

Report of:	To:	Date	Item No.
Cllr. Lynne Bowen Leisure and Culture Portfolio Holder	Council	28 November 2013	8(f)

EXECUTIVE REPORT: LEISURE AND CULTURE PORTFOLIO HOLDER

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, as set out below.

2. Tourism and the Visitors Economy

Visit Garstang TIC

- 2.1** Both Income and Visitor numbers are up for the seventh month running at the Visit Garstang TIC. The cumulative income is up by 29.7% on last year and Visitor numbers are up by 19%. The Visit Garstang TIC was a finalist in the Lancashire Tourism Awards for customer service.

Printed Guides

- 2.2** The Wyre Visitor Guide is just about to go to print. 30,000 copies will be produced and will be distributed late November.
- 2.3** The Rural 'On Your Doorstep' Campaign will be launched in time for Christmas and will target visitors and local residents with special offers for attractions and food and drink outlets.
- 2.4** A Nov 2012 to Feb 2013 What's On In Wyre has been produced and distributed to TIP's and TIC's across Wyre, as well as to some key Wyre tourism attractions.

Partnership Working - Marketing Lancashire and Marketing Blackpool

- 2.5** Wyre is participating in the forthcoming Visit Lancashire Guide 2014 which is produced by Marketing Lancashire. Wyre is also working closely with Marketing Lancashire to promote our tourism services to Wyre businesses at 'Drop In' Sessions, the first of which took place at Dewlay Cheese in Garstang with the next to be held at Farmer Parrs in November.

3. Arts, Events and Volunteering.

- 3.1** The old mobile advice centre is now having its refit which means Volunteer Wyre will officially be launched in the new year. Currently we have 12 partners from a variety of organisations signed up to support the project with four volunteer drivers to help take the vehicle around the Borough.
- 3.2** Currently we have 15 new volunteers going through the process of becoming a volunteer for Wyre Council, with a further 9 volunteers having completed the application stage and now volunteering for the services of their choice.
- 3.3** The German Theatre Group Helios performed to 2 sell out audiences at Thornton Little Theatre during the October half term, with their show H20. This was a theatrical exploration of the uses and necessities of water in our lives. The event is part of the section's commitment to family orientated events and early years theatre opportunities.
- 3.4** The Council was proud to be part of the planning and delivery of the Fleetwood Firework Extravaganza that took part at the Marine Hall Gardens. More than 5,000 people enjoyed a package of life performances, street theatre, samba drumming and a spectacular fireworks display.
- 3.5** An Event Organisers' Open Forum, comprising of organisers, the Police, L.C.C and Wyre Council was held at the Marine Hall in October to discuss topics such as collaboration and the sharing of resources, temporary road closures, and parade routes. The Forum is now established and will meet quarterly.
- 3.6** The Events Team is involved in finalising the Activity Plan for the Memorial Park Heritage Lottery Fund Project which will involve a number of diverse public events, research and educational projects and a host of creative ways to explore commemoration and contemporary reflection.
- 3.7** The Creative People and Places Programme, (£3 million of arts investment in Blackpool and Wyre) has appointed two new Directors. After comprehensive tours of the borough and the development of an understanding of the needs and aspirations of where the arts should engage with residents, the next steps will be to plan for exciting new events over a three year period, starting in Summer 2014.

4. Sports Development

Sports Awards

- 4.1** The largest celebration of amateur sport in the county recently took place in Blackpool. More than 400 people attended the annual sports awards ceremony including regional sporting personalities and business leaders, along with the families and friends of the finalists. Two Wyre Sports Awards winners have been honoured.

Graham Lawton, from Poulton, won the Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedication to community sport. A member of Fylde Cricket Club for the past 50 years, Graham has both played and umpired local cricket and taken on the roles of treasurer and groundsman at the club.

Lucy Briggs, from Garstang, was highly commended in the Young Volunteer of the Year Award in recognition of the time she has dedicated to volunteering in sport.

Garstang Handball Club

- 4.2 The Council has recently been successful in attracting funding from Sport England and England Handball to the value of £4,802 towards the development of a new Handball Club which will be based at Myerscough College. The club will be the first handball club to be established across the Fylde Coast, Preston and Lancaster areas.

5. Parks and Open spaces

Memorial Park Restoration update

- 5.1 The design team have completed designs for the Memorial Park restoration project, which comprise of technical designs and specifications for the hard and soft landscaping, and are to complete the documents for the tender package January 2014. The contract opportunity for a main contractor to undertake the restoration works has been advertised and the Technical Questionnaires issued, these are to be returned December 2013 for evaluation.

Playground refurbishment/Shaping your Neighbourhood updates

- 5.2 The consultation feedback on the detailed design for the play area for young children at Wyre Estuary Country Park was very positive. The contract opportunity will be sent to contractors shortly, with an appointment to be made December 2013. It is anticipated that work will commence on site March 2014.
- 5.3 The installation of the multi use games area at North Drive was slightly delayed due to the wet weather but the site is now complete.
- 5.4 The renovation works to the skate Park facility at Garstang were completed earlier in the month.

6. Coast and Countryside

Forest of Bowland AONB

- 6.1 The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership has launched the second stage of consultation for the review of the statutory AONB Management Plan. The AONB Management Plan 2014-19 (Consultation Draft) highlights, include:

- what makes the AONB special;
- some of the key issues affecting the area;

- recent AONB Partnership work to conserve and enhance the AONB;
- detailed actions to be delivered by the AONB Partnership over the next plan period.

The public and partner consultation on the draft plan runs until midday on Friday 13 December 2013.

- 6.2** An example of the partnership's work is peat restoration - over the last 3 years, a combination of habitat restoration and public access improvements have been carried out on Bleasdale Fells. The aim being to regenerate eroded peat, thus improving the management of the water catchment, bringing the habitat back into positive condition and repairing 840m of footpath.

7. Comments and Questions

- 7.1** 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.