
OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND LEISURE PORTFOLIO

Purpose of Report

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

Events

Trolley Dance Film

2. On Sunday 3 February 2008 filming of the Trolley Dance project took place in the Darlington Market Square. The project challenges stereotypical attitudes towards older people and the three-minute film will be used as a promotional tool for GOLD. The Arts Development Team developed the project, with funding from Northern Film and Media, GOLD and in kind support from the Dolphin Centre and Sainbury's supermarket. This small project attracted significant media coverage on the television, radio and in the press.

Inspiring Internationalists

3. On Friday 1 and Saturday 2 February 2008 the renowned international artist, Maria Naidu delivered professional development workshops in the Mueller technique of dance. The workshops were delivered in the 'Studio' at Darlington Arts Centre; this was attended by dance professionals from the NE region. Developed in partnership with TVD and funded by the Arts Councils 'Inspiring Internationalist' initiative.

Heathfield Primary School and Hummersknott School and Language College

4. Following a successful bid for Awards for All, artists will take a short residence at Heathfield Primary School from January to July 2008. At Hummersknott School and Language College, the education and outreach team is supporting the staff and pupils to progress towards achieving Arts Award Bronze. This is an accredited course that offers young people the opportunity to explore and expand their knowledge from a variety of artforms.

ArtsSpark Update

5. Darlington Arts Centre has taken the lead on developing a North East Regional Network for Youth Theatre Leaders, working alongside the National Association of Youth Theatre to organise the first event. It is hoped that the network will provide opportunities for Youth Theatre Leaders and organisations throughout the region to share skills, discuss common issues, plan regional events, network and create opportunities for young people.

6. Darlington Arts Centre recently hosted a workshop organised as part of the Arts Council's national YPPT (Young People's Participatory Theatre) project. The aim of the workshop was to involve young people to consult with them on their views and ideas about youth theatre provision in their area.
7. Darlington Arts Centre is supporting local dance Artist Debbie Waistell to submit a proposal to the Big Dance project – a National Arts Council initiative. The proposed project will involve young people aged 5 to 25 to take part in dance activities, culminating in a performance as part of the Big Dance week, in July.
8. ArtsSpark Youth Theatre and Dance groups are continuing to expand in numbers, attracting more young people each week. Two of the Youth Theatre groups are now full to capacity, as well as our new Contemporary Dance class for 7-11 year olds. This is mainly due to the new marketing initiatives for ArtsSpark, and the improved structure of the classes.

Best of Darlington Awards – Friday 15 February 2008

9. This year's Best of Darlington Awards were held on Friday 15 February at the Darlington College, the main sponsors of this year's event. The event celebrates the best that the town has to offer both personally and for the communities in which they live and work.

Public Art

10. We have been working in collaboration with the Friends of Darlington Civic Theatre to commission an interior artwork at Darlington Civic Theatre to celebrate its centenary. Artist Jane Charles has presented her design, which has been accepted.

Marketing

11. December saw the launch of a new contemporary website that offers all the latest information on Cultural Services in Darlington. A new feature is that of online booking for performances at Darlington Civic Theatre and Arts Centre.
12. Additionally, the site contains all of the up-to-date timetables and prices for all of the leisure programmes, including classes, swimming pool and Under the Sea soft play area. There is detailed information online for booking rooms for any occasion and there is a comprehensive guide to Stressholme Golf Centre including hole-by-hole descriptions and competition results.

Record Breaking Pantomime

13. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs has been the theatre's most successful pantomime to date, with over 46,000 people seeing the show.

Sponsorship

14. Culture Awards - The Civic Theatre has been short listed for the 'Best Arts and Business ' Partnership category at the Journal Culture awards. The nomination is for the Theatre's business partnership with Blakett Hart and Pratt and specifically the Centenary Celebrations, which they supported. The awards evening takes place on Monday 31 March 2008.

Sports Development

Darlington Sports Development Coaches Forum

15. The third Darlington Sports Development Coaches Forum took place at Harrowgate Hill Primary School on Wednesday 6 February 2008. The theme of this event was based on 'High Quality' coaching and we were joined by Andy Grant (Durham) and Matt Williams (Tees Valley) who are coach consultants for Sports Coach UK. Over 20 of our casual coaches attended the event and were also advised of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities in the near future.

Darlington Community Games 2008

16. The Community Games date has been confirmed for Tuesday 22 July and 21 Primary Schools have entered the games this year. The target age group is now Year 3 and 4 and the children will participate in the following sports: football; tag rugby; mini tennis; athletics and cricket. All pupils will receive coaching before the games linked to local sports clubs and national governing bodies.

Darlington Sport and Physical Activity Strategy – Stage 2 applications submitted

17. The Sports Development Team submitted the Stage 1 bids to appoint development officers who will work on: a Club and Equality project, an Outdoor Activity Project, and the expansion of the Get Everybody Motivated Scheme. The final decision on funding will be made in mid March. All the bids were endorsed by the Darlington Community Sports Network and the Local Strategic Partnership.

Community Sports Coach Swimming Update

18. The new Darlington Swimming Community Sports Coach has made a real impact in such a short space of time and has already established the Darlington Swimming Action Group. Darlington Swimming Club have submitted Stage 1 of the Swim 21 bid and more children have joined the club in the past four months. The Diving Club has had an application for a new diving board accepted and a new induction pack is being produced for all swimmers joining the Swimming Club.

Easter Programme of Activities

19. A full comprehensive Easter programme of Activities has been planned with a range of sports available to children across the town. The activities include: Gymnastics; Trampolining; Star Track Athletics; Mobile Skate Park; Swimming and Tennis at a range of community venues in Darlington.

Longfield's Extended Schools Update

20. The Programme of activities for January and February have been extremely well attended with activities ranging from Snooker; Fencing; Bowling; Skiing; Trampolining; Gymnastics; Table Tennis and Badminton. Consultation has taken place in Longfield School and Harrowgate Hill and a full programme has been devised for after Easter with new activities including Horse Riding and Climbing. Three performance camps have been organised at February half term for Basketball, Gymnastics and Trampolining and are all fully booked.

Zone Active

21. Zone Active continues to develop and deliver physical activity and sport in the wards of Eastbourne, Park East and Lascelles. Many activities are being taken over by partners to ensure sustainability for residents to continue to access on a long-term scale. The good practice delivered by Zone Active over the past three years will continue and plans are being implemented to ensure support and access to some funding streams will be available to continue to engage residents in sport and physical activity.

GEM – Level 2 NVQ Accredited Course

22. The first pilot of the accredited GEM Leaders course started in January. The course has been accessed by 14 candidates, which consist of Warden Scheme Managers, care staff from Social Services, Leisure Staff and volunteers. The course is accredited to a Level 2 progression award with the Open College Network and is proving very successful.

Darlington Railway Centre and Museum

23. The majority of the museum refurbishments are now complete, and work is underway to ensure that the museum is re-branded and marketed effectively. Designers are currently at work editing the 'story line' text, and work is underway to update and improve the collections in the museum
24. Preparation for the official opening event is well underway which will take place on Saturday 5 April. The day will include the chance for visitors to see Tornado, a Locomotive built by A1 Trust using modern technology and equipment from the original designs. The restoration of the locomotive has been carried out over an 18-year project and is due to leave the Darlington site at end of April to run on the main line railway at Loughborough. The opening event will be covered by local, regional and national news, aiming to attract 500 people on the day.

Learning and Access

25. The creative movement and dance workshops for schools carried out in January and February have been fully booked and a great success, with participation of over 240 children in attendance. Steam Shed Theatre Company are at present delivering outreach project to young people in Darlington to put together a performance that will be delivered at the opening weekend. Renaissance in the Region Tees Valley has funded this project.

Public Health and Health Improvement

26. At the Cabinet meeting on 12 February, I presented the Darlington Borough Council Strategy to Improve Health. The strategy recognises the potential for health improvement the Council has via the services it delivers and the workforce. DBC is the largest public sector local employer. I am Chair of the DBC Health Improvement Group which will further develop the Action Plan and take the strategy forward.
27. A public awareness raising event was held in the Cornmill Shopping Centre last month to promote sexual health and raise awareness of the sexually transmitted infection, Chlamydia. The data for Q3 shows that Darlington had the highest uptake for screening.

Councillor Nick Wallis
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Leisure