

| Report of:  | To:     | Date of Publication | Item No. |
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| Cllr Lynne Bowen<br>Leisure & Culture<br>Portfolio Holder | Council | 8 September 2011    | 9(f)     |

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| <b>EXECUTIVE REPORT: LEISURE AND CULTURE PORTFOLIO HOLDER</b> |
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**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To inform Council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Leisure and Culture Portfolio.

**2. Current and Future Issues**

2.1 Summary information is included in Appendix 1 on the following key outcomes.

- Reduction in health inequalities
- Healthier lifestyles and participation in physical effort.
- Protection of biodiversity and the natural environment.
- A vibrant visitor economy.
- Increased community involvement.
- Young people involved in positive activities.

Relevant information to be included in Appendix.

3. In accordance with Procedure Rule 11.3 any member of Council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with procedure Rule 11.5.

**LEISURE AND CULTURE PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE – SEPTEMBER, 2011**

**1. Reduction in health inequalities**

- 1.1** Refurbishment work is now concluded at Poulton Swimming and Fitness Centre. As part of the Council's capital programme the existing fitness studio and equipment has been upgraded. The fantastic new facilities will be launched in September. The Y:Active branded health and fitness centre is available for the whole community to use on a pay as you go basis or via a number of membership packages. The fees generated through the health and fitness memberships are reinvested back into the community facilities, ensuring that access to superb quality health and fitness is sustainable.
- 1.2** The YMCA Leisure Management budgets are monitored on a monthly basis. Income is nearly £45,000 up against budget to date. In addition, expenditure is £22,000 down against budget to date. All centres have exceeded income targets during the first quarter.

**2. Healthier lifestyles and participation in physical effort**

- 2.1** The summer has seen young people and families enjoying healthy environmental activities at the Wyre Estuary Country Park and the Fleetwood and Cleveleys Seafront. The families have been walking and exploring the Wyre Estuary paths and picnic areas, and beaches of Fleetwood and Cleveleys and with the help of the Rangers finding out about Earth Stories, Night-time biodiversity and Marine life.

**3. Protection of biodiversity and the natural environment**

- 3.1** Local volunteers and Wyre Rangers have surveyed the Towers Wood Community Woodland, Pheasant Wood, Hawthorne Park and Branksome Avenue for wildlife and 1.5ha have been managed for biodiversity.
- 3.2** Volunteers from Garstang Millennium Green Trust, British Telecom and Wyre Council's Ranger team have removed the invasive non-native plant – Himalayan Balsam from stretches of the River Wyre within the Garstang Millennium Green. Approximately 0.7 ha of land that had been over-grown with balsam were managed and the balsam has been left on site in compost piles.

**4. A vibrant visitor economy**

**Business Advisory Visits and WTA Membership**

- 4.1** A 'Benefits of Membership' leaflet has been produced and included with membership invoices. The following businesses have been visited to discuss tourism development opportunities, quality grading and potential

WTA membership:

- Subzero Ice Arena
- North Euston Hotel
- New Boston Hotel
- Belmont Holiday Flats
- Wyresdale Park, Scorton

[www.visitwyre.co.uk](http://www.visitwyre.co.uk) developments

- 4.2** During July, there were 6,256 website visits with approximately 22,000 pages viewed. The most popular pages are 'places to visit' – Fleetwood, Garstang and Cleveleys.
- 4.3** Ongoing website develops include:
- WTA Members section
  - Improving the areas to visit pages and links to local attractions.
  - Creation of the online 'Kids Stuff' publication.

Publications and Promotions

- 4.4** A variety of publications is produced and distributed during the summer. This includes 'Kids Stuff' (15,000 printed copies and an online publication).
- 4.5** To promote and raise awareness of tourism in Wyre, a number of publications are distributed at many shows and events. This includes the Cheshire Show, Tram Sunday, Great Ecclestone Agricultural Show, Garstang Show Goosnargh and Longridge Show, The Westmorland Show, Scorton Agricultural Show and Barrows Festival.

Olympic Torch Relay

- 4.6** Nominations were invited for the people of Wyre to nominate inspirational members of their community to carry the Olympic Flame during its 70 day journey across the Country. The first Olympic Torch Relay route announcement in May 2011 revealed the locations of each of the evening celebrations in the North West, one of which is Blackpool on 22nd June. A second, more detailed route announcement will be made later this year, providing information on the other cities, towns, villages and places of outstanding natural beauty, sports venues and community hubs the Olympic Flame will visit on each day of the relay. This is a fantastic opportunity for Wyre to raise its profile to visitors across the UK and abroad.

Arts – Launch of the Sea Swallow Book

- 4.7** In conjunction with Litfest, an author and illustrator were commissioned to develop the Sea Swallow Book. The book will be used predominantly by children in conjunction with the public art, which will be developed along the front at Cleveleys to Fleetwood. The book has been given to schools in

Wyre to children under 9. A set of 6 postcards has also been produced for sale in the Tourist Information Centres. The book was launched with a book signing by the author at Visit Fleetwood TIC on Tram Sunday.

## **5. Increased community involvement**

- 5.1** Over the past 6 weeks, 10 people have been placed successful into local sporting volunteer placements. These people also completed the Sports Leaders course delivered recently. Using 'V inspired' and 'Do It' websites have proven successful with over half of volunteers coming via these two sites.
- 5.2** Volunteers from Hawthorne Park Trust and the Wyre Council Volunteer Ranger team have been involved in wildlife surveying on the Hawthorne Park, the aim being to increase the knowledge of the biodiversity of the area and assist the partnership with the long-term management of the site.
- 5.3** Our work with local communities and volunteers within the area of Parks and Open Spaces has again achieved recognition with two sites being judged to have achieved Green Flag Status. Hawthorne Park in Thornton was judged in May for the annual award for the first time and Wyre Estuary Country Park has again received the award.
- 5.4** The Green Flag Award scheme is the benchmark national standard for parks and green spaces in the UK. The scheme continues to provide the high level of quality, against which our parks and green spaces are measured. This year a total of 256 parks across the North West achieved the standard and we can proudly boast two that gained excellence in recreational green areas.
- 5.5** Work started during August to refurbish the rose garden in Memorial Park Fleetwood, The £74,520 scheme is funded through assistance from Groundwork Lancashire and West, the Friends of Memorial Park and United Futures. Once the major landscaping is completed the planting works will commence. It is anticipated that the community will be "hands on" and assist with the planting. The friends group has also secured a £3,000 sustainability grant from The Big Lottery funding to help support the project after completion. This is for workshops, events and activities and also for training and capacity building for the group.
- 5.6** From 12 – 15 July, regional judges from North West in Bloom visited the borough to assess the 11 areas, 20 neighbourhoods and numerous private businesses and schools that have entered into the 'In Bloom' competition this year.
- 5.7** And Garstang had two extra visits, one on 4 August from National Judges for their entry into the Britain in Bloom Champion of Champions category, and again between 7 – 9 August, when two judges from Canada and the USA came to mark them in a worldwide competition, the International Challenge.

We will have the results for Garstang in the National Championships during September, and the Regional and International results in October.

## **6. Young people involved in positive activities**

- 6.1** The primary school sports after school project came to an end for the school year in July. Every Primary school in Wyre received 6 weeks of key stage 1 multi skills activity and 6 weeks of Year 3 & 4 Elevating Athletics. Sessions were very well received at all 31 schools and participation levels were very positive.
- 6.2** Sessions on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening have continued throughout the summer months at Fleetwood, Thornton, Preesall and Garstang. Sessions continue to have an influence on reducing juvenile nuisance and anti social behavior.
- 6.3** In July, the Wyre Bowling Development Group (BDG) interschool competition was held at Ashdell, Thornton. Four schools, 40 young people and 10 BDG volunteers from across Wyre all came together. The day was a huge success and all young people taking part receiving a certificate.