

COUNCIL
18 JULY 2019

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.

Highway Maintenance Programme

2. Highway Maintenance Schemes ongoing:
 - (a) Denmark Street and Wales Street Back Lane – resurfacing.
3. Highway Maintenance Scheme due to start:
 - (a) Micro-Asphalt Programme: Carriageway surfacing - 103 sites.
 - (b) C38 Elstob Lane. Viewley Hill Farm to Carr House: Carriageway reconstruction and resurfacing.
 - (c) C52 Yarm Road (Oak Tree Roundabout) Middleton St George: Carriageway resurfacing.
 - (d) A167 North Road. Whessoe Road to Westmoreland Street: Carriageway retexturing.
 - (e) C39 School Aycliffe Lane. The Chestnuts to boundary (DCC): Carriageway reconstruction and resurfacing.
 - (f) A167 Grange Road (Commercial Area - Victoria Road to Coniscliffe Road). Carriageway reconstruction and resurfacing.

Highway Improvement Schemes

4. Yarm Road/McMullen Road roundabout – works complete. Additional lane designation signs were erected in June 2019 to assist drivers in choosing the correct lanes.
5. Lingfield Way/Yarm Road traffic signalled controlled junction and construction is programmed to start in July 2019 and will be complete by the end of November 2019.
6. Works on an improvement scheme to change the B6279 Tornado Way throughabout to a conventional roundabout will commence in September 2019.
7. Highways England completed a scheme to provide a third lane approach to the A66 Morton Palms in April 2019. This has significantly improved access onto and across the A66.

Car Parking Charges

8. I have been reviewing charges and car parking statistics alongside officers and will be presenting my findings to Cabinet in due course.

Sports Development

In2 Project

9. The project has now started and is targeted initially at Corporation Road and Longfield Schools working with a small cohort of pupils. The aim of the project is to raise aspirations for the young people, improve their confidence, self-esteem, mental health and gain important life skills. So far activities have included; theatre productions, trips to Hamsterley Forest, Junior Kitchen and in school activities. It is hoped if successful the project will be rolled out to other Wards and schools in the town.

Events Management

All Square Event: 19-20 April

10. The All Square Festival returned for the second year, moving from the first Bank Holiday Monday in May to April. The music event ran over three days offering a different concept on each day, music Bongo Bingo related night on Thursday, Friday was a Club land organised event, Tribute acts on the Saturday and a dance music feel on the Sunday. For its second outing the event was a success, the group plan to do it again next year, possibly moving back to the May Bank Holiday.

Award Winning Food and Drink Festival and Jazz Festival: 3–6 May

11. Thousands flocked to the second Food and Drink Festival over the May Bank Holiday weekend which included the Jazz Festival, enhancing the entertainment offer for the weekend. Food demonstrations were complement with food and drink stalls, children's entertainment, street theatre and Jazz performance during the daytime and evening. The event was heralded a success and will be repeated on the same weekend in 2020.

Mass Dance – Sunday 19 May

12. Over 600 participants from local schools, dance schools and community groups took part in this year's Mass Dance themed 'This is me' challenging inequality. The dance was choreographed for the first time by the Seniors from Red Hall Dance Group. Professional entertainers performed during the event entertaining the dancers and the public.

June/July Events

13. The following events took place in June and July:
 - (a) Round 50 Cycle Ride: 2 June
 - (b) Pease Pudding Market: 6 June and 4 July. This is a recurring event which is held on the first Thursday of the month through to October.
 - (c) VIP Event for the older generation: 7 June
 - (d) Race for Life, South Park: 9 June
 - (e) The Great Get Together, South Park: 23 June
 - (f) Armed Forces Day: 25 June
 - (g) Proms in the Park: 30 June
 - (h) Day Time Pride: 6 July

(i) Darlington 70 mile cycle Ride: 7 July

Darlington Hippodrome

14. Archive week took place at Darlington Hippodrome week commencing 3 June with a special open day for the public on 6 June. Members of the public had the opportunity to engage with artefacts and ephemera from the theatre's archive collection. The Heritage Learning and Engagement Officer (HLEO) was available to talk members of the public through the artefacts and to answer questions, 125 people attended on the day. Darlington for Culture archive volunteers worked with the HLEO throughout the week to select items for the open day and to further develop the cataloguing of theatre posters.
15. The Hippodrome ran a series of events in May and June inviting audiences to participate in and experience a different offer from the main theatre show programme. From Quiz Nights to Gin and Jazz, to a Murder Mystery Night and a Family Open Day, all proved to be extremely successful with feedback from attendees that they would like more of this type of event in the future.
16. The Hippodrome had a successful week of performances when 'Joseph' ran from 21 May to 25 May. 4,953 people attended ten performances of the much-loved musical. There was a peak in secondary spend in the bars and cafes and a lot of positive feedback was received from audience members.

Visual Art

17. 1,576 visits were made to The Unseen Beautiful exhibition which ran from 18 May 2019 to 29 May 2019. The exhibition followed a call out for people to submit an image of Darlington which they felt captured the beauty of the place in April 2019. Over 700 images were received before the deadline and 695 exhibited in the exhibition, alongside commissioned photographs of Darlington by Lens Think professional photographer, Joanne Coates. People were asked to vote for their favourite image and 358 votes in total were received. Luke Piper's photograph won the public vote and he has been offered a workshop with Joanne followed by a solo exhibition at Darlington Town Hall in spring 2020.
18. 3,120 visits were made to the 'Beyond Graduation' exhibition which ran from Saturday 6 April 2019 to Wednesday 15 May 2019 in the gallery at Darlington Library and brought together work from graduates of the BA and MA Fine Art courses from Teesside University from 2007 to 2018.

Creative Darlington – Outreach and Arts Development Activity

19. The Trace Lines printmaking programme exploring local heritage and encouraging community engagement in Darlington, led by Adrian Moule and supported by Darlington Borough Council and Arts Council England, included activity during Darlington Libraries Local History Month in May 2019. Sessions have also taken place in Darlington Markets, Darlington Town Centre and Cockerton, in addition to a number of Darlington primary schools.
20. A free historical walking tour of part of the Stockton and Darlington Railway Line, organised by the Heritage on Track programme led by Darlington Borough Council, took place on the afternoon of Thursday 21 May 2019, setting off from the Head of

Steam Railway museum with a train ride to Dinsdale Station and a walk back, it was fully booked and well received. The event has been documented by film as part of the project.

Head of Steam

21. In May the museum had 332 school users, up more than 100 on the same time last year. At the time of writing, 372 are booked for June with 35 booked so far for July.
22. In May, volunteers gave 146 hours of their time to help with events, collections and public engagement at the museum.
23. The museum is currently holding two new exhibitions; Play and Display: Paper and Card Toys from 8 June until 1 September and The Moon exhibition from 15 June to 26 August.
24. The museum held its annual Vintage Vehicle Rally on 19 May, which was the most successful to date with 183 vehicles and 2124 visitors.

Libraries

25. We are going to take time to review proposals for Crown Street Library and the Library Service and will be presenting information and reports to Scrutiny, Cabinet and Council later this year.
26. Darlington Library is working alongside schools as part of a new programme from the National Literacy Trust. The programme is targeting children due to start school and aims to help improve parental engagement and literacy development. Everyone Ready for School is currently being trialled in Darlington with ten settings currently signed up and a further seven settings joining the project in 2020.
27. The Library has started a monthly Lego Club for children who are home educated. This is in addition to the well-attended weekly Lego Clubs at Crown Street and Cockerton Libraries.
28. May was Local History Month in the Centre for Local Studies. A wide-ranging programme was put together to promote the Centre, engage local people and encouraging them to be inspired by local history. Over 600 people visited the Centre during May, with another 350 attending a series of talks and special events. Local History Month talks included the Rememorial WW1 talk and workshop by Dr Ben Roberts of Teesside University, The Pease Family's Industrial Empire by Dr Dorothy Hamilton and Patons and Baldwins: Wonder Factory by Chris Lloyd of the Northern Echo.

Garden Waste

29. Members will be aware that the Council introduced a new Garden Waste collection service in April of this year. At the time of writing, approximately 4,250 residents have taken up the option of subscribing to the service. Very few issues have been experienced and the implementation went smoothly.

Grounds Maintenance

30. All planned works, pruning shrubs, etc., were successfully completed during the winter period. Grass cutting teams have now commenced regular cycles and aim to get around the Borough within 15 working days.
31. Summer judging for Northumbria in Bloom has taken place for the 'Best Town Centre' category, as well for a number of 'Special' awards; The Buddhist Centre, Tapas Bar, and Hash in the town centre, and Eastbourne Park and the Head of Steam Railway Museum.
32. During the summer, as part of an ongoing programme to carry out a range of improvements, up to 40 trees will be placed around the town centre.

Winter Maintenance

33. The 2018/19 winter period concluded at the end of April, although the winter did not provide any extreme, inclement weather. The Council gritted the roads on 189 occasions throughout the period using a total of 3,155 tonnes of rock salt.

Councillor Paul Howell
Cabinet Member with Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio