
DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Bill Dixon, Leader

Responsible Director - Ada Burns, Chief Executive

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise Members of the Council of the forthcoming significant date in the development of the Borough of Darlington, and the proposals to mark this event.

Summary

2. On 13 September 1867, Queen Victoria granted Darlington a Charter of Incorporation. This is the foundation date for the Corporation of the Borough of Darlington, and enabled the election of members and the appointment of a Mayor for the first time. It was a very significant step in the development of local governance in the town and the establishment of decision making by locally elected representatives. More importantly the petitioning for Royal Incorporation signalled the ambition of business and residents to see their town grow and prosper.
3. In 1967 the Centenary was celebrated with exhibitions, competitions, and community events to mark the evolution of the town. Events included a 'modern industrial exhibition', which served a dual purpose of attracting inward investment and companies, who are still present in Darlington today, exhibited. At the same time there were schools public speaking competitions and sports days.
4. The town and its administration has changed significantly since 1867, and in fact 2017 also marks 20 years since Darlington became a Unitary Council, assuming once again, responsibility for all local government services including social care and education.
5. It is proposed that the Borough should once again mark this event, but in keeping with our Corporate Objectives, should do this in ways that celebrate the achievements and ambitions of business, the community and the partnerships that are in place.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that :-

- (a) Members note the forthcoming 150th Anniversary of the Charter of Incorporation of Darlington Borough Council.
- (b) Comment on the proposals for events to mark and celebrate the development of the Borough since 1867.

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-

- (a) The anniversary is a significant event in the development of Darlington as a town and distinct and important economy and worthy of recognition.
- (b) As a growing Borough it is important that Darlington takes opportunities to inform and engage with communities and with business.
- (c) The Council plays an important role in providing services and advocating on behalf of the Borough, and this should be marked.

**Ada Burns
Chief Executive**

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

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| S17 Crime and Disorder | There are no issues in relation to Crime and Disorder. |
| Health and Well Being | There are no issues in relation to Health and Wellbeing. |
| Sustainability | There are no issues in relation to Sustainability |
| Diversity | There are no issues relating to Diversity. |
| Wards Affected | All Wards |
| Groups Affected | All persons connected with Darlington. |
| Budget and Policy Framework | This report does not affect the budget or policy framework. |
| Key Decision | This is not a key decision. |
| Urgent Decision | This is not an urgent decision. |
| One Darlington: Perfectly Placed | This report does not adversely impact on the Strategy. |
| Efficiency | This report does not have any direct impact on efficiency. |

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. On 13 September 1867, Darlington was granted a Charter of Incorporation by Queen Victoria. The Charter established the Corporation of the Borough of Darlington, and thereby enabled the election of members and the appointment of a Mayor. It was a very significant step in the reform of local governance in the town and the establishment of decision making in the town by locally elected representatives.
9. Before 1867 the town was under the control of the Palatinate powers of the Bishop of Durham and then from 1836, the Board of Health. As local government developed in other towns the pressure locally for change grew. Some townsfolk campaigned for change, arguing that the Board of Health, was not representative of wider views. A public enquiry subsequently found overwhelming support for the petition for a Charter of Incorporation.
10. The first election of Councillors was held on 3 December 1867. The first Council comprised a Mayor, Six Aldermen and 18 Councillors. There were 6 wards (Central, North, South, East, West and North West), with each ward having 3 Councillors. Interestingly, subsequent elections were held annually for a third of the total number of Councillors to be elected.
11. In September this year it will be 150 years since the granting of the Charter. Working with the Local Studies staff, the Durham Archives, Darlington Partnership and the Northern Echo, Officers have developed ideas to mark the Charter

anniversary, but more importantly, to celebrate the growth of the town, its economy and partnerships.

12. It is proposed to align these within the Darlington Partnership Festival of Ingenuity, scheduled to take place over the weekend of 22 and 23 September 2017.

13. For example the following activities are being planned at present:

- (a) Establishing a clear timeline detailing significant events during the past 150 years in Darlington and how life has changed with materials to help illustrate the story (photos, videos, documents, statistics, etc.)
- (b) Creating a display containing items gathered which will be launched at the Festival of Ingenuity and then moved to a venue for subsequent months.
- (c) Local history talks and walks to be offered.
- (d) Using materials already gathered, creating a short video to provide a summary of the past 150 years.
- (e) A two page article in the September edition of One Darlington
- (f) Using interesting / quirky facts from the past 150 years to create a heritage treasure hunt throughout the town centre in partnership with town centre retailers and businesses.
- (g) Working with schools and colleges to explore ways to engage children in thinking about the history and the future of Darlington, potentially including photography, essay writing or debates.
- (h) A thank-you tea with the Mayor for residents who have contributed, through their volunteering efforts, to the well-being of the borough and its residents.

Financial Implications

14. There are no direct financial implications of what is proposed. The Festival of Ingenuity is funded through sponsorship and Partnership Funds and other activities can be progressed through core budgets.

Consultation

15. There has been no specific consultation in the production of this report.