



Cabinet Member Report for Community Engagement

Northampton Borough Council

15th September 2014

Events

In July we hosted the Alive at Delapre concerts. The three day event attracted many thousands of visitors to the town, all of whom came to enjoy top entertainment in the beautiful setting of Delapre Park. The shows made a valuable contribution to our local economy, and helped spread Northampton's reputation as a venue for world class entertainment in the heart of the country.

On 3rd August a Service of Commemoration was held at All Saints' Church to mark the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War. The Mayor of Northampton councillor John Caswell joined the service along with councillors, town dignitaries, members of The Royal British Legion and members of the public.

On 4th August the town took part in the national Lights Out moment of reflection at All Saints' Church portico. Across the country people turned off their lights between 10pm and 11pm, leaving only a single light or candle for a symbolic act of reflection and hope. In Northampton lights were turned out at the Guildhall, All Saints' Church and All Saints' memorial garden for one hour, when candles were lit and prayers said.

Local musicians, street entertainers and family friendly activities were held in the Town Centre during the Love Northampton Summer Events which ran from 26th July to 30th August. The free entertainment included quality local music and a variety of street acts, featuring acrobats and circus performers plus fairground rides and Northampton's very own beach on the Market Square. Love Northampton Summer Events was organised by the Borough Council in partnership with the Northampton Music 365 project, Most Marvellous, Northampton Leisure Trust and the Town Centre BID.

As part of the Love Parks Week, which ran from 25th July to 3rd August, theatre lovers were able to enjoy a fairy-tale performance of Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing performed by the Masque Theatre in the courtyard at Abington Park Museum.

Culture & Heritage

A major collection of artworks by celebrated artist Peter Newcombe has been donated to Northampton Museum and Art Gallery. The exquisite collection of twelve ink and wash drawings illustrate the poetry of Northamptonshire Peasant Poet John Clare. The drawings were first exhibited in Northampton Museum and Art Gallery in 1968 to great national acclaim and became Newcombe's first major success as an artist. Since then he has exhibited widely, including at the Royal Academy, Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolour and Royal Society of British Artists. The gifted drawings represent a significant art donation to the museum.

August saw the opening of a major exhibition at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery. 'A Shoemaker goes to War' looked at the stories of some of the shoemakers who fought and how their absence affected those they left behind. The exhibition was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Northamptonshire Regimental Association and Northamptonshire Yeomanry Association. The exhibition forms part of an ongoing joint project with the Royal and Derngate Theatres entitled Conflict and Community. A number of associated workshops took place in August including Exploring Life in WW1, Poetry Writing and WW1 art workshops along with a 'What was it like in 1914' workshop run by the Royal and Derngate. Staff from the museum service and The Royal & Derngate theatres staged a 'WW1 Family Day' at the end of the month during which visitors could discover the history and heritage of Northampton Borough during WW1.

In July the Bassett Lowke Society staged a two day event 'Trains@NMAG' where a number of working model trains were on display at the museum.

July also saw the opening of the exhibition 'Norman Walsh – English Sports Footwear'. Walsh continues to be Britain's only, wholly owned company that designs and manufactures sports footwear. More than 4000 visitors viewed the exhibition during the three weeks that it was on display.

Northampton Leisure Trust

The summer has been extremely busy for the Trust with outdoor activities taking place across the Borough.

Children of all ages have been enjoying themselves taking part in the numerous activities in Funzone, the supervised holiday childcare scheme. Outside of Funzone there was a wealth of other activities on offer such as Street Dance, Cinema Gaming, Football, Badminton, Inflatables and Water Pistols, to name a few. All activities ran throughout the summer holiday period.

The Play Rangers have been out and about letting children's imaginations run wild hosting their popular and free, exciting outdoor activities in various parks and open spaces across the Borough. Play Streets sessions were also held in Spring Boroughs and Spencer.

Prior to the holiday period a Fun Day was held at Lings Forum. The event was a springboard for forthcoming school holiday activities. The event played host to over 240 children and their families and offered over 20 different activities. Local clubs continue to support the events including GKR Karate Club, Danes Camp Badminton Club, Lings Gym Mini's and Northampton Nets Basketball Club. All clubs have attracted new members because of the event.

National Play Day was held in Abington Park on 6th August with approximately 3,500 children, young people and their families attending. Building on the success of previous five annual National Play Day events, this year's event was the second to be funded by sponsors and contributions from local councillors.

Councillor Brandon Eldred

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement