
OVERVIEW OF LEISURE PORTFOLIO

Purpose of Report

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

Social Inclusion

2. A series of half-day arts and leisure workshops were held in North Lodge Park during August. The programme consisted of break dancing, story telling, Tai Chi, Asian arts and crafts, mural/community artwork, junk music, cold clay, didgeridoo, face painting and poetry.
3. The work, which was held as part of the 'Transforming your Spaces' project was managed by the Arts Development Team. The aim of this project was to give local children the opportunity to access arts and sports activities in a local and safer environment.

Dolphin Centre Refurbishment

4. As part of the Dolphin Centre Refurbishment Scheme, the wet changing village re-opened on 7 August 2006. This area will now be permanently staffed to increase the level of customer service. The new changing village has been well received by the Dolphin Centre users.
5. Customers and user groups of the centre are being kept fully informed of progress and customer comments and suggestions are regularly reviewed as the scheme progresses. To assist this a series of short web-casts have been commissioned and two are now available on the Council website.

Arts Centre Refurbishment

6. The first phase of the Arts Centre refurbishment is almost complete. Within this phase of the works the Dance Studio has been upgraded to accommodate theatrical and dance performances. New backstage dressing rooms have been constructed and these are now fully accessible for disabled artists.
7. The second phase of the development is also underway, which will create a plaza area to accommodate outdoor performances and a new al fresco dining area. Also featured at the front of the building will be a piece of work from international sculptor Angela Conner.

8. The Council has also been successful in gaining an additional £160,000 grant from the Arts Council that will be used to improve customer facilities in the reception and foyer areas. Within the foyer area a new entrance to the theatre will be created and improved reception facilities, with enhanced bar and restaurant areas. Details of the additional works are in the process of being finalised.

Eastbourne Sports Complex

9. The Sports Development Team, working with partner Groundwork have secured funds to develop an outdoor climbing boulder on the Eastbourne Sports Complex site, near to the running track.
10. Planning permission has been granted with work planned to commence in Spring 2007. A small proportion of the funding has been granted to develop revenue based projects aimed at extending youth activities.

Stressholme Golf Club

11. Stressholme Golf Course has held a number of competitions during the summer months. On 26 July 2006, the Golf Foundation Age Group Championships attracted over 46 participants. The Club Championship held on 16 July 2006 attracted over 80 participants and the Durham County Salver, planned for 6 September 2006 is expected to attract 100-150 participants.

Sport and Physical Activity Development

London 2012 Roadshow

12. Leisure Services in partnership with Sport England and One North East brought the London 2012 road show to Darlington on 21 July 2006. The tour marks the beginning of the countdown to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games. The aim of the event was to ensure that local communities and businesses were informed of the preparations for the games.
13. The event was held in the market square with a range of sport and physical activity demonstrations. Particular activities included the Haughton Volleyball Club demonstrating beach volleyball held on a purpose-built court in the market place. Additionally the Tees Valley Youth Games Athletics team and The Get Everybody Motivated members of the Sportability Club from Beaumont Hill. The Prime Minister, accompanied by Richard Caborn, Minister for Sport and Olympic gold medallists, Jonathon Edwards and Mark Foster attended the event

Sport and Physical Activity Strategy

14. The second draft of the Sports and Physical Activity Strategy is being consulted upon. The consultation, via the Community Sports Network, has engaged a cross section of partners including representatives from the PCT, Sport England, the LSP, Tees Valley Sport, Education and the voluntary sector. The purpose of the strategy is to facilitate a cohesive approach to the development of sport and physical activity in Darlington with a view to increasing participation at all levels

15. In recognition of the strength of this work so far, Leisure Services have now secured funding of £69,776 over three years. The funding will be used to employ a full time Physical Activity Development Officer, who will deliver on key outcomes of the Sport and Physical Activity Development Strategy and support the Community Sports Network.

Lifestyle On Referral Scheme

16. Following a comprehensive review of Darlington's existing GP Referral scheme, Leisure Services are working in partnership with Darlington PCT and have received £30,000 of additional funding to enable the appointment of a new Lifestyles Co-ordinator.
17. The Lifestyles Co-ordinator will work alongside community and statutory partners to develop a broader menu of services for patients. The new services will also include community-based activity, and advice and guidance on such areas as weight management and smoking cessation, encouraging people to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Summer Activities Programme

18. The Leisure and Arts programme of activities has continued throughout the summer. There has been a range of activities including tennis, dance, athletics, multi activity camps, cricket, tag rugby festivals and the mobile skate park. The courses have been fully booked and there will be an extensive programme of activities for the October Half Term this year.
19. There is planned physical activity provision for Key Stage 3 & 4 EOTAS (Education Other Than At School) based at McMullen House and Gladstone Street, which will commence in September 2006. The aim of the project is to encourage young people to participate in further activities and to complete a junior or Community Sports Leaders Award.

Arts Development and Education Outreach

20. The Arts Centre has scheduled adult arts and craft courses, which will commence early September 2006 for 28 weeks. The courses offer opportunities to develop skills and interests within a variety of art forms.
21. This year there are 9 painting and drawing courses, 4 yoga courses, 3 tai chi courses, 4 ceramics courses, 4 writing courses, 5 textiles courses, 2 stained glass courses, 5 youth theatre courses, 2 arts and crafts courses and 2 youth dance courses

Education and Outreach Team

22. The Arts Team held a drama week called Fireside Stories during week commencing 7 August 2006 at the Arts Centre. The week of activities saw young people producing mini plays based on old stories such as The Fall of Icarus and The Emperor's New Clothes and included other activities such as singing, dancing and costume making.

Visual Arts

23. A two-day traditional photographic exhibition at the Arts Centre was held on 2/3 August 2006. Experienced photographer Louise Taylor demonstrated how to shoot photos and how to develop and print black and white prints in a darkroom.
24. The Myles Meehan Gallery is showcasing Census of Marine Life by Ørnulf Opdahl from 28 July 2006 – 9 September 2006. In June 2004 Ørnulf joined the Norwegian research ship G.O. Sars and set sail with scientists from 16 nations on a two month expedition to study the animal life inhabiting the mid-Atlantic Ridge, a sub-marine mountain range several thousand metres deep, between Iceland and the Azores. The exhibition of watercolours is Opdahl's response to the trip above and below the ocean.

Marketing and Sponsorship

25. The John Wade Group provided the Council with 40 tons of sand for the beach volleyball demonstration for Olympic 2012 on 21 July 2006.
26. Jewson's provided the Council with 5 tons of builders' sand to be used for sand sculptures at Darlington by the Sea held on 27 July 2006.
27. Cummins Engine Company Ltd and Roman Ltd sponsored 'The Bands in the Park' programme in July and August 2006.
28. Sherwoods sponsored the 10k Road Run which was held on Sunday, 13 August with water provided by Highland Spring.
29. The 26th Rhythm and Brews Festival commences on 14 September and will run until 17 September 2006. This year sponsorship has been received from Capita Symonds.
30. Sponsorship from Computers in Personnel, providers of the Council's HR software systems, has been received for the Darlington Employee Award event, which takes place towards the end of October 2006.
31. Darlington College confirmed that they will sponsor the Grange Road/Victoria Road roundabout. Their signs will be in place in September 2006 following college's relocation to Haughton Road.

Darlington Railway Centre and Museum

Events

32. Over the August Bank Holiday the museum held a one-day Teddy Bears Picnic event. The event has not been tried for a number of years and proved very popular with families this year. The museum received 182 visitors in the one day.
33. The museum is involved in preparations for, and will be participating in, the Railfest 2006 event on 23 – 24 September. Activities will be taking place at various locations throughout the region such as Bank Top Station, Locomotion and Weardale Railway to name a few.

Education and Access

34. Sarah Gouldsbrough has joined the museum as Museum Access Officer. Her role will be to promote the museum to a wider audience, planning and implementing events and activities to increase museum usage and for the development of the museum's formal educational activities.

Study Centre and Collections

35. The Study Centre continues to be popular, with a steady amount of enquiries and excellent feedback. Some publishers are seeking photographs from the collection at present, although family research is becoming popular again.
36. A new Documentation Assistant has started work in the Collections Department and she is working through the store rooms updating records for objects, digitising and repackaging them. We are seeking to dispose of items that do not fit in with the collecting policy and a list is being compiled of possible disposals. This will make room for the museum's many new acquisitions, including items from the late Geoff Jackson's collection. An interesting new acquisition is a commemorative pocket watch bearing an image of Locomotion No. 1, which will enhance the collection very well.

Councillor Lee Vasey
Cabinet Member with Leisure Portfolio