



## Council 28 February 2012

### 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 December saw Santa Claus fly into Nowton Park and he was visited by over 100 families with excited children all receiving a present from Santa in his grotto in the woods. Both days of the event were fully booked and good fun was had by all.
- 1.2 During December Nowton Park also saw a presentation of a new attraction called *Winter's Tail* which was in the form of magical trails and story boards set out in the woods. The event attracted over 1,000 visitors and the positive feedback from the days means we are looking to build and improve on the event this year.
- 1.3 The Christmas Fireworks display on the Haverhill Recreation Ground was also a great success with many turning out to witness the festive spectacle.
- 1.4 On 27 January 2012, a Holocaust Memorial Day was held in the Abbey Gardens and attended by the High Commissioner of Rwanda, who gave a very moving speech highlighting the need to never forget the past, but also to use it to be more tolerant in the future.
- 1.5 On 1 February 2012 the historic Abbey Gate into the Abbey Gardens was bathed in red as the Mayor switched on the lights as part of a national campaign to encourage people to look after their hearts. The Abbey Gate is one of a number of iconic landmarks which turned red across the country to launch '*Red for Heart*' fundraising for the British Heart Foundation.
- 1.6 On 25 February 2012, the official opening of the new Nowton Park Centre is planned, and I am sure you will agree this is an excellent new facility for the community. On the same day students from the towns' senior schools will accompany the Mayor in planting trees in the park as part of our plantation to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee, the first of many Jubilee events and activities in the Borough during 2012.

## **2. Sport and Olympics**

- 2.1 I am pleased to report that the Haverhill Community Sports Association facility in Chalkstone Way has progressed well in its first year of operation. The key target of the project was to increase participation in men's, women's, junior, senior and disability football, and this has been accomplished by setting up an academic Football School in partnership with Samuel Ward Academy, a Player Development Centre in partnership with Abbeycroft Leisure, Social Inclusion projects in partnership with Suffolk Football Association (FA) and Disability coaching in partnership with Ipswich Town Football Club. The target in year one was 19 teams and they have achieved 28. They have also been granted FA Community Club status, the highest level a "grass roots" club can achieve.
- 2.2 Planning for the Olympic Torch Relay coming to the Borough on 7 July 2012 is progressing well, and two separate groups have been set up for Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds to plan events, and activities and ensure the most is made out of the day. Soon those carrying the torch will be revealed to the public and they will be told which bit of the 'leg' they will be part of.

## **3. Heritage**

- 3.1 Moyse's Hall Museum joined the late night shopping trend in December and gave visitors to Bury St Edmunds the opportunity to buy gifts in the shop outside normal visiting hours. Medieval music added to the atmosphere, with mince pies and mulled wine also on offer.
- 3.2 At West Stow in December, as part of a pilot, a family from Bury St Edmunds was given the first opportunity to become Anglo-Saxons for the day. The day included handling artefacts, donning suitable attire and working with local re-enactors to experience and learn different skills such as fire lighting using the flint and steel technique. The aim is to market such stays in the village in 2012.
- 3.3 Haverhill and District Local History Group have their own replica Olympic torch made by pupils of Place Farm Primary School, to herald their latest exhibition in the Town Hall Arts Centre. Since 6 January 2012, exhibition panels in the Bistro show Sporting Moments from the many and varied sports groups and teams that have thrived in Haverhill over the years. A timely reminder of the importance of such organisations in promoting the skills and spirit embodied in the Olympic Games. Extra material from schools and the story of the Olympic torch coming to Haverhill is on show in the local History room until March 2012.
- 3.4 The Heritage Service now has a new leaflet and website that was designed in association with a local expert in arts and heritage marketing. The objective was to give clear and simple descriptions of what the Heritage Service has to offer and to highlight the great value Heritage Ticket. The leaflet also gives a brief summary of some key events and promotes Bury St Edmunds as a historic Suffolk Town.
- 3.5 I am delighted to report that the café at West Stow reopened on 13 February 2012, just in time for half term, operated by Whitehouse Social Enterprise who won the contract to operate this and the new Nowton Park Café.

## **4. Public Halls**

- 4.1 The festive season was a busy period for the halls as 12 Christmas dinners and party nights were hosted, eight at The Apex and four at the Athenaeum. The events were all well received and a number of companies have already re-booked for this year.

- 4.2 The Apex also held three party nights aimed at selling tables to smaller companies and all were sold out well in advance, and more will be offered this year.
- 4.3 Following a three month public relations campaign to promote The Apex as a conference, meeting, seminar, and exhibition centre bookings are now filling the diary, especially for the first half of 2012 which is already 70% full in the auditorium and 43% in the studios. In early February 2012 we hosted a major conference for Bosch.
- 4.4 The Fillers concert on 28 December 2012 attracted over 700 people and, on 8 February 2012, The Celtic Dream performed to a sold out audience. There has also been great support for acts and events such as Fairport Convention, The Wolsey Orchestra and the Fat Cat comedy club.
- 4.5 This year's Bury Festival was launched at The Apex on 16 February 2012, and a strong and varied programme was well received. As well as national and international stars, there will also be a 1,000-strong choir made up of students and community groups from the whole district and BBC Radio 3 will be broadcasting a concert by the Britten Sinfonia.

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