

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR POLICY PLANNING AND
CORPORATE SERVICES AND THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH,
FAMILIES AND CULTURE****SERVICE UPDATE FOR THE PERIOD 10 JUNE TO 15 SEPTEMBER 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, INFORMATION AND COMMUNITY LEARNING****Southwell Library Poetry Festival**

2. The Southwell Library Poetry Festival took place between 17 & 21 July 2013, attracting over 550 visits and some excellent customer feedback. Highlights included a visit by the National Poet of Wales, Gillian Clarke; performance poet Mark Gwynne Jones; and Land Sea and Air with the Newark and Sherwood Concert Band, which was attended by the Chairman and his Lady.

Family and Community Partnership Events in Libraries

3. Over 1,400 people attended a series of fantastic family and community partnership events in Mansfield, Worksop and West Bridgford Libraries over the summer. Children and adults had the chance to learn about road and fire safety, the dangers of smoking and take part in many hands-on activities including CPR, correct use of defibrillators and the dangers of driving distractions.
4. Worksop Library received a visit from a fire engine and two heritage ambulances giving the community the chance to sit in the vehicles, try on emergency services kits and learn about the essential role these appliances play. Visitors to Mansfield Library had the chance to watch an educational film, try on a fire-fighter's uniform, learn about water safety and the dangers of starting fires. Freckle the Fire Investigation dog and his owner also attended the event and gave a rare insight into the work they carry out. The event ended with a visit from an appliance at the entrance to the Library where all Library customers could take the opportunity to sit in the engine, get out the fire hoses, try on kits and talk with the watch.

5. Nottinghamshire Libraries worked in partnership with the East Midlands Ambulance Service, Ambulance Heritage Society, County Health Partnerships Health Improvement Service, Nottinghamshire Road Safety Team, Worksop 'Green watch' Fire-fighters, Mansfield 'Red Watch' Fire-fighters and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Risk Reduction Team to deliver the events. The events enabled people to have fun whilst learning vital safety messages in the creative and inspiring settings of our libraries.

National Bookstart Week: 24 - 30 June 2013

6. Nottinghamshire Libraries celebrated National Bookstart Week with a series of special themed events, aimed at children under 5 and their families across the County. National Bookstart Week celebrates the Bookstart programme which gives two packs of books to every pre-school child in the UK, at two key stages to encourage the sharing of books with children from as young an age as possible. Research has shown that children receiving the Bookstart packs are more likely to enjoy books and visit the library, be more engaged in reading and do better at school.
7. The Bookstart programme in Nottinghamshire is managed by Nottinghamshire Libraries. The Bookstart Baby packs are usually gifted by health professionals before children are one year of age, the Bookstart Treasure Bag is gifted to three year olds at early years settings such as nurseries or playgroups. There are also special packs for children with hearing or visual impairments. Parents and carers can also obtain the packs from Nottinghamshire Libraries.
8. The theme for National Bookstart Week was Fairytales; staff and children across the County dressed up as their favourite fairy tale characters and joined in with songs, rhymes and stories. The Bookstart Bear also visited several libraries across the County. Every child that attended the special sessions also received a free story booklet of *The Ugly Duckling*.

Author Visits

9. On 26 June popular children's performance poet and percussionist Brian Moses visited West Bridgford library to perform some of his poems to classes of Year 5 and 6 pupils from two local primary schools. Brian was entertaining and inspiring, and the children loved his performance. One boy said that he didn't really like poetry, but after listening to Brian read and perform his poems, he was inspired to read more.
10. On 3 & 4 July, children's author and illustrator Guy Bass entertained and inspired classes of primary school children in Mansfield and West Bridgford libraries. The visits were arranged to help promote the 2013 Summer Reading Challenge in Mansfield and West Bridgford, prior to the launch on 13 July. In total, 13 classes of KS2 and KS3 children participated in the events, and a number of children purchased books on the day which were then signed by the author.
11. An on-going programme of author visits is part of the Library Service's strategy to promote reading for pleasure as studies have shown that this can have a major impact on children and young people and their future. In particular, that reading for pleasure is positively linked with literacy related benefits such as reading attainment and writing

ability, breadth of vocabulary and self-confidence as a reader, and that events focusing on reading for pleasure can also promote or enhance social skills in children.

Summer Reading Challenge launch

12. On Saturday 13 July, children's author Andrew Newbound visited Newark and Retford libraries to help launch 'Creepy House', the theme of this year's Summer Reading Challenge. Children were invited to help solve the six clues in the Creepy House Challenge by solving riddles and conundrums. In total 38 children and 21 adults took part across the two libraries. Feedback from participants was very positive, with one Retford parent commenting "A good event, it was great to get the kids thinking".
13. 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.
14. Now in its fifteenth year, the Summer Reading Challenge has proved extremely popular. Last year just under 8,900 children took part through libraries across the Nottinghamshire.
15. UKLA 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.

Youth Heritage Conference: Make History Happen!

16. One of the objectives of the Archives Audience Development Plan is to increase the use of Archives by young people so on Wednesday 17 July 2013 a Youth Heritage Conference was organised by the Archives Service, in partnership with Nottinghamshire Local History Association, and held at the Galleries of Justice Museum (Shire Hall), Nottingham. The Conference was fully booked, with 60 young people, plus heritage professionals and community workers. The day aimed to 'bring history to life' for a hugely diverse group of young people that ranged from a Nottingham school group, to young people from community projects, volunteer backgrounds, home education children and young people with individual heritage interests. The event was started off by Adam Stockwell, the current Broxtowe youth mayor.
17. Contributors included the City of Nottingham Museums Service, Greenshoots (a community group that manages youth and community projects), the University of Nottingham, the Galleries of Justice Museum and the Archives World War One Wakefield Memorials Project (HLF funded). Lots of young people spoke about their projects to the Conference, providing an opportunity to talk about how heritage had played such an important part in their lives.
18. The Conference brought together young people involved in archives, archaeology, arts, libraries, museums and community activities. There were workshops on World War 1, quill pen writing, conserving documents, heritage jewellery, archaeological artefacts and

Spinning Yarns (young people recording stories from their own lives). Talks explored the world of archaeology and how the legal system has treated young people through the years.

19. In the afternoon community archives and museum project leaders, along with their youth volunteers, reported on projects from around the County and in the city of Nottingham. There was a great buzz going round during the event with lots of people sharing their views and experiences of heritage and getting to know each other. Some young people 'signed-up' to the heritage projects that were promoted as part of the event. At the end of the day a Heritage rap poem was presented, 'Touch the Past', which was based on comments from the conference attendees.
20. The event evaluations provided lots of positive comments: 'great fun and interesting'; 'I learned a lot'; 'cool!'; 'very inspiring'. Some comments related to individual talks and workshops providing information that would be very helpful in organising future conferences or youth events. Offers of venues have already been received for future conferences and considerable enthusiasm has been expressed from organisations and individuals involved in this year's conference.

Laura Knight Portraits exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, London

21. Nottinghamshire Archives has loaned items to the Laura Knight exhibition which is being held at the National Portrait Gallery from 11 July to 13 October 2013 and then touring to The Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle, 2 November 2013 – 16 February 2014 and Plymouth Art Gallery, 1 March – 10 May 2014.
22. Dame Laura Knight (1877-1970) was born in Long Eaton but brought up in Nottingham and attended the Nottingham School of Art. In 1936 she became the first woman to be elected to the Royal Academy of Arts since its foundation in 1768. Knight is renowned for her ballet, theatre and circus paintings and her portraits of gypsies. During the Second World War she was commissioned by the War Artists Advisory Committee and in 1946 she was appointed an official war correspondent at the Nuremburg war crimes trials.
23. Nottinghamshire Archives holds a collection of manuscripts and photographs of Dame Laura Knight and as well as photographs which appear in the exhibition catalogue and in a digital display at the exhibition it has loaned a diary of her time in Nuremburg. Displayed underneath the monumental painting of 'The Nuremburg Trail' the diary provides not only a detailed description of the trial but also of her artistic technique. It is opened to show a haunting sketch of Hermann Goering.

COUNTRY PARKS AND GREEN ESTATE

Country Parks Service, Summer 2013

24. After a slow start to the visitor season occasioned by an unusually cold spring, attendances at this year's summer events were excellent, particularly during the school holiday period.
25. The annual Robin Hood Festival, in its 29th year, took place at Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre from 5 – 11 August and attracted an estimated 50,000 people over its seven days

– well up on last year's figure, with a corresponding increase in retail and catering income. Monday's opening ceremony was relatively quiet, due to an alarmist weather forecast, but attendances built steadily through the week, peaking during Saturday's falconry and jousting displays. A lively media campaign by Central Communications generated media interest from as far afield as the Ukraine, and gained over a thousand followers on Facebook. The event is planned, managed and staffed by the Sherwood Site manager and team, assisted this year by 16 community volunteers.

26. At Rufford Abbey Country Park, following the success of the Arts Service's Earth and Fire Ceramic Fair in June, the Park held its annual 1940s Living History weekend 'On the Home Front' over the last weekend of the school summer holiday. Around 7,000 people are estimated to have attended, making it one of the Park's busiest weekends ever, and although pressure on limited parking caused pressures, a large volume of positive feedback from attendees was received.
27. Bestwood Country Park, which has limited visitor facilities, enjoyed more summer events than it has for some time, assisted by the Park's two community support groups, the Friends of Bestwood Country Park and the Winding Engine House volunteers, and a Heritage Officer post funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The season finale on Sunday 8 September was Bestwood Steam Heritage Day, a free event featuring mini steam engines, pony rides by a local stables, teas served by the village Women's Institute. and the Black Diamonds Brass band. 250 people visited the restored Winding Engine House during the day.

CULTURAL AND ENRICHMENT SERVICES

National Quality Award for Rufford Abbey

28. In July Rufford Abbey Country Park underwent its annual inspection under the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme. This is run by the national Tourist Board, Visit England. A 'mystery shopper' visit is paid by an inspector and all facilities on site tested from a 'customers' eye view'.
29. The park retained its quality award for a further year, with some 'noted improvements' on last year.
30. Park staff were delighted to be complimented by the inspector, during her feedback session, on a well presented and attractive park with good customer welcome, and above average facilities for less able visitors. A full written report will be available later.

Attracting visitors to the county and inspiring local residents

31. The Arts Development Service which runs Rufford Craft Centre annually produces one of the finest art fairs in the country 'Earth & Fire International Ceramics Fair'. The event welcomes over 100 of the very best studio potters and ceramic artists from around the world to the picturesque setting in north Nottinghamshire where for three days they exhibit and sell their work to the people of Nottinghamshire and beyond.

32. 2013 was the event's 19th year and the quality of the work on show was outstanding. Exhibitors came from France, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland, South Africa and the UK as well as eight university stands including Nottingham Trent showcasing the potters of the future. To complement the fair there was a solo exhibition in the Gallery by renowned ceramic artist, Peter Beard, which marked his 40 years as a maker. Despite the less than spectacular weather over 6,000 visitors enjoyed looking at and indeed purchasing the work.
33. The service takes great care to ensure that the event is as accessible as possible and whilst car parking charges apply, the event itself is free to all. The service also ensures the event is accessible to visitors with physical disabilities by installing ramped access to the Abbey itself, providing the only three days in the year when the historic ruin is open to wheelchair users.
34. On the opening day of the event we encourage schools and groups to come which this year included school groups from Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, and the city, together with teachers from Burton Joyce on inset training, members of Southwell Care Project, local arts groups and amateur potters groups from as far afield as Norfolk. Earth & Fire provides a fantastic opportunity for local groups to engage with the programme at Rufford and be inspired by the ceramic work. They also have the chance to see demonstrations and talks from the exhibitors and marvel at the skill of these artists.
35. Inspired by Earth & Fire, Burton Joyce School, Southwell Care Project and the Looked After Children's team are continuing to work with the Craft Centre, working with Rachel Wood a local potter who secured funding for a residency in Australia and who is now sharing that work back to the community.
36. What visitors had to say:
- "The event is a fabulous showcase of amazing and inspiring work from skilled potters whose practice covers a wide range of creative styles. Well done to the council!"*
- "It is a total feast for the eyes and a very enjoyable event every year."*
- "A stimulating almost overwhelming experience".*

Creating the volunteering habit in Sport

37. The Nottinghamshire Leadership Academy Network works across the County to develop young sports volunteers. Funded by the Department of Education via Sport England, the Sports Development Service manages the programme on behalf of the County Sports Partnership. Comprising four programme strands, Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum, the network is run by schools' games co-ordinators who run local Leadership Academies in each district. These Academies offers young people the opportunity to develop skills which support both school events and sports clubs in the wider community.
38. The volunteering development pathway leads from Bronze Leaders: where young people support school based projects, after school clubs and school competitions through Silver Leaders: where additional training develops their skills to support the Nottinghamshire School Games through to Gold: where the best young volunteers are offered a chance to

participate in the County Leadership Camp and Platinum: where exceptional young volunteers support the development of Gold volunteers and act as 'youth sport champions'. Throughout the pathway the young volunteers participate in bespoke training sessions to support their skill development.

39. The annual County Leadership Camp, a highlight of the volunteering year, took place in July. This two day residential camp aims to broaden the horizons of the young volunteers and increase their awareness of the vastness of the sporting world. This was achieved through the use of introductory workshops delivered by expert facilitators, including; Strength & Conditioning (Tim Stevenson – coach for Paralympic GB members), Sports Psychology (Matt Thompson – Sport Psychologist working with the Talent Academies in America) and Sports Nutrition (Debra Tranter – nutritionist for the Taekwondo GB team).
40. There were 23 Gold Leader attendees this year, 7 male & 16 female, ranging from 14 to 17 years. This gender split is quite typical of young sports volunteers, a trend that is reflected in the increase of female professionals in sport. We are hoping that during the year the Gold Leader programme will expand to 40 with the addition of the extra young volunteers who were unable to attend the camp this summer.
41. The feedback was very positive, with 100% of the attendees rating their experience as good or better (85% rated it excellent). 88% of them believed that the experience had influenced their choice of future career. All the participants said the camp demonstrated the broadness of sport and either increased their desire to work in sport or changed the area of sport in which they would like to work.
42. The training pathway provided by the Network has enabled the deployment of high quality young volunteers into various high profile events; National School Games in Sheffield, The Nottinghamshire Sports Awards and The 2013 Ashes Test, the volunteers impressed so much there that Trent Bridge are keen for the Network to support their 2014 India Test and again for the 2015 Ashes Test.

Creating opportunities for Participation and Engagement in Arts and Sports through grant aid

43. Nottinghamshire County Council continues to invest in arts and sports through the corporate grant aid budget, distributing grants to clubs, community groups and arts organisations to create new opportunities to engage in sports and arts for Nottinghamshire citizens. There are two rounds of funding available per year with a total of £58,000 to be awarded (£42,000 in arts and £16,000 in sports).
44. The grant aid has been extremely successful in reaching participants, encouraging audiences, new participants and securing volunteering opportunities in arts and sports. In 2012-13, the grants enabled over 41,000 people to experience the arts as audiences and participants and 195 arts volunteering opportunities were supported in communities. In sports over 700 participants benefited from grant aided projects with approximately 100 new people engaging in sport as a direct result of the funding. The projects also included increasing the skills of over 50 sporting volunteers. In arts the grant aid investment also levered a further £84,000 from external sources.

45. The projects supported are varied from the parents and teachers at Wynndale School, Mansfield, running community drawing workshops in their local area as part of the National Campaign for Drawing's 'Big Draw' month to photographer Paul Horton creating a touring exhibition with accompanying digital photography workshops taking place in community venues across the County, including libraries (County wide). In sports Farnsfield Tennis Club will be developing an innovative project for mums and toddlers. The project aims to target pre-school children and their mothers (both shown to be under represented groups within the district) and offer beginners coaching to both age ranges.
46. Applications are currently open for the second round of both arts and sports grants, which will be awarded in November.

CONSERVATION

Nature Conservation

47. *Invasive species:* The Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group, which is hosted by the Conservation Team, has been continuing work to control invasive non-native species this summer, particularly focussing on Himalayan balsam. Volunteers from local communities have worked hard to control Himalayan Balsam, removing large stands of the plant by hand along a number of key water courses. County Council staff, accompanied by Councillor Knight, also volunteered to carry out 'balsam pulling' during their lunch break on the banks of the River Trent in West Bridgford.
48. *Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping:* Work is currently nearing completion on a Biodiversity Opportunity Map (BOM) of the Trent Valley. This 'BOM' will help those involved in nature conservation in Nottinghamshire to target action in areas where it will have the most impact. In particular, it will be used to help underpin the County Council's Minerals Local Plan which is currently in production, by helping to determine which habitats should be created through site restoration, and where. Work to complete a BOM for Sherwood to inform the current bid for a £3million Heritage Lottery funded Landscape Partnership Scheme is also in progress, and further work is planned in other areas (including west Rushcliffe and the Erewash Valley). In all cases, funding has been obtained to undertake the work.

Greenwood Community Forest

49. *Greenwood Community Awards:* Greenwood Community Awards are made to community groups and individual volunteers, to recognise outstanding contribution towards improving and promoting the local environment. This year's Award ceremony took place on 11 September at Goosedale Conference Centre, Papplewick, when over 120 guests gathered to celebrate achievements.
50. Councillor John Knight, Chair of the Greenwood Partnership Board, opened the event with some rousing words of encouragement for the efforts of all volunteers. Colin Barson, Chair of the Friends of Greenwood Community Forum, followed by giving a review of the year's achievements.
51. Councillor Knight presented twelve awards to volunteers from all areas of Greenwood Community Forest, ranging in age from Young Volunteer and School Involvement, to

Adult Volunteer and Long Serving Team. Those recognised had supported activities including biodiversity conservation, walking for health and the organisation of local events, as well as fund-raising and other essential work “behind the scenes”.

Archaeology

52. *Rufford Field School:* As part of an investigation in to the condition of the walls that supported the ornamental gates at the end of Broad Ride, prior to their proposed restoration, the County Council’s Community Archaeologists ran a highly successful field school and excavation between the 1st and 12th July 2013. The field school provided training in a whole range of archaeological excavation and recording skills for volunteers and attracted a total of 315 volunteer hours over the 5 days. The following week-long excavation around the site of the gates also attracted 14 volunteers, clocking up a total of 273 hours between them. Feedback from the participants has been excellent, with the majority commenting that they “wouldn’t change a thing” about the experience.
53. *East Bridgford:* The Community Archaeologists have supported residents of East Bridgford in carrying out an investigation into the development of the village from the three Manors mentioned in the Domesday Book to the present single village. The project was funded through the LIS programme and consisted of two phases. The first phase involved volunteers excavating 14 test pits in gardens around the village. The second phase of post-excavation recording and analysis of finds ensured that volunteers of all abilities were able to participate.
54. *Graveyard Surveys:* Two graveyard surveys have been carried out at Laneham and Norwell, involving a total of 6 days of fieldwork with local volunteers to map and record the gravestones. The Community Archaeologists have also worked with a range of other local groups from across the County including Worksop and South Clifton, giving talks on Nottinghamshire’s archaeology, leading walks in historic Sherwood and supporting a family day on ancient crafts at Nottingham University Museum.

Historic Buildings

55. *Beeston Canalside Heritage Centre:* We are very pleased to report that a project to restore four disused eighteenth century lock cottages at Beeston Lock has been successful in its application to Heritage Lottery Fund. More than £680,000 of Lottery funding will help to create the Canalside Heritage Centre including a museum and exhibition on the history of the Beeston Canal, nature trails, cycle hire, a fishing tackle shop, on-site allotment and café. The County Council has supported the project throughout its development with the provision of advice and guidance from project officers and heritage specialists, funding of £30,000 for the initial feasibility study from the Local Improvement Scheme programme and a further £50,000 LIS contribution to match fund the final project. We were also able to provide £40,000 of funding remaining from the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, as the site is close to the former Attenborough gravel pits.
56. We are also pleased to report that two more of the county’s most significant protected ancient buildings have been repaired, with local communities helping to look after their heritage legacy.

57. *St Helen's, South Wheatley*: This Grade I listed church tower, also a Scheduled Ancient Monument, had been abandoned in the 19th century and described as in a 'ruinous state' as long ago as the 1890s. The County Council's heritage staff assisted the Parochial Church Council of North Wheatley to apply for an English Heritage 'Heritage @ Risk' grant of £65,000 and LIS funds of £35,000 were provided to match their contribution. The work involved extensive ivy clearance and rebuilding of the upper section of the tower where the ivy had, over 100 years, infiltrated the ancient stonework and caused it to become unstable. Thankfully most of the missing stonework was recovered by archaeologists from around the base of the tower. Some stone was also retrieved from local rockeries during a 'stone amnesty'! In the end there was even an extra stone pinnacle (which we have stored in the base of the tower along with others).
58. *Flintham Mud Dovecote*: One the county's rarest types of ancient building is represented by the remains of a mud dovecote at Cottage Farm in Flintham. Few people know that monolithic mud was once a quite common building material in certain parts of the county, a tradition that is better known in Devon where it is called 'cob' building. Now we have very few mud buildings left, and this one is particularly interesting as it has over 100 nest holes for doves. The dovecote is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and now forms part of the boundary between two properties. The remains had become totally overgrown with ivy, causing very serious concerns for English Heritage and the county's heritage specialists. Together English Heritage and the County Council LIS programme were able to fund repairs by a local craftsperson, providing £35,000 and £8,000 respectively, and it was even filmed by the BBC for their Country File programme last year. The final part of the project was for an interpretation panel to be put up in time for this year's Heritage Open Days (on 14th and 15th September).
59. *Heritage Open Days*: Despite the weather on the Sunday, thousands of local residents and visitors from around the country joined in the many events being run around the county over the weekend of the 14th and 15th September. HODs is an annual event across the country that has been running for over 15 years. In Nottinghamshire, events were organised by many of the Civic Societies around the county (Beeston, Newark and Retford for instance) and many other individuals and organisations also opened up access to the County's heritage for the weekend. County Council heritage specialists helped out at several of the events, giving a talk at Retford library as part of the craft skills event, helping at Ollerton Water Mill and providing tours of Sibthorpe, Flintham and Thoroton dovecotes.

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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