2013, Rufford Abbey Country Park submitted an application to be assessed under the national "Accredited Country Park" scheme which is managed by Natural England.
24. Applications must be backed by a detailed management plan and are assessed against a range of essential and desirable criteria.
25. It is most pleasing to report that Rufford fully met the required standard and can now display the scheme's quality mark.
26. This is yet another quality indicator to go alongside the annual VAQAS (Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme) and our Visitor Surveys which reported a 98% high satisfaction rating in 2012.
27. Both of these surveys will take place later in 2013 to ensure our standards of visitor excellence are maintained.

## **Rufford Abbey Country Park – Site Improvements**

28. The Committee will be aware of a programme of site improvements that has been taking place at Rufford during the past six months, primarily during the quieter visitor period of the year in January and February.
29. The main through path from the Abbey to the Mill has now been levelled, sealed and re-surfaced; a new car park has been created on the site of the former Lakeside Garden Centre; improvements in site signage and interpretation are being developed; the Nemi fountain is being repaired; there are plans to open up Broad Ride by removing a number of overhanging branches; the bridges surrounding the Rufford lake have been repaired.
30. All these actions are considered as short term 'quick wins' prior to a more in-depth strategic Development Plan being prepared for the longer term future of the Park.

## **GREEN ESTATE**

31. Members may be aware of recent fatalities on the train/tramline at Hucknall.
32. Following strong public concerns, Network Rail has determined to build a new pedestrian bridge crossing over the lines, but in order to do this, has to acquire some land from the County Council on a site known as Hucknall Gateway.
33. The site currently provides limited amenity use and in the wider interests of public safety, it has been agreed that it can be transferred to Network Rail to enable their works to take place.
34. A report to the Finance and Property Committee meeting on 20 March 2013 has been prepared to this effect.

## **CULTURAL AND ENRICHMENT SERVICES**

### **Arts Development**

#### **Rural Touring**

35. Nottinghamshire's rural touring scheme, Village Ventures, continues to engage audiences and communities across the County. Audience surveys at Village Ventures events, during the period October - December 2012, show a high satisfaction level regarding quality of experience, with 93% of the overall audience rating events as either 'good' or 'very good'. 77% of the audience said that they attended in order to support local events or as a way of spending time with people within their own communities.
36. Local volunteer promoters, who host events in their village and community halls, continue to provide positive feedback - *'All I can say is the show was excellent, and was all that we have come to expect from the Village Ventures scheme'* - Promoter, Rushcliffe. In a recent survey with volunteer promoters, 83% said that they continued to host and support Village Ventures events as a way of supporting their communities and making the arts accessible to rural areas.

#### **Enterprising Ashfield**

37. A new project, Enterprising Ashfield, is a partnership between the arts development service, Ashfield District Council, The Hive at Nottingham Trent University, Creative Greenhouse, Framework, Takeover Radio 106 and Prince's Youth Business Trust to support emerging creative businesses in Ashfield and Mansfield. The project supports fledgling businesses in the area with a combination of creative mentoring, product development and business advice. Part of the project will see a local creatives revive an empty shop and stage an art and music event in Sutton in Ashfield. The creative energy around the project has attracted key partners and links to the Mary Portas initiative in Ashfield offering sustainable pathways for the cohort.
38. The visibility of the community retail space will generate a network of support beyond the selected group and strong links with the Sutton Centre Academy are also being forged as part of the project. Community drop-in activities run by artists and musicians working with the businesses on the scheme will initiate engagement in the arts with local people.

### **Sports Development**

#### **County Sports Awards**

39. The 21<sup>st</sup> Nottinghamshire Sports Awards event was held on 12 February 2013 with over 450 people attending, from volunteers in community sport to Olympians and Paralympians as well as London 2012 Games Makers and Torch Bearers. In total, there were 16 award categories with five dedicated to young people.
40. There was a good spread of winners from across the local authorities with Bassetlaw picking up three awards including Sporting Project of the Year for the Bassetlaw Games. Gedling also did well winning four categories as well as having two inductees to the Roll

of Honour. The evening started with a performance by the young people from the Notts Performing Arts choir.

### **National Water Sports Centre update**

41. At the Policy Committee meeting on 16 January 2013 the 'preferred' bidder to manage and develop the National Water Sports Centre (NWSC) was agreed. Serco Leisure Ltd was chosen as managing agent on behalf of the Holme Pierrepont Leisure Trust and, subject to final contractual agreements, will operate the NWSC from 1 April 2013.
42. Since the January Policy Committee meeting significant progress has been made in finalising the contract which is scheduled to be signed by all parties on 28 March 2013.
43. Planning for the transfer of staff and facilities is on schedule including all arrangements under the TUPE transfer regulations and consultation with staff and unions.
44. Service departments including HR, IT, Finance, Property and Corporate Communications have worked hard to ensure that the transfer will be as seamless as possible to ensure business continuity at the NWSC moving forward.
45. Staff on site have responded positively to the new arrangements and are looking forward to working in the new trust organisation and seeing the site develop for a new generation of users.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) That the report be noted.

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