
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.

Eastbourne Sports Complex – The Home of the Darlington School Games

2. The past academic year has been one of real progress for School Sport in Darlington with a vast range of competitions and festivals established at the Eastbourne Sports Complex site.
3. The range of multi-sport events throughout the year has include the Primary and Secondary School Games Days, the Change for Life Celebration event, the Sportsability Festival, the Primary and Secondary Athletics events, the Quadkids Athletics Festivals and Primary Cross Country.
4. The Sports Complex has also hosted several Tees Valley (Level 3) events on the site, namely Mini-Hockey, Girls' Football and Quadkids Athletics. These competitions are prestigious county level competitions with representatives from Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Stockton, Redcar and Cleveland, Eston and of course Darlington. Overall there have been 4250 young people from Darlington who have used the sports complex site and 250 from the wider Tees Valley area. The age range of the participants is 5 to 16 years.

Active Darlington Project

5. Darlington Sports Development Team has engaged 596 participants to date as part of the Sport England funded Active Darlington. This represents great progress since its introduction in February. 406 participants have been engaged to date. The gender split is 50/50 with 38 of the participants from BME groups and 30 participants who have a disability.
6. So far the team have delivered 739 sessions with an average contact time of eleven hours per participant. The project is well on its way to achieving the 2000 new participants that are targeted over a three-year period.
7. Strong partnership work with clubs, national governing bodies and the local community groups in Darlington has been the foundation for this development. Participants can be tracked throughout the programme to help measure impact.

parkrun

8. parkrun was successfully launched in Darlington on 15 December 2012 with the support of the Sports Development Team and Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group, and is proving a real success story. Initially launched in Bushy Park, Greater London, in 2004, parkrun is a national initiative which offers runners of all abilities the opportunity to undertake a free, weekly, timed 5K run around a pre-determined course.
9. parkruns take place at 9am every Saturday morning in over 260 parks across the Country, and Darlington's parkrun takes place in the South Park, starting beside the Clock Tower Bowling Green.
10. Runners are asked to register on the parkrun website, which maintains a log of their parkrun activity, and participants can be rewarded for achieving key milestones, with T-shirts, trainers, etc. provided by parkrun's main sponsors.
11. Events in Darlington are now starting to regularly attract over 150 entrants each week, and 2,482 different runners have now participated since the launch on 15 December 2012, with all events co-ordinated by a team of volunteers. More information on the Darlington South Park parkrun can be found at www.parkrun.org.uk/darlingtonsouthpark

Race for Life

12. On 8 June, 2014 over 3,000 females participated in this year's Race for Life in aid of Cancer Research held in the South Park. Local running clubs, traffic management, stewards and Council events staff provide Cancer Research with numerous volunteers to enable the event to take place.

Community Carnival

13. This year's Community Carnival held on 28 June 2014, celebrated its 32nd year, and was based on the theme Dancing in the Streets and attracted well over 400 participants from local schools and dance schools, voluntary organisations and professional street performers.
14. The parade route, which was changed this year to attract more spectators, started in the Market Square and finished at Stanhope Park where there were lots of family activities, as well as the Forum Music Stage and a record number of charity stalls raising money for good causes.

Darlington by the Sea

15. Darlington by the Sea was held on 7 July and was also a celebration of all things active. The Change for Life Roadshow came into Town thanks to the partnership that has been developed by Sports Development and Public Health. This represented a coup for the Town given it only visited ten places throughout the UK

during the summer and the majority of those locations were cities.

16. The Sports Development team put on a wide range of interactive sport related activities throughout the Town, stretching for the main hub of the Market Square along High Row and West Row down to Joseph Pease Place. Young people could try their hand at Street Swords, Table Tennis, Basketball, Tri Golf and much more.
17. Change for Life had Disney themed interactive activities, which included rowing and bike simulators and a Disney themed Frozen Dance session. Change for Life had over 1500 entries to their area, great success all round. Distinct Darlington continued the theme for an additional 13 days.

Darlington Dance Festival

18. Following the success of the Dance Festival over the past four years the Darlington Dance Festival Association (formed in 2012 to help secure external funding) held its Mass Dance on 12 July in the Market Square along with professional performances.
19. Approximately 600 dancers performed the mass dance which was choreographed by Darrien Wright and Debbie Waistell. Hundreds of spectators gathered round the arena to enjoy an afternoon of dance and workshops in the sunshine.

Our Big Gig

20. Following the tremendous success of last year's Big Gig in South Park, which was jointly organised by Durham Music Services and the Events team, it was decided to support a similar event in 2014 that would be predominately performed by young people.
21. Hundreds attended a sunny afternoon of musical entertainment on 12 July which included Darlington Little Big Band, South Regional Youth Wind Band, Darlington Youth Choir and Hurworth School Choir.

Sherwood's Darlington 10km Road Run

22. Celebrating its 27th year, the Sherwood's Darlington 10km Road Run which was held on 10 August, has gone from strength to strength and this year was no exception. Although a 'no entry on the day policy' was implemented a few years ago to help streamline the event, the 10km race still reaches its full capacity and because of this, the race capacity for 2014 had been increased. This year we had an additional 300 entrants from 2013, a total of 1,750. In addition we had over 150 take part in the Family Fun Run, open to all ages including pushchairs.
23. The race was a resounding success for the organisers, sponsors and runners who had nothing but praise for their experience, whether it had been their first time running or regulars returning.
24. The race is growing in stature around the running community, so much so that we had a Commonwealth Games competitor enter, Kate Avery, who finished fourth in

the 10,000M at Glasgow 2014. Kate smashed the Darlington 10K female course record finishing first and 6th overall. Wondiye Fikre Indelbu returned to win for a second consecutive year in the Men's Race.

25. Our social media coverage has played a pivotal role in growing the event throughout the year. Photographs and messages of the build up to the start, the start itself, during the race and through to crossing the finish line were posted on Facebook and Twitter generating a buzz of communication.

Fancy a Tea Dance

26. The Annual Tea Dance, held in the Market Square on 13 August to help launch the Summer Markets Spectacular, attracted over 500 people on a sunny afternoon.
27. The event jointly organised by GOLD and the Events team provided musical entertainment throughout the afternoon by the Mini Dance Orchestra and a vast range of stalls provided informative information to those attending. Free cream teas were provided courtesy of local businesses.

Creative Darlington - Maximising Strategic Arts Assets

28. Creative Darlington awarded support to Humantics CIC to review its policies, staff structure, financial systems and to support its business planning. Creative Darlington expects to receive a copy of its revised business plan, developed with support from Acumen Trust, shortly.
29. Creative Darlington awarded support to OddManOut, an emerging theatre company which supports writing with a director, Scott Young, resident in Darlington. The award will enable OddManOut to adopt a formal structure, develop its profile, networks and engagement with potential sponsors and to build its capacity to develop finance through other routes than Lottery applications.
30. Creative Darlington awarded support to Darlington for Culture to introduce a new members' benefits package and develop the commercial aspects of its website, which will help to sustain the organisation. Darlington for Culture has developed a brief and will commission services to take this work forward.

Creative Darlington – Developing Finance for the Arts

31. Several groups, artists and arts organisations that have received Developing Finance for Arts Activity in Darlington support through Creative Darlington are either developing projects or have staged activity in Darlington with our support. Darlington Community Carnival worked with carnival arts specialists, Darlington Jazz Festival promoted development opportunities for young musicians, Flying Cloud Theatre Company staged intergenerational workshops with Darlington groups (a primary school and an ex-forces group), Darlington Dance Festival Association staged participatory dance activity and Hilarity Bites! programmed over 13 hours of free comedy in accessible venues across Darlington as part of

Darlington Comedy Festival in July 2014.

32. Susie Stephens will share work from her Retracing Routledge project in Darlington through an exhibition and a groups of artists are developing the Durham Women's Voices projects in Darlington and County Durham, and will share work produced through performances in Darlington, dates to be confirmed.
33. To date recipients of Creative Darlington support have secured approximately £3 additional finance for their activity from every £1 awarded by Creative Darlington. Creative Darlington has introduced deadlines to apply for support through this scheme in 2014/15.

Arts Festivals 2014

34. Creative Darlington has supported Darlington Jazz Festival, Darlington Arts Festival, Darlington Community Carnival, Darlington Dance Festival and Darlington Comedy Festival in 2014 so far. Creative Darlington has also committed financial support to enable Darlington schools, artists and arts organisations to engage in the Festival of Thrift 2014 and to support the promotion of Darlington's cultural offer through this festival. Creative Darlington worked with Marchday to develop its successful Lottery application which secured Grants for the Arts support for the arts programme within this year's festival.

The Bridge Centre for Visual Arts

35. The Bridge Centre for Visual Arts celebrated its second birthday with an art fair on 9 August. The weather assisted celebrations and visitors enjoyed live music from local musicians, a large 'Arts' cake commissioned from Darlington College, an arts and crafts fair and the newly paved garden area. The event was planned and organised by the Bridge Centre for Visual Arts organisation. Volunteers have worked tirelessly in sprucing up and planting the existing gardens and arranging potted plants in the newly paved garden area.

Darlington Civic Theatre

36. On 1 July, Arts Council England announced that Theatre Hullabaloo had been awarded £1.5M at Stage 1 of its Capital Programme, to create a child-centred theatre development on the site of the former fire station next to the Civic Theatre. This will include a 150 seat theatre, family café, creative play spaces and will be an office and creative base for Theatre Hullabaloo, who are currently located at the Quaker Meeting House following the closure of the Arts Centre.
37. This will be of national significance as it will be the only development of its kind north of London. This award was made possible by the Council's commitment to the project, including the use of proceeds from the sale of the Arts Centre to secure the site. The Hullabaloon will be an artistic and operational partnership between Theatre Hullabaloo and the Civic Theatre and will also be a resource for community arts activity.

38. The Civic Theatre is dark through August for maintenance, following a successful Summer season. Audiences particularly enjoyed the opportunity to see 'The Play That Goes Wrong' a new comedy, direct from the West End and a first visit to Darlington by The Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company. During its week here the Company also delivered a pre-show talk on Gilbert & Sullivan and its connections to Darlington and also performed in the Market Square for Distinct Darlington's VIP OAP event. Other particularly successful shows included 'An Evening with Sir Ranulph Fiennes', Darlington Comedy Festival Gala, which was in aid of four local charities and A Last Night of the Proms Special marking the 100th anniversary of World War 1. This was the first of a number of special commemorative presentations this year, which will include Michael Morpurgo's 'Private Peaceful' and a new adaptation of Pat Barker's 'Regeneration'.

Audience Development at the Civic Theatre

39. On 7 June the Civic Theatre hosted the North East Regional Youth Theatre Festival. This event for youth theatres across the North East was planned and delivered by young people from the theatre's ArtsSpark youth theatre group and was attended by over 100 young people.
40. On 24 June the annual ArtsSpark Showcase took place at the Civic Theatre, where young people from the youth theatre and dance groups run by the theatre shared work they had created in their classes over the year. With funding from the North East Children's Theatre Consortium, the Civic Theatre has commissioned artist Sam Zuppari to create a family feedback board for families to tell us what they think about their visit to the theatre. It depicts the Fish 'n' Actors train which brought both fish and theatrical productions by train to Bank Top at the beginning of the 20th century and some of the colourful characters from the Theatre's past.
41. The Friends of Darlington Civic Theatre have generously funded a new radio frequency hearing system for the Theatre auditorium, which provides an induction loop for use with hearing aids as well as headsets that can enhance hearing and can be used for audio described productions. This replaces an outdated system that was no longer providing the best possible experience for audience members.

New Market Trader Campaign

42. Market trade is more difficult at the beginning of the calendar year, so the Council introduced a marketing campaign devised to encourage new traders to contribute to the already varied stalls in time for Spring/Summer. The campaign aimed to raise the profile of Darlington Markets and encourage a wide range of trader types to the markets at a more difficult time of year. The eight-week marketing campaign ran from 1 April, to coincide with the launch of the Market Events Leaflet 2014, through to 26 May, during the weekend event 'Love Your Local Market', which attracted even more new traders to Darlington. Part of the campaign aimed to promote space for hire to car dealerships in Darlington. This was a success, welcoming two car dealerships (Evans Halshaw and S G Petch) to this year's Summer Market for four days.

43. The campaign was delivered through social media, radio advertising and marketing in various publications and was successful in bringing an additional four traders to the general Saturday and Monday Markets. We have received more market stall enquiries for both the outdoor market and indoor market and a higher profile on social media. The general outdoor market is now at full capacity and there is demand for more gazebos to allow for additional traders.

Heritage Campus Engagement

44. Throughout September and into October a comprehensive public engagement process has been developed to gather people's views on the future of Railway Heritage in Darlington. With the unique, globally significant, assets at the centre of this around the Railway Museum this engagement seeks to highlight the associated assets in Darlington that tell the story of the birth of railways and the early stages of the industrial revolution.

45. Alongside existing events where officers will be present to take views and explain the emerging concepts there will be a number of dedicated events to raise awareness and celebrate Darlington's rich heritage. A music, food and drink festival is planned for the 11 October where the public can find out more and share their vision for the Heritage Campus.

Little Foffano's Deli

46. A taste of the continent can now be found in Darlington Market after the new Italian deli opened its doors last month (July 2014). Freshly made lasagne, homemade bread, and authentic Italian desserts are just some of the delicacies on offer at Little Foffano's Deli.

47. The deli is run by Stefano and Emma Foffano, the husband-and-wife team behind Foffano's, a popular Italian restaurant in Darlington market square. Also on offer are products sourced directly from Italy, as well as pasta sauces made at the restaurant using locally sourced ingredients. The deli, which has taken the place of a florist's in the covered market, was officially opened by Darlington's Mayor and Mayoress, Gerald and Ruth Lee.

Revised Weekly Collection

48. As Members will be aware, changes to refuse and recycling collections will be implemented from week commencing 6 October 2014. These changes will save the Council approximately £400,000 per annum. Residents will have received either an additional bin or box depending on which scheme they are on, and information with regard to the new service and a calendar informing them of which day and week to place out refuse and recycling.

Green Flag

49. Both South Park and West Cemetery were once again successful in retaining the National Green Flag Award that they were the best parks and green spaces in the Country.

Love Where You Live

50. Love Where You Live is a campaign by Keep Britain Tidy that the Council has adopted as part of the litter and grounds maintenance project. I will be launching Love Where You Live Darlington later this year which aims to encourage people in Darlington to
- (a) Love Where They Live
 - (b) Take pride in the town and their locality
 - (c) Drop less litter
 - (d) Volunteer and get involved in projects which support these values
51. As part of the launch the Council will commit to a Love Where You Live pledge asking residents to also pledge to show that they love where they live.
52. The key for the next twelve months for the litter and grounds maintenance project is to encourage more residents to become involved in caring for their environment, whether that is through litter picking, helping out in their local park or adopting a neglected piece of land. This way, by working together, we can improve the environment where we all live with reducing resources.

Street Champions

53. The database of Street Champions continues to increase and currently stands at 362. More importantly however, there are now more 'active' Street Champions who are not only taking part in organised events, but are doing litter picks in their own immediate communities. It is estimated this number to be in excess of 50 and rising steadily.

Friends Groups

54. The 17 'Friends' Groups for open spaces and parks continue to progress and grow with new members becoming involved.

Schools and Groups (Scouts, Beavers, Brownies and Guides)

55. Equipment is available for groups and schools to carry out litter picks, as well as work with them to raise awareness around 'green issues'. Prior to the end of term several schools attended South Park for full days using the Education Centre as a learning centre and spending time in the Park to undertake environmental awareness lessons and the importance of working to a 'green agenda' at KS2 (primary). Ravensdale Beaver Group carried out a litter pick on 5 September.

Litter Free Durham and Darlington

56. This was a huge success with over 105 litter picks taking place in County Durham and Darlington. Over 2,033 people took part as well as schools, community organisations, Council staff and EA staff. In all, 1,386 bags of litter were collected and three tonnes of rubbish was taken from the River Skerne and River Weir as part of the river cleanse.

Joint Working/External Groups

57. Officers are working with other organisations, local artists and community groups to promote recycling, litter awareness and environmental best practice including Durham Wildlife Trust, Groundwork Borth East, Scrap StudioArts, Rejig Sewing, High Grow Darlington, Evolution, Darlington Beekeepers and Friends of the Earth.

Winter Maintenance

58. As we are now in Autumn moving towards Winter, the Council's team of maintenance staff will be on call from 6 October throughout the Winter providing gritting and ploughing services as needed. This is an extremely important and valuable service that I know is appreciated by Members and residents.

Councillor Nick Wallis
Cabinet Member with Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio