

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE & CULTURE

### 1. ARTS SERVICES

- The LET shop on King William St, closed its door for the final time on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011, following an exciting 9 months working with almost 100 local artists and 5000 people. New collaborations and groups have developed through the project so more empty shop work is planned for the near future.
- New webpages have been developed to allow people to access information, siting and images of the public art across the borough.
- The final piece of public art installed at Darwen Leisure Centre, 'River' by Lorna Green, is situated outside the front entrance and is a mixture of natural stone and glass, drawing on the artwork inside the building.
- On May 13<sup>th</sup> we will be holding a printmaking event with artist Sarah Lawton between 6.00 pm - 7.30 pm at Blackburn Museum and art Gallery as part of the International Museums at Night programme. The evening will be linked to the new piece that Timorous Beasties will be unveiling in Blackburn Town Centre later in the month.

### 2. KING GEORGES HALL

The programming for the Comedy Festival (Oct & Nov) is going well with Sarah Millican already selling fast. In June we have Paolo Nutini, but this sold out within 1.5 hours of the box office opening. Sally Morgan (Psychic) & Sarah Millican have also got reserve dates as sales are going well.

### 3. DARWEN LIBRARY THEATRE

The Theatre is doing well, although attendances are down slightly. Forthcoming attractions are Dennis Locorriere, Joe Brown, Catfish Keith coming over from America, Marc Almond in October and Spiers & Boden the award winning folk duo in November. A number of volunteers support the Theatre and this continues to grow.

### 4. FESTIVALS & EVENTS

The Council is supporting Darwen Town Council in organising Darwen Music Live on 28th - 30th May. The Town Council has secured some great acts - Billy Bragg and Dodgy on the main stage on Sunday. A range of other acts will be performing across the town from Friday evening. Darwen Library Theatre is hosting events for 3 days from the Saturday 1.00 pm. – 7.00 pm.

### 5. RE:FRESH INVESTMENT CONTINUES

Following positive evaluation and outcomes analysis both the Council and Care Trust Plus have agreed to continue to invest in the successful re:refresh programme, with £1.65m committed for 2011/12 to improve the health and wellbeing of citizens.

Over the last 3 years Blackburn with Darwen has achieved the 2nd highest national increase in adult participation, a huge turn-around from the third lowest participation rates in the country four years ago.

The biggest increases in participation have been seen in routine and manual occupation groups; those who experience the highest health inequalities. Participation among non-white ethnic groups has more than doubled from 11% to 25% women increased from 13 to 17%, people with disabilities increased from 7 to 16%

National data indicates that the increases in physical activity will have prevented an estimated 30 premature deaths and 24 coronary events. Additional impacts will also include the prevention of cancer, improvements in social interactions and mental health.

2011/12 will be a transition year for re:refresh with some changes to the programme of free leisure to ensure appropriate use of resources whilst maximising impact.

The agreed changes have been communicated to residents and customers in a variety of ways including letters to beeZ members, posters, Shuttle article; staff intranet sites and Team Talk, website and general press release. The communication plan has been led by Corporate PR, with the re:refresh project team supporting with additional information and advice for customers at sites.

## **6. HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

Leisure, Health and Wellbeing will continue to deliver a wide variety of community based healthy lifestyle programmes having secured ongoing commissioning from Care Trust Plus. Successfully demonstrating positive outcomes for residents participating in Falls Prevention, Cardiac Rehabilitation, Weight Management, Stroke and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease rehabilitation services was an important factor in receiving further funding. The positive relationship with Public Health and contribution to wider health priorities will also see services such as Healthy Communities Partnership, Health Trainers and Self Care continue to engage volunteers, supporting them to get involved and improve their own health and wellbeing as well as in their local communities. Over 100 volunteers are already supported through Leisure, Health and Wellbeing projects.

## **7. MUSEUM SERVICE**

Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery's new opening times from 12 noon - 4.45pm started on the 5<sup>th</sup> April. The Curator of Art post is now shared with Burnley Borough Council on a 50/50 basis.

Other shared service ideas are to be progressed and potentially aided by a Museums Development Fund application to the Museums, Libraries & Archives Council/ Renaissance transitional funds for 2011/12.

Turton Tower opened for the new season on April 2<sup>nd</sup> with a remodelled tea room service that has been tendered out. New pathways in the grounds and improved outside toilet facilities. A model for access by guided tour is being used for visits to the house.

'Woven Together' a project involving local groups; St. Vincent's Housing Association; Blackburn with Darwen Foyer; Young refugees; Devonport Court and Action Factory who are displaying the end results of their work that was used to build links and understanding between one another.

'Engage' a display of photography by victims of sexual exploitation. The exhibition is the culmination of a project with BwD multi agency project that allowed exploited people to express themselves and communicate to others images of their lives and interests in order to challenge common assumptions made about them.

## **8. YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICES**

### **8.1 Youth Elections**

YPS staff delivered significant programmes around the youth elections in youth clubs, voluntary sector provision and input in school assemblies to support the importance of democracy and the role of the BwD Youth MP. Turnout in the 2011 youth election was over 50% and following a well attended count in the council chamber Chris Bleasdale was elected as Youth MP.

### **8.2 Youth Voice**

Several members of the Youth Forum have been involved in conference facilitating supporting the 50+ Partnership in looking into intergenerational work.

Neighbourhood Youth Forums have also focused on community cohesion staging several workshops and events, also linked to YPS staff facilitating workshops at the recent inter-schools cohesion conferences.

### **8.3 February half term activity programme**

Youth clubs and centres across BwD staged additional provision during February half term. Highlights included football competition at Bangor Street, new openings at Kaleidoscope Youth Centre (marketed to young people in Highercroft area via SMS text message) through Beez card.

The children with Disabilities and Looked After Children Projects also delivered comprehensive programmes during the holidays at both Darwen Youth Centre and Ivy Street Community Centre.

### **8.4 Community Music Project**

The CMP has delivered work to support the recent Young Minds project, using young people connected with the project to both write and perform original music included in the Young Minds DVD. The Project also created the DVD to support the Youth Elections meaning young people's creative skills were showcased in almost every secondary school in the Borough.

### **8.5 Duke of Edinburgh Presentation**

Over 200 people attended the D of E award presentation award ceremony held at St Wilfrid's School. The awards, which are delivered both through schools and through YPS Open Award group, were presented to recipients who have completed Bronze, Silver and the prestigious Gold award. The regional representative for the DofE Award highlighted the fact that BwD has the largest Open Award group in the North West.

## **9. LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE (LIS)**

### **9.1 Community Capacity Builders Project**

The Library and Information Service has been awarded £40,000 in grant funding, by UK On-line, to establish a borough-wide digital network. The project is Government-backed and involves the engagement of a minimum of 50 settings – corporate, commercial and voluntary – in a "web" of delivery, with digital champions based across settings and trained to inform and recruit those in the community who are not as yet on-line. LIS has one year in which to create the network, engage its champions and roll out a programme of IT focussed events. The project will promote digital empowerment and reduce the digital divide. This local network will be one of 50 to be established across the country in 2011/12 and then sustained, through a LIS-co-ordinated partnership, in future years.