

CABINET BRIEFING
CABINET MEMBER LEISURE AND TOURISM
September 2010

SPORT AND RECREATION

Free Holiday Activities

Free & Active providing Places To Go, Things To Do has been running throughout summer at a range of leisure centres, youth centres and community venues across the borough. Continuing to partner with the Sefton Youth Service, the programme offered a range of free activities for children and young people aged 2-19.

Due to budgetary constraints marketing for this summer had to be significantly reduced with a range of alternative low cost marketing mediums chosen as customers were directed to social networking websites, partner websites as well as the official Active Sefton and MOVE IT websites to download the holiday brochure, resulting in 81% increase in first time visitors to the sites.

Throughout the summer programme, more than 33,000 visits were recorded with an estimated 2,660 hours of sport and positive physical activities undertaken by children and young people.

Sefton's voluntary sector sports clubs once again helped support the programme, providing specialist coaching sessions in a number of sporting disciplines.

Positive Futures

Throughout the summer holidays, the Sefton Positive Futures team continued to provide a range of activities for disabled children and young people as part of the Aiming High For Disabled Children project.

Activities on offer throughout the summer included family based activities, day trips and activity days with transport provided for the first time from some areas of the borough.

Throughout the school holiday 156 children and young people attended, of which 37 were new attendees, which represents a 60% increase in attendance numbers over previous holidays.

Active Workforce

Notification has been received that the Active Workforce bid for a second year of Sportsmatch funding has been successful enabling the programme to continue to provide free "back to..." sports and leagues.

The "back to..." sports activities have proven popular with more than 100 women participating in the "back to Netball" league, the 24th "back to Badminton" course now set to run in September and the football league now containing 11 teams. In addition, the Active Workforce programme continues to offer additional non sport specific activities with the latest step challenge now running (closing date for entrants 23/9/10).

Active Sefton Leisure Centres

Dunes Splash World have partnered with the Liverpool 08 Culture Company to provide a free online booking service via the Dunes Splash World website for customers, which has generated additional sales revenue as well as positioning the centre to be able to now generate additional income via the Splash World website.

The use of the social networking website Facebook has increased the number of friends on both the Dunes Splash World and Active Sefton profiles to more than 1,100 and continues to grow in addition to a growing number of Twitter followers.

Celebrating the end of the summer holiday activities, the Netherton Activity Centre held its annual "NAC's Got Talent" competition with eight acts making it through to the final from the earlier stages.

Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre has implemented a range of disability specific water sports activities for adults from local day centres. Activities on offer at the weekly water camp included a range of paddle sports, from dragon boating to canoeing and bell boating with the competitive element being displayed in the team raft building activities. Inspiring the next generation of sporting heroes, the centre was also visited by Chris Holmes, former Paralympic Gold Medalist and Director of Paralympic Integration for the games who toured the site and spoke to disabled children and young people.

Homeless Games

The department's Positive Futures team organised the Sefton arm of the national Homeless Games to provide sporting opportunities for professionals, volunteers and individuals from a homeless background. Offering a range of sports including swimming, netball, basketball, pool and darts to name a few, more than 200 people turned up to take part in the activities and seek out exit routes from the programme.

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

The Summer Reading Challenge 2010 –Space Hop

This year's Summer Reading Challenge – Space Hop has proved more popular than ever. With two weeks of the challenge left, almost 5,000 children have joined Space Hop and over 3,500 have completed their Challenge.

The Summer Reading Challenge has always proved popular in the Maghull area, but this year Meadows has set new records. Almost 800 children in and around Maghull have joined Space Hop, a 23% increase on last year's figures, with almost 600 children completing their challenge which is a 19% increase on the previous year.

A special mention must also go to the libraries in and around the Southport area. Southport has done very well to only have a drop of 14% in their new location. Ainsdale, Birkdale and Churchtown libraries have more than made up for that dip. Children joining the Challenge at all three libraries are up on last year, with Churchtown increasing joiners by a magnificent 25%.

Self service technology reaches Birkdale Library

Following the success of the self service operation at Meadows, two machines have just been installed at Birkdale. As a stand alone library, it will provide a useful comparison to Meadows, and will inform how this could be rolled out to other libraries. The funding for this came from the Merseyside Improvement and Efficiency Programme.

TOURISM

Marketing

PR: a familiarisation trip held for five travel journalists over the weekend of the 17 – 19 September. The Southport Air Show has already received substantial coverage with more to collate from the weekend. Davies Tanner (business Tourism PR) continue to secure exposure in a range of trade publications and associated websites (equivalent advertising value of over £100,000).

Design & Print: The Southport Comedy Week programme is being designed, delivery end September. The Sefton Trail leaflet (borough-wide tourism/leisure offer) has been delivered and is in distribution. Southport Short Breaks & Holiday Guide (2011) design has been agreed, advertising sales are under way. Southport Pocket Guide design under way

Website/new media: The move to the new 'enterprise' web platform for visitsouthport.com has taken place, the online shop will also go live in September. The tourism Facebook and Twitter sites are now both active with daily (or more frequent) updates. E-Newsletter sent to database monthly, now over 6,000 contacts.

Travel Trade: Work done with the industry (exhibitions attended, travel trade newsletter, new travel trade guide etc.) continues to produce results. Coach figures 11% up on the same period last year.

STBN: Businesses in paying membership stands at 104. Next Alliance meeting 17 November. Southport Restaurateurs Association (SRA) recruiting for 2011, new guide to be produced during the autumn.

Events

Southport Summer Classics took place on Friday 30th July with the Magic of Soul and Motown and on Saturday 31st July with a traditional proms style concert with the Northern Chamber Orchestra Sinfonia. Despite the weather Friday night was busy, Saturday night was quiet, particularly compared to previous years.

The "Lord St Celebrates" took place over four weekends in July and August. This was a joint initiative between Tourism and Sefton Arts and uses Partners for Growth funding. Events were well received.

Southport Air show 18th and 19th September – set up has started, ticket sales are going well. The trade village is fully booked and the Premier tickets are sold out for the Saturday. Plenty of ground based attractions including replica aircraft, Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Exhibition and also a Tri Plane exhibition.

British Musical Fireworks Championships – 1st, 2nd and 3rd October – all plans in place competitors happy and looking forward to a high standard of displays. Fantastic Fireworks have dropped out and been replaced with MLE Pyrotechnics.

Southport Comedy Week – headline acts programmed to date include Dara O Briain, Sean Lock and Rich Hall. Work on-going on the fringe events.

RLPO Lunchtime concerts at Bootle Town Hall, full programme in place, first concert takes place on Thursday 23rd September with a Piano Recital.

Christmas Lights Switch on and Parade – Sunday 21st November – work ongoing. Christmas Retail Campaign, Chapel Street will host a Christmas Market on the 11th and 12th and 18th & 19th December, this will include local retailers plus some new traders along with Reindeer and possibly a Wii Winter Games console.

Southport Food & Drink Festival, we will be working with Edge Street events again, planning for 2011 has started already including search for sponsorship. The event will take place on the 12th – 15th May 2011.

Business Tourism

The second quarter of the 2010/11 financial year is almost complete and has seen seven conferences confirm, worth an estimated £5.6m in economic impact.

Planning for a number of autumn projects is well under way including exhibiting alongside The Mersey Partnership at Event UK in Birmingham, Conference Times Autumn/Winter issue, Newsletter e-blast to agents and corporate contacts as well as a group familiarisation visit for Agents in November.

LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

New Play Area for Crosby Coastal Park

Sefton Council received a grant in 2009 for children's play from the Big Lottery Fund, part of which has been used to build a major new play area at Crosby Coastal Park. The project aims to encourage more natural and adventurous play in this popular location next to Crosby Marine Lake. It comprises a large enclosed area with varied landform and stimulating equipment to encourage imaginative play. The play area was officially opened in early August, and has been extremely well used and appreciated, despite the wet weather.

National Awards for Parks and Open Spaces

In addition to the two new Green Flags reported previously, Sefton's Landscape Service has been recognized by three other independent organisations:

- Green Apple Award: presented by the Green Organisation for Environmental Best Practice
- Finalists in the category 'Best Service Team: Parks, Grounds and Horticulture', in the annual service awards organised by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE).
- Winners of five trophies, including 'Best in Show' at the Southport Flower Show; Sefton's garden received coverage in the National Press.

As well as this, the Landscape Section is hoping for positive outcomes in this year's North West in Bloom competition, along with the Crosby / Waterloo and Southport Steering Groups. Results are due in late October