
Council



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Report by Cllr Sarah Stamp Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage	
Report No:	COU/SE/15/010 [to be completed by Democratic Services]	
Report to and date/s:	Council	24 February 2015
Portfolio includes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arts and Culture• Festivals and Events• Heritage Services• Parks and open Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Halls• Sport• Tourism (Destinations and Events)

1. Parks and Open Spaces

1.1 Events & Activities

- 1.1.1 Over the Christmas period, many took advantage of the range of festive activities available in the parks. At Nowton Park and East Town Park in Haverhill, popular ranger events included a visit to Father Christmas, Christmas Wreath making, workshops to make reindeer food and the traditional New Year's Day Treasure Hunt.
- 1.1.2 Holocaust Memorial Day service – I was proud to attend the Holocaust Memorial Day service in the Abbey Gardens, on Tuesday 27 January 2015. This years' service, which also celebrated the opening of the new garden area, coincided with the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Reverend Canon Matthew Vernon, Sub-Dean of St Edmundsbury Cathedral, delivered the service in partnership with Rabbi Danny Rich, Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism.
- 1.1.3 A stainless steel teardrop sculpture stands a metre and a half tall at the centre of the new garden, surrounded by 57 cobble stones - one for each of the 57 Jews murdered in Bury St Edmunds on Palm Sunday in 1190 - and two benches to allow visitors a place for quiet reflection. Thank you to all Councillors who supported this well attended and poignant event.

- 1.1.4 For all current events please refer to the following link:
<http://www.whatsonwestsuffolk.co.uk>

1.2 **Projects**

1.2.1 **Play area refurbishments - 2014-15**

- Haverhill Recreation ground Play area (Haverhill)
Part SEBC capital - Part Sct. 106.
Construction currently underway – To be completed by the end of the current financial year.
- Quendon Place (Haverhill)
Funded entirely from Sct.106 funding
Construction currently underway – To be completed by the end of the current financial year.
- Flying Fortress Park (BSE)
Funded entirely from sct. 106 receipts.
New MUGA already installed.
New play area currently out to tender should be opening summer 2015.

1.2.2 **Play area refurbishments planned 2015-16**

- Nowton Pit (Bury St Edmunds) - move play area from base of steep slope, install new equipment, install a new path to link play area, car-park and residential estate.
- Allington Walk (Haverhill) - remove existing play equipment, locate new equipment within a fenced in area, installation of a new access path, re-fence & mark out a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA).
- Priors Play area (Bury St Edmunds) - MUGA to move 90 degrees, to enable easier access to a new younger children's play area, installation of new play equipment and boundary fencing.

2. **Heritage Services**

2.1 **Magna Carta Lecture by Prof David Carpenter**

- 2.1.1 There was a full house in Moyses Hall Undercroft for Professor David Carpenter's recent lecture on the role of Bury St Edmunds in the story of the Magna Carta. Professor Carpenter's research clearly links the Barons attending a meeting in the town in late 1214 to the eventual signing of the Magna Carta in 1215.

2.2 **Museum Exhibitions for 2015**

- 2.2.1 New displays open in early February- the 'Horace Barker Signature Exhibition' in the Great Hall is a broad display of the items the museum cares for, showing the diverse nature of collecting from the original opening in 1899. Barker's current ancestors have loaned new images and items belonging to the longest serving Moyses Hall curator (1899-1932).

2.2.2 The Great Hall will be revamped with the addition of a small gallery called 'The Avenue'. An original Tudor door and fireplace will be exposed. The Avenue will host a variety of exhibitions starting with Sybil Andrews Prints in February leading onto the Mayoralty Display in March and then the WW1 Display for the summer.

2.2.3 The Avenue will also act as a new entrance into the Gershom Parkington Room where the Gershom Parkington world class clock collection is displayed. Currently around 70% of the collection's clocks are on display with a further seven long case clocks and other items being added in August. A new interactive computer system, funded from grant money, is also being provided.

2.3 **West Stow**

2.3.1 Alan Jones, a Master Thatcher, arrived in January to start work on thatching of the new sunken house. This new house is part of the celebrations associated with 50 years of archaeology at West Stow and will replace the existing version which was built in 1974. The building should be completed by the end of February.

2.3.2 Alan will be presenting a lecture entitled 'an introduction to early thatching techniques' at West Stow in February for 30 people (bookings available through The Apex)

2.3.3 School visits to West Stow increased considerably in 2014 with over 440 children visiting the newly created winter programme in December. The new programme provides indoor sessions as well as visits out to the Anglo Saxon village. The increase is due in part to changes in the national curriculum and teacher's confidence in the winter programme we are now providing. January schools numbers were 639 pupils, compared to 199 in the same period for 2013.

2.3.4 West Stow Country Park is also reapplying for Green Flag status again this year having successfully retained the accreditation for a number of years.

2.4 **Heritage outreach**

2.4.1 Care Home Visit - As part of the Heritage Services outreach programme, Ron Murrell has visited The Martin's Care home to further forge the links established with the home, including last summer's 70's project. Ron has provided a variety of talks to the residents on themes such as WW1. As well as promoting the merits of the town's museum to the residents' and their families the visits have also enabled the service to record some of the resident's accounts of the past. This aural history has helped bring to life some of the exhibitions hosted in Moyse's Hall Museum.

2.4.2 Gainsborough Fine Art Exhibition - In an attempt to increase footfall, Museums throughout Suffolk are now working more closely

together to promote one another's exhibits. A joint exhibition to celebrate the works of renowned Suffolk artists is being held in Gainsborough House Museum, Sudbury from June to October. Art from our own collections alongside others from Newmarket National Horse Racing Museum will form part of this celebration of art. The concept is for a travelling exhibition to each partner in the coming years.

3. Tourism (Destinations & Events)

- 3.1 In preparation for the tourist season, further training sessions have been held for staff and volunteers working in the towns tourism points. Tours of Moyse's Hall and The Apex have given those involved a better understanding of the towns offer. Welcome Host Gold training for 16 members on the 5th February will continue to strengthen the tourism offer for the coming season.
- 3.2 The London Excursions, Tourism and Travel show was attended by two members of staff from The Apex who helped market and promote the virtues of West Suffolk to the shows audience.

4. Public Halls – The Apex

- 4.1 Box office sales from The Apex continue to increase.
- In December 2014, The Apex sold 6,024 tickets to a value of £101,061.50. Comparing this directly with December 2013, this is an increase of 1,688 tickets and an increased box office income of £28,723.00.
 - Likewise January 2015's figures are up on the same time last year, with the box office sales generating £116,214.50 of income (6,545 tickets) compared to £76,650.70 (4,841 tickets) in January 2014. This is an increase of £39,563.80 and 1,704 ticket sales.
 - At the end of January 2015 the cumulative box office income totalled £950,230.60. This is an increase of £251,806.92 compared to the end of January 2014, at which point box office income totalled £698,423.68.
 - In the 2014 calendar year, The Apex attracted 11,940 new first time bookers. This compares to 8,328 in 2013.
 - So far in 2015, The Apex has achieved 10 sell out shows in January and February.
- 4.2 Social media - The Apex Facebook page now has over 2,570 likes – an increase of 13.5% from 6 months ago.
- The Apex Twitter account now has over 3,200 Twitter followers – an increase of 19.8% from 6 months ago.
 - The Apex e-mailing list now has over 16,000 email addresses of customers who have opted in to hear from us – an increase of 12.5% from 6 months ago.

- Our monthly eNewsletter has an average Open Rate of 38.6% (compared to a UK average of 22.9%).
- Our monthly eNewsletter has an average Unique User Click-Through Rate of 4.7% (compared to a UK average of 3.3%).
- Our monthly eNewsletter has an average Unsubscribe Rate of 0.08% (compared to a UK average of 0.53%).

4.3 Website

- www.theapex.co.uk's average monthly Unique Users is 14,020 so far this financial year, compared to 8,230 last financial year.
- www.theapex.co.uk's average monthly Sessions is 47,307 so far this financial year, compared to 28,028 last financial year.
- www.theapex.co.uk's average monthly Page Views is 133,786 this financial year, compared to 97,416 last financial year.

5. **Leisure**

5.1 **The Friends Life Women's Tour 2015**

5.1.1 After last year's successful hosting of the final leg of the Friends Life Women's Tour, St Edmundsbury Borough Council have worked with Abbeycroft Leisure and Suffolk County Council to bring the start of the Friends Life Women's Tour 2015 to Bury St Edmunds. The Grand Depart will take place on Wednesday 17th June and will see the world's best female cyclists leave Angel Hill and take a route to Aldeburgh. In addition to the start, a riders presentation evening will take place on the evening of the 16th June where riders and teams will be showcased at a free event.

5.1.2 Securing this high profile event creates the opportunity to promote cycling as an everyday activity and assists in improving the physical activity levels of local residents and therefore a wide range of community activity is being developed to ensure that residents get the opportunity to engage in cycling. This includes the continuation of the Women on Wheel Cycle Ride in aid of St Nicholas Hospice, for which I am proud to be an Ambassador and have even promised to take part! This event will take place on the 5th July and it is expected that the event will see a strong take up.

5.2 **Stand Tall**

5.2.1 A new initiative called stand tall is now being delivered across St Edmundsbury. The project aims to assist young people with Mental Health Issues through the provision of access to a number of sessions that use boxing themed activity to promote self-confidence and a supportive environment to take part in exercise. The project is being delivered in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill and is supported by the West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group and a number of other stakeholders who are assisting refer young people into the programme. Indicative outcomes are good with all participants showing increased physical activity and 80% showing improved mental wellbeing. This programme is being supported by

funding from Sport England as part of the "Get Healthy, Get into Sport" initiative that was submitted as a broader bid linked to the Most Active County Initiative.