

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE**SERVICE UPDATE FOR THE PERIOD 13 JANUARY TO 9 MARCH 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****West Bridgford Library – Costa Book Awards**

2. On 22 January, West Bridgford Library hosted a Costa Book Awards evening, sponsored by Costa, as part of the library's cultural programme. The sell-out event saw past and current award nominees form a panel to discuss the book awards, their writing and this year's nominations. The event culminated with a vote for the winner of the Book of the Year – and the 90 strong audience correctly predicted the real award winner who was revealed the following week. The event elicited fantastic feedback from customers; *“Loved it. Phenomenal range of speakers, brilliant writers, sharing so much with us the audience. Brilliant - really great evening in a fabulous space. Thank you!”*

Ten Till Tea: Family learning for adoptive and fostering families – Saturday 8 March

3. ACLS and the library service worked in partnership with fostering teams, the support after adoption team and the youth service (young people looked after team) to deliver a family learning event for fostering and adoptive families. Worksop Library was the venue for a fun day of shared activities and challenges aimed at supporting family learning and promoting health and wellbeing. The day also provided opportunities to promote the benefits of reading for pleasure and encourage greater awareness of the services offered in Nottinghamshire libraries.
4. Families created fruit mobiles, had the chance to make fruit smoothies using pedal power on the Smoothie Bike and enjoyed joining in with a family storytelling session. Foster carers and adoptive parents were able to share experiences with each other in a discussion group facilitated by professionals from relevant teams. The day ended with a showcase of work created and certificates presented to all participants. 21 adults and 19 children attended and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Further detailed impact analysis and evaluation will be undertaken across the teams involved.

COUNTRY PARKS AND GREEN ESTATES

5. The mild but unusually stormy weather through January and February caused a number of site problems for the Country Park and Green Estates teams. Some Green Estate sites suffered flooding, notably the Linby Trail and the Southwell Trail. The team continue to work to repair surfaces and drainage on these popular trails.
6. At Sherwood Forest Country Park a small number of veteran oaks were damaged. Rufford Abbey's lost two trees from its historic Lime Tree Avenue and the large poplar fronting the Abbey ruins. Whilst dealing with tree damage the opportunity was taken to cut back some of the overgrown yews along the Abbey front. All areas have now been made safe, ready for the main visitor season, but a large amount of woodland clearance work remains to be done.
7. However, the lack of snow and ice brought some benefits in terms of visitor numbers and commercial trading at Rufford Abbey and Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre.
8. Overall, retail was up 35% on this time last year and catering up 39%. Whilst all outlets were busier, two areas were particularly successful:
 - Rufford and Sherwood hosted 9 weddings this January and February, against 3 last year.
 - A Groupon promotion for the Savile Restaurant was launched on 26 January, and it sold out at 1,000 meals in just two days. Customers will be able to redeem their coupons from 24 February until 4 April.
9. Rufford Abbey and Sherwood Forest Country Parks both function as tourist attractions. Increasingly, tourists look online for information and TripAdvisor is one of the main sources. It is pleasing to note that TripAdvisor customer ratings for Sherwood Forest, despite the aging facilities there, are running at four out of five. At the time of writing Rufford Abbey had achieved an impressive four and a half out of five rating.

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

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