

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE**SERVICE UPDATE FOR THE PERIOD 14 APRIL TO 11 MAY 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****ACLS Family Learning - National Exemplars of Good Practice**

2. On 14 April 2014 an Ofsted Inspector visited ACLS to gather evidence for a case study on the ACLS Family Dr Who course which will appear on the Ofsted website as a national example of good practice.
3. ACLS had successfully submitted an application to NIACE (the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education) to participate in the latest round of Ofsted thematic inspections focused on the contribution of family learning provision in raising children's educational attainment in schools and early years settings. Previous ACLS family learning work - especially the contribution to the 'Closing the Gap' initiative - had demonstrated that work with parents can also help to engage children in learning more effectively.
4. Nationally over 40 submissions were made to be involved in Ofsted visits to become examples of good practice on the Ofsted website but only 10 examples were selected. ACLS successfully submitted two courses – Family BLOODHOUND and Family Dr Who.
5. The Family Dr Who and the Family BLOODHOUND are STEM (Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics) courses which use subjects that interest both adults and children to embed STEM topics. As examples, Family Dr Who includes making a working model Dalek with electrical circuits for lights and Family BLOODHOUND explores the science behind the exciting Bloodhound project to build the fastest car in the world.
6. Family BLOODHOUND has been selected to be visited by a consultant at the start of June in order that a case study on this course model can be written as an example of innovative family learning delivery in schools and feature on the NIACE website.

World Book Night

7. Libraries participated in the national celebration of reading, World Book Night, on 23 April. As well as 26 libraries acting as pick up points for members of the public who applied to be book givers, a fantastic Girls' Night Out was held at Worksop Library. Library staff and Councillor Knight also visited Nottingham Forest Football Club, gifting some books to Academy and Community Project players. World Book Night is managed nationally by the Reading Agency and aims to raise the profile of reading for pleasure through a series of celebratory events, bring communities together and place books in the hands of those who might not regularly read.

Changes to management arrangements for the Arts Service

8. Following a review of management arrangements across the Culture portfolio, the Community Arts Service will move into the Libraries, Archives, Information and Learning (LAI&L) group of services. The Team Manager, Arts and Sports, will report to the Group Manager, LAI&L. Strategic management of the Community Sports Service will be managed by the Group Manager, Culture and Enrichment Services

COUNTRY PARKS AND GREEN ESTATES

9. After a cool and rainy February and March, the Easter half term break launched the main visitor season with brisk trading and high visitor numbers at our country parks.
10. Commercial (catering and retail) services were exceptionally busy over the school holidays. The second week of the holidays (w/e 20/04/14) was the best ever Easter trading week with takings of £92,000.
11. At Rufford Abbey the Easter Trail – a low cost family entertainment – proved popular, with around 3,200 trails sold.
12. Sherwood Forest Country Park commemorated the Diamond Jubilee of being created a Site of Special Scientific Interest. A variety of events, from bushcraft for kids to a willow weaving workshop, stressed the importance and fun of woodland and the outdoors.
13. The last weekend of April saw the first of three major living history weekends at Rufford Abbey. A multi period event featured displays of many eras, from the Romans to the modern British army. The event was largely self-financed via 60 trade stands for historical re-enactors, housed in the park's summer marquee, and attracted over 4,000 visitors.
14. Meanwhile, at Bestwood Country Park, the Winding Engine House, which is shown to the public by a dedicated group of community volunteers, had its first opening of the year on Saturday 19 April. A community café in the park's restored Dynamo House provides teas and light refreshments. This is staffed by the Friends of Bestwood Country Park, and is much appreciated by visitors.

Rethinking Parks National Initiative: Sparks 4 Parks

15. Officers in the Country Parks and Greenspace Team recently bid for a high profile "one off" funding opportunity organised by NESTA and The Heritage Lottery Fund. This is part of a national initiative called "Rethinking Parks."
16. Nesta is "a national charity with a mission to bring great ideas to life." It works with Government and national organisations to foster creative thinking. The challenge thrown down by Nesta was to find "*innovative ideas to fund public parks in the future.*"
17. The Team's project idea was to create a new online software tool to help park and greenspace managers nationally to assess the potential of their sites for energy generation and thus create new income potential. The project is called Sparks 4 Parks.
18. A partnership with the University of Nottingham has been formed as they are one of the leading specialists in renewable and alternative energy and one of the top six English universities for links with industry. The Jubilee campus is home to the International Centre for Sustainable Energy and one of the lowest carbon buildings in the country.
19. If the bid is successful, the University will create a new expert post within their Engineering faculty to develop the software tool and the Team will provide the "real life" green sites on which to test it - the 1,700 hectares of Nottinghamshire greenspace that the County manages.
20. NCC does not have to contribute any match funding, just a modest amount of officer time.

Progress so far

21. From hundreds of applications from parks around Britain, the Country Parks and Greenspace Team was one of 28 teams invited down to the NESTA headquarters in the City of London before Easter to present their idea and take part in an ideas workshop.
22. The Team was then tasked with working up the proposal into a full bid within just three weeks and this has been submitted. Only ten projects will be chosen and the maximum award will be £100,000 to each successful partnership. The top ideas will feature on NESTA's innovation website.

What will be gained?

23. Whether the bid succeeds or fails, the project has stimulated the service to think more creatively about the future budget challenges facing the County Council. The service also has the benefit of a new partnership with one of the leading local universities.
24. Part of the full bid was to explain the idea in a three minute video. This was filmed by Nottinghamshire video company BesQ, based in Warsop, and will be shown at the Committee meeting.

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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