



## Council 28 September 2010

### CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

#### *Written report by Cllr Lynsey Alexander, Culture & Sport Portfolio*

**Portfolio includes:**

- Sport;
- Public Halls;
- Arts Development;
- Festivals and Events;
- Heritage;
- Parks and green spaces; and
- Cemeteries.

**1. Parks and Cemeteries**

1.1 The results of the Anglia in Bloom judging have been announced and are as follows:-

Large Town Category:	Bury St Edmunds was awarded Gold;
Village Category:	Cavendish was awarded Bronze;
Large Village Category:	Clare was awarded Silver; and
Best Public Open Space:	Clare Country Park.

I am delighted that areas within our Borough have done so well in the Anglia in Bloom competition this year and I heartily congratulate all the many people and organisations who have contributed to this fantastic success.

1.2 I am pleased to announce that in July, Green Flags have been awarded to East Town Park, Nowton Park and Abbey Gardens. The Green Flag award is a much coveted accreditation that shows we have not only beautiful, clean and well kept green areas but we have sound management plans that look to keep them that way in the future.

1.3 On the 19 July the Leader of the Council celebrated the opening of a newly landscaped area by the St Olaves shopping precinct in Bury St Edmunds, and was joined by Ward Councillors, representatives from the Howard Estate Association of residents and tenants, the Over 60's Club, Bury in Bloom, and pupils and teachers from Howard Primary and Middle School. The project to enhance this area was a great community initiative which was assisted by officers in the Parks Service and funding from ASDA and the precinct owners Land Master Holdings.

- 1.4 On the 22 July Abbey Gardens played an important role in hosting 3 Regiment Army Air Corps Freedom of the Borough celebrations. The day was marked by an Apache Helicopter landing on Angel Hill and a march through Bury St Edmunds town centre. Prince Charles also attended the event to present some of the soldiers with medals and, despite driving rain, was happy to take part in a group photograph with the Regiment.
- 1.5 The Haverhill Town Council's *'Big Bash'* event held on Haverhill Recreation ground on the 25 July was a great success as was the *'Big Day'* out event hosted on the 28 July with each event attracting over 2,500 people.
- 1.6 The Parks Manager along with a working group of Members met on two occasions over the summer period to discuss the Borough's existing park byelaws. These meetings resulted in the preparation of a set of draft new byelaws that the Policy Development Committee considered on 1 September and Cabinet on 15 September. There will now be consultation on the draft byelaws before full Council is asked to approve them.
- 1.7 The second year of the *'Partners in Play'* project has built on the success of the first year with the 2 Children's Festivals attracting more children than ever. Over 2,400 children attended the events in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill in August and both received excellent feedback from children and parents alike.
- 1.8 A new green gym has been installed on the Motts Field section of East Town Park, funded mainly from Haverhill Strategic Partnership and Abbeycroft Leisure. The gym was supported by the friends of East Town Park as this was one of their targets for their site improvement plan. Since its installation the exercise units have been extremely well used by all in the community.

## 2. *Sport*

- 2.1 On 17 September the Tour of Britain cycle race came to Suffolk and St Edmundsbury. The 7<sup>th</sup> stage of the event started on Angel Hill, Bury St Edmunds, then routed through Haverhill and Clare, into Babergh and culminating in Colchester. It was a marvelous spectacle which saw thousands of people visit the town to see the start. To lead off the race the elite riders were joined by local cyclists and over 50 schoolchildren who got the chance to cycle a short distance before peeling off and allowing the professionals to continue along the route. The community event on the previous day also proved to be very popular with many events occurring on Angel Hill and in the Abbey Gardens.
- 2.2 On 11 July the Rwandan High Commissioner visited Bury St Edmunds to help open the Suffolk Youth Games. The visit was the launch of the Borough's association with Rwanda and was a great success. The High Commissioner witnessed an excellent youth games and even had time for a tour of the town; indeed, the Commercial Attaché, who was also part of the group, was so taken with the area he returned the following week with his family.
- 2.3 On Saturday 7 August I attended the official opening of the new Haverhill Community Football Project. The event was held on the first day of the new football season. This date was our target to deliver the project and we succeeded. This was enhanced by Haverhill Rovers winning 1-0 to bring the very well attended opening event to a successful conclusion. Our next step is the start of the new Haverhill Player Development Centre in partnership with Suffolk Football Association and Abbeycroft Leisure, this commences on 4 October.

### **3. Heritage**

- 3.1 I was delighted to officially open the *'Keeping Time'* exhibition on the evening of 12 August at Moyses Hall. The Borough Council has one of the finest publicly owned collections of time measurement instruments (clocks, watches and dials) in the world, a large part of which was donated by Gershom Parkington. This new exhibition in Moyses Hall adds to the existing display and provides even more for the public to see. It is a comprehensive display for both specialists and non specialists to enjoy.
- 3.2 As part of the research on Gershom Parkington it emerged that his grave was in the Bury St Edmunds cemetery. Heritage staff and our Parks' Cemetery staff, have ensured that repairs have been carried out to this important monument to this benefactor and a new plaque has been installed to more clearly mark this site within the cemetery.
- 3.3 In August guided tours of West Stow Anglo Saxon Village were initiated which are charged for. There are 2 tours each day, and a number have been fully booked with 30 adults. With 5 different staff able to provide tours with different emphases means that when customers make repeat visits using their Heritage Ticket they could have a different tour each time. It is estimated that the total income in a full year could be nearly £3,000.
- 3.4 The Allen Collection of bicycles was used to promote the Tour of Britain launch event in July and a more significant small exhibition of vintage bicycles and interpretive banners were on display in the Athenaeum, Bury St Edmunds on 16 and 17 September. There was also a show reel from the *'Lap of Honour'* film project, which celebrates Suffolk's Olympic and Paralympic Games Heritage from 1948 to the present.
- 3.5 The Heritage Service also took part in this years Children's Festival in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill on August 17 and 18 which promoted a medieval theme. The children at each event could try out archery equipment, design shields and try on replica costumes.

### **4. Public Halls**

- 4.1 On 23 August the new staff team moved into The Apex. There are a number of experienced new staff joining the existing public halls team. There is a real energy and excitement amongst all the staff that will ensure that The Apex is a great success.
- 4.2 On 6 September the Box Office went live and on the first day our ticket sales were in excess of £3,000. The telephones have continued to ring, which is excellent news for the forthcoming shows.
- 4.3 On 9 September it was a pleasure to be part of the 'hard hat' concert where over 500 volunteers assisted us in 'testing' the acoustics of the building. The music was really enjoyable and much was learned about how the building works. We have titled the next period of time up to the end of December the *'Sound Check Season'* and I am really looking forward to welcoming the young people of St Edmundsbury to The Apex on 8 October for Bury Sound. The open weekend on the 9 and 10 October will allow all residents and visitors to look round the building. The programme up to December allows us to test the building through programming a diverse range of events, hopefully something for the whole community to enjoy.
- 4.4 In the New Year The Apex will programme more activities and start to host a range of commercial activities. Please do visit The Apex and assist the staff in promoting it to the widest possible audience.