

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Annual Presentation by the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>OAS/SE/18/001</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	10 January 2018
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<b>Purpose of report:</b>	<p>As part of the "Challenge" role, Overview and Scrutiny are asked to consider the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members. It is part of the Scrutiny role to "challenge" in the form of questions.</p> <p>Therefore, to carry out this constitutional requirement, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member shall attend to give an account of his or her portfolio and answer questions from the Committee.</p>	

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<p><b>Members of the Committee are asked to question the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture on her portfolio responsibilities, and having considered the information, the Committee may wish to:</b></p> <p><b>1) Make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture for her consideration;</b></p> <p><b>2) Request further information and / or receive a future update.</b></p> <p><b>3) Take any other appropriate action as necessary.</b></p>		
<p><b>Key Decision:</b></p> <p><i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)</i></p>	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>		
<b>Consultation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>		
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>		
<b>Implications:</b>			
Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
	Low/Medium/ High*		Low/Medium/ High*
None			
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All		
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>	None		
<b>Documents attached:</b>	None		

## **1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation**

### **1.1 Background**

1.1.1 As part of its "Challenge" role, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the roles and responsibilities of Cabinet Members. To carry out this constitutional requirement, at every ordinary Overview and Scrutiny meeting at least one Cabinet Member shall be invited to give an account of his or her portfolio and to answer questions from the Committee.

1.1.2 Last year, on 11 January 2017, Councillor Joanna Rayner, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture, attended this committee and presented a report which summarised the areas of responsibility covered under her portfolio.

### **1.2 Scrutiny Focus**

1.2.1 The scope of this report differs from that of last year as the Cabinet Member has been asked to prepare a report which answers the following specific questions identified by the committee members as being relevant to the leisure and culture portfolio:

a. **West Stow Country Park:** West Stow has become very popular with school visits and visitor numbers are up, however the Council still needs to create an income. Therefore, what events are being planned for 2018, for example more events like musical festivals?

b. **West Stow Country Park:** West Stow has recently developed a new website, so why not encourage businesses to advertise for a fee on their website?

c. **Bury Literature Festival 2017:** Bury St Edmunds held its first Literature Festival in 2017, which was a great success. There are plans for a similar event to be held in 2018, and questioned whether the Portfolio Holder will be involved in the planning of the event?

### **1.3 Response to Key Questions Set out in the Scrutiny Focus**

#### **1.3.1 West Stow County Park (a)**

School visitor numbers to West Stow are indeed up again this year the below table quantifies the pupil visits in recent years:

Financial year	Pupil Numbers
2014-2015	12,664
2015-2016	14,434
2016-2017	16,885
April 2017 to 30 November	11,370

The next nearest venue of this nature is Sutton Hoo which doesn't attract anywhere near as many school visits as West Stow.

The Country Park contains a number of elements each of which impacts on the revenue costs of the site as a whole:

Feature	Potential to earn income	Actions taken/being taken to increase income/reduce costs
Reconstructed Anglo-Saxon Village and associated Museum	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ticket prices reviewed and increased 2016-2017.</li> <li>• Active Friends and volunteer group</li> <li>• Regular programme of events.</li> <li>• Archery concession</li> <li>• Forest Schools concession</li> <li>• Shop generates an income.</li> <li>• Form and marketing of Heritage tickets are under review and will be improved.</li> </ul>
Café	Yes	New more financially advantageous concession awarded in 2016.
Large Children's Play area	No	It's a non-staffed play area in a public park. We do not charge for access to any other play area in the Borough.
Archive store building (300 sq.m)	No	As an authority we have a significant collection which we are duty bound to look after.
125 acres of public open space, usage of which is impacted by SSSI	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We receive a grant from Natural England which helps with maintaining the SSSI land.</li> <li>• There are a number of events which generate some income.</li> <li>• Grazing</li> </ul>
Two fishing lakes	Yes	Leases reviewed in 2017 income increased.
Large car-park	Yes	Charges are reviewed in line with all similar car parks.
Public toilet facilities	No	Again we don't currently charge the public to use toilets in the Borough.
Old sewage pump house (currently used as an archeological store)	Yes	We are currently looking into potential alternative uses for this building with the intention of it generating an income to help sustain the site.

Part of West Stow Country Park is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The type of event that can be held on or near a SSSI is limited and income from outdoor events, run by the Council, cannot be guaranteed as the weather is so unpredictable. Inclement weather at outdoor events has a major negative impact on audience numbers.

Officers have successfully bid for external funding to help attract more footfall and income to West Stow. This has included contributions from the [Breck's Breaking New Ground](#) project which is funding the hosting of a number of successful events. These events included the Brecks Fest, Enchanted Heath Events, and traditional building technique training sessions in 2016 and 2017.

Officers also successfully bid for and received a grant of just over £128,000 for initiatives to improve the resilience of the Borough's two museums. This funding has, amongst various projects, helped with various marketing issues (e.g. new web sites and leaflets), a new outdoor classroom/shelter facility and museum display improvements on site at West Stow.

A list of currently scheduled events for 2018 is included in **Appendix 1**.

The list is by no means complete at this stage as we are still in negotiations with certain event organisers. When booking events we are mindful of other events taking place at our other venues (e.g. Nowton Park and Abbey Gardens) and other competing events at other regional venues (e.g. Thetford Forest).

The costs of running the West Stow Country Park has reduced year on year since 2014/15. Notwithstanding this fact the Council will continue to look at opportunities, which compliment this special site, to increase income, footfall and reduce expenditure.

### 1.3.2 **West Stow County Park (b)**

As stated above the Borough's Heritage Service was awarded an Arts Council Resilience Grant and part of the funding was used to create a new Web page for both West Stow and Moyse's Hall.

See link: <http://www.weststow.org/whats-on/>

<http://www.moysesshall.org/>

The issue of selling advertising space on the West Stow Web page has been considered. Our Marketing and Sales Manager is investigating the opportunities for sponsorship across the leisure and culture portfolio. However, owing to the limited space on the pages and the increased security requirements associated with it being a public body's web site he is currently not convinced that this is the most lucrative way of generating an income. We are in the process of unifying the ticketing system for Heritage event sales and this will enable us to sell advertising space on the back of the tickets as we do the Apex event tickets.

We are repackaging the Heritage tickets, so that using the membership card will allow holders to get a bigger and broader range of discounts. For example Newmarket / Palace House have agreed to offer a discount to Annual Ticket holders, as have Kentwell Hall, West Stow Pods and Sodexo, at The Apex Café.

The Repackaging of the Annual Ticket project includes:

- Redesigning the visual branding and identity of the Annual Ticket
- Creating a publicity leaflet
- Creating a new membership card and welcome pack
- Creating an Annual Ticket page on both the Moyse's Hall and West Stow websites
- Advertising and articles about the Annual Ticket in the WOWS magazine
- Pop up banners at both Moyse's Hall and West Stow box offices, to prompt purchase.
- Promoting heavily through social media and e-shots

### 1.3.3 **Bury Literature Festival**

Bury St Edmunds first Literature Festival was held between 25 - 29 October 2017. The Event was officially opened by the High Sheriff of Suffolk, Geoffrey Probert.

The programme of events which made up the festival took place at various venues around the town. The festival was organised by a group of avid local readers, entirely independently of the Council, who wanted literature to be among the cultural offerings in the town.

This town event, which was heralded as a great success, received funding via Ward Councillor's locality budgets.

The festival programme featured award-winning authors such as Louis de Berniere, author of Captain Corelli's Mandolin, and Sarah Perry author of After Me Comes The Flood.

The project is a great example of the community coming together to organise an event and if approached I will certainly help in any way I can.

## 1.4 **Proposals**

- 1.4.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee ask questions of the Cabinet Member following her update.

## Appendix 1

### West Stow Event Listings for 2018 (current as of 31 November 2017).

Village opening times 10am-5pm (last entry 4pm in Summer/3.30pm in Winter)

Normal admission applies

DATE	EVENT NAME	DESCRIPTION
<b>Saturday 10 – Sunday 18 February</b>	Ring Quest at West Stow	Explore the Anglo-Saxon Village and Country Park on this family adventure trail. Find the clues, solve the riddles and help save Middle Earth! Find the Dragon, explore Mirkwood. With archery in the Village and a lecture/tour on Saturday 17 February.
<b>Sunday 25 February</b>	'Close Encounters' Bird Ringing with Colin Jakes	A fascinating opportunity to watch the experts catch, examine and ring a variety of feathered visitors to the Country Park (subject to weather) 9am-11.30am. COST: Adults £5, Child £2.50 Booking essential
<b>Easter Saturday 31 March / Sunday 1 April/ Monday 2 April</b>	<i>A Weekend of Medieval fun at West Stow TBC</i>	NANMA <b>TBC</b>
<b>14-15 April</b>	Stowacynn costume	Costume enactments
<b>Early May Bank Holiday 6 – 7 May</b>	Dark Age Warriors.....	Matt/Dark Ages group
<b>Late May Bank Holiday 26 - 28 May</b>	The Healing Arts of the Anglo-Saxons	Ealdfaeder come to the A-S Village. <i>The leech woman has many herbs to cure you, but beware of some of the darker concoctions she hides! Maybe it would be safer to have an Old English verse charm said over you? ...probably much safer than the surgery, judging from the array of fiendish looking tools they have! How healthy is the Saxon diet anyway, and what were the prevalent diseases? + runes, stories, crafts, food, coinage etc.</i>
<b>2-3 June</b>	Meet the 95 <sup>th</sup> Rifles!	The 95 <sup>th</sup> Rifles Napoleonic group will be camped at West Stow. With drill and firing displays. A chance to try on the famous green jacket or feel the weight of a Baker rifle!
<b>23- 24 June</b>	DRAGON FEST! (BIG EVENT)	Themed event and trails....all things dragon....costume re-enactment with

		Wulfingas in the Village ...story telling....puppets etc. + Friends Promo stall. + Ash and 'Gloria'
<b>14-15 July</b>	Stowacynn costume	Stowacynn
<b>July</b>	<i>Angelcynn</i>	<i>Weekend Event - late July TBC?</i>
<b>Thursdays 2, 9, 16, 23 August</b>	Summer Holidays: Activity Thursdays	Days of free have-a-go activities for all the family including Archery, Pottery, Mini Archaeological dig, storytelling, etc.
<b>4 - 5 August</b>	NO EVENT	
<b>11 - 12 August</b>	A Twistory Event at West Stow!	Family fun fantasy event with Matt and The Dark Age group
<b>18 - 19 August</b>	NO EVENT	
<b>August (25) 26-27 Bank Holidays</b>	The Vikings come to West Stow!	Jorvik Vikings occupy the Village.
<b>September</b>	<i>Wulfingas Feast</i>	<i>Food event TBC</i>
<b>September</b>	<i>Stowacynn</i>	<i>Costume event dates TBA (?15-16<sup>th</sup>)</i>
<b>October half-term 22 Oct - Sun 28 Oct</b>	Anglo-Saxon Crafts and Skills (title TBC)	Ynglingas will be living and working in the A-S Village
<b>17 - 18 November</b>	Stowacynn Yule	Stowacynn/Friends day. .With the Anglo-Saxon Hall decorated for Yule. <b>TBC</b>