



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# E40

## Council 18 June 2013

### CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

#### ***Report by Cllr Sarah Stamp Heritage, Arts and Culture Portfolio***

**Portfolio includes:**

- Arts and Culture
- Festivals and Events
- Heritage Services
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Public Halls
- Tourism (Destinations and Events)

#### **1. *Parks and Open Spaces***

- 1.1 Since the last Portfolio Holder's report, in February, there have been twenty two externally organised events held in the Borough's parks and open spaces including: three fun fairs, two circuses, numerous fun runs, orienteering events in Nowton Park and two outdoor Bury Festival concerts in the Abbey Gardens. At the time of preparing this report, plans are being finalised for the Bury Motor show in Nowton Park. This event is taking place on the weekend previously occupied by the Nowton Country Fair and it is hoped that this new event will attract similar numbers of visitors.
- 1.2 Wheelscape have been appointed to deliver a new skate park facility on the Olding Road skate park site. The new facility, which will be constructed of concrete, will replace the old wooden facility which is now reaching the end of its useable life. The local user group (Bury Skate Park Experience) assisted officers in the selection of the winning bid which was designed by Wheelscape. The closure of the facility will be celebrated at this year's Skate Jam, which will be held towards the end of the school summer holiday period. Demolition of the old facility and creation of the new will follow shortly after that event. The anticipated build time will be around ten weeks, and owing to the success of officers and the user group's funding activities, the scheme will be delivered in a single construction phase.
- 1.3 The Borough has been successful in obtaining external funding to assist new tree planting at both Nowton Park, Bury St Edmunds and Bergamott Road Open Space, Haverhill. Approximately 3,500 young whip trees have been planted at the two sites. The planting at Nowton Park, which forms part of the sites' woodland management scheme, replaces a numbers of trees which were felled as part of a scheme designed to make the woodland areas on site more

sustainable. The purpose of the planting at Bergamott Road was to make better use of the site and to provide a better buffer along the by-pass.

- 1.4 Mark Davison, the Borough's Arboricultural Officer (Tree Officer), left the Borough's employment earlier this month to embark on a new career with the Environment Agency. I'd like to take this opportunity to wish Mark all the best for the future and to formally thank him for his six years of service.
- 1.5 I am delighted to announce the launch of Bury St Edmunds Parkrun on 29 June 2013, 9am at Nowton Park. Parkrun organise free, weekly, 5km timed runs around the world and it's great that volunteers from that organisation have agreed to introduce a run in one of our parks. The run events are open to everyone, free, and are safe and easy to take part in. A web page promoting the Nowton Parkrun can be viewed using the following link:  
<http://www.parkrun.org.uk/burystedmunds/>
- 1.7 Play area improvements have now been completed at both Tollgate Recreation Ground and Nowton Park. At Tollgate Recreation ground, following consultation with local residents and the Ward Councillor, the play area was relocated to a safer position nearer the community centre, and at Nowton a number of items of worn equipment have been replaced with new and the boundaries of the site relocated to enable easier and safer vehicle access onto the Long Meadow.

## **2. *Bury Festival***

- 2.1 This year we ran a reduced 4-day Bury Festival, in order to give us some space to think about how the festival fits in as part of the town's cultural life and how to shape the festival in 2014 and beyond. The festival was a success, with in excess of 7,000 people attending the wide range of events on offer, meaning the festival met its financial targets. Discussions are now taking place about the 2014 festival and we will be seeking greater involvement from the Theatre Royal and other partners in the town. I would like to place on record my thanks to Nick Wells and everyone else involved in pulling together this year's festival.

## **3. *Apex***

- 3.1 The Apex continues to win plaudits from musicians for its acoustics and also for how they are treated whilst performing here. Audience figures are growing across all artforms and we are continuing to present a wide variety of activity, from concerts that have broad public appeal to events that are offering new experiences to Bury audiences. New relationships with different musicians, promoters and agents are continually being nurtured which promise to bring an ever-developing programme to the Apex.

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

- 4.1 I am very optimistic that the Heritage Service bid for Heritage Lottery 'Skills for the Future' funding with partners in Suffolk Archaeology and the Suffolk Record Office will be successful. This will develop skills for trainees to work on heritage collections cataloguing. At West Stow there has already been partnership working with Suffolk Archaeology and a new Community Archaeologist is working on projects based at the Anglo-Saxon Village.

- 4.2 In April there was some thatching maintenance carried out on the Village at West Stow where visitors could see traditional techniques being used. Master Thatcher Alan Jones added new ridges to the Hall and the Weaving House, whilst an experimental design is being tested on the pig house roof. A new pair of pigs arrived back on site at the same time.
- 4.3 Activity Thursdays are very popular when they run in the holidays at West Stow with archery, pot making, mini digs and more. They are often linked with Outdoor Explore sessions on site from Abbeycroft Leisure.
- 4.3 Six hedgehogs were released at West Stow Country Park in a shared services project with Forest Heath District Council to encourage re-colonisation of the area. Suffolk Walking Festival staged a charity walk at the park and Green Flag Award judging has just taken place.
- 4.4 Sales of the Heritage ticket are still increasing with many families grateful of the chance to access both Museums and park at Nowton Park and West Stow for a year for only £30.
- 4.4 At Moyse's Hall Museum a new submission for the Museum Accreditation Scheme was submitted to the Arts Council in April. That month also saw a new style of Victorian themed event at the museum which was very well received. Max Berry (aged 8) put together his own project on the event which was so good that elements of it were added to the Moyse's Hall Facebook Page. Earlier in April a BBC film crew had recorded sequences for a programme on the Red Barn Murder; a talk was given later in the month on the same Corder Trial subject matter.
- 4.5 Material from the collections has been loaned to Clare Ancient House Museum for their Elizabeth de Burgh exhibition. Costumes have been loaned to the Theatre Royal and to the National Trust at Ickworth House. The Past and Present Society have arranged a special viewing of the Cullum collection items at the Collections Study Building, West Stow.
- 4.6 The 'Archive Alive' mobile cinema tour includes Bury St Edmunds Cornhill (outside Moyse's Hall) on June 6th between 3-6pm. The project is taking archive film on the road courtesy of a 1960s vintage mobile cinema to bring the archive alive throughout Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex.