
OVERVIEW OF LEISURE AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio.

Dolphin Centre Capital Programme – Release of Funds

2. Approval has been given to the release of funds within the capital programme for the replacement/refurbishment of Dolphin Centre mechanical and electrical installations as well as building refurbishment work; and to agree the procurement plan for the appointment of the main contractor to carry out the works.
3. The release of £2.7m for the mechanical and electrical project and £210,000 to cover the loss of income in the Dolphin Centre during the works will facilitate the necessary investment in the Dolphin Centre.

Healthy Darlington

4. During the period from 28 October 2014 to 23 January 2015 the Healthy Darlington Service has engaged 4170 residents. This has been facilitated through a diverse range of programmes, including the one to one consultations in the Healthy Darlington Hub at the Dolphin Centre, targeted older people's programmes, community based activity, vacation courses for children and support for community sports clubs.
5. Furthermore, the Healthy Darlington School Sport Partnership has also delivered a range of Key Stage 1 and 2 lunchtime and after school sessions, Healthy Lifestyle clubs and competition programme. 45 separate school sport festivals are delivered annually with recent highlights in February/March including Tees Valley Tennis finals at the Dolphin Centre, Tees Valley Girls Football finals at Longfield School and Darlington Primary Schools Swimming Galas at the Dolphin Centre, where every primary school in the Borough participated.
6. Since 28 October 2014, 430 clients have engaged with dedicated one to one consultations to support positive lifestyle changes through the Healthy Darlington Hub with a 68 per cent retention rate after 12 weeks. Clients are being drawn from all over the Borough. In terms of the demographic spread, 60 per cent of clients were male, and 40 per cent were female, with ages ranging from 14 to 80 years old. 7.7 per cent were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, and 19 per cent reported having a disability. 60 per cent were referred or signposted to the service by a medical practitioner and 40 per cent were 'walk-in' clients, half of whom had heard of the service through word of mouth from existing service users.

7. In addition to the face to face work with clients, the Healthy Darlington Hub team also carry out outreach work with those in the community who require additional support. Groups who receive outreach support include: Age UK Darlington; Darlington Probation Service; Integrated Offender Management Unit; 700 Club; MIND Darlington; Exercise After Stroke Group; Cardiac Rehabilitation Group; schools and colleges. 30 staff from the Housing and Lifeline services attended training over three sessions to give them the skills to deliver brief health interventions and refer on to other existing services.

Sport England #ThisGirlCan

8. On 8 March 2015 a free event, in support of This Girl Can and International Women's Day, was held in the Dolphin Centre. The day was aimed at all women and girls aged 14 plus and focused on giving them a positive experience in sport. The women participated in a wide range of taster sessions such as Netball, Trampolining, Squashercise and much more. Swimfit was also available to try in the pool and there was free access to the gym and pool all day. Many women also visited the Healthy Darlington Hub for a free mini health check, which included their Height, Weight, BMI and Blood Pressure. Over the course of the day around 150 women took advantage of the activities on offer. A follow up exercise is now ongoing to retain as many of these women as possible in regular health and fitness through local clubs, structured sessions and informal participation.
9. Darlington's programme was showcased as a model of good practice at Sport England's annual convention in Nottingham from 16 to 17 March.

GO Run for Fun, Eastbourne Sports Complex

10. On 10 February 2015 over 300 children from 18 Darlington primary schools took part in the first Go Run for Fun event of the year, aiming to inspire children to be active and fully supporting Darlington's aim of getting the young people of Darlington moving more. The Eastbourne Sports Complex event was launched by Olympic athlete Perri Shakes-Drayton, Blue Peter presenter, Barney Harwood and English Fell Running champion, Victoria Wilkinson and was broadcast on Blue Peter in early April.

Swimfit

11. Chris Cook, a double Commonwealth Champion and Olympic finalist from Newcastle, visited the Dolphin Centre on 27 February 2015 to mark the official launch of the Swim Fit programme in Darlington. Swim Fit sessions involve participants trying a variety of swimming regimes detailed in poolside exercise cards. Since the Team introduced the programme last month it has engaged over 100 new participants.

Darlington Civic Theatre

12. A Family Open Weekend was held at the theatre at the end of February. Activities on offer included a craft workshop based on the 'Of Fish and Actors' theme, competitions, tours and Highly Sprung presented its show Travelling Treasury,

which takes place in a beautiful bespoke caravan. It was a free event and all available places were taken up.

13. This season has included some very strong dramas, including 'The Business of Murder' and 'Birdsong' which have been very well received. The Civic Theatre is a partner in the Touring Consortium whose latest production 'A View from the Bridge' was at the theatre week commencing 16 March 2015. The productions were accompanied by high quality audience development activities, funded by Arts Council England.
14. There is a young reporter's programme where young people have the opportunity to report on a range of topics connected to the show and their work is then published on Theatrecloud, an online resource. Young people from Darlington College are participating in this scheme. Special partnerships have been developed with local secondary schools, where pupils visit the theatre to see the show and also receive a workshop in school and a page to stage workshop in the theatre delivered by the theatre company. A captioned performance is available as well as two audio described performances for visually impaired audience members. Volunteer ambassadors have been working with the theatre to target new audiences for the show from within their contacts and Darlington for Culture has partnered the theatre in this scheme. Ambassadors were taken to Nottingham to see the production by the theatre company, so they could see it before it came to Darlington. The next consortium production will be 'Brave New World' in the Autumn.
15. The new theatre brochure for Spring/Summer has been produced and was available from early April. A very strong programme is on offer, including the popular annual pantomime which this year is Cinderella and stars Ashleigh and Pudsey the dog, winners of Britain's Got Talent.

Developing Finance for the Arts

16. Equal Arts, working with Age UK, have identified care homes in Darlington that are interested in participating in their HenPower initiative and were offered a Developing Finance for Arts Activity award to develop creative programme in Darlington in 2014/15 which will help move this forward. Equal Arts launched the HenPower initiative, which has secured significant funding through Big Lottery, in 2012. Equal Arts HenPower project is among the case studies demonstrating how loneliness and isolation can be successfully tackled with group-based interventions.
17. Darlington Jazz Club staged the Darlington Jazz Festival 2014 with support from a Developing Finance for the Arts award and have recently secured a Grants for the Arts offer from Arts Council England for the Darlington Jazz Festival 2015 and have approached Creative Darlington for additional finance.
18. Darlington based Hilarity Bites! has received the final payment of its award for delivery of Darlington Comedy Festival 2014, which incorporated a variety of events, including free activity, across Darlington and secured a variety of sponsorship.

Audience Development

19. Creative Darlington is supporting Durham Music Service in developing a Grants for the Arts application to bring the full Hallé Orchestra to Darlington in 2016/17 to work with local schools and to perform at The Dolphin Centre. In addition to various arts organisations, public bodies and schools sponsorship is expected to support this project, which should build audiences for and engagement with classical music in Darlington.
20. Creative Darlington is supporting Darlington for Culture in marketing and promoting Darlington Arts Festival 2015 and providing a budget to support market stall provision within the Arts Showcase event in the 'Borough Road Cultural Quarter' on 10 May 2015. We have programmed exhibitions in the 2015 Arts Festival programme. Creative Darlington's networking has also brought an Equal Arts event aimed at providing peer support and professional development for artists working with older people to the Bridge Centre for Visual Arts and a Creative Employment Programme event to the Darlington Campus of Teesside University as part of the 2015 Arts Festival.
21. Creative Darlington has supported the development of the Jabberwocky Markets in Darlington since October 2013 by committing match finance to Battersea Arts Centre's successful application to Arts Council England for strategic touring programme support initially, and by awarding this finance to Luxi Ltd who co-ordinate the Jabberwocky Markets. The Spring 2015 Jabberwocky Market programme ran from 26 March to 29 March. Involvement in the Battersea Arts Centre led network is helping to build Darlington's reputation as a place with an appetite for high quality and accessible arts practice.

Crown Street Art Gallery

22. There have been 54,595 visits to the gallery from opening in May 2012 to 17 March 2015. The Daphne Stitt Transposition exhibition included the screening of three different films exploring imperial and colonial relations in art and natural history as 18th century Britain encountered Australia. It was accompanied by a Meet the Artist and Film Screening event on 4 March 2014 and secured positive comments including '*as good as anything at BALTIC or Tate*'.

Darlington Sherwoods Vauxhall 10km Launch

23. This year will be the 28th year of the Darlington 10k Road Run and it was launched in the town centre on 14 March 2015. The event has been established as one of the best races in the region and has just been awarded Gold Grade by BARR (British Association of Road Races). The race attracts 1500+ athletes and last year included Commonwealth Games 10,000m runner Kate Avery. The principal sponsor Sherwood's had their Vauxhall vehicle display on Joseph Pease Place along with The Northern Echo (media partner) giving away a free bottle of water with every paper sold. The paper also contained a £2 discount entry for the 10K. Runners can also enter online.

Darlington Junior 3k Race

24. This year sees the reintroduction of the Junior 3km run supported by Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group (DCCG) who will sponsor the junior race for the next five years. The race is open to 8-14 year olds and will include a comprehensive schools programme during the summer term to engage Key Stage 2 and 3 children particularly.
25. The run will be delivered by the Events team in partnership with Darlington Move More team and supported extensively by the School Games Organiser. The Move More team will work alongside the local schools, clubs and community groups to increase participation at the event. They will promote the Junior Run throughout the year and offer affordable recreational community based family activity sessions leading up to the run in various venues throughout the town. Sessions both during and after school will also be co-ordinated by the School Games Organiser throughout the year. This will ensure the event will have a more targeted and co-ordinated approach.

Town Centre Events

26. On 14 March there was a hive of sports activity in the Market Square to encourage visitors to have a go at something new including Darlington Storm Basketball Club, Tri Golf, Health and Fitness classes and Darlington Martial Arts Academy.
27. On 21 March a Jazz quartet performed around the town centre including Skinnergate, Bondgate, Northgate and High Row.

Markets

28. Events are being planned to promote Love Your Local Market fortnight (13-27 May) to link in with the national celebration programme. This will include work alongside Darlington Sunday People's Market and our Saturday/ Monday Market Traders.

Author Visit

29. A well-known and sought after author Chris Bradford paid a visit to Hurworth School and ran an additional performance in Crown Street Library for pupils from St Augustine's Primary School. Chris brought with him his samurai sword and impressed the children with his tales of ninjas and bodyguard work. Many children went away with a signed copy of one of his books.

World Book Week

30. In addition to the numerous events and activities during World Book Day, mentioned in the last report, the Catholic Schools Partnership held a book festival in Crown Street Library to celebrate World Book Day. Year 7 pupils from a range of schools dressed up as their favourite book character, performed scenes from their much loved books and won prizes for the best book jacket drawn. Storyteller Gary Cordingley paid a visit and thrilled the pupils with his 'Postcard from Africa' workshop. The Library also had a visit from pupils from Beaumont Hill Academy who listened to Gary tell stories using the library's multi-sensory Bag Books.

31. Chris Lloyd held a second author talk promoting his new book 'Darlington in 100 Days' on the evening of World Book Day, his first talk being over-subscribed in February.
32. Darlington Age UK Ukulele Group, who recently formed, performed for the first time in the Library in front of dozens of visitors whom voluntarily participated in the singing.

Read Regional Library Event

33. As part of the Read Regional Festival, Cockerton Library held a book reading event on 17 March 2015 for adults from upcoming authors Lauren Owen and Robert Williams. Both authors have fantastic reviews for their books and as well as sharing thoughts about their books and the writing process, they also answered questions from audience members.

World Poetry Day Celebrations

34. To celebrate World Poetry Day, rap and performance poet Donovan Christopher was invited to Darlington Library on 18 March, 2015. Donovan worked with three different classes during the day and shared poems from his 'Rapperman' books. Donovan teaches about respect and equality through his rap poems and the pupils loved him. Local Storyteller Elizabeth Baker visited the Library during Shakespeare Week to share poems and stories from William Shakespeare.

The Centre for Local Studies

35. The Centre for Local Studies is continuing the Commemoration of World War I and working with the Durham County Record Office on the 'Durham at War, Discovering Darlington's War' project. The first of a series of workshops has been held with volunteers starting research projects on various aspects of life in Darlington during the Great War. The Centre also put together a popular display relating to the Darlington munitions workers at the North Road Works, which resulted in a two-page spread in the Northern Echo's 'Echo Memories' supplement.
36. During March, the Centre for Local Studies was pleased to be able to show an exhibition about the Bishop's Manor House at Feethams and show some of the finds from the archaeological dig. Niall Hammond, who put the exhibition together, gave a talk on 24 March 2015 in the library to an enthusiastic crowd.

Museum Exhibitions

37. A selection of railway posters and carriage prints by one of Britain's finest railway poster artists Frank Henry Mason went on display at the Museum on 21 March and will remain on display until 31 May 2015.
38. On 27 February 2015 the Museum hosted the Annual Conservation Advisory Network conference. The event saw 40 museum and conservation professionals visit the Museum site to learn about conservation and access.

2025

39. Support from Durham County Council, Stockton Borough Council and the National Railway Museum for the project has been gained and all parties have agreed to progress and commission three pieces of work:

- (a) Audit of Stockton and Darlington track bed
- (b) Artefacts and collections
- (c) Available event infrastructure

A press conference to launch the joint working went well and the project received coverage in local press and radio.

Heritage Campus

40. Extensive community consultation was undertaken from August to October last year. The consultation was to gather ideas on how we can make the most of our unique railway history in Darlington. Over 200 people responded through the consultation with over 420 ideas. These have been assessed and seven thematic groups for the vision have now been put in place:

- (a) The story of Darlington
- (b) Global Significance
- (c) A Living Museum
- (d) The Right Connections
- (e) Boosting the Economy
- (f) Something for Everyone
- (g) Working Together

41. These broad themes were accepted by the Railway Heritage Group. The draft vision is being drafted ready for consultation in June before formal adoption, which is expected in September 2015.

Revised Weekly Collection Service

42. Members will be aware that on 6 October 2014, a revised weekly collection service was brought in for the collection of domestic waste and recycling materials throughout the Borough. This service has now settled down and the number of enquiries received by Darlington Borough Council in relation to the service has dropped significantly. We will continue to educate those residents still struggling to come to terms with the new service.

Street Cleansing

43. The end of year local environmental quality results in relation to street cleansing is now known. Over the course of 12 months, inspections at various Wards across the Borough have been compiled and as a result the Council gets an overall result on an annual basis. For the 2014/15 financial year the Council has achieved a 6 per cent failure rate. This means that only six streets out of every 100 inspected failed to reach the required standard of cleanliness. This result is the same as the

2013/14 financial year, and with all the changes made to services and reductions in resources available this is a remarkable achievement by all the teams involved.

Grounds Maintenance

44. All works scheduled for the winter period of 2014/15 have now been completed. Grass cutting operations started week commencing 30 March. Due to a reduction in resources available, the team has adopted a zonal approach to servicing throughout the town, whilst a separate 'rural' team will service all the outlying communities.

Winter Maintenance

45. As the 2014/15 winter maintenance season comes to an end, to date there has been no significant disruption to the road network as a result of inclement weather.

Councillor Nick Wallis
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