



Council 27 September 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 Olympic Torch Relay

St. Edmundsbury played its part in the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. The Olympic Torch Relay came through Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds on 7 July with huge crowds. 25,000 attended in Haverhill and 60,000 in Bury St Edmunds, making the day the largest event we have ever organised. Both relays were a great success and both communities got the chance to enjoy this once in a lifetime experience. I am certain this has been an experience that will stay with people for ever, and I take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers and staff who made this day such a great success.

1.2 Rwanda Partnership

Over the summer, in partnership with Abbeycroft Leisure, Suffolk County Council and Greene King, to name but a few, we have had the pleasure of welcoming both the Rwandan Olympic and Paralympic teams to Bury St Edmunds for their Pre-Games Training Camps. During their stay in the town, the Rwandan athletes and officials attended numerous events, and met many local people. Both teams were welcomed to the town at a civic reception hosted by the Mayor, and also had the opportunity to explore the town and its surroundings by visiting some of its main attractions. Local residents welcomed Rwandan guests into their communities; the Olympic team attended a service at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, whilst the congregation of Southgate Community Church hosted a coffee morning in their honour. Several of the athletes trained with local sports clubs, and the Sitting Volleyball team ran several coaching sessions with local children. We look forward to developing further business, education and sporting links with our new Rwandan friends.

1.3 The Rwandan Olympic Team also inspired participants at the Suffolk Youth Games, visited the Sport for Rwanda Festival at King Edward VI Upper School and unveiled a Rwanda

garden developed in their honour. During their stay the Rwandan team were accompanied by a journalist and cameraman from an Australian current affairs show, Dateline, who broadcast three programmes about how the West Suffolk town has welcomed the Rwandan athletes. Whilst they were not successful in winning any medals, they were great ambassadors for their country and the Olympic spirit.

2. Heritage

- 2.1 The Rwandans enjoyed a warm welcome from our Heritage Services. They visited Moyse's Hall Museum to see the Suffolk's Lap of Honour Exhibition and enjoyed participating in some fun activities at West Stow.
- 2.2 The Suffolk's Lap of Honour Exhibition at Moyse's Hall was chosen to host the Paralympics flame for a day on 27 August. Around 600 members of the public came to see it, to get their photo taken to enjoy the exhibition. The exhibition closes at the end of September but a special Heritage publication will record some of the impact of the Olympics and Paralympics on all of us in this part of Suffolk.
- 2.3 A busy summer holiday programme of events was promoted in 'Out and About 2012' and on the new Heritage website. These included 'Drop-in Wednesdays' at Moyse's Hall and 'Activity Thursdays' at West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village. The West Stow days were particularly busy as the 'Outdoor Explore' sessions organised with Abbeycroft took place on the same day and were also well attended. The 'Activity Thursdays' provided free family orientated activities and an ideal opportunity to experience what West Stow has to offer for those with a Heritage Ticket. They included mini-digs, leather embossing, willow fish making, pottery making, storytelling and 'have a go' archery.

3. Public Halls

- 3.1 The Feast of Fiddles concert on 26 August was described by Sue Marchant, BBC East as "absolutely awesome!" and featured six of the UK's finest fiddle players. A sold out house ended up dancing in the aisles. The concert heralded the start of the autumn season at The Apex after a short summer break in the arts programme. The summer break began on 15 July after the curtain came down on four sold out performances of County Upper School's production of Phantom of the Opera. With the licence for this most famous and successful work only being released to amateur companies in September 2011, County Upper School were one of the first schools in the country to undertake this production. Over 100 members of the school community took part in getting this major show on the road at the end of the school year to great critical acclaim.
- 3.2 We took a stall at the Suffolk Show and, despite the 'hurricane', the one day that we were able to exhibit proved extremely beneficial, delivering a perfect opportunity to talk up The Apex to consumers from areas in the region that are difficult to reach via normal marketing activities.
- 3.3 With an excellent programme planned for the autumn season, specific music genre leaflets have been produced to support classical, folk and world events in addition to the normal event brochure. Targeted marketing activities include online, distribution to key groups and dedicated PR.
- 3.4 The Apex continues its focus on cost-effective PR to support brand building and the promotion of events. In addition to the regular activities, plans are in place to achieve national recognition within industry publications in order to maximise opportunities to attract key music and commercial events. Work is also underway to develop joint marketing with our new catering partner, Sodexo Prestige, who start operations in November.

3.5 As Members will be aware, work on the agreed Two Year review of The Apex continues with our partners, and I look forward to sharing and debating the outcome of this important review with all Councillors in the coming months.

4. *Parks and Open Spaces*

4.1 This summer has seen a record number of events taking place in the parks across the Borough, ranging from small community picnics to regionally significant music concerts.

4.2 The annual Nowton Country Fair held at Nowton Park on 17 June proved a popular event again this year. Despite the unpredictable weather, this summer also saw the parks hosting a range of open air theatre events including a performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream in Abbey Gardens, Sword in the Stone at East Town Park Haverhill and Hansel and Gretel at Nowton Park. The Parks Service has forged a number of links with local theatre companies this year, and hopes to be able to build upon the successes of this year in the future.

4.3 There were a number of new events hosted in the parks this year including: 'Stand By Me' (Mencap anti hate campaign); The Milk Run (a fun run in Haverhill organised by the Breast Feeding Network); and 'Load of Pants' fun walk for men organised by the St Nicholas Hospice. Unfortunately, the wet weather we experienced in July meant that the Race for Life's second race was cancelled by the organisers due to torrential rain and poor ground conditions. The wet weather and poor ground conditions also meant that the Bury Motor Show, which was scheduled to take place at Nowton Park on 14 and 15 July had to be cancelled.

4.4 On Sunday 22 July the Borough in partnership with staff from West Suffolk Hospital hosted "It's a Bury Knockout" at Hardwick Heath. The event was well attended by an estimated 4,000 people, and the proceeds from the event went towards cancer diagnostic equipment for the hospital and sport Rwanda.

4.5 In addition to the Armed Forces Day events in Abbey Gardens, the Haverhill Recreation Ground also played host to an Armed Forces Day event this year, organised by the Royal British Legion. The Royal British Legion event included a display of the Rally vehicles which were about to embark in this year's Race for Heroes charity rally. The route of the rally included the most famous tracks and driving routes around central Europe, including: Le Mans, Monaco, Stelvio Pass, Grossglockener Pass, <http://www.grossglockner.at/en/> Hockenheim Circuit and the Nurburgring.

4.6 On 30 June the II Squadron homecoming parade in the Abbey Gardens formed part of the Armed Forces Day celebrations organised by Sharon Fairweather. The Gardens also hosted the Battle of Britain Parade organised by the 27th Squadron on 16 September.

4.7 Over the weekend of 20 July the Abbey Gardens became the venue for the second Abbey Fest. The lineup of acts attracted an audience of over 6000 people.

4.8 The Borough is now able to boast four Green Flag accredited parkland sites: Abbey Gardens, Nowton Park, East Town Park and West Stow Country Park, half of the amount awarded in Suffolk as a whole. On 17 July, West Stow Country Park celebrated the award of Green Flag status.

This was the first application for the award and the site was judged on a whole variety of criteria to meet the required national standard. These include facilities, access, signage, litter control, marketing and management strategy.

My congratulations to all the staff involved in achieving this national recognition.

- 4.9 One positive legacy of the Borough's (sadly unsuccessful) attempt to obtain Heritage Lottery Funding for Abbey Gardens has been the ongoing support and contributions made by the Abbey Gardens Friends. The organisation now boasts over sixty paid-up members and there are now regular volunteers working in the Gardens helping the garden staff. The Friends have organised a range of events over the summer period which are helping to raise awareness of the Gardens' historical and community significance. Sodexo commenced trading in the Abbey Gardens Kiosk at the beginning of August; business is in line with their predictions and feedback from users has been positive.
- 4.10 I'd also like to congratulate Bury in Bloom and all those involved in securing a gold award in the Large Town category of Anglia in Bloom.

5. ***Health and Wellbeing***

- 5.1 On 18 July Councillors and officers from St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath attended a stakeholder event run by the newly formed Western Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This was an opportunity to hear from the group about their approach to commissioning services, and for them to hear from interested local groups and individuals about their priorities. The half day event was very well attended, and I was heartened to hear that they intended to keep bureaucracy to minimum and focus the great majority of their resources on commissioning services. More recently I have received a letter from the CCG giving details of the individual GPs who are taking leads for particular areas of work. There are clearly opportunities here to work with the CCG around a number of the services which districts provide and where further resource could be commissioned by the CCG as a sound investment in the health of local communities.
- 5.2 At a county level the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board is holding a stakeholder event on 28 September 2012. The 2012 Public Health report will be launched there but the bulk of the day will be focused on testing the issues identified in the draft of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the county. The Board has already agreed four priority areas, these focus on Ageing Well, Young People, Wellbeing and Mental Health. The draft strategy is starting to focus on areas where joint work could have the most impact. As with the CCGs there are great opportunities to highlight the value of district services and the kinds of community activism which we invest in and which play such an important role in creating a sense of community wellbeing. I am pleased that the districts have taken the lead in preparing and presenting the options for the wellbeing theme and hope this will generate a lot of discussion.