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**OVERVIEW OF LEISURE PORTFOLIO**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. During the last eight-week cycle the following were the main areas of work under my Leisure Portfolio.

**Inclusion**

2. Through the Children's Trust and work by the Education Outreach Manager, a successful drama workshop took place at the Arts Centre for children with disabilities over the week of Spring Bank Holiday. This culminated in the children staging a short production for parents and carers.
3. Boccia and New Age Kurling are planned as part of the summer programme of activities, which will help raise the profile of these accessible sports. Additional training has been carried out for operational leisure staff, with nine members of the team completing 'Disability Equality Training'. Sports ability volunteers and the Youth Service team member attended a "Let's All Play" kids' active course to improve future inclusive play opportunities.

**Youth Games**

4. The 8<sup>th</sup> Tees Valley Partnership Youth Games took place at Brierton Sports Centre on Saturday, 18 June 2005 and Northfield Sports Drome on Sunday 19 June 2005. Team Darlington was represented in every sporting event and almost 300 children from the town took part. The teams all received training before the games started at the various venues across the town lead by Club Coaches. Team Darlington was successful in a number of events and achieved a record number of medals compared to previous years.

The Sports Development Team have been successful in a bid to bring the games to Darlington in 2006 where over 800 children from the Tees Valley will compete at Eastbourne Sports Complex and Haughton Education Village.

**Primary Festivals**

5. The Sports Development Team has been heavily involved in the annual Primary School festivals, including the Primary School Netball Tournament, which took place at Longfield School on Wednesday, 8 June 2005 with 15 schools partaking.

6. The Darlington Primary Schools Athletics Field events took place at Hummersknott School on Friday, 17 June 2005. The track events were held at Eastbourne Sports Complex on Wednesday, 22 June 2005. In total, 25 schools participated in the event.

### **Sportsability Club**

7. Sports Development have teamed up with Children's Trust to set up a Sportsability Club every Sunday at the Dolphin Centre from 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon. There are currently 12 members with the possibility of expanding in the future.

### **Zone Active**

8. As part of the Zone Active Project, mini health MOTs were organised in Eastbourne, Park East and Lascelles Wards, providing the communities with the opportunity to have a free fitness test. The tests included: Blood Pressure, Resting Heart Rate, Flexibility, Grip Strength, Lung Capacity, Height, Weight, Body Mass Index and Body Composition. The events were used to carry out some consultation within the community.
9. Linking with Darlington PCT, a Walking for Health training course took place on 8 June 2005 with volunteers from the Zone Active area attending. It is hoped that further walks in the community will be organised. A walking group is already established in the Eastbourne Ward with plans to start a similar group in the other two wards.
10. Through consultation and activities planned with existing youth groups in Park East and Eastbourne, an afternoon of activities for Skerne Park Youth Club was provided on 31 May 2005. Also the youth groups are planning to arrange a Kwik Cricket Match between Skerne Park and Eastbourne Youth Clubs and then putting a joint team together to represent Darlington in the Street Games Festival in August.
11. A Multi Activity day at Skerne Park Primary School took place on 1 June 2005 with 16 children from years 4, 5 and 6 attending.

### **Summer Programme**

12. A programme of activities has been planned for the forthcoming summer holidays which include a wide range of courses for youngsters of all age groups, including tennis camps, multi activity sessions, hockey, netball, boccia and kurling.
13. The courses run throughout the summer and will culminate in a two-day event at the Dolphin Centre on Thursday, 25 August 2005 and Friday, 26 August 2005. The two-day event will be free of charge and will include skateboarding, climbing wall, self defence, basketball, cyber chaos and wrestling throughout the two days.

## **West Park Handover Celebrations**

14. The West Park project, which is the first major new park in the town for 100 years, was formally handed over to the Council on Tuesday, 21 June 2005. To celebrate this historic occasion, Tony Cooper and poet Bill Herbert formally handed over the parkland to me. The event included a welcome speech by her Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor Stella Robson and a picnic in the park for 150 local school children.

## **Northumbria In Bloom**

15. Officers are currently involved in preparation for Northumbria In Bloom. The Horticulture Team have overseen the delivery of hundreds of flowers to schools to enhance their grounds. Judging will take place on Tuesday 26 July 2005 to assess our efforts. More than 180,000 flowers have been planted throughout the Borough and 800 hanging baskets provided.

## **‘No Smoking Policy’ introduced across Darlington Borough Council’s Leisure and Arts facilities**

16. With effect from Monday, 27 June 2005 a ‘No Smoking Policy’ was introduced in leisure and arts bars, cafeterias and restaurants. The policy was introduced in recognition of the Government’s plans to make public places smoke free by the end of 2007 and in response to feedback from users. Leader of the Council, Councillor John Williams, accepted a number of clean air awards on behalf of Darlington Borough Council for the buildings and facilities concerned.

## **Darlington Borough Council Art Collection**

17. A painting from the Darlington Borough Council art collection is currently on loan to the prestigious Dulwich Picture Gallery in London. ‘Fallen Tree against Sunset’ by Graham Sutherland was specially requested for loan by the gallery to form part of a major retrospective of his work. The exhibition runs from 15 June 2005 to 25 September 2005 and then moves to Djanolgy Art Gallery in Nottingham.

## **South Park**

18. The majority of the work included within Phase 1 is now complete. The only exception is the installation of the east entrance gates, which will now be completed at the end of Phase 2. Work on Phase 2 is progressing well, with all works on programme for completion by September 2005.
19. The proposals for the Skateboard Park have now received planning consent with work programmed to start in late June.
20. A DVD has recently been completed for distribution to schools to get their feedback as to what they wish to see in the Park.

## **Darlington Railway Centre and Museum**

### *Events*

21. Father's Day Steaming and the Transporting Lives Family Weekend (25 and 26 June) were well received with visitors enjoying the family activities. The 'Thomas the Tank' event with all the usual activities is on 9 and 10 July and visitor numbers are expected to exceed last year. (More information on actual numbers to follow after the event).
22. **HLF Application** - The application has been submitted and a preliminary meeting was held on 1 July to discuss the proposal in detail. Following a meeting to discuss proposals for additional works to 'finish off' the roof repair project, English Heritage has suggested that an application for funds to assist with this would be received positively. An application will be prepared and submitted. An application will be also be submitted to the Railway Heritage Trust.
23. **Roof Repair Project** - Newton Moore have won the contract to carry out the roof repair project and work is due to start on 4 July for approximately 12 weeks, during which time the Museum will remain open.
24. **Rail Safety Campaign** - The Museum has entered into discussions with Network Rail to develop, in conjunction with the Darlington Railway Preservation Society, a character, which will highlight to children the dangers of playing on railway lines. The character will be used for educational activities and also general family visits.

### *Education Activity*

25. **Under the Tracks** - A new project has been developed with the poet Maureen Almond. Year 6 pupils from Corporation Road School will spend four days at the Museum working with the poet to develop creative writing skills and produce new work. It is hoped the work will be of sufficient quality to attract further funding to turn the poems into a short film as part of the 'First Light' sponsorship scheme.
26. **We'll Meet Again** - On Friday August 12 a show 'We'll Meet Again' to mark the end of WWII will be performed at 11.00 a.m. and 2.15 p.m. The show is hosted by ex ENSA performer Harry Herring and will feature songs and anecdotes from the war. The show has been run in partnership with Crown Street Library as part of the BBC 'Peoples War' project. It is hoped that the audience will then record their memories of the war. The memories of Darlington's residents will then be published in a booklet distributed by the library. Funding of over £7,000 has been secured for this project.
27. **WWII Time Trackers School Project** – fully booked, returns to the Museum. This ran from the 9 to 23 of May. A great success the 3-year project has now ended and we are investigating new ways to fund this project. Around 5,000 students have taken part in this project since its inception.

## ***Collections Activity***

28. **Donations** - During June the Museum received a donation of two Stockton and Darlington five-pound notes of the Jonathan Backhouse Company Bankers and Financiers of the Stockton to Darlington Railway. The notes are dated 1884 and 1887. As these are in good condition and framed, they will be put on display within our Temporary Exhibition area which currently displays the development of the Stockton and Darlington Railway.
29. **Renaissance in the Regions – ICT Hub** - Darlington Railway Museum now has 1,000 items on the MODES collection database, which have been fully updated and made ‘web ready’. It is planned to update these items onto the Single Point of Access (SPA) server during July for a period of evaluation. This evaluation process is likely to take two to three months to complete to ensure that the server and website are working correctly. When the ICT Hub are satisfied that visitors to the website will be able to access the information successfully, the SPA will go live allowing Darlington, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Stockton and Redcar and Cleveland collections to be accessed. More collection details will be added to the server when they have been updated. Links from the SPA to Darlington Railway Museum will increase the number of ‘hits’ to our site and should inevitably increase the profile of the Museum.
30. **Tubwell Row Collections** - Darlington Railway Museum has successfully acquired funding from NEMLAC for a Good Practice Grant for £2,056. This grant will enable the Museum to employ a temporary documentation assistant to catalogue the remaining items from the Tubwell Row Museum. After these items have been catalogued decisions can be made on the future of these items. This may be the formal accessioning into Darlington Railway Museum’s Collections, or the Transfer to other more relevant Museums if these items do not conform to our Collecting Policy. Racking is being purchased for McNay Street where the cataloguing will be carried out and it is hoped that this work will start during September (with the help of two volunteers) and be completed during November of this year.

**Councillor Lee Vasey  
Cabinet Member with Leisure Portfolio**