

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

**COUNCILLOR DAMIAN TALBOT**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR: MARTIN EDEN  
DATE: 3-12-15**

### **ROYAL LANCASHIRE AGRICULTURAL SHOW 2016**

The Department is pleased to announce that the prestigious Royal Lancashire Agricultural Show is returning to the borough and will be held at Witton Park on 12th, 13th and 14th August 2016. It is expected that the event will attract many, many visitors each day. Managers from Leisure will ensure that the event management plan and Traffic Management plans are in place to mitigate impact on residents in the area.

### **REGIONAL CROSS COUNTRY EVENTS**

Witton Park will be hosting two significant regional events in the New Year; the Northern Cross Country Championships on 31st January 2016 and the Lancashire Schools Cross Country on 7th February 2016. These follow the success of the English Schools Cross Country championships held earlier this year.

### **LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE**

#### **Wi-Fi**

Due to a successful Art's Council Wi-Fi and public libraries grant application, all the borough's libraries will be public Wi-Fi enabled in February 2016. This service will be free. Visitors will be able to log in with their personal devices enabling access to online library information resources, job training websites, email, social networking sites etc. With many Council services online this will also improve access to digital services.

In addition a 2 year Wi-Fi pilot with BT and Barclays at Darwen Library provides additional support involving Barclays Digital Eagles and library staff in providing free IT support to help local people build confidence and develop the skills they need to succeed in the digital world.

### **YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICES**

#### **YOUTH MP VISIT TO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT**

On the 13th November, Jessica Henderson, the Youth MP for Blackburn with Darwen joined over 200 Members of the UK Youth Parliament in a debate at the House of Commons, chaired by the Speaker Rt Hon John Bercow MP. The Youth MP's debated the top 5 issues chosen by young people across UK through the 'Make Your Mark Campaign.

The top 5 topics chosen were; a living Wage; a curriculum to prepare use for life; transport; mental health & young people; Tackling racism and religious discrimination.

## **COMMUNITY ASSETS**

### **Green Lane Community Fun Day**

The Halloween fun day was attended by approximately 200 people and provided an excellent opportunity for community engagement. Council staff, HFT, Police, local groups and residents worked together to provide activities including face painting, crafts, climbing wall, outdoor games, musical entertainment from the 'Majesticks', fancy dress competition and food and drink in the café. The event also provided an opportunity to gain feedback regarding the potential refurbishment of the multi-use games area. Local community volunteers have also come forward to set up new groups such as parents and toddlers and 'tea-time' club.

### **Bangor St Community Centre Asset transfer update**

The procurement process for the asset transfer of Bangor St Community Centre is complete. The successful tenderer is a local charitable trust, Minority Enterprise Development Trust (MEDT) who has been selected to deliver the asset transfer starting with a 3 months Licence period from January 2016. Following a satisfactory operation under Licence, extend to a 25 year lease. MEDT are committed to the long-term sustainable future of the centre for all stakeholders and will continue to support all programmes that have a positive impact on the local community alongside working with new groups who can enhance the present offer.

### **BLACKBURN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY**

The Cotton to Gold exhibition will end on 14 November. It will have been seen by about 6000 visitors. The exhibition was successful in drawing visitor from further afield than usual.

Following Cotton to Gold the Blackburn Artist Society Autumn Open Exhibition from 21 November 2015 to the 6 February 2016. This is an annual event celebrating the artistic talent that exists in the Borough. The Society President, Sam Bahia, is exhibiting his work in the community gallery during the exhibition until 28 November.

### **VENUES – KGH & DLT**

Ticket sales are strong for the 2015 Pantomimes at both KGH and DLT (Aladdin and Sleeping Beauty respectively). Concert highlights at KGH have included performances by Freddie Flintoff, Bill Bailey (2 nights), Paddy McGuinness, Stewart Francis, Noel Fielding, the Hoosiers, the Lancashire Hotpots, the UK Subs and the Bay City Rollers. The 2015/16 'Blackburn Classics' season kicked off with successful concerts by the Halle Orchestra and the Royal Northern Sinfonia, both generating sell-out pre-concert meals for Blakeys. Award nights/presentation evenings included Blackburn College, the Challenge Awards and Witton Park High School.

There was also a strong variety on offer at DLT. The highlight of the 'National Theatre Live' season was Benedict Cumberbatch in Hamlet; the Friends of Darwen Library's first fund-raiser with a talk by author and walker Nick Burton; concert performances included near sell-out shows by local bands Doug Perkins & the Spectaculars and the New York Tourists; other shows included Spear of Destiny, hotly-tipped blues guitarist Laurence Jones, the Houghton Weavers, and Irish Country star Jimmy Buckley. Younger audiences enjoyed the half term programme whilst the monthly Comedy Club continues to be popular at both venues.