

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURAL SERVICES****SERVICE UPDATE FOR THE PERIOD 29 SEPTEMBER TO 9 NOVEMBER 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****School Library Inspiration Award**

2. Following advice and support from the Education Library Service (ELS), Oak Tree Lane Primary School, Mansfield, has been announced as the overall winner in the School Library Association's inaugural School Library Inspiration Award.
3. ELS had been contacted by Oak Tree Lane Primary School in December 2011 to give professional advice on developing their School Library. ELS suggested approaching the Foyle Foundation to bid for funding to help with the development of their new library for the school and community to develop an improved focus on reading.
4. In 2012 the school was successful in receiving £10,000 from the Foundation. This along with money from the school and the PTA, and following professional advice given by ELS, enabled the development of an outstanding new library which was opened by Rebecca Adlington in March 2013.
5. ELS then encouraged the school to enter the School Library Association's School Library Inspiration Award, which aims to set "future standards for the recognition of excellence in school library design." The School developed a You Tube film for their nomination and in June 2014 Oak Tree Lane Primary was shortlisted, along with three other schools. In October 2014 Oak Tree Lane Primary School Library was awarded overall winner of this national award.

**Jamie Thomson Visit to Mansfield Central Library**

6. Jamie Thomson, author of numerous children's and adults books and the 2012 winner of the Roald Dahl Funny Prize for his *Dark Lord: The Teenage Years*, visited Mansfield

Central Library in October. Over 170 year 5/6 pupils from local schools (Sutton Road and St Philip Neri) were entertained by Jamie's impressions of the Dark Lord and his sound effects machine. The interactive session involved dancing volunteers from the audience. Feedback from pupils was very positive:

*"I enjoyed seeing a real live author and being able to ask him questions"*

*"...there was lots of comedy fun. It was an amazing experience!"*

*"he made me laugh a lot and I enjoyed where he told us about the books".*

7. The visit was part of an ongoing programme of library author visits to promote reading for pleasure as studies have shown that this can have a major impact on children and young people and their future. 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.

### **Every Picture Tells A Story – half-term holiday events**

8. A series of workshops for children were held in libraries during the October half-term holiday focusing on the creation of book illustrations. The events provided opportunities for children to learn to draw illustrations, to promote stories and reading and increase library visits and book issues.
9. Author and Illustrator Lynne Chapman hosted workshops at Worksop, West Bridgford and Mansfield Central Libraries, whilst Illustrator Jo Litchfield led a workshop at Newark Library. There were also four story and craft sessions at Arnold, Beeston, Hucknall and Kirby-in-Ashfield Libraries where children created pop-up cards and a simple picture puzzle. Over 200 children participated in the nine sessions during the week where they were inspired to draw their own characters from their favourite stories.

### **Duck in a Truck – family theatre at Mansfield Central Library**

10. Local theatre company, Blunderbus, returned to Mansfield Central Library's theatre during October half-term for two performances of their latest show Duck in a Truck, based on the picture book by best-selling author Jez Alborough. The show aimed at 3–7 years olds thrilled and entertained over 340 children and parents. Positive comments received included:

*"a very good production, entertaining and great theatre"*

*"My two year old's first theatre experience – thank you, fabulous! And a return for my three and half year old"*

*A fabulous show, well put on and staffed. A lovely family event"*

11. The performances were part of an ongoing programme of family theatre at Mansfield Central Library. Live theatre supports language development in a fun and enjoyable way.

## **Readers' Day 2014**

12. Over 150 readers joined Nottinghamshire County Council's Library Service and Nottingham City Libraries for our annual joint Readers' Day on 8 November. Highlights included hearing from renowned authors Rose Tremain, Sathnam Sanghera and John Harvey, and taking part in workshops ranging from deciding which 'heirloom books' to pass on to the next generation to Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard III. Readers enjoyed the chance to dedicate a day to listening to authors and discussing their reading experiences with others, with comments such as an '*exceptionally good Readers' Day*' and '*wonderful Readers' Day*'.

## **COUNTRY PARKS AND GREEN ESTATES**

### **Rufford Abbey World War II Event**

13. The weekend of the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September saw one of the most popular events of the Rufford Abbey calendar, the 1940s "On The Home Front" living history weekend. This was the second of two events in 2014 marking the national commemorations of the first and second World Wars.
14. The Park received around 6,000 visitors over the weekend, who enjoyed a variety of lively displays and demonstrations ranging from farm work with the Women's Land Army, swing dancing and wartime cookery to a mock air raid. Historical re-enactors in authentic period costume came from as far away as Kent to take part, and the Park's Coach House Cafe recorded one of its busiest ever trading days.
15. The October half term is traditionally a busy time at Rufford Abbey and events this time around included the Big Draw, a free participation event organised by the County Council's Arts Service in the Craft Centre, and the Halloween Trail - a popular low cost half term activity for families to enjoy together.

### **Sherwood Through the Ages**

16. Following hard on the heels of the August Robin Hood festival and the Major Oak Woodland Festival in September came a third major event for Sherwood Forest Country Park – a multi period living history re-enactment "Sherwood Forest Through the Ages." The event, which took place on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> October, gained good publicity in local media, and helped to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Sherwood Forest being designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its nature and ecology value.

### **Health Walks**

17. Bestwood Country Park continues its popular monthly series of health walks from October through to January, providing gentle ranger led walks through the Country Park, aimed specifically at people recovering from illness, or taking their first steps towards a healthier lifestyle. It also encourages lone participants, who might not feel confident to explore the Park alone, to enjoy the companionship of a safe and friendly group.

## 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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