

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE  
AND THE GROUP MANAGER, PLANNING**

**SERVICE UPDATE FOR THE PERIOD 15 AUGUST TO 9 OCTOBER 2016**

**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, ARTS, INFORMATION AND COMMUNITY LEARNING**

**£1 million refurbishment for Beeston Library**

2. Beeston Library closed on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October in preparation for a major refurbishment. The project is part of Inspire's commitment to create an innovative and modern space and will deliver a series of improvements to the building's infrastructure, including:
  - new roof, windows, ceiling, lights, flooring and heating system
  - new shelving and a re-design of public spaces for modern library use
  - re-opening of the original main entrance on Foster Avenue
  - the creation of a new arts and learning room
  - a new IT Discovery suite
  - improvements to the meeting areas and exhibition spaces.
3. During the closure a temporary library will open in the Beeston Youth and Community Centre, West End, on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October. This will provide a selection of stock, some computer access and the continuation of some events such as the popular Rattle, Rhyme and Roll for children. Stapleford and Toton Libraries will also open for additional hours.

**Big Draw**

4. Nottinghamshire libraries are set to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths) ahead with a series of fun workshops as part of the [The Big Draw Festival](#), an annual international celebration. This year's STEAM powered Big Draw will be the first delivered by Inspire which was set up earlier this year to deliver culture, learning and libraries across Nottinghamshire.

5. From 1-31 October, every year, thousands of enjoyable drawing activities connect people of all ages with places, artists, designers, illustrators, and each other to celebrate the universal language of drawing. This year's theme brings together Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths - STEAM recalls our Industrial past and the fusion of creative innovation, enterprise and the arts.
6. Inspire will be delivering a programme of workshops in libraries for anyone who loves to draw, as well as for those who think they can't! Aimed at children and their families, participants will have fully illuminated fun exploring technology with creativity, using conductive drawing materials and working with an artist to create beautiful drawings with an electric circuit.
7. The work created will then become part of a touring library exhibition between November 2016 and April 2017.
8. Inspire have also secured an Arts Council England Grant for the Arts to extend the workshops to smaller libraries and to work with 10 schools to run Big Draw workshops and add more amazing artworks to the exhibition.

## **COUNTRY PARKS AND GREEN ESTATES**

9. Sherwood Forest Country Park held its 'Major Oak Woodland Festival' on the weekend of 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> September – a celebration of traditional woodland and green wood working skills. The costs of staging the event were offset by sponsorship obtained by partner organisation, the Sherwood Forest Trust. Despite variable weather, the event again attracted good numbers and proved both entertaining and educational for visitors, showcasing a variety of activities from traditional hurdle making, chair carving and charcoal making to Have a Go willow weaving – all staged in the leafy glades of one of England's oldest forests.
10. In September, Rufford Abbey Country Park underwent its two-yearly inspection under the Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme (VAQS). This is a quality scheme run by the national tourist board. A paid inspector makes an all-day mystery shopper visit and tests all facilities, from the customer's eye view. This year's score was 80% - a 10% increase on last year. The inspector praised the excellent standard achieved, with improvements noted in all areas, including retail, catering, customer welcome and pre-arrival information.

## **CONSERVATION**

### **Invasive Non-native Species**

11. The Himalayan Balsam control project has seen another impressive year of volunteer action from individuals and community groups. This volunteer effort, co-ordinated by the Biodiversity Officer, has continued to undertake control of Himalayan Balsam in the River Leen catchment (over approximately 9km of river frontage and also on non-river sites too); the River Maun catchment (also over approximately 9km of river frontage and on non-river sites); and the River Meden catchment (over approximately 13km of river frontage). Work has also started in the upper reaches of the River Erewash catchment for the first year, involving Himalayan Balsam control over a stretch of approximately 1.3

km of the river. Other control work has also taken place across the County including the Ouse Dyke, Cocker Beck, Normanton Brook, Potwell Dyke, River Poulter catchment, The Fleet and the Trent at Lady Bay.

12. Volunteer involvement has continued to increase, with volunteers including students from West Notts College and Samworth Academy, and members of local groups such as the Friends of King's Mill Reservoir, Maun Conservation Group, Forest Town Nature Conservation Group and the Leen Valley Volunteers. Once again the project was able to involve County Council staff from County Hall and Trent Bridge House, as well as staff from the Environment Agency, to undertake volunteer work in their lunch break along the River Trent waterfront at Lady Bay. A big thank you to everyone involved.

## **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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