



meeting **COUNTY COUNCIL**

date **24 September 2009**

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

REPORT FOR THE PERIOD JUNE-AUGUST 2009

1. The following are summaries of work relating to my portfolio. This is a very comprehensive report which reflects the wide range of initiatives being undertaken which are improving and enhancing people's lives.

NATIONAL WATER SPORTS CENTRE

2. Nottinghamshire County Council remains committed to promoting the National Water Sports Centre as a world class sporting facility and developing it into one of the country's premier leisure attractions. Future developments and operations will be governed by a robust business plan to ensure it maximises its commercial potential whilst encouraging increased sporting excellence and recreational participation for the whole community.
3. A promotional brochure and film was developed to advertise the centre as a Pre Olympic Training camp for visiting nations leading up to 2012. This material was used by two officers who attended the World Canoe Slalom Championships in Spain from 9 to 13 September to sell the facility.

SHERWOOD FOREST VISITOR CENTRE

4. The County Council is dedicated to conserving the National Nature Reserve at Sherwood Forest, reinvigorating the legend of Robin Hood and attracting more tourists to the county. To support this aim we remain committed to constructing a new visitor centre at Sherwood Forest and are currently investigating a range of designs and interpretations which will offer improved value for money combined with a first class visitor's experience.
5. We are carefully considering the scheme as part of the next stage of the review, which includes making a business case and taking into account factors such as cost of the project, progress to date and benefit to the community. We are also in negotiations with emda who are contributing funding towards the project.

COUNTRY PARKS AND CONSERVATION

Robin Hood Festival

6. The 25th Annual Robin Hood Festival took place at Sherwood Forest Country Park & Visitor Centre from the 3 – 9 August. The festival is organised by staff at Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre and is funded by the County Council. However, this year there was a financial contribution from Experience Nottinghamshire.
7. The event received excellent and extensive media coverage and all indications are that visitor numbers matched the previous year's estimated 70,000 attendees. Inclement weather on the Wednesday morning did not prevent a record number of coach parties visiting the Festival on that day.
8. The reputation of the Festival for attracting visitors from outside the UK drew TV celebrity John Sergeant and the Mentorn Media production company to film at the Festival on Saturday 8th August. This recording for a television programme entitled "John Sergeant's Tourist Trail", witnessed John interviewing Festival goers from Holland, America and France. The piece will be broadcast on ITV1 in November 2009.
9. Plans are already underway for the 2010 Festival which will be taking place from Monday 2nd of August to Sunday 8th August.

Volunteer Training

10. The County Council's Green Estate comprises numerous sites that are managed for both access & nature conservation. Many of these sites have Friends of Groups or volunteers from the local community who help to manage the sites in partnership with ourselves. Their involvement can take many forms from just having a presence on the site to litter picking, reporting problems or getting involved in wild flower/bird surveys and is vital to the management of these sites.
11. In addition to the above many of our volunteers are involved in hands on, practical management and we are keen to offer support & training where possible. In July we were able to put 8 of our regular volunteers through a brush cutter training course and I am delighted to report that all 8 successfully completed the course.

Desert Project Working Group Clear Up

12. In July Rufford Colliery Number 1 Tip at Rainworth, known locally as The Desert and home of Rainworth Water Local Nature Reserve, was included in a community clear up organised by the Desert Project Working Group. The Group was formed to reduce anti-social behaviour and discuss the long-term future management of the site. The clear up was the first activity run by the group and successfully removed almost 40 tonnes of waste from the site as a whole. Having cleared rubbish from the access track and turning area a new barrier was installed to reduced the potential for fly-tipping in the future.

Linby Trail - Meadow Management

13. The Linby Trail is a restored railway line linking Linby and Newstead. The Trail runs over magnesium limestone and therefore has a large area of calcareous grassland. This habitat is unusual in the local context and contains a number of wildflower species. To ensure the future health of the grassland it is cut and the hay removed each year. This year the cut was done by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) over three days in early August when over 600m of the Trail was cut and the hay removed to be spread at other sites.

Tippings Wood Local Nature Reserve - Path Resurfacing

14. Tippings Wood Local Nature Reserve is set on a former tip of Blidworth Colliery between Blidworth and Rainworth. As well as a range of habitats including woodland and wetland the site contains a number of paths and multi-user routes. One of the routes (almost 1km) which links the villages of Blidworth and Rainworth has been resurfaced using over £9,000 of Building Better Communities Funding. The new surface has increased the width and quality of the path meaning that a wider range of users, in particular parents with pushchairs and the less able, can now access the path and Tippings Wood more easily.

Kirkby Grives – Path Resurfacing

15. The path at Kirkby Grives links Lindleys Lane in Kirkby-in-Ashfield with Ashfield District Council's Lane End Nature Area. In conjunction with Lindley's Lane Walkway the path supplies an off-road route from the area of new development near Grives Lane to the Nature Area and beyond. To complement Ashfield's redevelopment of Lane End Nature Area, the path was resurfaced using Building Better Communities Funding in partnership with Ashfield District Council. Members of the local community, including the less able can now safely access the Nature Area from Lindley's Lane.

Rufford Country Park

16. For the past three years Rufford Abbey has staged a major 'Living History' event, in order to bring to life the long and colourful history of this heritage site. For 2009 a large scale re-enactment event was held, depicting life "On the Home Front" during the Second World War. Re-enactors from all over the country converged on the park with a variety of displays and events, designed to get the public involved and to recreate a period of history in which Rufford Abbey was used as both an officer training ground and later a prisoner of war camp.
17. Fine weather and a very popular event combined to draw the largest crowds seen at Rufford Abbey Country Park for many years, with an estimated 5000 people attending over the weekend (the average for a weekend is normally around 1500). Visitor satisfaction with the event was excellent, but the high

number of visitors stretched the park's infrastructure to the limit and this will be taken into account if a similar event is staged next year.

Cotgrave Country Park

18. Cotgrave Country park continues to attract substantial numbers of visitors. The Friends of Cotgrave Country Park have worked hard with local organisations to promote the facility and the park now has a new webpage on the County Council's Website. Over the summer the park hosted a mountain bike race organised by Velo Club Nottingham. The event was a great success and it is intended to make this an annual event.
19. In response to local interest the Friends have also developed an extensive orienteering course over the varied landscapes of the park. The Trail has recently been trialled by local scouts, cadets and local schools and a user – friendly colour leaflet of the course is available which is designed to help provide a fun event for novices or a more challenging experience for the more seasoned orienteer.

A46 Dualling Scheme

20. The summer months have seen intense archaeological fieldwork activity on the A46 project. A number of discoveries have been made, some of which have the opportunity to change the way we think about the history of the County particularly in Roman and prehistoric times. Exhibitions and talks are being planned once the main phase of archaeological fieldwork is complete.

Festival of British Archaeology

21. The Festival of British Archaeology is an annual national event, coordinated by the Council for British Archaeology and it represents an opportunity for various organisations and groups to involve people in heritage. The County Council's Community Archaeologists coordinated 10 events this year, the largest being the Ancient Arts Festival which took place at Sherwood Forest Country Park and was attended by over 2000 people.

Footprints of Industry Conference

22. This national conference at the Ironbridge Institute celebrated industrial archaeology and the County's community archaeologists presented a paper on the recent Jacksdale Community Excavation, a project funded by the Building Better Communities scheme. The paper was very well-received and the archaeologists have now been asked to produce a paper for the conference proceedings which will be published next year, bringing national academic standing to the project.

Heritage Newsletter

23. The community archaeologists are now responsible for editing this publication, which goes out to households, tourist destinations, schools, libraries and museums across the county. It has been renamed the Heritage and Conservation Newsletter, so its content can be widened. Over 2000 copies of the Spring/Summer issue were distributed and a great deal of positive feedback has been received about the new format and content.

Nottinghamshire Renaissance Heritage Awards

24. I am pleased to report that the community archaeologists were nominated for this prestigious award, along with the Nottingham University Museum, for a Family Archaeology and Museum Open Day that was run earlier in the year. Although they did not win the category of Best Event, they were short-listed ahead of many other very good events across the county.

Listed Buildings Owners Event

25. The third annual event for owners of listed buildings was run at Rufford Abbey on June 19th and 20th. It was well attended and feedback was all extremely positive. This is a unique event that aims to introduce owners to crafts people and techniques and includes lectures, demonstrations and even hands-on training in lime pointing!

Heritage Open Days

26. The 2009 national Civic Trust Heritage Open Days event is the largest heritage event of its type and has been taking place for over 10 years. The event took place over the weekend of 12th and 13th September with over 50 venues and activities taking part in Nottinghamshire providing free access for all the family to historic places and events. County Council conservation officers helped to promote and organise events and also took part in various events over the weekend.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ARCHIVES

1911 Census

27. Nottinghamshire Archives is very pleased to have been chosen as only one of seven regional centres in England and Wales to be provided with free access for a year to the recently released online records of the 1911 census. This will be of immense value to the county's family historians, as the census is one of key resources for genealogists tracing their family tree.

Nottinghamshire Renaissance Heritage awards

28. I am very pleased to report that Nottinghamshire Archives were recently shortlisted for two awards. Firstly, in the Nottinghamshire Heritage awards for

the Best Exhibition 2009 for their *Wheels of Fortune: The Story of Raleigh Cycles of Nottingham* exhibition and also for the Caring for Collections Award 2009 for the *Nottinghamshire Archives Worldwide Catalogue*. Assistant Head: Archives, Heritage and Records Management, Mark Dorrington, was interviewed on BBC Radio Nottingham in connection with the awards ceremony at Newark Town Hall on 23 July.

Manorial Study Day

29. On 27 June a manorial study day was held to encourage greater interest and use of the many manorial records held at the Archives. In the morning talks were given by Senior Archivist Chris Weir and Archivist Peter Lester on: *Manorial records: their range and use* and *Manorial Landscapes: evidence and interpretation*. This was followed by a visit to the Manor House at Donington-le-Heath.

Edwinstowe Extravaganza

30. Nottinghamshire Archives took part in this event from 13-17 July putting on a display at Edwinstowe Library of church, school, parish and colliery records. Ancestry sessions were also held by Library staff and there was a promotion of the Picture the Past photographic website.

Southwell Workhouse

31. Nottinghamshire Archives have mounted an exhibition at the Workhouse from 7 September- 23 October entitled *Kill or Cure* featuring records held at Nottinghamshire Archives. On 15 September Senior Archivist Chris Weir gave a talk *Kill or Cure! The History of Bygone Medicine in Nottinghamshire*.

Heritage Open Day

32. Nottinghamshire Archives took part in the national Heritage Open Days weekend, organised by English Heritage, with a special opening on the afternoon of 12 September. Visitors were able to see behind the scenes visiting the archive strong rooms and conservation workshop and viewing a display of archives.

Lowdham Book Festival

33. Several of the recent Libraries and Archives publications featured on the Lowdham Book Festival programme in June of this year. Archivist Alex Rees spoke on *Turning Back the Pages of Raleigh Cycles of Nottingham*. Roger Dobson gave a talk on *Southwell Inns and Alehouses* and archaeologist James Wright on *Castles of Nottinghamshire*.

These Uncertain Tymes

34. A new publication about the English Civil War was launched at The Gilstrap Centre, Newark on 26 August by Councillor Keith Girling. *These Uncertain*

Tymes', Newark and the Civilian Experience of the Civil Wars 1640-1660 by Dr Stuart Jennings is a study of the civilian experience of the inhabitants of Newark during the Civil War. Dr Jennings focuses on the town's survival during the Civil War and made extensive use of the town's unpublished archives, many of which are held at Nottinghamshire Archives, to compile this book.

LIBRARIES

Summer Reading Challenge

35. This is the 11th year that Nottinghamshire has run the Summer Reading Challenge in libraries. Children are challenged to read 6 books over the summer holidays and are given incentives along the way before receiving a certificate and medal for completing their challenge. This year's theme, Quest Seekers, focussed on the power of imagination and was promoted across schools and in the community during the summer term.
36. The challenge has been supported by a programme of summer activities in libraries linked to the Quest Seekers theme and these have encouraged children to join the challenge and helped maintain momentum throughout the summer. This year, for the first time, 12 young volunteers (aged between 14 and 17) were recruited to support the challenge, talking to children about the books they have read. Initial feedback is extremely positive and it is hoped to extend this scheme next year.
37. Early indications are that the number of children joining the challenge has increased. Highlights from the major libraries so far include Sutton-in-Ashfield with over 500 starters (compared to 340 last year), West Bridgford with 800 (over 100 more than last year), Worksop with over 400 (an increase of 100), Beeston with over 550 and Arnold with over 400. It is expected that by the time Quest Seekers ends on 12th September many of these children will have completed the challenge. These are excellent figures and I would like to congratulate the thousands of children who have taken part and thank all those involved with this very successful scheme for all their hard work and commitment.

Gotham Memorial Hall

38. Following a successful bid for external funding, Gotham Parish Council is carrying out major building work on the village's Memorial Hall. The County Council is also making a modest financial contribution to this scheme resulting in an enlargement and refurbishment of the library which is located there. As well as being slightly larger, the "new" library will be more accessible, equipped with new shelving and will benefit from an injection of new stock. Work on the building will be completed, and the new library opened, by the end of October.

Play days

39. Library staff were involved in borough council play days held across the county during July and August. Staff promoted the wide range of library services

available for children of all ages. Parents had opportunities to sit and read stories with their children and talk to staff about how to encourage a love of books and reading. Bookstart + packs and promotional literature were given out. This was a good opportunity to reach people who do not currently use the service and parents visiting the stalls were very impressed with how much libraries have to offer children and families.

Creative Writing Competition for Children

40. The Library Service has been working with New Writers UK this summer to promote their county wide children's writing competition. The competition was launched at Rufford County Park on 13 June and was open to primary and secondary school children in years 5, 6, 7 and 8. Over 50 entries were received and the standard of writing was exceptionally high. Finalists were awarded prizes by the Chairman of the County Council and Des Coleman from the BBC at the New Writers UK Book Festival at County Hall on 19 September. The winning entries will be displayed in local libraries as well as being compiled into a book.

Access to Library Loans History

41. The management system that all Nottinghamshire libraries use, known as 'Symphony' has recently been upgraded. Among the new features provided is access to the past history of books lent to all our customers. Information on books that people have borrowed can be stored allowing library staff to advise customers if they have already read a particular book, or to remind them of an author they enjoyed some time ago.
42. Library managers can also make use of this information to understand more about their customers' preferences and when and where they visit our libraries. Analysis is currently being carried out on where borrowers live, by postcode, which allows us to map out the library 'catchment area' and the frequency of visits. There are almost half a million registered library users in the county and city and I think it is important to stress that all the data is securely controlled in compliance with data protection regulations. It will be used solely for the administration and improvement of the provision of library services.

SPORTS SERVICE

Nottinghamshire Youth Games

43. Between May and July over 550 young athletes took part in this year's Youth Games competitions held around the county. Districts competed in netball at Mansfield, hockey at Ashfield, rugby at Bassetlaw, gymnastics in the City and angling at Newark. There was also a day of competition in inclusive sports held at Manor Sports Centre in Mansfield. Young people with disabilities were given the opportunity to try athletics, table tennis, polybat (an adapted sport similar to table tennis), and cricket. There was also a boccia competition at primary and secondary level. During the competition, staff identified the 5 most consistent

players through the day. These players will represent Nottinghamshire in a regional competition along with an under 25s team.

Safeguarding in Sport

44. Having achieved the preliminary and intermediate awards, work continues towards the advanced National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) standard for sport. A new county safeguarding group for sport has identified specific training requirements both for the group members and the network as a whole and two specialist training sessions were held for staff across the sector covering areas such as information sharing protocols.

Disability Sport

45. A County Athlete Assessment Day for youngsters with disabilities ran on 25 June at the University of Nottingham as part of the Playground to Podium programme. Playground to Podium is the new national strategy for the identification, development and support of talented young disabled athletes. Young people identified as having a good aptitude for sport took part in football, boccia, table tennis, athletics or wheelchair basketball. The group listened to an inspirational speech from Paralympic gold medal winning swimmer, Sam Hynd who gave an insight into the work, barriers, support and determination he has experienced on his path to success.

Elite Sport

46. Swimmers from Nova Centurion, the county swim squad, have been successful at all levels. Ann Morris, coached by county coach Jamie Main, won a bronze medal in the 400m freestyle at the European Junior Swimming Championships in Prague. At the European Youth Olympic Festival held in Finland Natasha Hofton and Rachel Martin came away with bronze in the 4x100m freestyle relay team. Rachel was also involved in the mixed 4x200m relay team where she added a silver medal.
47. Other Nottinghamshire athletes competing included gymnast Sam Oldham from Keyworth who won double individual golds on the pommel horse and parallel bars against tough opposition from Europe's elite gymnasts. Tennis player Joshua Ward-Hibbert from Watnall reached the singles quarter finals and a fourth place in the mens doubles.
48. At the Swimming World Championships held in Rome at the end of July, Rebecca Adlington came away with a bronze medal in the 800m freestyle and a bronze in the 4 x 200m freestyle relay. Nova Centurion Kathryn Wyld was part of the British record breaking 4x100m freestyle team that made the final.
49. Nottinghamshire paralympians faced their first major competition since Beijing at the Paralympic World Cup held in Manchester in May. Charlotte Henshaw won gold in the Women's 100m breaststroke. Paralympic gold medallist Sam Hynd also won the 400m Freestyle.

50. In the athletics competition Danny West from the county athletics squads, took gold in the Shot. The final Nottinghamshire medal came in the wheelchair basketball competition where Team GB took the bronze medal. Newark's Joe Bestwick was top goalscorer.
51. These are excellent results and I would like to offer my congratulations to all the young athletes and their coaches for all their hard work.

Sports Volunteering

52. This summer has seen over 300 people involved as volunteers in the European Canoe Slalom Championships held at the national Water Sports Centre and over 200 volunteers supporting the International Cricket Council Twenty20 cricket world cup. Launched to tie in with this, the 'Championing Notts Sports Volunteering Project' is a joint venture between the county and city to recruit, train and deploy volunteers for future events. The project is run with funding from the City and County Councils and the East Midlands Development Agency. To date, there are 90 volunteers registered on the scheme and they receive regular newsletters signposting them to upcoming volunteering opportunities.

Coaching Development

53. The service recently launched two further sports coaching resource packs in libraries at West Bridgford and Sutton. These are collections of coaching manuals, CDs and DVDs specially selected to support the coaches in those areas. There are now resources in 6 of the 8 districts including one in the City. We envisage that Mansfield and Gedling will have resources up and running by November.
54. Coaches taking part in the nationally recognised Talented Coaches programme this year have continued to receive support. They work on individual development opportunities highlighted in personal action plans as well as group training sessions in sports psychology, FUNdamentals and multi skills, and strength and conditioning. The group also attended a talk given by Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club's Director of Cricket – Mick Newell who spoke about session planning and periodisation - examining different types of training at different stages of the season.

ARTS SERVICE

Rural Touring Scheme Review

55. The Arts Service took over management of Village Venture, the rural touring scheme in Nottinghamshire in April 2008 when the previous management retired and no suitable replacement could be found. The service also manages the Lincolnshire scheme under contract from Lincolnshire County Council and this brings the benefit of negotiating block bookings of performances at preferable rates. Since 2008 the scheme has been substantially reviewed and refined

whilst maintaining the quality and reach of the programme. A web site is being launched in September and a more accessible Village Ventures brochure has been published. The new website will feature company/artist information, poster and ticket templates, online booking and feedback reports.

56. Since the County Council took over management 115 shows have taken place in the county in 47 venues attracting an audience of 7,568, an increase on the previous year's figures. The County and District partnership has continued to strive to build audiences by maintaining the quality of the programme and supporting new promoters. As in previous years, the programme continues promote a wide range of professional performance including work with a diverse range of cultural influences, from countries such as; New Mexico, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Ghana, Italy and Eastern Europe. In this way we aim to create a more sustainable future for the scheme and plan to investigate options for independent management in the new year.

Earth & Fire Ceramic Fair Review

57. The 15th annual ceramic fair took place at Rufford Abbey at the end of June. For the first time the event was extended from its customary two days to three. Attracting over 7,000 people, Earth & Fire is one of the busiest events at the park and the extension was primarily implemented to relieve pressure on the site. Feedback from visitors was extremely positive with 99.6% rating the overall event good to excellent and 99.8% rating the staff good to excellent. Furthermore, despite the economic downturn the potters reported healthy sales.

Arts for older people

58. Working with partners in Newark and Sherwood District Council and Nottinghamshire NHS the Arts Service has developed a two year programme of high quality arts activity designed to appeal to older people and encourage their participation. I am delighted to report that the 'Visible' programme has now been awarded a national lottery Grants for the Arts award of £90,000 from Arts Council England.
59. 'Visible' will develop an increased number of volunteers from an older age group and will pilot an 'older people's arts award' based on The Discovery Award. This award will recognise older people learning new skills, gaining confidence and going on to be active within their own communities to lead new arts groups and activities. The project will also offer training to artists and develop the capacity of local arts organisations to respond to the creative potential of older people through specially designed training and development programmes. The project will also encourage other districts to develop similar schemes.

Arts within new build health centres

60. Working in partnership with Nottinghamshire LIFT and Nottinghamshire NHS the Arts Service have supported artists to contribute to the planning and inclusion of integral artwork within the new build health centres in Arnold and Bingham. A provisional sum of £25,000 each for Arnold and Bingham has now been secured from within the build budget of these sites to allow significant commissioning of new work.

Supporting the independent arts sector

61. To support arts organisations across the county, increase audiences and participants, the Arts Service is discussing a countywide funding bid with the Arts Council. We aim to support joint marketing and promotion activities whereby organisations can support and learn from each other and maximise the impact of marketing spend. Meetings are planned for September to discuss areas where co-operative action could improve the financial viability of organisations and help build a more sustainable future for the sector.

WORLD CUP HOST CITY BID

62. The County Council is part of the partnership together with the City Council, Rushcliffe Borough Council and Nottingham Forest Football Club that has been working on developing a bid for Nottingham to be a Candidate Host City for the 2018 World Cup. The main challenge has been to identify a stadium that is compliant with FIFA requirements. The County Council has been clear that it cannot support a proposal to build the new stadium at Gamston, in the green belt. No modelling has been done on the surrounding roads and the traffic impact, particularly through Tollerton.

At this time, it has not been possible to reach agreement with the City Council on the final outcome, but discussions are continuing.

ECONOMIC REGENERATION

Nottinghamshire Thinks – Future Economic Prosperity of Nottinghamshire

63. During June and July 2009 the County Council, Nottingham City Council, and Nottingham Development Enterprise jointly hosted a series of four themed breakfast events that followed on from the *Nottinghamshire Thinks: Economic Prosperity Summit* hosted by Lord Jones in January. The events covered the following themes:
- Science and innovation
 - Enterprise and skills
 - Reputation and aspiration
 - Transport and infrastructure

64. I was particularly pleased to be present at one of these, the Reputation and Aspiration event which was held at Rufford Mill. Delegates were particularly complimentary of the Mill as an excellent venue for such a prestigious event.
65. The purpose of all four of the events was to focus on future growth areas for the local economy and to get business input to our future strategies and direction. The events were held at venues across the City and County and attracted a combined audience of 192 local businesses, partners and stakeholders. High quality local speakers set the scene for each of the sessions and then took part in a panel / audience debate.
66. A key focus of the events was to draw out three key themes or priorities from each that could be taken forward by Nottinghamshire partners and that would give a focus to partners' efforts to grow the future local economy and capitalise on sectors that will bounce back more quickly from the recession. The County Council has agreed to report back on progress against the priorities at the proposed January 2010 Economic Prosperity Summit.

Ride Out the Recession Events – July 2009

67. I am pleased to report that Councillor Keith Girling, Deputy Cabinet Member for Culture and Community, attended a number of the recent Ride Out the Recession Events. The Economic Regeneration Service have funded seven half day events which were co-organised with Business Link and which were held across Nottinghamshire during July to help local companies access timely information and advice on how to protect themselves against the economic downturn.
68. The events featured experts on cash flow management, employment law, public sector procurement, sales and marketing who shared their advice and tips on what measures businesses can take to weather the storm and potentially gain a competitive edge. 175 people from 152 businesses attended the events and feedback was positive. Business Link is maintaining contact with the businesses to ensure that they are aware of all the business support services available to them.
69. Nottinghamshire County Council is keen to do all it can to assist its local businesses in these difficult times. These sessions form part of the Council's wider response to the economic downturn, which includes a series of Recession Response and Recession Advice pages on the County Council website under the business and the economy section.

Nottingham Evening Post Business Awards - Company of the Year

70. Nottinghamshire County Council sponsored the Evening Post Company of the Year 2009 award and was involved in the judging. I was very pleased to attend the awards evening on 7 July 2009 along with the Leader, Deputy Leader and senior officers. The awards showcase some of Nottinghamshire's best

businesses. It is pleasing to note that despite the economic downturn there are some excellent businesses in a growth phase.

71. The winner was Barcode Warehouse of Newark. The business specialises in the supply of bar-coding materials and devices and has recently secured large contracts with Royal Mail and the NHS. The business which was incorporated in 1999, benefited from a Nottinghamshire County Council business loan and has developed from 2 employees to 100 employees and now has a turnover of £16m per annum. The Economic Regeneration Service is working with the company to support possible expansion plans.

The Interim Notts Economic Development Partnership (INEDP)

72. In April 2009 the County Council became the accountable body for East Midlands Development Agency (emda) funding that had previously been routed through the Alliance SSP. This funding, £3.8m for 2009/10, will support economic development and regeneration in North Nottinghamshire. INEDP has been set up to advise the County Council on the allocation of the this delegated funding. Councillor Girling is vice-chair of the INEDP Board which comprises 15 senior nominees from key private, public, local government and third sector bodies. He was also appointed by the Board to chair the Partnership's Executive Group.
73. Partnership efforts are currently focussed upon maximising the impact of 2009/10 funding and developing a county-wide Sub-Regional Investment Plan (SRIP) for the 2010-13 period, setting out the key strategic investment priorities for Nottinghamshire. This document is being developed in conjunction with the Greater Nottingham Partnership (GNP), a sub-regional strategic partnership covering the City, Rushcliffe, Gedling, Broxtowe and Hucknall in Ashfield. The County Council will also become the accountable body for the emda funding currently delegated to the GNP with effect from April 2010, with the GNP's remaining funding likely to be delegated to Nottingham City Council.

Park Road Resource Centre

74. On the 27th August I was pleased to accept an invitation to visit the Park Road Resource Centre, run and managed by the local Mansfield Woodhouse Community Development Group (MWCDG). MWCDG is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. It has a board of trustees with committed community members and is supported by an extended volunteer forum.
75. I was very impressed with the commitment shown by the Group in meeting local needs and issues through the Centre. The Resource Centre now hosts a learning centre; offers family and individual support via an accredited counselling service and the local Surestart initiative; provides telephone, internet, e-mail and photocopying facilities and produces the community newsletter. In addition, the Centre provides a base for a wide range of community organisations and their activities.

76. As a sign of their continued ambitions, MWCDG now manages a contract with the District Council to manage three business centres across the district. I was pleased to hear about their ambitions and the genuine welcome they gave to the support offered by the County Council.

Councillor John Cottee
Cabinet Member for Culture and Community