



Cabinet Member Report for Community Engagement

Northampton Borough Council

20th January 2014

Councillor Community Fund

Applications for the Councillor Community Fund totalled 105 applications received by December 2013, which amounts to £62,998 of funding. The Councillor Community Fund has been a popular scheme and has enabled individual councillors to direct thousands of pounds of funding where it will do the most good in their communities.

Partnership Support

The partnership grants application process will open in January 2014. There will be a total budget of £550,000 for community and voluntary groups. Northampton Community Foundation administer the small grants process on behalf of NBC. There is £50,000 available for small projects, to support community events and activities; small scale training costs, pieces of equipment etc. Access to the fund has been added to NBC's website to help promote the scheme.

Forums

Support is being offered to the Chairs and Community Co-Chairs of all six forums, to increase attendance, widen representation, develop a calendar of activity and events and develop a set of action plans, to encourage all six of the forums to become more outcome focused and continue to make a useful contribution.

Events

In December The Frost Fair on the Market Square hosted over 100 unique individual traders with crowds enjoying the entertainment and the Christmas atmosphere with an increase of over 33% of visitors compared to the same time in 2012.

The team are now in the planning stages for the 2014 events calendar, with Holocaust Memorial Day events being held on 27th January.

Culture & Heritage

After a busy December with ten popular evening events, the New Year has started with four new exhibitions at the Museum. On the first floor of the gallery a selection of art is being shown from the Museum's own collection, all of which were painted during "The Golden Age" immediately before the First World War. This is a prelude to several of the exhibitions that will come later in the year.

A second art exhibition contains works by local artist Mark McMurdie and is titled "Portraits and Townscapes". Mark is the Lead Teacher in Fine Art at Duston School and has exhibited in the Royal Academy, the Barbican and various London galleries.

The first shoe exhibition is showing shoes from the "Golden Age" in order to compliment the art exhibition upstairs in the museum. The major shoe exhibition on the ground floor has a "Vintage" theme. "The Dream Shoe Closet" invites visitors into a late 1970s bedroom and shoe closet with a shoe twist. In this interactive experience you can enjoy the space, play games from the period, open cupboards and drawers or walk through our Narnia style wardrobe and find shoes from our shoe collection from the 1920s to the 1980s. The exhibition was originally developed for the Vintage festival in Oxford in 2013 organised by Wayne and Geraldine Hemingway. It is the first time that it has been displayed in Northampton.

On January 14th the Museum will collaborate with The Royal and Derngate to provide an innovative evening of drama titled "All in the Timing". Six short plays will be presented, in sequence, in six different spaces in the Museum, for four different audiences.

Northampton Leisure Trust

Northampton's First Play Street scheme, which is designed to give children a safe and fun place play outside in their own neighbourhood has had a big impact in Spring Boroughs. The Play Street saw 221 visits by local children in its first sixteen weeks. The Play Streets scheme is being run in partnership with Spring Lane Primary School and Spring Boroughs Residents Association.

Customer Services

The Customer Service team participated in the help the soldiers' campaign and donated various items to this cause which were all gratefully received.

Several new partners have now joined the One Stop Shop, The Royal British Legion, Stop Smoking, Polish Stop Smoking and Options 2 (National Careers Service, professional advice, guidance on careers, skills and job market). Assistance has also been put in place in the One Stop Shop to support residents who are facing fuel and food issues.

Councillor Brandon Eldred
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement