

*CALEX*

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE & CULTURE

### 1. Facility Improvements

#### **Darwen Leisure Centre Royal Visit**

The Palace has confirmed that HRH The Princess Royal will officially open Darwen Leisure Centre during a visit to the new building on Monday July 5th 2010. Princess Anne will tour the new state of the art facilities, observing different activities around the centre and taking the opportunity to meet instructors and participants from a wide range of user groups including Schools, Adult Social Services, Darwen Aldridge Community Academy, Parent and Toddlers groups and representatives from Health and Fitness classes. The visit will conclude with HRH unveiling a commemorative plaque.

#### **School Swimming**

School Swimming commenced at the new Darwen Leisure Centre after the Easter Holidays with 29 schools attending and over 700 children swimming with school each week. (Another 2hr 30 being used currently for KS3 Booster but not sure how to word it)

Both teachers and pupils are in awe of the new building and many a "wow" was heard on their first visit. The teachers appreciate the thought that has been put into the layout of the building to include school use, with the bus lane meaning safe entry and exit from the bus and the group change and large changing rooms meaning that they can be kept completely separate from the public.

#### **Four Seasons Garden Centre – Open for Business**

Four Seasons Garden Centre is the focal point of the Grow Active and Lifestyles to Work projects. Funded from the council's Working Neighbourhoods Fund it is a formal partnership with Twin Valley Homes to support the worklessness agenda through the development of a community resource based around a commercial garden centre operation.

Four Seasons is now open Monday to Saturday (closed Wednesday) and provides volunteering opportunities, work placements and vocational training for adults (aged 16+), including those who have learning disabilities, complex health and social needs who are resident in the borough. The venture has been identified through Phase 2 of the Future Jobs Fund as an excellent venue to offer progression into paid employment.

An Open Day for partners and stakeholders was held on 1<sup>st</sup> June

#### **Parklands**

Unfortunately a minority of parks have suffered from a number of incidents including vandalism to play areas, Corporation Park walls, steps and buildings plus Pleasington fencing has been damaged by either vehicles or person

unknown. The new play area sites are also attracting vandalism, which as the summer continues, has traditionally, risen to a peak during the school holidays. All incidents of vandalism are reported to the Police.

At Corporation Park, the synthetic tennis courts are being re-laid, and should be fully functional by Wimbledon Week. This is in addition to the relaying of the Red Grass courts last year.

Corporation, Witton, Roe Lee and Bold Venture Parks have all been inspected by independent judges as part of the annual Green Flag process. Queens and Sunnyhurst will be mystery shopped prior to the end of June to assess their condition against the national Green Flag standard.

Huddlesden Millennium Green has also been judged for the Green Pennant. Green Flag results will be known in July.

## 2. Healthy Living

### re:refresh

Since the launch of re:refresh the project has overachieved all performance targets and this has been reflected in the achievements in National Indicator 8 (NI8: 3x30mins activity per week) in the Active People Survey, conducted by Sport England, with the borough's adult participation rate increasing from 16.4% to 21%. Moving Blackburn with Darwen up the national table 88 places from 347/354 to 259/354.

As well as borough wide increases in participation, re:refresh has had **considerable achievements in groups commonly referred to as 'hard to reach'**.

A recent National Audit Office report has noted the failure of Sport England (and potentially the Olympics legacy programme) to increase physical activity in ethnic minority groups, low income groups, women and disabled groups. re:refresh has achieved exactly the opposite (34% of female adults with a beeZ card are active and 42% of BME card holders are active). **This makes BwD a genuine national leader with this programme and its results.** BwD is filling its leisure service facilities and programmes with active citizens whilst other Local Authorities who charge are heavily subsidising their facilities and have low participation/empty venues/programmes.

Also noteworthy is that in 2009/10 over 50% of active adult beeZ card holders (15,025) were from the 25% most deprived areas of the borough, compared to only 3115 active adults in 2007/08 prior to re:refresh – highlighting the positive impact and uptake of activity created by removing the price barrier with free leisure.

## 3. Festivals & Events

**Darwen Live 2010 - Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> May & Monday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2010**

The 11<sup>th</sup> annual *Darwen Live* music festival successfully took place during the bank holiday weekend, under sunny skies and in front of a family-oriented audience of approximately 10,000 attendees. Organised by Brett R. Henry, Anne Ellwood, and Steve Burch from Culture, Leisure, and Sport, this year's festival featuring the headline acts of *Hayseed Dixie* and *Ex Simple Minds*, plus musical artistes from throughout Darwen performed on the outdoor main stage, the indoor *Acoustic Stage* located at the Darwen Library Theatre, in addition to ten other participating pubs and clubs throughout the town.

Through a well-planned and synchronised operation smoothly conducted between the council and the local police, this year's festival was delivered without any incidents or reported injuries within the festival site. The supervising command inspector has already informed the council's head of festival and events that from a police point of view this year's festival was the best Darwen Live festival ever delivered. The same sentiment was echoed by the first aid team provided by the St John Ambulance organisation. A very visible presence by the many market traders of Darwen Market was noticeable as well, this year. Offering a variety of food and merchandise, the traders contributed an extra positive element to the overall festival atmosphere.

#### 4. Young Peoples Services

##### **Summer Off for Fun provision**

Planning is underway for the Summer Off for Fun programme and the delivering includes not only Council Services but also a greater input from the voluntary sector.

##### **Play Pathfinder - Witton Adventure Play Area opening – 11 June 2010**

The opening of the Adventure Play area at Witton Park was very successful with the Right Honourable Jack Straw formally opening the playground and key note speeches from Councillor Michael Law-Riding and Nick Kennedy, Chair of Witton Steering Group.

#### 5. Turton Tower

##### **Turton Tower Fair**

The 3rd Turton Fair, organised by The Friends of Turton Tower, was held on Monday 31st May in the grounds of Turton Tower. The fair consisted of: a dog show, brass band, string quartet, numerous children's activities and a variety of stalls plus a stilt walker, maypole dancing and the crowning of a May Queen. Approx 3000 people attended the fair and thoroughly enjoyed the day. The new Play Pathfinder adventure playground was also hugely popular with children of all ages.