

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE AND CULTURE

LEISURE / RE: FRESH REVIEWS

The reviews across both leisure services and re:fresh have progressed. Working closely with managers and in consultation with Unions and staff the impacts of necessary establishment changes across leisure services have been mitigated against and frontline services retained.

Preparations are ongoing across the section to reflect the expected funding reductions from 2011/12 onwards whilst ensuring that the section is positioned to continue to deliver on and positively contribute to the health and well being agenda.

RE: FRESH

Since the innovative re:fresh initiative was launched, as a partnership between the council and NHS Blackburn with Darwen, leisure attendances, monitored through the beeZ card have increased from 2,000 per week to 12,000 per week

SHADSWORTH LEISURE CENTRE - UPDATE

The Management Board is now established and comprises of a mixture of Centre users, staff and Council representation, with guidance from Council officers. The Board is meeting on a fortnightly basis to monitor usage and develop ideas for increasing visitor numbers and income.

The Centre re-opening is progressing well and is expected to exceed its new target for visitor numbers, with users increasing week on week during the last month.

NATIONAL OLDER PEOPLES DAY - FRIDAY 1ST OCTOBER

The theme for this year's event was '**Full of Life**' with a focus on physical activity. Culture, Leisure & Sport took the lead, supported by local partners including Age Concern and the Older People Forum and took Darwen Leisure Centre on a Caribbean Cruise for the day. Between 10am and 3pm older people from across the borough were invited to come and enjoy a wide range of exciting, new and healthy activities, these included: Latin Splash in the 25m pool, treatments in the 'Ship's Spa' and an opportunity to relax in the Ship's café with a healthy smoothie. The centre's regular programme of activities continued throughout the whole day creating an intergenerational atmosphere in keeping with the '**Full of Life**' tagline.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES - MAINTAINING AND DELIVERING SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Young People's Services are continuing to manage commissioning budget reductions, including the in-year reduction of the Area Based Grant (ABG). This is impacting further on the continued provision of activities for young people.

Young People's Service are working to implement the new staffing structure as part of the service review to respond to these budget challenges with a continued focus on front line services.

Furthermore, due to these budget reductions there will be a modified programme of activities during the half term holiday period. However, schemes for high risk groups i.e. CWD and CIOC will be maintained.

NEW ARTS SHOP OPEN FOR BUSINESS.

On September 16th the former jewellers shop Val Hall on Town Hall square was converted into a hub of arts activity. The shop will be running until March 2011 with a series of different artists taking up residence from local artist exhibitions, art fairs and performances. The project, which is funded by the Arts Council and the government's Department of Community and Local Government, will see the shop renamed The LET shop, which stands for Liberating Empty Terrain. The project aims to bring life into empty shop spaces but also support local artist and creative industries in developing their businesses by giving a public fronted venue to showcase their work.

The current residents are doorstep collective who are running a series of family workshops on Thursdays to Saturdays from 11am until 3pm the and developing a range arts and crafts boxes for families to take home and get creative together.

From October 15 until November 8, Blackburn born artist Julia Swarbrick will be opening the shop as a gallery, showing her own work and that of local artists. Forthcoming activities will see the shop used for the Christmas art markets and as the setting for an opera about homelessness.