
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.

Release of Capital

2. Funding has been released from the Capital MTFP to undertake essential works within cemeteries and for the replacement of street lighting columns within St. Cuthbert's Churchyard and Stanhope Green.
3. £80,000 will be released for works within the cemeteries; and £23,000 for the replacement lighting columns.

Planning for the future of Railway Heritage in Darlington

4. We have approved a proposal to develop and deliver a vision for the future of railway heritage in Darlington and to undertake a comprehensive public engagement and consultation process that will underpin this vision.
5. In order to recognise the importance of railway and industrial heritage in Darlington, there is a need to create a vision and action plan to secure a sustainable future for not only the Head of Steam Museum but the wider physical and cultural asset.
6. Whilst the vision is being developed, an application for World Heritage Status will be made to help put the railway heritage of the town on a global footing. The first stage in gaining World Heritage Status is the nomination of the sites and assets onto the National Tentative List which is currently being update.

Civic Theatre Restoration Update

7. Progress on the restoration project for the Civic Theatre and Heritage Lottery Fund application continues and Officers continue to work with colleagues at the Heritage Lottery Fund with the project receiving extremely positive feedback to date and the Heritage Lottery Fund Board being very support of the application.
8. The total project cost is estimated to be £8.242m and the funding is planned from the HLF grant, fundraising and the restoration levy.

Land at former Eastbourne School – Residential Development and Investment in Eastbourne Sports Complex

9. We have given approval to further develop land at the former Eastbourne School and to utilise the receipt from sales of the land to invest in replacing/refurbishing the complex and associated facilities.
10. Eastbourne Sports Complex is the Council's main outdoor sports facility providing multi-purpose space and changing facilities and is integral to delivering on priorities within the Sports and Physical Activity Strategy.
11. The expected receipt from the sale of the land is circa £1.6 m and would generate approximately £200,000 per annum in council tax and new homes bonus for the Council when fully developed.

Xplorer and Run Challenge

12. Xplorer, which is a fun based family Orienteering activity, was extremely popular over the Easter holidays. We had 70 participants, adults and children, which surpassed our targets and there is more planned for the future. Sessions were delivered at South Park and West Park. Run Challenge started on 4 June 2014, which was a fun orienteering based race for adults. Runs were planned from various community venues across the town.

Foundation Sessions

13. Foundation sessions for disabled adults have grown in numbers from 10 to 15 participants per week with potential to further develop. As a result of its success more sessions at Lakeside Lodge started in June aimed at getting adults out into the South Park to take part in physical activity.

Badminton, Table Tennis and Back to Netball

14. Badminton, Pilates and Table Tennis sessions based at Kings Church are underway as drop-in sessions aimed at targeting new participants as part of the Active Darlington Project.
15. Back to Netball is a 10 week initiative to encourage women from all ages and backgrounds to get back involved in the sport. It is a one hour a week programme, which develops and increases women's physical activity and has had a really positive response with women from across the Borough turning up each week to get involved.

Run In Darlington and Rounders

16. New programmes are underway across Darlington to engage all abilities of runners and gives participants the opportunity to run with a group of people for fitness and enjoyment. The team has also worked with Rounders England, securing a small grant to establish opportunities for families to engage in this sport. We have recently trained eight participants on a rounder's activators course which will give them the skills, knowledge and equipment to deliver Rounders in local parks and to families.

Overall Statistics – Active Darlington Project

17. So far the team have engaged 474 participants on the Active Darlington project, well ahead of the Sport England target. This is a fantastic achievement in such a short space of time. 370 participants have been the target age group of 14 plus and the ages range from 7 year old to 74. 45 per cent of these participants are female and 55 per cent are male. 38 of the participants are from an ethnic background and 30 have a disability.
18. So far the team have delivered 391 sessions with an average contact time of 11 hours per participant. The throughput so far is 2449 visits.

Walking Month in MAY

19. Sports Development has celebrated walking month in May. An editorial has gone out in the Darlington Together magazine resulting in increased public enquiries. Additional Nordic walking tasters took place each Wednesday in May and promotion of Janice Chapman's (volunteer walk leader) case study has promoted her Wednesday walks. This article has created interest in the walks scheme. Nordic walking continues to be popular; four sessions took place each week and were close to capacity throughout the week.

Cycle in Darlington

20. The Summer cycle rides are in full swing and are well attended. The Back on Your Bike rides aimed at reintroducing people into cycling are seeing regular attendance for the eight week block of sessions. These riders will be signposted to the weekly sessions upon completion on the back on your bike sessions. Cycle in Darlington is linking with the Festival of Thrift in September.

Holiday MAYhem

21. The half term activities programme took place on the week commencing 26 May (excluding Monday). The Holiday MAYhem information was circulated through Communications and sent out to the Schools. The School Games team circulated the leaflets through their events.

#The Zone

22. #TheZone runs every Friday Night at the Dolphin Centre and targets young people aged 11-17, operating from 7pm-9pm. Various activities are available each week for a cost of £2.. Since the start date of 17 January, #TheZone has engaged over 500 individuals with a current regular attendance of 150+ per week. This has proved a real youth engagement exercise with Mick Button from Darlington Police now keen to support further development.

Exercise after Stroke

23. The Exercise after Stroke rehabilitation scheme is based at Eastbourne Sports Complex on Wednesday and Friday afternoons, and on Mondays at the Dolphin Centre. Funding has just been awarded to run the Scheme for another year. Sessions are accessed initially by a direct referral and additional sessions have been added to ensure ongoing progressions for those completing the 12 weeks referral. The Scheme has received 50 referrals to date.

Future Champions

24. The Tees Valley Sport (TVS) Future Champions scheme is growing in Darlington. In the most recent round of applications Darlington had the highest representation of young athletes out of any of the Local Authority areas
25. We are currently working with TVS to build on this success to continue to raise the profile of the scheme in Darlington in order to celebrate and support our elite young athletes.

Slimming World on Referral

26. The scheme continues to grow and feedback from referrers has been very positive. So far we have processed 197 referrals since 1 April. We are awaiting feedback from Slimming World on the total numbers who have redeemed the vouchers and completed the course.
27. Slimming World is accredited by the Royal College of Midwives as being appropriate for women who are overweight during pregnancy and breastfeeding, so this year we have amended the contract to include these women, which has been welcomed by Darlington's Community Midwives.

Maternal Health Programme

28. Due to the success of the Fit Mamas programme (run by Groundworks with support from the Council's Sports Development) and the Post-natal Pilates class, we are planning to develop a broader programme of activity for pregnant women and new Mums.

29. We are running an L3 Exercise and Pregnancy course in-house training in July for eight of our delivery staff and we have started making preliminary plans to set up a second Fit Mamas session, along with additional fitness and aqua-aerobics classes at the Dolphin Centre.

Primary Swimming Galas

30. The School Sport Partnership, working alongside Darlington Amateur Swimming Club, held their annual primary swimming galas with the small schools competing on 19 March and large schools on 26 March. The events were hosted at the Dolphin Centre and in total we had 352 competitors over the two days from 22 primary schools including five children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) who competed in the newly added disability races for 2014. In the small schools competition Holy Family, St Augustine's and St Bede's were first, second and third respectively. In the large schools the top three were Abbey, Harrowgate Hill and Mowden.

Primary School Games Day

31. Fourteen primary schools attended the Primary School Games Day at Eastbourne Sports Complex on 2 April 2014. Schools had the option to bring teams for tri-golf, mini-hockey and rounders. Eight teams entered the tri-golf skills festival, 11 teams entered the mini-hockey and seven teams entered the rounders. In total we engaged 273 primary children and we had vital support from 25 young leaders representing Longfield School and St Aidan's who helped the running of events.

Primary Orienteering

32. The rearranged Primary Orienteering festival took place on 26th March at Eastbourne Sports Complex. We had 96 competitors from Holy Family, Northwood, St John's, Springfield, Skerne Park, Rydal Academy, St Augustine's and Reid Street Schools. Cleveland Orienteering Club helped with the running of the event on the day. 62 competitors were male with the remaining 34 female and the overall winning school was Springfield with St Augustine's in second place followed by Cockerton. Team results were based on top three runners in each team.

Quadkids Athletics

33. The School Sport Partnership organised and delivered three fantastic Quadkids Cluster events at Eastbourne Sports Complex on 19, 20 and 21 May. The event is designed for year 3 and 4 primary pupils who compete in a 50 metres sprint, 400metres howler throw and standing long jump.
34. Across the three days we had an amazing 24 out of 28 schools in the Borough compete totalling 416 competitors. The top two teams from each day were invited to the Quadkids final on 13 June at Eastbourne Sports Complex. The teams invited were Mowden, Abbey, West Park, Cockerton, Heighington and St George's. The

three events had the privilege of some fantastic leaders from St Aidan's school who recorded distances and times on the day.

Darlington Civic Theatre Spring Season

35. A new theatre company, The Reduced Height Theatre Company, visited the Civic Theatre with the classic comedy See How They Run. The Company was established by Warwick Davies to provide opportunities for actors with dwarfism. The show was very well received and 80 people also attended a post-show talk led by Warwick and the whole company which gave a fascinating insight into how the show was created and the challenges of life on tour for the company.
36. One night shows continue to sell strongly at the Theatre, with The Simon and Garfunkel Story; Suggs, My Life Story in Words and Music; Jane MacDonald; Pam Ayres; and Stars of Strictly Come Dancing all selling in excess of 750 seats.
37. The Civic Theatre hosted a number of events as part of the Jabberwocky Market an ACE funded festival of small scale theatre organised in Darlington by LUXI who are North-East based producers. Events at the Theatre included a rehearsed reading by a Darlington based company Matthew & Stan of a new play, Dear Mister Kaiser, and an installation on the stage of 97 Years by artist Jo Hellier which was an evocative exploration through live audio and video of the experience of ageing.
38. An announcement has been made nationally concerning the next production to be presented in Darlington by the National Touring Group, which brought Eternal Love to Darlington in March. In April 2015, the Civic Theatre will be presenting the Royal Shakespeare Company's acclaimed Jacobean comedy A Mad World My Masters. The production will be accompanied by an extensive audience development programme made possible by the Arts Council.

Audience Development at the Civic Theatre

39. On 29 March the Theatre's ArtsSpark Contemporary Dance group took part in a local dance platform competition called Pulse, part of UDance 2014, at Stockton's Arc with another 11 groups from across the Tees Valley. They were one of only two groups chosen to go through to the regional final. Following this on 6 April, the group took part in the Regional Final of Pulse at Dance City, Newcastle with ten other groups from across the North East. On 27 May young people from this group were also invited to take part in another Regional Dance Platform event at Stockton's Riverside College, alongside eleven groups from across the region.
40. A number of theatre tours have taken place, including for Girl Guides, Richmond Women's Institute and Dimensions. A charity ghost hunt was also held in the Theatre in aid of St Theresa's Hospice.

Creative Darlington – Maximising Strategic Arts Assets

41. Creative Darlington has agreed to support Darlington for Culture in commissioning research and development of efficient systems, to collect annual subscription fees and in introducing a new member's benefits package and developing the commercial aspects of its website, which will help to sustain their organisation.

Creative Darlington – Developing Finance for the Arts

42. Creative Darlington offered awards to Darlington Community Carnival, Darlington Jazz Festival, Flying Cloud Theatre Company and Julie Ward (to promote arts activity in Darlington within the Durham Women Rising campaign) in April 2014, and to Darlington Dance Festival Association and Hilarity Bites! in May 2014. For every £1 allocated from the strategic arts budget to date to Develop Finance for Arts Activity in Darlington approximately £3 additional finance has been secured from other sources, primarily fundraising, then sponsorship and philanthropic support.

Arts Festivals 2014

43. The Festival of Thrift 2013 received the Journal Culture Award for the best event in the Tees Valley at a ceremony at The Sage Gateshead this Spring. This is the first time a Darlington festival has secured a Journal Culture Award. Darlington Arts Festival 2014 has been very popular, including Darlington Jazz Festival and a literature festival.
44. The strategic arts budget supported promotion of the festival, which is led by Darlington for Culture and enabled specific activity to be staged within Darlington Arts Festival 2014 programme (the Jabberwocky Market, which included performances at Darlington Civic Theatre and Voodoo Café and the Art Lending Library).
45. The Art Lending Library opened at Crown Street Library following a parade through Darlington Town Centre on 3 May 2014 including music from Cockerton Silver Band. The Art Lending Library offered over 50 pieces of original artwork to loan to Darlington residents, organisations and businesses, with local households, Skerne Park Academy and The Bridge Centre for Visual Arts borrowing work. A programme of events accompanied the Art Lending Library and volunteers helped to steward the exhibition and to deliver works which were going out on loan. Darlington Community Carnival received support from the strategic arts budget to stage activity in June 2014. Darlington Comedy Festival and Darlington Dance Festival will be supported through the strategic arts budget during July 2014.

Crown Street Art Gallery

46. The Art Lending Library exhibition closed on 5 June 2014 and the next exhibition, 'Mapped Out' by Helen Winthorpe-Kendrick, opened on 7 June 2014. This was followed by an exhibition of work from the Borough Art Collection and by local artist

John Longstaff (a.k.a. cartoonist Cluff of the Northern Echo), which included original drawings, paintings and cartoons.

47. The strategic arts budget has also been asked to support the exhibition of work within the new waiting area and the corridor to interview rooms within the Town Hall. It is hoped new spaces for the exhibition of artwork will be established by the end of July 2014. New display areas would enable exhibitions by local artists and groups (e.g. the Community Arts Project, the OpenArt Studio) and from the Borough Art Collection.

Arts Activity in Darlington Town Centre

48. Navigator North opened a new Art Space in an empty shop on 8 High Row and staged activity over the weekends of 17 and 18 May and 24 and 25 May 2014 as part of an ongoing partnership with East Street Arts. With support from the strategic arts budget Navigator North invited Salford Zine Library to exhibit a selection of their collection of over 1400 artist zines and creative self-published works to Darlington and to lead participatory activity.
49. A Darlington zine was produced on the first day, after which a limited edition of 50 was printed and given away to visitors on subsequent exhibition days. A copy of the Darlington zine has since been accepted into the Salford Zine collection. During the second weekend, zine maker and artist Mike Duckett ran a 'Collaborative Typewriting' workshop. 207 people visited the exhibition within the space, as well as over 40 people taking part in the zine making and collaborative typewriter activities over the four days.

Vintage Vehicle Rally

50. A very successful Vintage Vehicle Rally was held at the Head of Steam Museum on 18 May 2014. The event attracted 133 vintage and commercial vehicles from across the North East and Yorkshire regions and over 1600 visitors and exhibitors attended to enjoy a family day out which included for the first time vintage stalls to compliment the event.

Darlington Jazz Festival

51. On 27 April 2014 the Head of Steam hosted one of the Jazz Festival events for the first time and attracted a new audience to the venue. Darlington Jazz Club received funding from Jazz North's initiative to take music to an unusual setting which they chose the museum; they located performances in a marquee in front of the museum and on the museum bridge, both proved a success and it is proposed that it will return in 2015.

Big Curry Cook Off

52. On 10 May 2014 the Army organised a curry cook off in the Market Square for a second year with support from the events team. The event consisted of cookery demonstrations and a public voting on three regiment curry dishes, military bands and family attractions. Despite heavy shower spells throughout the day, the event was well attended and the Army Benevolent Fund raised over £1,000 for charity.

Libraries

53. The Centre for Local Studies had a very popular display of photographs and other items relating to Patons and Baldwins in February, with 3 special open days which attracted over 300 people. The installation will be exhibited at September's Festival of Thrift.
54. Local Studies have completed a programme of work for the Tees Valley World War One (WW1) exhibition. Many items from Centre for Local Studies collection have been selected and used for this part of the project and staff have been working on this project for almost a year now. The exhibition will be at the library in January and February 2015 and we will have events and displays to go with it.

Head of Steam Exhibitions

55. 'Freepass' an exhibition by textile artist Catherine Howard, opened on 8 April (and runs until 27 July). Catherine has organised a number of talks, workshops and events to accompany the exhibition.

Schools

56. The schools programme engaged more than 400 children during March/April and continued with a range of workshops during the summer term, which included Creative Writing, WW1, WW2 and working with the Local Motion and Sustainable Travel teams for Junior Travel Rangers.

Outreach and Community Groups

57. We are working with The Links (who provide services for adults with physical and learning disabilities) to host regular weekly sessions for a group of its users. Activities include looking for things around the museum and developing personal and social skills. We provide a space for them and art activities once a month. They use our refreshment facilities. The group are going to help us look after some of our plants on the station platforms.

Tees Valley WW1

58. Work continues to plan more outreach in the Town and on the exhibition and performance later this year.

North East Railways in WW1

59. We have started our outreach events and have held a number already:

- 24th March – Centre for Local Studies at Crown Street Library
- 9th April – St Mark's Church, North Road
- 7th May – Age UK Veterans Café
- 15th May – Cockerton Library
- 29th May – Clayport Library, Durham
- 3-5th June – Market Square, Darlington
- 16th July – Indoor market, Darlington
- 5th August – St John's Church, Darlington
- 13th August – GOLD Tea Dance

60. Alongside this project, we will be creating a field of poppies for the museum, with the aim of making 2236 poppies – one for each of the men of the North Eastern Railway who was killed on active service during WW1.

Darlington Markets

61. Love Your Local Market was a fortnight's celebration of our local market scene and culture that took place in May. Alongside this event Distinct Darlington hosted Darlington's Food Festival a celebration of fine food and drink in an outdoor setting providing a showcase for local restaurateurs and producers.

62. The Markets Team are busy organising the annual Darlington Summer Market. Darlington's Town Centre will be bustling with the sights and sounds of busy market life as the award-winning Summer Market opens for business this August. Market stalls from all over the world will take part in the event selling a wide-range of gifts and produce. Live music and entertainment promise to add to the family fun throughout the event.

63. Darlington Markets Traders Retail Association has been re-established within the Covered Market and a new Committee has been selected - Kevin Bland as Chairman and Robin Blair as Vice Chair. The first joint meeting was held on 5 June 2014.

64. Darlington Sunday People's Market is still as popular as ever giving the residents and visitors something different from the normal Saturday and Monday market.

Refuse

65. We continue to prepare for the forthcoming revised weekly collection service commencing in October of this year, the particular focus at present being the Communications Plan to ensure residents are made fully aware of the requirements of the new service.

Street Cleansing

66. There has been no significant change in street cleansing services of late. The latest local environmental quality surveys indicate only a low percentage of roads failing to reach the required standard.

Grounds Maintenance

67. Heavy rainfall and recent warm weather are providing excellent growing conditions, hampering grass cutting operations at present. All available resources are being allocated to this service and it is envisaged that grass cutting will be 'caught up' very soon.

Countryside

68. Working with Groundwork North East, the Countryside Team have recently been successful in obtaining grant funding from NESTA for increased community and business involvement in parks.
69. Durham Wildlife Trust (DWT) is now undertaking education through schools on the Council's behalf on environmental issues. This is a partnership arrangement between the DWT and the Council.

Nursery

70. Woodburn Nursery continues to provide flowers for local authorities the length of the Country. This year's Tour de France is to start in Hawes, North Yorkshire and at the start, flowers provided by Woodburn Nursery will be prevalent in press coverage.

Fitting Shop

71. Members will be aware that services recently transferred to Allington Way from the former Vicarage Road site. Part of the transfer meant relocating the Fitting Shop. By doing so and upgrading the facilities available, we are now in a position to commence Hackney Carriage and Private Hire taxi testing and MOTs. It is also envisaged that the service will be able to undertake MOTs for members of the public.

Councillor Nick Wallis
Cabinet Member with Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio