

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE
AND THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, POLICY, PLANNING AND CORPORATE
SERVICES****SERVICE UPDATE FOR THE PERIOD 12 MAY TO 8 JUNE 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****Re-opening of Newark Library**

2. Newark Library, a very busy and large town library, was re-opened on 19 May 2014 after a five month closure for essential building repairs and improvements, and a library refurbishment. A joint project with the Property Services Department enabled the library service to make major improvements for customers as well as making savings on future maintenance and revenue costs.
3. The library refurbishment itself cost £200,000 and the work undertaken consisted of complete internal re-decoration including partial re-flooring, new shelving and graphics, furniture and the creation of a new meeting room. The aim was to make the library more welcoming and attractive for the library customers by modernising the building, with particular emphasis on improving the children's area in order to encourage new members and increase usage and also creating a meeting room for business and community hire. A new vending/café area was also added. £40,000 was spent on new books for the library.
4. The major planned maintenance project replaced the lighting, including the emergency lighting, electrical wiring and the ceiling.
5. On Saturday 31 May 2014 the Chairman of the County Council officially re-opened the library and over 250 members of the local community attended a family fun event with craft activities, storytelling and poetry promoting the library and reading.
6. Since re-opening there have been many favourable comments on the changes from library customers:

"How light and airy it is, it was definitely worth the wait".

"I've been going to Grantham Library but I'm going to come here in future".

"I'm not going to Costa anymore when I can sit here with coffee, reading and looking over the park".

"This is the best coffee I have ever tasted".

"The new book stock is fantastic".

Commissioning ACLS Courses 2014/15

7. In April the Adult and Community Learning Service (ACLS) published the annual Commissioning Prospectus outlining what the Service priorities will be for the academic year 2014/15 and considered bids from organisations interested in delivering courses on 19 May. Sixteen good quality applications have been received and show a spread of potential providers ranging from large bids from colleges and the Workers Educational Organisation through to small charities and micro-businesses.
8. Negotiation is now on-going to agree the level of course activities and funding for each provider.

ACLS Marketing Events to Engage Communities

9. During May, the ACLS held two marketing events, one in the north of the County at Worksop Library and the other in the south at West Bridgford Library. The events were aimed at organisations that previously had no experience of working with the Service. Presentations were given outlining ACLS priorities, the funding available and how to access it and the support given to organisations who work with ACLS. Those attending were then invited to pose questions and engage in discussions around potential partnerships.
10. The session at West Bridgford Library was a new joint venture between ACLS and the Arts Service which attracted representatives from artists' groups across the district. Both events generated interest in working with the Service in the future.

COUNTRY PARKS AND GREEN ESTATES

11. On Sunday 18 May Bestwood Country Park was the host venue for a very popular 'Feed the Thousand Challenge' event jointly organised by the park and Veolia Environmental. The challenge was to cook and serve a thousand free lunches from an amount of money equivalent to that thrown away in food waste by the average family in one year. Hot sunny weather ensured an excellent turn out to this, the second such event at Bestwood Country Park.
12. An estimated 1,100 lunches were enjoyed by local residents and park users, and free tours of the restored Winding Engine House were led by the Winding Engine House volunteer group. The large number of people attending the site meant support from park

staff, the two park Friends Groups and many other local volunteers was essential. All worked hard through a long hot day to ensure a safe and enjoyable event.

13. The Winding Engine House and the adjoining Dynamo House continue to act as an effective focus for community involvement. A Saturday morning café run by the Friends of Bestwood Country Park and the local Women's Institute has so far generated over £2,000 for local charities and good causes. There are plans to extend opening hours in response to local demand.
14. Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre provided visitors with a series of events through May and June to celebrate the diamond jubilee of this part of the Forest being designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest.
15. A special guided bike ride, RSPB talks, Bushcraft for Kids, appearances by Robin Hood's outlaws and a free walk and talk on the archaeology of the Forest were amongst the varied events on offer to mark this special year for Sherwood Forest.

CULTURAL AND ENRICHMENT SERVICES

Update from the Arts Development Service

16. The Arts Development Service has won a National Drawing Inspiration Award from the Campaign for Drawing for their Big Draw events across the County last year. The award comes a year after the team won the Trail Blazer Award for the development of an innovative training programme that enabled groups across the County to develop and run their own Big Draw events.
17. The theme for 2013 was 'Draw Tomorrow' and the Arts Service took the simple idea to inspire the County to get drawing. The wider development programme saw librarians, young people, volunteers, teachers, children's centre staff and parents training to have the confidence to use drawing to engage hundreds of people in communities across the County.
18. Box drawings were completed by thousands of Nottinghamshire people on themes as diverse as what you might be when you grow up to what if I won the lottery and what is for dinner tomorrow.
19. The resulting art works were brought together as an installation at Rufford Gallery before touring Nottinghamshire Libraries. One of the greatest success stories of the 2013 programme was the community involvement in local areas. Hucknall worked together to form a whole town event "Boxing Clever" which saw 3,500 Hucknall residents working in 27 groups to complete boxes that were exhibited in local shops.
20. The service will receive £750 towards the Nottinghamshire Big Draw Programme this year that will link in with the World War 1 commemorations and come together in an exhibition at Rufford Craft Gallery in October.

CONSERVATION

Landscape Partnership Scheme

21. The Stage 1 application for a Heritage Lottery funded Landscape Partnership Scheme for Sherwood Forest was submitted by the deadline of 31st May and will go to the national Heritage Lottery Fund Board in October 2015. This is a resubmission of the Scheme originally submitted in May 2013 but since the original submission, a great deal of work has been undertaken to refine the project and strengthen the outputs. Nottinghamshire County Council is the lead body and the main partners are the Forestry Commission, the Friends of Moor Pond Wood, Groundwork Creswell, Ashfield and Mansfield, Greenwood Partnership, Natural England, Newark and Sherwood District Council, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Sherwood Forest Trust.
22. Entitled *From Miner to Major: the real Sherwood Forest*, the Scheme will deliver outputs across three main themes:
- Natural Heritage
 - Built and Cultural Heritage
 - Access
- All three themes will have a strong cross-cutting element of community engagement. If successful, the Landscape Partnership Scheme will bring over £3.5 million of investment into the Sherwood area over 5 years.

Invasive Non-native Species

23. Led by the County Council's Biodiversity Officer, work has started again to tackle the problem of invasive non-native species across the County. As part of the efforts to stem the spread of Himalayan Balsam along the County's watercourses, County Council staff have been giving up their lunch breaks to pull up Balsam plants on the banks of the Trent at Lady Bay. Two sessions have been held so far on the 22nd May and 19th June.
24. It is intended to hold two further sessions between 12.30 and 1.30pm on the 9th and 30th July. Everyone is welcome to come and help – gloves will be provided! By pulling the Balsam before it can set seed, stands of the plant can be controlled and reduced, thereby reducing its impacts on native wildlife and flooding.

Fields in Trust

25. The County Council has been approached by Fields in Trust and the Royal British Legion to dedicate an area of green space as a Centenary Field, as part of the World War I commemorations. The dedication of Centenary Fields is intended to protect war memorial parks or open spaces given in memory of those who lost their lives.
26. Conservation Team staff are working with colleagues in Country Parks and Green Estates and Corporate Property to identify a suitable site. A report will be brought to a future Culture Committee meeting.

Community Archaeology

27. The Community Archaeology field season is now underway. The highlight of this year's season will be the Archaeological Field School and Excavation at Rufford Abbey in July. The Field School will run from the 7th to 11th July and will provide people with an introduction to professional excavation techniques through a targeted excavation on the Mediaeval Abbey lawn. The Volunteer excavation will be held between the 14th and 18th July and is open to anyone, with volunteers able to attend for as many or as few days as they like. Both events are fully booked.

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

Jayne Francis-Ward
Corporate Director, Policy, Planning and Corporate Services

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Derek Higton
Service Director, Youth, Families and Culture
T: 0115 9773498

Sally Gill
Group Manager, Planning
T: 0115 9696536

E: derek.higton@nottscc.gov.uk

E: sally.gill@nottscc.gov.uk

C0447