

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE  
AND THE GROUP MANAGER, PLANNING****SERVICE UPDATE FOR THE PERIOD UP TO 9 JUNE 2013****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**

2. The new £5.2m library and young people's centre opened to the public on 16 March 2013, following an official opening ceremony on the previous day. During the first weekend of opening over 8,000 people paid the new library a visit.
3. The response to the new building and the services provided has been overwhelmingly positive with many written comments of congratulations to the local team and the County Council.
4. The exhibitions, events and meeting spaces have been very successful with ticketed events becoming sold out within days of release. Regular activities for both children and adults are proving popular with very positive feedback from those attending and partners. A regular County Council supported workclub has also been established at the library.
5. The use of public access computers, wifi and study spaces has been high with the more traditional 'reading room' proving popular for customers wanting to find a quieter place to read.
6. Sunday opening, which was implemented for the first time at West Bridgford on 17 March 2013, is proving popular with an average of over 400 visits in the 4 hour opening period.
7. The total number of visitors since opening to the end of May was 75,643 with 109,614 books and other items being loaned.
8. The speed at which the library was set up and made operational between building handover and opening to the public was very short compared with previous new library projects. The local and county library teams pulled together and worked extremely hard

to meet very tight deadlines. This was supported by colleagues from across the Council including IT Services, Property Services, Cleaning Services, Communications, Business Support and the Young People's Service.

### **East Leake Library**

9. East Leake Library re-opened at the end of April after a three and half month closure for essential building repairs and improvements and a library make over. Joint projects with planned maintenance enables the library service to make major improvements for customers as well as making savings on future maintenance and revenue costs.
10. The library makeover cost £95,000 and the work undertaken consisted of complete internal re-decoration, new shelving and graphics, furniture and carpet. The aim was to modernise and make the library more attractive for the library customers, with particular emphasis on moving the children's area to make it more prominent in order to encourage new members and use. The local studies collection was also improved to give prominence to a collection that had been donated by a member of the community. £30,000 was also spent on new books for the library.
11. The planned maintenance project improved the exterior of the library and replaced windows, doors and fascias that were in very poor condition. The heating and lighting were also replaced.
12. On Saturday 27 April the Chairman of the County Council officially re-opened the library and over 100 members of the local community also attended a family fun event promoting the library.
13. Since reopening there have been many favourable comments on the changes from customers.

"I can't believe the difference; it is so much brighter and welcoming"

"I love the way you have created lots of small spaces to sit and read and relax"

"It is a fantastic new space for the children, they will enjoy coming here"

14. The performance of the library for May 2013 compared to May 2012 shows considerable improvement:
  - the number of visits has increased by 66%
  - the number of books borrowed has increased by 65%
  - the number of new members joining has increased by 281%.

### **Ancestral Tourism**

15. Nottinghamshire Archives is the lead partner in the Nottinghamshire Ancestral Tourism Partnership alongside Nottingham City Council Library and Information Service, Bassetlaw District Council, the University of Nottingham, Experience Nottinghamshire, Nottinghamshire Family History Society, Nottinghamshire Heritage Forum and the Galleries of Justice.

16. The partnership is working together to promote the County as a destination for residents and visitors interested in their Nottinghamshire ancestors, encouraging both research and visitors who want to 'walk in the footsteps of their ancestors'.
17. For 2013 the partnership has put together a programme of linked events under the banner of *Nottinghamshire's People*.
18. The keynote exhibition, *Nottinghamshire's People, Ancestral Stories from the Archives*, was opened at the Weston Gallery, Lakeside, University of Nottingham, on 6 June 2013 by Mrs Jennifer Spencer, Chief Executive of Experience Nottinghamshire. It will run until 1 September 2013 and is jointly curated by Nottinghamshire Archives and the University of Nottingham, Manuscripts and Special Collections. The exhibition celebrates the lives of Nottinghamshire's people and communities and showcases the wealth of original archives available in these two repositories for family history research. Alongside the exhibition is a complementary series of talks.
19. Nottinghamshire Libraries and Archives held a very successful Local History Fair as part of the wider *Nottinghamshire's People* programme. This took place at Mansfield Library on Sunday 19 May when over 20 local history groups and organisations from around the County attracted several hundred visitors to the library.
20. During March Edwinstowe Library held a Local and Family History week and throughout the summer exhibitions and talks will be held at Worksop Library as part of the *Nottinghamshire's People* programme.
21. Nottinghamshire Archives will also be hosting a talk on RAF Ancestral Research on 9 July.

### **Wakefield Memorials First World War Project**

22. The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded Nottinghamshire Archives a grant of £22,000 to catalogue and preserve the Wakefield Memorials collection. This collection was compiled by Mrs Patricia Wakefield of Bulwell and deposited with the Archives. It comprises her research into graves and memorials in the UK, France and Belgium of East Midlands soldiers who died in the First World War.
23. The project will be undertaken by a group of home educated young people working under the supervision of a Project Archivist and assisted by some adult volunteers. It will enable the collection to be made more widely available to researchers in the run up to the commemoration of the centenary of the outbreak of the war in 2014.

### **COUNTRY PARKS AND GREEN ESTATE**

24. After a cold, rainy early spring, April and May saw a welcome increase in visitor numbers at Rufford Abbey and Sherwood Forest Country Parks, and a consequent increase in commercial sales at these sites.
25. Catering and retail sales were up 35% on the same two months last year. A 'Groupon' internet promotion was launched for the Savile Restaurant at Rufford Abbey, and attracted 1,100 new customers.

26. Bestwood Country Park held its largest public event for some years with the 'Big Lunch' on Sunday 2 June. This community event, held in partnership with Veolia Environmental Services, aimed to cook 1,000 free lunches using the £680 that the average British family throw away each year in waste food. Excellent weather, attendance of the Bestwood Black Diamonds Brass Band and many stalls by local groups and charities meant that the site was busy all day. An estimated 1,100 free lunches were eventually served.
27. At Rufford Abbey the key event of the spring season was the annual Historical Bazaar on 27 and 28 April, a marquee event with the added attraction of living history re-enactments and displays, attended by approximately 6,000 visitors over the weekend.
28. Sherwood Forest meanwhile offered numerous nature events including a popular Dawn Chorus Walk at 5am on Sunday 28 April, and a successful 'Medieval May Fair' on Sunday 5 and Monday 6 May in and around the Visitor Centre.
29. Meanwhile the Green Estates Team, in conjunction with the Landscape & Reclamation Team of Highways Division, completed Phase One of a new multi-user recreational route from Bilsthorpe to Clipstone, opening up three miles of trail to walkers, horseriders and cyclists. The new route has been well received by local residents.

## **CULTURAL AND ENRICHMENT SERVICES**

### **Recognising the achievement of young people with special educational needs through the arts**

30. The Arts Development Service has been working with Nottinghamshire special schools for around three years, particularly supporting them to offer a wider range of recognition and accreditation to their young people through the nationally accredited Young People's Arts Award.
31. We have worked both with Carlton Digby Special School (Mapperley), and Fountaindale School (nr. Mansfield), to commission pieces of art that mark their rebuilding. At Carlton Digby artist Lewis Morgan has produced an interactive 'play' sculpture. At Fountaindale, working with Junction Arts and artist Nathan Portlock, an exhibition based on memories and stories of Fountaindale has been produced and is currently displayed at Mansfield Library.
32. During the Spring term 2013, we have worked with most of the special schools across the County to deliver an exciting project that gets some of our most vulnerable young people, who all have special educational needs, involved in arts activities led by professional artists. Artists Jess Kemp, James Sutton and Carole Beavis were commissioned to work in nine schools, working together with the pupils and wider school community to make modroc sculptures, willow woven structures and painted silk teepees and banners. These amazing pieces will be used by the schools for future activities, for instance, the silk teepees will be used for fabulous storytelling dens or chill out spaces.
33. On 6 June, all the schools came together at Rufford Abbey to see their work displayed and take part in even more arts activities, including remarkable performances by theatre company, Talking Birds, inside their mobile whale! Over a 150 young people joined us

on the day. We were extremely proud to display the work and to publicly recognise the achievements of these young people.

34. We will continue to work with Nottinghamshire special schools to find ways to support and recognise the creative achievement of young people with special educational needs.

### **Working with rural communities across the County**

35. Village Ventures is the rural touring scheme for Nottinghamshire offering a high quality programme of live performance to rural and semi-urban areas across the County. The programme promotes high quality professional dance, theatre and music performances, including children's and family shows, to village and community halls, supported by a network of local volunteer promoters who select and host performances and publicise the shows to their local audiences.
36. During 2012/13 the County's community halls hosted 127 performances supported by over 500 local volunteers, reaching over 8,000 people - a 5% increase in audiences for Village Ventures shows on the previous year.
37. The scheme generates funding of £41,000 annually from Arts Council England, along with funding support from each of Nottinghamshire's district councils. Village Ventures helps to develop a strong sense of community spirit between both local volunteers and audiences, by bringing people of all ages together in a familiar venue to share an enjoyable, social experience.
38. The programme also helps to keep village and community halls alive and vibrant by contributing to the range of arts and social opportunities available to local people, particularly in areas where there may be little access to performance venues. Research across the programme during 2012/13 shows that 72% of audiences for Village Ventures performances are local to the venue, with 96% rating the quality of shows and 'value for money' of their overall experience of local performances as 'good' or 'very good'.
39. In addition to increasing access to high quality arts events, Village Ventures aims to build capacity within communities to participate in and experience the arts, through supporting and developing the skills of local volunteer promoters.

### **Sports Legacy Fund**

40. 162 sports clubs representing 34 sports have now received offers totalling £1,586,666 from the Nottinghamshire Sports Legacy Fund. All seven Nottinghamshire areas have a minimum of 12 clubs located within each area.
41. The Legacy Fund was created as a single one-off grant stream in special recognition of the lasting impact of London 2012 on sport across the country. It was designed to support grassroots community sports clubs to enhance and improve facilities and/or to purchase new sports equipment which would help to improve sports performance and/or help to increase sports participation.
42. The new fund was welcomed by Lord Coe as a "great example of a local legacy fund" and received praised by the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce for

the economic boost it will generate. A number of Sports Governing Bodies have also praised the fund, valuing the input and impact the fund will have upon local clubs. Applications worth more than £3m were tabled after the scheme was launched. Initially envisaged as a £1m pot, the volume of applications resulted in an additional £700,000 being made available.

43. The Legacy pot featured two streams – Kick Start grants of between £500 to £10,000 and Game Changer grants of £10,000 to £50,000 to help local sports organisations promote sport and nurture talent to find the sports stars of the future.
44. Many of the Game Changer awards were to part fund larger projects which involved additional match funding being secured or sourced by the applicant. One of the successful applicants, cycling club Forest Town Aces, has confirmed it plans to work with a County-based company to complete its project. The £41,880 grant means the cycling club can invest in a new 440m steel perimeter fence needed to guard spectators from competitors racing on the tarmac cycle track. Forest Town Aces is the only outdoor racing track in the East Midlands which is over 100 years old; the Legacy grant will help preserve and enhance the facility for the next generation.
45. The fund will also result in an increase in the number of clubs gaining Club Mark<sup>1</sup> Accreditation status and more clubs are now being connected to local Club Forum networks as a result of the grant.
46. Of the remaining £113,000 yet to be awarded, the sports service is currently assessing a number of applications which were originally deferred pending further information. It is anticipated that recommendations will be made to the September meeting of the Culture Committee concerning these last applications.

## **CONSERVATION**

### **Sherwood Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme**

47. This Committee received a report on 26 March which summarised progress to develop a Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) for Sherwood and agreed that the County Council would provide the lead body role for the bid.
48. The bid has been coordinated by a Funding Working Group of the Sherwood Forest Regional Park, bringing together a wide range of organisations. After considerable work by many partners, Nottinghamshire County Council submitted the bid on 31 May.
49. Proposals have an overall vision of supporting “action to reconnect Sherwood Forest’s sense of place, its ancient woodlands, heathlands, and cultural heritage, through a partnership that welcomes people and inspires future success from legends of the past.”
50. The project would involve a 5-year delivery programme, preceded by an 18-month development phase. Estimated total costs are £3.9M, of which the requested HLF grant is £2.8M.

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<sup>1</sup> Club Mark is a Sport England scheme which assures sports clubs meet defined operational standards

51. LPS applications follow a two-stage format. HLF is expected to announce its decision on our stage 1 application in October. If this is successful, HLF will release funding to support the development phase where partners will undertake further work to refine a final bid.

### **Thynghowe and the Forgotten Heritage of Sherwood**

52. Over the last year, the Greenwood Community Forest team has supported a local community group – the Friends of Thynghowe – to develop a successful funding bid to Heritage Lottery Fund and then to deliver the resultant heritage and community-based project.
53. The Friends group was keen to investigate historical features of part of Birklands Forest, following the discovery of what could be a rare “Thyng” or Viking meeting place. Their project used the latest LIDAR (Light detection and ranging) technology to map ground contours that are otherwise hidden under trees. Training was provided to local people who were then able to take part in surveys to confirm features on the ground, analyze maps and archive found data.
54. The project also raised wider interest and awareness of the heritage of the Forest. The Greenwood team worked with four primary schools to deliver maths, art and wildlife workshops. The project culminated in a celebratory “Spring Thing” – a Viking re-enactment at Sherwood Pines, which provided a new attraction for visitors to this Forestry Commission site.

### **Heritage at Risk**

55. The Conservation team has continued to support local communities and groups in finding solutions for heritage assets that are at risk. The Canalside Heritage Centre at Beeston Lock is working towards submission of a Stage 2 application for a £750,000 Heritage Lottery Fund project and smaller projects at Blidworth Mill and the Manor House, Bingham are also taking shape.

### **Industrial Heritage**

56. The County Council’s Senior Practitioners for Archaeology and Historic Buildings were recently asked to speak at a two-day course organised by English Heritage and held at Oxford University as part of its Professional Training in the Historic Environment series. The focus of this course was on managing Industrial Heritage.

### **Aggregates and Heritage**

57. A major research project to assess the archaeological resource of those parts of Nottinghamshire that are potentially available for aggregates extraction has concluded with the publication of the report “Aggregates and Archaeology in Nottinghamshire”. The report has been co-authored by the County Council and Trent and Peak Archaeology and aims to provide guidance on the assessment, evaluation and mitigation techniques for archaeological schemes of treatment in advance of aggregates extraction.

58. The research was undertaken between 2009 and 2012 with funding from Defra and was steered by a partnership of English Heritage, British Geological Survey and representatives from the aggregates industry, planning, contracting and academic sectors.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) That the report be noted.

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