



Cabinet Member Report for Community Engagement

Northampton Borough Council

8th December 2014

Events

In November we saw the return of the Becket's Park firework display. This popular family friendly event returned for the first time since it was cancelled in 2007 by the Lib Dems and attracted 18,000 visitors into the Town Centre.

On 20th November we launched Christmas in the Town Centre with the official switch on of the town's Christmas lights, which this year extend up Wellingborough Road to brighten up even more of the town. We also have a German Market, which is currently set up along Abington Street and has helped attract thousands of people into the Town Centre to enjoy what our town has to offer this Christmas.

On 1st December an event will be held at The Guildhall to mark World AIDS Day. This annual event is an opportunity for us as a town to show our support for those who are affected by HIV and AIDS, and to raise awareness of the groups helping to find a cure.

Culture & Heritage

An Intermediate Ukulele Workshop with local musician and singer, Sara Spade took place in November at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery. The event followed on from the sold out beginners class in October. The October half term workshops attracted 129 young people with topics ranging from 'Leather Stamping', 'The Big Draw' and 'Ghoulis Crafts'. To mark Halloween, actor James Hornsby, performed a reading of his spine chilling adaptation of Bram Stoker's 'Dracula' at Abington Park Museum.

During November two exhibitions opened at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery. 'Palimpsests' explores ways that shoes become vessels or records of memory and why the imprint or trace of a body demands that we recollect. 'It's a Christmas Cracker!' explores winter themed art, shoes and history from the museum's collections and links in with a visit from Santa during December. A third exhibition showcased for four days in November at the Guildhall to mark the 825th Anniversary of Northampton Charter. The exhibition told the story of Northampton being granted its Royal Charter.

During November, A Christmas craft fair at Abington Park Museum took place with stalls available to hire by local craft makers. Fiori Musicali performed some of their beautiful baroque music at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery and a talk on Medieval Northampton.

Christmas craft workshops for children will take place during December at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery.

Forums

The youth forum has supported the 'Break the Shire Event' held at the Guildhall. The LGBTQ forum has been promoting the 'Straight Allies' campaign, which was the focus for International Coming Out Day, which was held at the Royal & Derngate Theatre on 11th October. Further planning is taking place for Holocaust Memorial Day amongst the forums and also a Valentines Health Walk, led by the Youth Forum to support their plans around Health and Well-being.

Northampton Leisure Trust

Northampton Leisure Trust has been shortlisted in three categories for the Northamptonshire Business Excellence Awards 2014. The categories are; Enterprising Organisation of the Year, Community Investment Award and Creative Innovation Award. The winners will be announced at the Awards ceremony on 11th December 2014.

The Play Team at the Trust is currently conducting a survey of "Children's Outdoor Play in Northampton". This will assist them in developing a Play Partnership with like-minded individuals, organisations and businesses to help shape play provision across the County.

The Play Rangers have been expanding their activities and now deliver after school community based Play Ranger sessions at Lumbertubs Primary School on Mondays.

Walking Football was launched at Duston Sports Centre in September and has proved a big success and is now a permanent session in the 50 Plus Activity Sessions. Due to the success we are working with Club 81 and have introduced an evening session at Lings Forum. The six week trial began on 11th November and is proving to be popular.

Customer Services

We have worked closely on a joint event with Barclays to promote digital inclusion. Barclaycard's Digital Eagles were present in the One Stop Shop during the week where over 30 customers received training to help them navigate the web. Many customers created email addresses and secured payment accounts and now feel safe whilst shopping on the internet. Many were not aware of the Council services available on line and many tenants have now created a citizens account so that they can view their rent balance and make payments without the costs of calling the Council. We will continue to work closely with Barclays to jointly support our customers and promote digital inclusion.

Many of our partners joined our Courtyard Coffee Morning and our Showcasing Event on the Market square. These included the Police, Army, Enterprise, Community Law, Fire and Rescue, Call Care, Credit Union, Delos, Woman's Aid, Bipolar UK, Mental Awareness and many others. They engaged with our customers, staff and passersby to promote their services.

This year, we received many nominations for colleagues and teams within the authority for going the extra mile and providing excellent customer service. Awards were given to staff and Teams for their excellent service delivery.

Councillor Brandon Eldred
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement