



Cabinet Member Report for Community Engagement

Northampton Borough Council

18th April, 2016

Councillor Community Fund

Since the beginning of May 2015, a total of £71,544 has been spent. This totals just over 50% of the overall allocation for the year (2015/16). The unspent funding will be carried over, into the new financial year.

Partnership Support

42 applications have been received for the Partnership Grant for 2016/17. The grants total £1.25 million. There are applications from 12 new organisations. The grant panel have met to assess the applications and organisations will find out if they have been successful or not this month.

Community Centres

Annual reviews with each of the community centres are in the process of being carried out. The Our Place programme continues, as a way to prioritise the support that is offered to the centres. Focussing on pulling together local stakeholders and developing a set of action plans, highlighting improvements to the centre, including activities that are influenced by the community. The following centres will be prioritised for support; Briar Hill, Bellinge, Semilong/ Aliston Gardens, Kings Heath and Spencer/Dallington.

Events

The council has provided support to partners delivering events like the Sports Relief Mile in Becketts Park (20 March); HMS Laforey Parade in the town centre and Market Square (3 April) and the April Fools Harley Run in Abington Street (9 April).

The Bands in the Park season on Abington Park Bandstand commenced on Sunday 4th April and the programme runs every Sunday until the middle of September.

Looking forward the council is working with partners the District Scouts St Georges Day Celebration & parade in the town centre and Becketts Park (24 April); Food Festival in Becketts Park (14 & 15 May); Beer Festival in Delapre Park (19 – 22 May); Speedy Cup on the Racecourse (4 June); Pretty Muddy (4 June) & Race for Life (5 June) in Abington Park; Carnival Parade from the Racecourse and around the town centre (11 June); Music Festival in the town centre (19 June) and the Women's Cycling Tour 2016 in the town centre (19 June).

Planning for Northampton Festival, Mass Cycle Ride, Delapre Food Festival, Diwali, Fireworks, Christmas continue.

The council are working with the Royal British Legion (RBL) on Armed Forces Day on the Market Square with the Parade starting at Eastgate and processing along Abington Street to the Market Square on Saturday 25 June.

Culture & Heritage

April saw two new exhibitions showcasing at Northampton Museums: 'Bees – Pollinators of the World', an exhibition which introduces visitors to the life of the honey bee through stunning photography opened at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery and 'Art in the Park' the 55th annual open art exhibition opened at Abington Park Museum.

The last of the winter series of Over 60s talks in April was fully booked and feedback was exceptionally positive. Easter workshops for children were held at both museums and the popular Easter Egg Trail attracted many young families to Abington Park Museum over the Easter weekend. A Beginners Ukulele workshop led by Sara Spade took place in March and once again was very popular and well attended.

A start up meeting was held with the main contractor to begin the development of the new museum.

Customer Services

Providing more of our services on line is one of the council's priorities and it is essential that we are promoting digital inclusion throughout the authority. I am pleased to advise that we have agreed a permanent partnership with Barclays Digital Eagles who have increased their support from once a month to weekly and from February there will be two digital Eagles present within the OSS every Monday from 10:00 – 16:00. They are there to support customers whilst using the self-serve computers and to promote future training sessions to help increase confidence whilst using web services.

Community Law Services moved into the OSS in February. Feedback has been extremely positive and they are pleased with the accommodation and how welcome they have been made to feel. They have seen an increase in referrals resulting in customers receiving the support they need under the one roof.

Councillor Brandon Eldred
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement