



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# E214

## **Full Council 17<sup>th</sup> December 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 my last report in September, there have been fourteen externally organised events held in the Borough's parks and open spaces. These include a community archaeological dig in Clare Castle Country Park, which was managed by the Stour Valley Landscape Partnership Managing a Masterpiece group, Circuses on Hardwick Heath and Haverhill Recreation Ground as well as the extremely successful Round Table Fireworks display in the Abbey Gardens.
- 1.2 The autumn series of events also included two successful civic functions including the Battle of Britain and Remembrance Day parades both of which commenced from the Abbey Gardens.
- 1.3 The Deputy Mayor of St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Cllr Tim Marks, and Mayor of Haverhill Town Council Roger André, jointly opened the new Jubilee Park and allotment site on 24 October 2013. These new facilities, located on the former Clements School site in Haverhill, are situated in the heart of the Clements estate and provide a much needed resource for this area.

#### **2. *Bury In Bloom***

- 2.1 I would like to congratulate everybody involved with the installation of the Wolf & Crown sculpture on the Southgate Green Roundabout in Bury St Edmunds, especially Melanie Lesser of Bury in Bloom for her hard work pulling the project together. The sculpture is a fantastic reminder of our important heritage in Bury St Edmunds and has attracted a lot of positive

publicity for the town, both nationally and locally, since its unveiling on 21 November 2013. The project has been a great example of local businesses working together with the borough and county councils. Local craftsmen were selected to carry out the work and, as part of this project, the sculptor will be visiting local schools to run workshops.

### **3. *Heritage Services***

- 3.1 The third Sci-fi event at Moyses Hall was extremely well attended this year attracting over 2,500 people. The event owes its success in part to all those individuals who loaned props and memorabilia to the museum for the event.
- 3.2 The Heritage team have also been busy working up designs for the proposed new medieval west gallery exhibition which will tell the story of the Town's Abbey and people of that time. It's hoped that this exhibition will open just prior to the February 2014 school half term break.
- 3.3 At West Stow the information boards relating to the mini-dig "have a go at archaeology" facility have now been installed. This facility has proven to be popular with visiting family groups.
- 3.4 Heritage Officers across the County have been working up the details for a 1970's exhibition next year. Officers have been pulling together plans for a series of entertaining activities which will encompass sport, music and fashion of that era. The events will be held between June and October next year.
- 3.5 I am pleased to report that Suffolk County Council has listened to concerns about losing access to heritage in West Suffolk. They have decided to retain the Bury St Edmunds Record Office, and we will be working closely with the county council to develop an exciting new strategy that will make the best use of all our cultural assets and provide an even better service for all those who value our heritage. I send my thanks to the county council for the decision which will see a heritage service fit for the future.

### **4. *Tourism (Destinations & Events)***

- 4.1 Officers from the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) and Heritage Service attended a 'Welcome to Britain' session held at RAF Lakenheath in November. The session was attended by over 20 American families and officers were able to promote the local visitor attractions in our locality.
- 4.2 The new TIC & Heritage Operations Manager, Lance Alexander, attended his first Bury Tourism Group meeting in November and as well as introducing himself to the team he was able to promote the forthcoming events and activities in the Town.
- 4.3 The 10<sup>th</sup> Christmas Fayre was yet again another fantastic success with around 110,000 people attending the four days. Particularly successful

was the Community day on the Thursday that attracted 12,000 people. Many compliments were received from stall holders, visitors and I am extremely appreciative to Sharon Fairweather and all her staff and the Stewards for the fantastic work that they all undertook.

## **5. Public Halls**

- 5.1 I was very pleased to attend The Apex on 19 November to launch the heritage film touch screen pod. The Pod, provides free access to archive footage of East Anglia, including fascinating glimpses of Bury St Edmunds and surrounding areas over the past 105 years. You can search and select the films by theme, place or year from a collection of hundreds of archive clips sourced and digitised from both the University of East Anglia's East Anglian Film Archive and Rouen's Pole Image Haute-Normandie, the project's cross-channel partner.
- 5.2 The 44 inch screen pod, one of a pair, will remain in The Apex foyer after the project comes to an end, while the other is hosted at Fusion at The Forum, Norwich. I would urge colleagues to take a look – there are some fascinating clips from Coronation Day in our town.
- 5.3 The project website, [www.archivealive.org](http://www.archivealive.org) was launched in October 2012, followed by a hugely popular 'Archive Alive' summer tour of 17 venues, including Bury's Cornhill, outside Moyse's Museum.
- 5.4 I am pleased to be able to say that the programme at The Apex is continuing to develop in terms of the number, range and financial performance of the events. I am delighted to report that the 2013/14 programme is currently operating well above target and is in profit. Between April and the end of December, we have sold over 39,000 tickets for 276 ticketed public events in the various rooms in The Apex.
- 5.5 Some notable names to look out for next year include Suggs, Lloyd Cole and Joan Armatrading, who is performing here as part of her last major tour. A 2014 highlights leaflet has been printed to give people more advance notice of shows next year to boost awareness and ticket sales and has been handed out at Apex events during the busy Christmas period.
- 5.6 In my last report I announced that the Apex had secured a contract to sell tickets for a new 750-seat concert hall in Saffron Walden thereby guaranteeing additional income to the Council. This partnership is working well and the new Commercial Team will continue the drive to develop yet more external box office business and income.
- 5.7 I have previously reported that the Best Western Priory Hotel is now sponsoring the Jazz & Blues programme at The Apex. I am delighted to announce that sponsorship of the Classical music programme has now been agreed with Sodexo. Other sponsorship opportunities continue to be sought and discussions are ongoing.

- 5.8 The Commercial Team is now coming together under the lead of Commercial Manager, Richard Hartley, and they are looking at the range of events that are currently provided by St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath, when they take place, how they are currently marketed, their popularity and the financial performance. They will then be exploring opportunities for developing existing activity and identifying possible additional events that will help to generate income.

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