



Council 13 December 2011

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Report by Cllr Sara Mildmay-White, Deputy Leader of the Council and Culture and Sport Portfolio

Portfolio includes:

- Arts and Cultural Development;
- Cemeteries;
- Festivals and Events;
- Health and Wellbeing;
- Heritage Services;
- Parks and Open Spaces;
- Public Halls; and
- Sport and Olympics.

1. Parks and Cemeteries

- 1.1 On 13 October 2011 the new play area at St Peter's Pit in Bury St Edmunds was opened. This project showed how a community group working with the Council and other partners can make a difference in their area as most of the money to buy the new equipment was raised by the group themselves.
- 1.2 On 28 and 29 October 2011 East Town Park, Haverhill and Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds were the places to be entertained and frightened as both parks held their scary Halloween events.
- 1.3 On 5 November 2011 the Abbey Gardens had its annual Fireworks night organised by the Round Table. Despite the slightly inclement weather a good crowd turned out to watch the spectacular display.
- 1.4 The new Nowton Park visitor centre is nearing completion and will look to open early in the New Year, with an official opening in early Spring 2012. The project is on track and on budget and will provide the Park with an excellent new facility, including new changing rooms for our local sports people.
- 1.5 On 11 November 2011, as part of the Remembrance Day events, children from Howard Community Primary School, local residents and Bury in Bloom attended a bulb planting afternoon at the memorial in St Olaves precinct for Luke Southgate who died in Afghanistan in 2009. Hundreds of crocus and daffodil bulbs were planted that will make the area a beautiful sight next Spring.

- 1.6 The public exhibition of possible ideas for the future development of the Abbey Gardens will be held on 10 December 2011. The exciting and thought-provoking proposals were developed with a range of stakeholders, including the new Friends Group, and carries forward the work initially started by the former Policy Development Committee's scrutiny review of a couple of years ago. Results of the consultation will be analysed before a final plan is submitted to the Cabinet in February 2012 and then onto the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of a grant application.

2. Sport and Olympics

- 2.1 On 7 November 2011 St Edmundsbury was informed that the Olympic Torch relay would be coming to our area on 7 July 2012, with the Torch being carried by the selected torch bearers in Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds. This is a fantastic accolade for the Borough and is in recognition for all that has been achieved so far with our work with Rwanda and bringing the Pre Games Training Camps to the area.
- 2.2 When Rwanda chose our facilities for their camps part of the reason was that we promised local support for their athletes and, therefore, I am pleased to announce that Greene King has confirmed that they will be sponsoring both teams during their stay.
- 2.3 On 23 November 2011 Cabinet approved the Community Transfer of the Victory Ground to a new consortium of partners, which included Victory Sports Ground Ltd, South Lee School and Bury Cricket Club. This is part of our ongoing asset management programme and is in line with the Council's policy of community ownership of assets. The new Sports hall and pavilion will combine club, school and community use and will be an excellent addition to our sports facilities. We now look forward to the project proceeding to the planning stage.

3. Heritage

- 3.1 Volunteers from the 2012 Suffolk Legacy Project and members of Suffolk Circle both booked community group events in October to view the Suffolk's Lap of Honour exhibition in Moyse's Hall Museum and the latter group heard a talk from Professor Bill Tancred MBE, the Suffolk born double Olympian.
- 3.2 On 20 November 2011 it was St Edmund Day and to mark the occasion Moyse's Hall Museum put on a lecture that enlightened the audience of St Edmund's life and exploits.
- 3.3 At West Stow the new den building area has added to the high quality play facilities. Suggested by one of our focus groups, it allows families to build their own round house or Saxon hut and has become a popular place to visit.
- 3.4 Over three Sundays in November more than 2,600 visitors attended Yulefest events at West Stow. There were 38 craft stalls, 3 different kinds of musical entertainment plus mince pies and mulled wine served by the local Scouts. There was also free entry to the Anglo Saxon Village, where the Friends group were in Anglo-Saxon costume demonstrating crafts, storytelling and undertaking have-a-go archery. All the days were well attended and the gift shop increased sales from the year before.

4. Public Halls

- 4.1 The Apex continues to receive excellent press coverage both locally and nationally, with over 2,000 column inches of press coverage since May 2011, an average of 3 radio interviews a month and 4 local press features each week adding to over 350 online articles; The Apex is rarely out of the news. The coverage has especially highlighted the excellent

range of activities taking place from concerts to trade fairs to conferences and even a chess congress.

- 4.2 The Apex has also attracted a huge diversity of national and international artists to perform for local and regional audiences. In the past year artists from every continent have appeared on stage.
- 4.3 I am pleased to say our home grown artists have also found their feet, the latest being Suffolk Sinfonia who performed on Saturday 12 November 2011 and received plaudits from the audience for performing as well as any professional orchestra.
- 4.4 This concert took place at the start of a week in which The Apex broke its audience attendance record with over 2,500 people watching performances that cut across all age divides and included a Festival of Remembrance where the audience was entertained by teenage air cadets, a sell out concert by Show of Hands, who are widely acknowledged as the finest acoustic roots duo in England and Harry Green, 14 year old jazz saxophonist and winner of the West Suffolk Young Musician of the Year 2011, entertaining the guests at our first curated exhibition in the café.