

## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE, CULTURE, AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

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**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR: MARTIN EDEN  
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### **KING GEORGE'S HALL**

With Bolton's Albert Halls closed for refurbishment KGH is picking up a number of additional bookings. The flexibility of the KGH complex has enabled a wide range of events to take place since April including concerts (Livewire AC/DC, Limehouse Lizzy, The Shires, Talon Eagles, Echo & the Bunnymen), conferences, coroners courts, college exams, comedy clubs (including Dave Spikey, Alan Carr and Milton Jones), Civic Sunday, elections, award ceremonies, a wedding, fashion shows, masonic meetings, soul nights, boxing, BBC TV filming, historic building tours, the Mayors Ball and even a ghost hunt !

### **DARWEN LIBRARY THEATRE**

The varied programme continues to develop supported by funding from the Arts Council initiative 'Plugged-In' which has enabled Live and Encore screenings of all the National Theatre's latest productions. The Youth Theatre is now well-established and under the new management of Action Factory they commissioned a special production which the children performed to mark Refugee Week 2015. DLT is also used as a meeting venue for the Older Peoples Forum and Healthwatch UK amongst others. Concert highlights included performances by the legendary Mike Harding, Norman Prince, Leo & Anto from the Saw Doctors, and Chantel McGregor.

### **HEALTHY LIFESTYLES**

#### **Macmillan Cancer Improvement Partnership**

After a successful funding bid, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council is hosting a Pennine Lancashire role (Macmillan Move More Physical Activity Coordinator) as part of the Macmillan Cancer Improvement Partnership (MCIP). MCIP is a pioneering £1 million, three year programme to provide better care and support for cancer patients from the moment of diagnosis to beyond treatment. The project aims to address the high cancer incidence and mortality rate in the area.

Cancer diagnosis are higher across East Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen than the England average and there are inequalities across the area with survival rates – this innovative role is about integrating physical activity for people at different stages of the journey to improve their quality of life, physical and mental ability/wellbeing.

Due to the early success of the work (much of it piloted in Blackburn with Darwen) the initial 12 months funding has now been extended by a further 12

months with letters of support from East Lancashire and BwD Clinical Commissioning Groups & Public Health regarding continuation beyond that.

## **LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE**

### **Self-service facilities**

Self-service units are now live at each of the Borough's libraries, helping the service to maintain its current opening hours on reduced staffing. The new machines allow customers to borrow and return multiple books, DVDs and CDs in one quick transaction as well as check their reservations and manage their account. The new system will also enable staff to manage stock more effectively to better meet our customers' needs.

The newly launched Internet Booking Service enables customers to reserve a library PC remotely from their mobile phone or from any other personal device linked to the internet. Completing the trio of self-service facilities is the Ikiiosk. Visitors to Blackburn Library can use the new Ikiiosk to book a PC up to a week in advance at any Blackburn with Darwen Library. The Ikiiosk also allows customers to manage and pay for their own printing.

### **Livesey Library**

The day to day delivery of the library service is now made by a team of 16 volunteers. The volunteers have undertaken a programme of training to equip them to help in the library, ranging from health and safety sessions to specific library work, which includes assisting customers to choose and borrow books. The volunteers will continue to support most of the existing activities, e.g. the weekly coffee mornings. Volunteers will be supported by the back office library team.

Planning is ongoing to extend the volunteer run community library model to both Mill Hill and Roman Road libraries.

## **ARTS SERVICES**

### **Blackburn is Open**

Blackburn is Open has been successful in a funding bid to arts council for £65,000. This will cover the next 12 months of work which will include the development of the country's first **Festival of Making**. In 2015 this will form part of the heritage festival on 12 September, with a much larger independent event the following year.

Blackburn is Open has been busy in May with what is still the only urban room in the country and has a range of events, exhibitions and activities across the summer including local artists community groups and Blackburn Photography club.

**The Bureau**

The St Johns Centre will reopen as the 'The Bureau centre for creative arts' in June when the tenancy is taken up by a group of local artists and creative professionals. They have some very exciting plans of events, exhibitions and community activities for the forthcoming months.

**Blackburn Festival**

The festival will be going ahead this year with the event on September 5th for its 3rd year with a voluntary committee. They are currently recruiting for volunteers.