



Cabinet Member Report for Community Engagement

Northampton Borough Council

2nd June 2014

Partnership Support

Over half a million pounds has been allocated by the Borough Council to support local agencies, charities and community groups that help people in Northampton. This year we have awarded partnership funding of £550,000 to 25 good causes to help them continue their work to support the town's communities and residents.

Over the last three years this Administration has made millions of pounds available to non-profit organisations and groups that offer practical support, advice and guidance to people in Northampton. There are some really fantastic groups in Northampton who help people in need and make our local communities better. In these difficult economic times even a small grant can make a big difference in helping them continue the work they are doing do.

As well as the partnership funding allocation, Northampton Borough Council has allocated £15,000 of its small grants fund to support another seven organisations that applied.

Events

People were invited to the Guildhall to make some noise on to mark the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO) on 16th May. The event was held in the Guildhall's courtyard where people were encouraged to bring along instruments to make a minute of noise against the violence and discrimination that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experience internationally. The Mayor of Northampton, Councillor John Caswell, councillors and representatives from community groups gave short speeches to raise awareness of the day and of all those people who are unable to speak out due to homophobia, transphobia, hate crime and prejudice.

The annual open air art exhibition at Abington Park Museum opened for its 53rd year on 10th May. Art in the Park features over 70 artworks from both professional and amateur artists from across the county. There are landscapes, portraits, abstracts and still life artworks using a variety of styles and techniques, and many are available to buy. The exhibition is showing in the courtyard at Abington Park Museum until 22nd June and admission is free.

Northampton Borough Council once again ran the popular Delapre Beer Festival at Delapre Park at the end of May, after saving last year's event from cancellation. The festival has always been very popular, and we were delighted to be able to host it again and give everyone the opportunity to enjoy Delapre Park at this fun family event. The event featured over 200 beers, 90 ciders, country wines, gin and locally sourced food as well as live music. Around 8,000 people attended last year's festival and after receiving feedback from customers, this year's event featured additional seating areas, a

traditional band stand and improved entry systems. We were also pleased that Phipps NBC celebrated its return to brewing in the town with an exhibition stand at the event. The company has recently started brewing in Northampton again after an absence of more than four decades.

On 7th May Northampton hosted its first ever Women's Cycling Tour in our Town Centre. It was a real privilege to be involved with this event, which attracted thousands of people into the town and helped put Northampton on the map as a venue for major sporting events.

Culture & Heritage

On the top floor of the Central Museum and Art Gallery the Western Front Association is showing a small but moving exhibition honouring the lives of many of the shoemakers who lost their lives in the First World War.

An exhibition showcasing innovative and intriguing work by international shoe designer, Kobi Levi, went on display at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery on 24th May. Titled 'Kobi and the Playful World of Shoes', the exhibition will be the first major showing in the UK, highlighting Kobi's designs that challenge the conventional definitions of design, art and fashion, and also explore the genre of 'extreme footwear'. The exhibition will feature hand crafted shoes designed as animals, bananas and even coffee pots, exploring how everyday items can be transformed into stylish and funny creations that can be worn or admired as art. We are delighted to be hosting Kobi's first major exhibition in the UK, which will run until 20th June.

During the Easter holidays and May half term, daily workshops were held for young children at the Central Museum and Easter Egg hunts took place on nine days in Abington Park.

Tony Howes performed his one man adaptation of A Midsummer Night's Dream in Abington Great Hall on 26th April and James Hornsby presented Charles Dickens' much loved novel Great Expectations at Guildhall Road on 16th May. Performance was also a major ingredient on 1st May when an enthusiastic audience enjoyed an evening of poetry, talks and debate to complement the exhibition celebrating the 150th anniversary of the death of John Clare.

The exhibition celebrating women's cycling - WOW – Women on Wheels has been very popular and was a great addition to the Women's Tour which ended its first stage in Northampton on 7th May. Related events have also been very popular with over 100 attending "An evening with Hannah Barnes" on 29th April.

Councillor Brandon Eldred

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement