



meeting **COUNTY COUNCIL**

date **17th June 2004**

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE

REPORT FOR THE PERIOD TO JUNE 2004

1. The following are summaries of work relating to my portfolio since my last report to Council.

Leisure and Culture

Arts

2. Over this period, nearly 120 performances, projects and workshops were staged by the Service. These included festivals, performances in village halls and schools, gallery and concert hall events, specific target groups, and - for the first time - work with Early Years.
3. Highlights include sell-out Shakespeare at Thoresby, the Lowdham Book Festival, the Newark on Water festival, the start of the Music in Quiet places programme, and support for the Manton Gala.

Performances

4. This period saw a new performance especially devised for very young children, in collaboration with the Nott Dance Festival; 4 performances were staged across the County.
5. The Music in Quiet places annual series of concerts in churches saw a Black Women's choir in Worksop, a Canadian fiddle band, and English folk bands perform. Events have also taken place in Radcliffe, Caunton, Wysall, Osberton, Greasley, Walesby, Trowell, Cotgrave, and Annesley.
6. The Lowdham Literature Festival, now firmly established as one of the regions leading literature events is proving as popular as ever, and the attractions include Kate Adie.

Next Stage

7. This period saw the launch of the Festival season with arts taster sessions in kite making, willow weaving and recycled jewellery at Thoresby and professional street theatre performances at Kirkby Carnival. In this lead-up to a summer full of community galas, many projects are underway with groups across the north Notts area to create carnival parades/music including Homestart (Mansfield Woodhouse), schools and after-school clubs in Manton and Kirkby in Ashfield.
8. Similarly the first round of the "Lucky" series of workshops took place at Kirkby's Summit Centre and were scheduled as part of the annual Ashfield Arts Festival with participants creating charm bracelets, lucky bags and playing alternative bingo. This is part of an overarching across North Notts project instigated by Sutton in Ashfield artist, Meloni Poole.
9. CD copies of the Ollerton monologues, *Snapshots of Ollerton*, were distributed to county libraries and local groups as was the second edition of the North Nottinghamshire Summer Festivals Guide, *Celebrate*.
10. In Sutton in Ashfield, 10 socially excluded young adult males began working with a professional filmmaker on a twelve week project at a newly created Saturday film school, while, clients of the Hope Drop-in Centre in Worksop began working with a web designer to develop a e-zine for users of the service.
11. In Worksop, a new partnership between the Women's Resource Centre, Bassetlaw Women's Aid and Next Stage saw the commencement of a seven-week reminiscence project at the refuge with Next Stage associate artist, Joy Pitt.
12. As part of the Langold Dyscaar Primary School Arts week, mosaic artist Rachel Nuttall spent three days working with children and teachers in a project that was funded in part through the community initiative fund. Work began at the Rockerfeld Centre with the commencement of an eight week course in stained glass to create a new window for the building.

Other

13. On Bank Holiday Monday, the Service was a partner in the relaunch of Thoresby Park where all the units are now let to creative industries. The cultural investment at Thoresby has been supported by ERDF Objective 2 and the Thoresby Estate, in partnership and the relaunch was fronted by Des Coleman of Eastenders.

Tourism and Country Parks

Robin Hood Festival – 2nd – 8th August

14. Sherwood Forest's annual Robin Hood Festival will be celebrating its 20th Anniversary this year and, thanks to financial support from local company

Hardys & Hansons, the week-long programme of events will be the busiest it has ever been.

15. Regular cast members will be joined by several newcomers, including English Longbow events, medieval alchemist Dr John Greene, juggler Jack o' All Trades, Peterkin the Fool, larger than life knight in shining armour Sir Lupin of Pipwithers and longbow archer and storyteller William of Sherwood.
16. The ever popular jousting tournaments and falconry displays will be back, with mid-week shows on the Wednesday in additional to the weekend events.
17. New events include a 20th Anniversary story competition, medieval costume day, and an outlaw challenge.
18. Copies of the Festival programme are being circulated widely throughout the county and surrounding areas and it is hoped that attendances at the event will exceed last years 64,000 visitors.

Young People

The Adrenalin Rush event

19. Nineteen teams of young people took part in the Adrenalin Rush event at the National Watersports Centre on 15th May. A programme of various water and land based challenges was organised by Rushcliffe based Youth Service staff and over 180 young people took part.
20. The event was designed to provide the opportunity for young people to interact with a number of agencies and to promote and recruit members to the Rushcliffe Youth Assembly.
21. In addition to the challenges a number of bands performed throughout the day along with Circus performers and Graffiti artists.
22. The event was jointly funded by Nottinghamshire County Council, Rushcliffe Borough Council and Connexions Nottinghamshire.

Libraries, Archives and Information

Read On Write Away and Library Service Try IT project in Manton

23. On 10 May 2004 North Nottinghamshire Group Librarians, North Notts College, the Boots Books for Babies Development Worker and local storyteller, Joy Pitt, took the Read On Write Away (ROWA) bus to Manton to offer parents with children the opportunity to Try IT. The Try IT project is part of the Library Service's contribution to the authority's PSA targets, and aims to develop ICT skills in targeted communities. The ROWAN bus is equipped with computers upstairs and crèche facilities downstairs. People attending the session spent 2-3 hours at the computers and appreciated the individual support they received. The children's activities, organised by the Group Children's Co-ordinator, also attracted many children.

24. This was the first attempt to take the Try IT activities outside a library and to involve these different agencies. As such it can be deemed a success. By providing a learning opportunity, with a relaxed atmosphere and individual attention, it was possible to offer an alternative to the more formal courses that are run in target libraries. The event created a lot of positive comments and the service is aiming to repeat the exercise at the Manton Gala on Saturday July 10. The Manton community is a major PSA target for the library service.

Libraries & Archives Publications

25. On 26th May, the County Library Publication Group launched an important new publication at Nottinghamshire Archives – “The Great Ancestor Hunt, 2nd Edition”. This is a much revised version of a best selling title first published in 1997 and reflects the dramatic changes in the world of genealogy with the huge growth of electronic sources of information and the Internet. “The Great Ancestor Hunt, 2nd Edition” has been fully revised by Tim Warner of Newark Library and Roger Parish, the City Local Studies Librarian and will answer a real need in libraries across the County and City.

Nottinghamshire Archives

Workshops

26. In May 2004 Nottinghamshire Archives held two workshops as part of a series of events across Nottinghamshire that celebrated Local History Month. Both workshops were led by Archives staff and were targeted at potential users of archive sources. The workshops aimed both to promote the use of archives for researching local history and to provide a valuable learning opportunity for users. ‘Reading Old Documents’ (12 May) provided tips and advice on the ‘everyday writing’ used in documents between 1600 and 1800 and ‘Discovering Old Property Deeds’ (19 May) helped users to discover the historical meaning and value of archival deeds and how they can help us find out more about the development of local communities. The workshops provided intensive, small-group, educational opportunities for work with archival documents. It is planned to undertake further workshops at a future date.

Customer survey

27. During the fortnight 17 May – 28 May 2004 a customer survey was held at the Archives. The survey was part of a nationwide survey of archive repositories co-ordinated by the Public Services Quality Group (PSQG) of the National Council on Archives. More than 200 visitors to Nottinghamshire Archives were surveyed. The questions in the survey aim to evaluate visitors’ views on a wide range of services and facilities, including opening hours, the helpfulness of staff, the quality of indexes and lists, IT facilities and copying services. It also asks for views on how archives ‘contribute to society’. The results will help Nottinghamshire Archives evaluate its services and facilities and plan improvements in the future. It will also provide helpful information on

archive usage at national level. The survey results will be collated by PSQG later in the year and made available to local users through Nottinghamshire Archives.

Document purchase

28. Nottinghamshire Archives has purchased an important collection of mediaeval charters relating to Morton and Fiskerton, c.1200-1421 and a deed relating to Hucknall, 1569. These have been purchased with the aid of grants of £2,500 from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council / Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund and £1,500 from the Friends of the National Libraries.
29. The charters for Morton and Fiskerton are of considerable local importance as they are amongst the few mediaeval documents from these two parishes held by the Archives. The deed relating to Hucknall provides evidence of the distribution of the former monastic property of Newstead Abbey after the dissolution of the monasteries and acquisition by the Byron family.

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Cabinet Member for Culture

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