

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE****SERVICE UPDATE FOR THE PERIOD 11 NOVEMBER 2013 TO 12 JANUARY 2014****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, INFORMATION AND COMMUNITY LEARNING****Stapleford Library**

2. Stapleford Library, a very busy, large community library was re-opened on 25 November 2013 after a nine month closure for essential building repairs and improvements, and a library refurbishment. A joint project with the Property Services department enabled the Library Service to make major improvements for customers as well as making savings on future maintenance and revenue costs.
3. The Library, built in 1983, had not had any substantial changes and was in obvious need of repair and modernisation.
4. The aim was to make the library more welcoming and attractive for library customers by completely modernising the building, with particular emphasis on better display of the books and improvements to the children's area in order to encourage new members and increase usage. A new vending/café space and a gallery area were also created. The Library Service spent £50,000 on new books to enhance the library stock.
5. The major planned maintenance project replaced the heating, lighting, lift and staircase, and improved the exterior of the Library, replacing windows and doors and creating a new entrance.
6. On Saturday 30 November 2013 the Chairman of the County Council officially re-opened the library and nearly 600 members of the local community attended a family fun event with storytelling and poetry, promoting the library and reading.
7. Since reopening there have been many favourable comments on the changes from library customers.

*'Thank you so much Nottinghamshire County Council. This library is brilliant! Tremendous selection adults to children. Friendly & helpful staff. A great asset to the community.'*

*'An amazing transformation, warm, light & cheery, lots of wonderful new books. An impressive library with cheerful, helpful staff.'*

*'First visit to new update library, fantastic, didn't expect it to be so good.'*

*'Amazing transformation, fantastic facilities and friendly & helpful staff as usual. Has not lost the personal touch and I will be using regularly.'*

*'It's excellent. I can't wait to get reading.'* (Charlie, aged 7)

*'I love the new library it's so up to date and I love the new books.'* (Ami, aged 10).

8. The performance of the Library for December 2013 compared with December 2012 is as follows:

- books borrowed has increased by 36%
- new members joining has increased by 250%
- use of computers has increased by 50% (with no increase in the number of computers).

### **Michael Craig-Martin Exhibition at West Bridgford Library**

9. From 23 November 2013 to 5 January 2014, visitors to West Bridgford Library had the opportunity to enjoy Michael Craig-Martin's colourful *Alphabet* exhibition. Part of the Hayward Touring's programme from the Southbank Centre, London, the colourful series of 26 monochrome silk screen prints was enjoyed by library visitors who also had the chance to participate in a creative writing workshop inspired by the exhibition.

### **COUNTRY PARKS AND GREEN ESTATES**

10. The festive season proved a busy time for the Country Parks service. Nearly 3,000 families enjoyed Santa's Grotto at Rufford Abbey, Tree Dressing celebrations at Sherwood Forest were well attended, and at Bestwood Country Park, staff provided some 30 park volunteers with a festive lunch in the Dynamo House which was restored by Heritage Lottery and Nottinghamshire County Council some years ago.
11. The Aurora Illuminations event at Rufford Abbey attracted some 7,500 people over its nine nights of operation. The Country Parks teams are currently reviewing this year's winter offer and working up a new programme for 2014.
12. The in-house catering team witnessed brisk trading throughout the festive period, and bookings for Christmas lunches and evening dinners were up on last year's figures. Commercial trading is up by 10% assisted by the favourable weather conditions in November and December.

13. Flooding and other winter challenges to outdoor sites kept the Green Estates Service occupied through the period. Work also began on a new extension to the Bilsthorpe Trail, which will link Sherwood Pines Forest Park to Vicar Water Park, and to Mansfield via the existing Timberland Trail. This will provide local cyclists with an attractive and sustainable new route.

## **CULTURAL AND ENRICHMENT SERVICES**

### **Working creatively with families**

14. The Arts Development Service works directly with families at Rufford Craft Centre and other settings across the County. It also works to develop the skills non-arts professionals need to enable them to engage creatively with families.
15. Free family drop in sessions are held at Rufford throughout the year to complement the exhibition programme. For example, alongside the summer exhibition, drop in sessions took place both at Rufford, in schools and at 22 libraries in the County. Artists ran a family outreach programme to interpret the themes of the exhibition, and produce a collective community art work of hundreds of butterflies. The work toured from Rufford Gallery to the three new library galleries and then into smaller library settings. Over 1,100 people took part in the workshops and contributed to the touring art work. Nearly 4,000 visitors to Rufford enjoyed seeing the final work.

### **The Big Draw**

16. The Big Draw is the flagship event of the National Campaign for Drawing and runs throughout October in thousands of venues across the UK and internationally. It provides a highly accessible vehicle to engage families and individuals who may have thought they had little artistic skill or talent. Nottinghamshire County Council's Arts Development Service has led the programme to use drawing for engagement over the last five years and works with non arts professionals in settings including older people's care homes, looked after children's teams, children's centres, schools, community centres, youth groups, libraries, and many more. This programme has developed training for leaders in these settings to use drawing to achieve their own priorities, and run events across the County. Our work, increasing participation in drawing, was awarded the National Trail Blazer Award by the National Campaign for Drawing in 2012.
17. Spurred on by the Award, the 2013 Big Draw programme attracted record numbers. Family events took place at Rufford with over 3,000 participants working with artists to *Draw Tomorrow* in a box and then add their box to the gallery where the sculptural collective community art work grew and evolved. Over 4,800 visitors to the gallery then explored this world of tomorrow by torchlight.
18. This year we trained a volunteer cohort in libraries across the County, who, along with library staff (who were trained in 2012), ran events in over 25 libraries involving 1,800 participants. Training also took place with parents at Rainworth Children's Centre to provide them with the skills to run a programme for their community. They learnt about event management and health and safety issues as well as generating creative ideas for their own event which went on to attract 100 local families.

19. Following a successful Big Draw pilot project in 2012 with staff and young people at Clayfields House, a secure children's unit, a further project was developed. Using the Big Draw as a focus the young people worked with an artist to achieve Discover and Explore Arts Award, a nationally accredited qualification.
20. Communities across the County have taken the Big Draw to heart and none more so than Hucknall who formed a steering group led by the children's centre and included over 25 different groups in the community to run events. Supported by the Arts Service with resources and materials, they mirrored the programme at Rufford 'Drawing Tomorrow' in boxes. Over 3,000 people in schools, church groups, youth groups, the library and Tesco participated, turning every shop in the High Street into a gallery.
21. The total figure for participation in Big Draw events across Nottinghamshire in 2013 was in excess of 10,000. Comments made about Big Draw 2013 included the following:

*"This Big Draw is on of the best children's work I have seen, very well done by everyone involved especially the children." - Gallery Visitor*

*"I liked seeing my box on display which I made at Hucknall National School." - Young person*

*"It was so cool! Looking at everyone's boxes for inspiration made me go and create something amazing!" - Workshop participant*

*"The course encouraged me to open up and it felt good to be part of the community" - Big Draw Trainee*

*"We have never had so many parents engage with the school" - Teacher who used Big Draw in school*

### **Supporting and developing coaching excellence**

22. Over the last few months the coaching support provided by Nottinghamshire County Council has continued to go from strength to strength. The Sports Service has been able to support local clubs and coaches and have been recognised for our work at a national level.
23. We have had over 600 coaches through our courses and programmes over the calendar year with excellent feedback from our key projects:

*'I cannot express how much I personally have gained from the Talented Coaches Programme; it is a great programme to be part of and would recommend the new recruits take advantage of all the training opportunities on offer to them, even if it is not connected to their sport. What they can learn from the tutors and coaches is invaluable' (I would like to do it all again!!) Pauline Gourley, Head Coach, Newark Swimming Club*
24. Newark swimming club is also a good example of the wider opportunities the County Council offers. Through our regional contacts we were able to link them with a high level swimming club in Loughborough; this new relationship resulted in the Newark Club

receiving a visit from an Olympic swimmer and coach, inspiring members and coaches alike.

25. The Nottinghamshire Talented Coaches Programme is now in its sixth year and has supported over 100 key County coaches. It works with targeted coaches and gives them extensive training and mentoring for twelve months. Developed and run by the County Council, the scheme has been highlighted nationally as an example of good practice.
26. We have 1,400 coaches on our coach database, who regularly receive information about local courses, news, jobs and new initiatives, together with national and regional opportunities.
27. Our coaching officer, Pete Forster, continues to contribute to national and regional debates and has recently been selected to travel to Sweden with one other CSP Coaching Lead as part of a study tour with Sports Coach UK.
28. The support the Sports Service provides to clubs and individuals across the County ensures our aspiring young athletes will be given the best possible advice and guidance in whatever sport they engage with in Nottinghamshire.

## **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.

**Derek Higton**  
**Service Director, Youth, Families and Culture**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Derek Higton  
Service Director, Youth, Families and Culture  
T: 0115 9773498  
E: [derek.higton@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:derek.higton@nottsc.gov.uk)

C0347