



Cabinet Member Report for Community Engagement

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 21 September 2015

Partnership & Communities **Councillor Community Fund**

65 grants have been made from the Councillor Community Fund since April. At the end of August the total amount awarded was £22,956.00, providing support to a wide range of local voluntary organisations and local projects.

Community Grants

During the grant year 2014/15, 21 local organisations were successful in applying for funding, and a total amount of £55,518 was awarded for this period. For the current grant year 2015/16, to date a total amount of £12,000 has been awarded to 4 local organisations from the £50,000 pot. The Community Grants panel continue to meet on a quarterly basis to discuss and consider all applications.

Our Place

The National Our Place programme has now been completed, with NBC receiving sign-off for the work it has undertaken through this funded project. The project has enabled NBC to produce, develop and deliver a realistic and achievable Operational Plan for developing 8 of the boroughs community centres in partnership with their management committees. The plan is to further utilise this approach in the development of the other 13 community centres.

Events

Alive at Delapre was a success with over 15,000 visitors attending the event.

Throughout August and part of September the beach was again in the market square for the 4th year running, attracting positive feedback from those attending. The Air ambulance service held two awareness days in this period and the local PCSO's hosted a property marking day. The heritage bus was parked on the market on Friday 11th September to promote the heritage trail.

Culture & Heritage

July saw the opening of 'Beastly Machines' with lots of interactive activities for all the family at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery. The exhibition features a menagerie of moving animals by Derbyshire based sculptor Johnny White and is proving very popular with young children and adults alike.

Visitors to the museum continued to enjoy 'Love in the Time of the Italian Baroque' and 'For the Love of Venice' and during the month two events were linked to the Italian exhibitions – the first, a Life Drawing Master Class led by renowned local artist, Chris Fiddes.

The second an 'An Evening of Wine & Opera' started with wine tasting provided by the Wine Connection team in The Derngate followed by popular arias sung by rising opera star, Francesca Stevens. The event sold out. The 31st July saw the preview night of Northampton Museums & Art Gallery's 150th exhibition which was attended by over 150

guests who enjoyed music by local folk band 'The Kings Gambit', looking round the exhibition and a glass of wine sponsored by Aspers Casino. The exhibition is proving popular with both young and old, many of them recognising 'Alfie' from the days of Gordon Scott's shoe shop in Abington Street. Finally, 'Stitching Magic' opened in September and showcases work by members of the Northamptonshire Branch of the Embroiderers' Guild.

There was something for children of all ages at the summer holiday workshops at Abington Park Museum including two sold out events - Bug Hunts and a Teddy Bears' Picnic for the youngest along with Art from Nature workshops. Beastly Machines, Heraldic Shields, Leather Stamping, Archaeology and Elephant Workshops all took place at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery. Families enjoyed the Medieval Mayhem theme day at Abington Park Museum which featured living history demonstrations, falconry displays and archery along with craft activities.

A third Shoe Making workshop in August with Hetty Rose again sold out and more workshops are planned for 2016.

During July 17,045 footwear photographs were taken of around 2,273 pairs of shoes for the Virtually Shoes project funded by The Arts Council England. A total of 85,664 photographs of footwear have been taken to date.

During July and August four talks were researched and delivered by volunteers working on the Conflict & Community project which is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Further talks are planned in September. The project will also see volunteers deliver WW1 outreach session to libraries and other venues over the summer holidays.

August saw the first in a series of talks entitled 'Object in Focus' which explores objects from the collection in more detail. Further talks are planned between September and November.

July saw volunteers offering 554 hours of their time to various projects and events at the Museum. The Virtual Shoe project funded by the Arts Council England commenced in April and 377.5 hours were completed by volunteers assisting with the photography of the shoes during July.

Looking forward, 'Whose Round is it?' looks at the part the brewing industry has played in a town that still has over 70 pubs and will see the staff at the museum brew a 'Museum bitter' under the expert tuition of staff at Phipps Brewery.

Finally, July year to date visits to both museums are 12% above target and the highest for over 3 years.

Customer Services

Customer Services are working alongside Benefits, NPH and our Housing and Wellbeing Team on the plan for the introduction of Universal credit ensuring support is on hand to support claimants with this change.

We are pleased to announce a partnership with Barclays Digital Eagles. A series of drop in sessions and in-depth classroom sessions have been made available and started during August. The Digital Eagles are offering practical advice on using computers and the internet. Trainers have been on hand for everyone who attends. The Digital Eagles have already been trained on NBC, LGSS and NPH website's and will also be helping people navigate these websites and online services. The sessions have got off to a flying start with several very satisfied clients including one happy client in his eighties now able to get

online to use email, social media, Skype and much more. Mr Wright who lives alone is now planning on using his new skills to contact old friends and make video calls with relatives in America and Australia.

From August The Sunflower Centre moved their Face to Face appointments into the OSS supporting victims of domestic abuse in an easy accessible, comfortable and private environment.

Councillor Brandon Eldred
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement