



## Council 19 June 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 *Sports and Olympics***

- 1.1 The Borough Council is delighted that Suffolk Football Association (FA) has confirmed their position as a contributing partner to the Bury Community Football Project this exciting project, through a direct investment of £250,000 in the community facilities. We have worked with the FA for many years on projects such as those in Haverhill and Clare, and we know that their commitment to community engagement and increasing participation has been a key part of the success of these schemes. Good progress continues to be made in relation to finalising the national funding required.
- 1.2 Preparations continue for the arrival of the Rwandan team in July, and the Olympic Torch Relay on the afternoon of 7 July, which will be a great day for both Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds. More details on both will be issued later in June when event plans and diaries are finalised.
- 1.3 I am sure that I speak for all Councillors in congratulating Peter White, from our planning team, and his colleagues in the Cycle to Rwanda Team for their achievements to date. At the time of writing, having overcome some huge challenges, the team were making good progress through the Sudan and Ethiopian stages. We wish them all the best with their final push to complete the arduous 6,000 mile journey from Bury St Edmunds to Kigali. Anyone wishing to show their support through a donation to *Sport for Rwanda* can do so at [www.justgiving.com/cycletorwanda](http://www.justgiving.com/cycletorwanda).

#### **2. *Arts and Cultural Development***

- 2.1 The Spring Season at The Apex has been very well received by audiences, and we continue to see support growing for the project. In July, the Cabinet will be considering a two-year review of The Apex, as required in the 2009 business case. This forward-looking piece of work will seek to take the steps needed to move The Apex onto the next stage of its development.

- 2.2 The Box Office at The Apex recently passed the £1m mark for the value of tickets sold since it opened in the summer of 2010, which is a tremendous achievement. This includes the value of around 90,000 tickets sold for events at The Apex itself. An estimated 250,000 people have now visited The Apex to make use of the conferencing and meeting, craft and trade fairs, cafe and performance opportunities that the centre offers.
- 2.3 *Crenulated Zoom*, a large-scale commissioned sculptural artwork created by artist Tod Hanson, and funded by developer contributions, is now prominently hung in the entrance foyer at The Apex. The work has received much praise from the public and has certainly enlivened the foyer area, hanging alongside the large scale photographic images which display performers live on stage at The Apex. Outdoor planters now add to the brightness of the building frontage, ahead of a larger scheme in the autumn with the new caterer, Sodexo Prestige
- 2.4 The second annual Apex promoted Fashion Fusion event took place on the 20 April. Over thirty Bury St Edmunds Fashion retailers were provided with the opportunity to promote their wares to a sell out crowd. The night was a huge success and raised over £5,000, which was donated to St Nicholas Hospice.
- 2.5 The highlights of the corporate offer have included a well attended business breakfast hosted by Ashton KCJ Solicitors, and the Start Up Suffolk Conference and exhibition attended by over 200 delegates. This conference was aimed at encouraging entrepreneurship and providing the tools for new businesses to be established.
- 2.6 Alongside Menta, The Prince's Trust, West Suffolk College and colleagues in the economic development team, the team at The Apex is currently putting together plans for a youth business festival to encourage young people to explore how they can set up and sustain their own businesses with an emphasis on music, entertainment and retail. The event will bring together key inspirational speakers who have had success in these fields.
- 2.7 The Apex booked a pitch at the Confex trade show at Excel in London in March. The Apex team invested in the pitch in partnership with Trinity Park, Ipswich to ensure that Suffolk, and indeed East Anglia, was represented at the show.
- 2.8 We are pleased to report that a National Health Conference has been secured for October and future conferences are now in the pipeline.
- 2.9 On the 23 April, The Apex also hosted a Visit East Anglia business gathering, and also took a stall to promote the venue at the Suffolk Show in June.

### **3. Bury St Edmunds Festival**

- 3.1 The Festival has again proved a success with audiences, with over 15,000 attending concerts and events. The week started with a 1,000 voice community choir on the stage at the Abbey Gardens and ended in the same place with Claire Teal and the BBC big Band on a glorious Sunday evening. The opening night saw gloomy rainclouds overhead but, by the time Claire Teal took to the stage 10 days later, temperatures had soared to 25 degrees and Bury St Edmunds was basking in glorious summertime.
- 3.2 The Festival brought an outstanding selection of international artists to Bury St Edmunds; performers who have graced the world's premier stages. These artists unanimously have commented on what great audiences and facilities we have here in Bury St Edmunds. I would like to record my thanks to not only the Festival Manager, but to all of the various partners, joint-promoters, venues, staff, Festival Friends, performers and sponsors who have, once again, played their part in the huge team effort needed to put on the Festival.

#### **4. Heritage Services**

- 4.1 A display from the Suffolk's Lap of Honour exhibition at Moyses Hall was taken to the 2012 Festival of Sport event at Newmarket on 13 May. Over 7,000 people attended this event and many were interested by the display and the popular 'make a medal' activity which was provided alongside the Forest Heath District Council display.
- 4.2 On 16 May, Moyses Hall Museum took part in the Olympic *Inspire Day* celebration. Suffolk athlete Michael Crowe who was in the Hockey Team in the 1972 Olympics was featured in a Bury Free Press article and an interview on BBC Radio Suffolk. A series of temporary exhibitions in the Suffolk's Lap of Honour exhibition have shown how different Suffolk athletes have been inspired to take part in the Olympic Games, and how new Olympic stories are being gathered. In May it was confirmed that the Paralympics flame will be hosted at Moyses Hall Museum on 27 August.
- 4.3 On 20 May the Heritage Service was promoted at a major BBC free event as part of the *Great British Story* with Michael Wood at Ickworth House. The event attracted over 2,000 visitors. The Anglo-Saxons were represented by costumed re-enactors; a stone mason volunteer was demonstrating and talking about the Abbey, and items from the collections were also displayed. Visitors enjoyed being photographed wearing a ball and chain.
- 4.4 West Stow hosted the biggest school group in its long history on 24 May. All 261 children from Perryfields School, Chelmsford visited with 50 adults; in addition to their entrance fees, they spent £1,006 in the shop, and this really special visit, which was facilitated by Heritage staff from both the Moyses Hall and West Stow sites.
- 4.5 Green Flag award judging took place for West Stow Country Park on 1 June. Results should be known at the end of July.

#### **5. Health and Wellbeing**

- 5.1 The shadow Suffolk Wellbeing Board continues to meet, and I attended the last meeting as Councillor Rona Burt from Forest Heath District Council (FHDC), who has been our joint representative, was unable to attend. It is fair to say that the Board is still in its early stages, and much of the discussion at the meeting was about how the Board wanted to operate and deal with business in future. The substantive health-related business was an endorsement by the Board of the national *Troubled Families* initiative, which is being led by the Children's Trust. The Trust is currently identifying families who meet the criteria of multiple interventions from a range of different agencies and professionals. The initiative will then see a lead worker appointed who will co-ordinate all the work with that family. The aim is for the family to get more integrated support and for agencies to avoid the duplication and waste of multiple contacts.
- 5.2 On 2 May the Leader and I had the opportunity to meet the new Director of Public Health, Tessa Lindfield. She had spent the morning touring the area with officers and then over lunch met with Members and Heads of Service from both FHDC and the Borough Council. It was a good opportunity to talk to her about the Public Health issues here in the Borough and introduce her to the area.

## **6. Parks and Open Spaces**

- 6.1 March was one of the warmest and driest on record, so much so that the spring bedding schemes in Abbey Gardens required irrigating and the caterers in Nowton Park were much busier than they could have ever anticipated in their first month of trading on site. This good weather brought people flocking to the parks, and Nowton Park recorded its busiest March on record as the heat brought forward the daffodil flowering.
- 6.2 During March there were a couple of charity based fun runs; one in Haverhill along the railway walk, managed by the Haverhill Running Club, and one in Nowton Park managed by the Stroke Association. Both events ran smoothly and achieved their aim of drawing in funds for their respective causes.
- 6.3 The good weather in March was followed by one of the wettest Aprils on record and visitor numbers in April to all the parks were down on previous years. For this reason, it is still too early to judge properly the impact of the introduction of car parking charges at Nowton Park in April. We should have a better idea after the Summer holidays when we will be reviewing the situation. However, I can report that the £15 season ticket option is already proving popular; so far over 200 have been sold.
- 6.4 During April and the early part of May Haverhill Recreation Ground and Oakes Road playing fields both hosted separate fairs. Both fairs were offered and accepted extensions of time on site to try and reduce damage to the grounds through pulling off site whilst the sites were so water logged.
- 6.5 On 30 April, the Abbey Gardens hosted the unfortunately named '*Big Dribble*' an England Hockey board initiative promoting Hockey in the UK. The event included pupils from schools around the area in a hockey slalom course around large inflatable objects.
- 6.6 On 13 May, eighty classic cars departed from Nowton Park as part of the West Suffolk Motor Club classic car run. That same weekend the Abbey Gardens Friends held a promotional day for their activities under the new canopy of the Gathering Place. The Gathering Place was then used the following weekend by the Bury Concert band.
- 6.7 On 29 May, a performance of the story of Hansel and Gretel took place at Nowton Nursery, which was a well attended and successful event.
- 6.8 On 1 June, the Borough Council and Abbey Gardens Friends were delighted to host the Marquis of Bristol for an event to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gardens being open to the general public. A tree was planted and a fabulous new flower bed to mark the anniversary was unveiled. An exhibition provided by the Heritage Team in the Athenaeum topped off the event.

## **7. Jubilee Celebrations**

- 7.1 The Borough Council played its own part in a busy weekend of Jubilee events organised by local communities, Councils, and businesses. The Abbey Gardens, Nowton Park, East Town Park and Moyse's Hall all hosted special events to support the large range of other activities organised throughout the Borough. As Members will be aware we have also supported commemorative tree planting schemes throughout the Borough to ensure that the Jubilee is remembered for many generations to come. In keeping with the spirit of the occasion, the Jubilee celebrations have been a great team effort between the town and parish councils, community groups, business and town centre organisations, the Borough Council and the County Council and other agencies.

## **8. Cemeteries**

- 8.1 Automatic pedestrian gates have recently been fitted to both Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds Cemeteries. The gate to the Hospital Road entrance at Bury St Edmunds Cemetery was paid for by the Town Council, an initiative which has strengthened our ties with them. The vehicular access gates to the Kings Road entrance and the pedestrian gate to the West Road entrance have also been automated. We are the first Council maintained cemeteries in the region to use state of the art technology to serve its clients and save money, without compromising on service or security. All three pedestrian access gates are solar powered with the vehicular access gates to Kings Road being mains powered.