

<b>CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT</b> <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)</b>		
<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>DATE</b>
Liz Dowd	Communities, Partnerships and Engagement	25 November 2024

### **Community Safety and Engagement Team**

All Christmas trees for the Borough have been ordered. Members have been emailed to inform them about the Mayors Toy Appeal and Foodbank donations being deducted from their ward budgets and planning is underway to purchase the toys and gifts. All groups have been asked to supply dates and times of their planned Christmas events so that we can book electricians to be available on site at their chosen times.

A ward member and MP clean up took place on Netherton Park estate to support the Clear Hold Build partnership activity. Community skips were placed on the estate by the cleansing team and OVH. Plus-Dane also provided a caged tipper and two operatives for the morning to collect any on-street fly tipped bulky items. MFRS provided residents with free home safety checks and smoke alarms, whilst Merseyside Police assisted volunteers from Hugh Baird College, OVH, Plus Dane and Sefton Council in a community litter pick. Sefton Councils environmental enforcement team were also on site looking for evidence of fly tipping.

A meeting has taken place with the Windmills Foundation to discuss their Social Signature project and how they can potentially work with Strand Partnership, RSL's, Hugh Baird College and various departments within the Council to develop a programme with young people focussing on rear entry clearance and environmental improvements. The project is in the very early stages of planning, and it is hoped to have a plan agreed before the end of the year with all partners involved.

All items relating to donations for the July 29<sup>th</sup> incident have now been relocated from the Memorial Gardens and 108 Sussex Road. The non-perishable items have been taken into storage at the Atkinson, whilst the potted plants that have not been replanted have been taken to Hesketh Park/ Botanic Gardens for storage.

The Area Coordinators and Team Manager have been supporting residents affected by the recent flooding in Bulwer Street and the surrounding area.

### **Youth Engagement team**

The team were successful in a bid to the Violence Reduction Partnership. The funding secured will be used to enhance the outreach offer in the Hawthorne Rd area of Bootle and Southport Town Centre.

## Community Safety

The Dog Bite Reduction Strategy working group meets regularly to review and discuss the action plan. The group looks at data and emerging issues to proactively work together to develop a positive approach.

Education is an extremely important aspect of the strategy and work is ongoing with local schools as well as the Dog Trust providing support in the community alongside the Green Sefton team.

There is an ongoing ASB issue with rough sleepers at St Georges Church on Lord Street. Issues have been on-street drinking and litter and drug use. The ASB Team have been working with the Police and supporting partners to look at ways of addressing the issue.

The police have secured funding for Operation Opala which focuses on the rough sleepers and street drinkers. The operation is in partnership with agencies to provide holistic support and advice.

Planning for Operation Banger commenced on 16/08/24. The following has been agreed:

- **Youth Service:** The team will be out in the youth bus in the lead up to Halloween and bonfire night and they will be also using the minibus to cover hotspot areas.
- **Park Nights Programme:** Dates/locations yet to be decided: Will be looking for feedback from partners – Neighbourhoods, Green Sefton, Merseyside Police etc, for locations. Active Sefton will be running the sessions Monday – Thursday, 5pm-7pm for 2 weeks, two sessions a night – one North and one South, or an even spread.

## Hate Crime

The Hate crime officer continues to meet with individuals and groups to provide reassurance following the events in Southport and across the country. Support has been provided to Southport Mosque along with the Youth Team and area coordinator for Southport to enable them to hold an open day for members of the wider community.

The Hate Crime Officer will be delivering one of the Lunchtime Learning talks on hate crime reporting. Awareness sessions have also been arranged with staff from One Vision Housing and staff from New Directions.

## Equality Diversity & Inclusion

The EDI officer has continued developing the 'bitesize' EDI training sessions that are useable within team meetings. This has included creation of a session that raises awareness for neurodiversity in the workplace.

The Zero Tolerance Policy has been prepared for introductory statements from key leaders.

## **Sustainable Affordable Living Coordinator**

Officers have been meeting with representatives from the Combined Authority regarding a digital platform for the Food Provision sector. They have been introduced to MiCT through Sefton CVS.

## **LIBRARIES**

### **Libraries Summer Reading Challenge**

Last year was a bumper year for Sefton's Summer Reading Challenge. The scheme runs each year over the summer holidays and aimed to support literacy in children aged 4-11. Children must read 6 books over the summer and if they do this are presented with a certificate at school assemblies across Sefton. The Library Service puts a lot of effort in engaging with primary schools and children before the holidays begin, with each school receiving a visit by a library member from staff. This year's theme is called Marvelous Makers. The take up is looking good with 2474 children joined so far, and 1023 children have already completed the challenge. While good, the numbers are a little down on last year (which was a bumper year), so staff have been asked to give an extra push to promote the scheme.

### **New offer to memory loss sufferers**

In partnership with the Alzheimer's Society, the Library Service is helping distribute Twiddle Muffs to residents suffering from memory loss. Twiddle Muffs are hand knitted objects with sensory material stitched in and help provide cognitive stimulation which helps slow down memory loss. The scheme is part of a larger project to provide practical support for those residents struggling as memory loss progresses. As well as Twiddle Muffs, the Library Service is distributing identity cards which residents can have on their person to help contact carers if they get distressed by confusion.

### **Formby Library Community Garden at Southport Flower Show**

Now in its second year, the Garden Club at Formby Library decided to promote their club by producing a show garden at the Southport Flower Show. The garden is managed by Jane Woodcock, the Senior Library Assistant at Formby, but run by volunteers who set up the gardening club. Aimed at reducing social isolation and engaging with the natural world, it was the gardening club members who wanted to do a show garden at the Flower Show. Jane managed to get in free as a community garden and got 8 free tickets for the volunteers. The show garden was well received by the public who found the raised beds ideal to sit on and take some time out amidst the madness of the flower show. Myerscough College were also impressed and now want to engage with the community garden club further.

### **Update on NPO funding**

In 2022, the Library Service secured £585,000 from Arts Council England as part of being named the first National Portfolio Organisation in Sefton. The funding was originally for a 3- year project and that has now been increased to a 4-year project with an additional £195,000 of funding for year 4. The funding is to be used on cultural and creative activities in Bootle, Crosby and Netherton that help target social isolation and lead to improvements in mental health. Now half- way through the funding timescale, to date 215 of cultural

activities have taken place with several innovative and socially important projects established such as Colour of Pomegranates which helps migrant women engage in the wider community.

### **LCR Digital Inclusion Initiative -free tablets**

The LCR are running a pilot digital inclusion initiative in partnership with Lloyds' bank. This project involves the gifting of thousands of tablets across the region to digitally excluded residents. Part of the gifting involves a half days training for recipients in the use of the tablets and there is limited access to data included. The library service has submitted a project brief for consideration in this initiative and have been immediately accepted. The libraries' project is to train up some of the migrant women already involved with the Colour of Pomegranates project to become trainers. These then deliver the training in Sefton for recipients of the free tablets. The migrant women involved will be able to give something back to the community and this should support their integration. At the same time the confidence of the trainers will be improved and excluded residents will become more digitally agile.

### **Impressive take up of the Digital Newspaper offer**

Over the last few years, the library service has been reviewing it's offer of physical newspapers in the library. Due to the increasing cost of physical newspapers the offer in the libraries has been gradually reducing. However, to off-set this, the library service provides a digital newspaper platform called Pressreader which provides 7000 daily newspapers from across the world. Not only is this more inclusive for Sefton's diversifying demographics, but newspapers are published on Pressreader before they are available physically. Usage figures are impressive, with 19,376 individual hits on Pressreader last month and 538,359 separate articles viewed, which equates to a 50% increase in take up compared to last year.

The library service has also trialled a virtual newspaper offer in each library by providing locked down tablets. The trial has been dogged by technical issues with the tablets and take up has been low. A second trial is now being developed with a larger screen and an improved method of delivering Pressreader.

### **Wi-Fi replaced**

In 2014, libraries took part in a government pilot to install a new method of connecting to the internet called Wi-Fi. In partnership with BT and Barclays Bank, the libraries at Bootle, Crosby and Formby where all connected to free Wi-Fi. While the Wi-Fi worked well, the pilot was not without its issues, the worst being the lack of internet filtering. For some time now it has been anticipated that the pilot Wi-Fi scheme would come to an end, so plans have been drawn up to install council Wi-Fi in these 3 libraries. At the end of August, it was announced by Barclay's Bank that the scheme would close at the end of September, with the Wi-Fi being discontinued. However, plans for the installation of the council Wi-Fi were sufficiently progressed that it could be installed rapidly, and this has now happened. The new Council Wi-Fi has a much stronger signal, has filtering, and connects to both parts of the network – both staff and public.

## **THE ATKINSON**

### **Theatre Programme**

Coastal Voice: the Atkinson will host the Lottery concert performance of *Coastal Voice* on Friday 25th October, featuring the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. This is a live multimedia performance which explores the heritage and identity of three areas: – Sefton, Grimsby and Dover. It uses the real-life stories from a year of interviews to celebrate pride of place, identity and local accents.

The project is devised by award winning Crosby-based composer, John McHugh, Artistic Director at the Music in Mind charity. John recently arranged and conducted the music for the opening of Liverpool's Eurovision Festival.

John describes the music for Coastal Voice as a 'tone poem' for the Sefton coast based on the melodies of local dialect. In addition to the RLPO performance the evening will feature local musicians Maddie Lara and Keith Hubbard, and scenes from a comedy play *The Iron Men* by Joe Lewis. The performance will be filmed as a feature within the project archive and used to create augmented reality content for schools and local people to enjoy further after the event.

*Coastal Voice* is supported by National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Burbo Bank Extension Community Fund. The Sefton schools who have contributed to the project are Meols Cop, Kew Woods, Woodlands, Waterloo Primary and Bedford Road Primary. Community participation has come from SACHA, Friends of Derby Park, In Another Place, and Y Kids.

### **Museum Programme**

This October the Atkinson celebrates 10 years of acting as custodians of the Victorian benefactor Mrs Anne Goodison's Egyptology collection. Over the years the collection has been enhanced with digital Augmented Reality, and fun interactive displays. The collection continues to attract schools from Sefton and more widely across the North West region. Last year 1,139 students enjoyed curated visits with additional activities such as workshops and drama performances linked to archaeological themes.

Zahed Taj-Eddin: An Alchemy for Afterlife 26 October 2024 – 25 October 2025  
To celebrate the 10th anniversary The Atkinson has invited contemporary artist Zahed Taj-Eddin to install his Nu-Shabtis amongst artefacts from the Goodison Collection permanently on display. The new installation creates a dialogue between ancient and contemporary craftsmanship.

Shabtis are figurines found in many ancient Egyptian tombs - they were servants for the afterlife. Zahed Taj-Eddin imagines that Ancient Egyptian tombs are opened in the present day. The Nu-Shabtis discover that there is no afterlife, no master to substitute for and no labours to perform. They are liberated and become free to do whatever they like. The Nu-Shabtis follow modern lifestyles, engaging with technology, retail, social entertainment and even political protest. In these varying responses to our modern existence, they reflect us all, and the complications and contradictions of the world in which we currently live.

## **Other news**

Building maintenance: the Atkinson is currently working through two projects, both of which have been underwritten by external funding. With support from the Youth Investment Fund the Bank building section is having new heritage windows installed. This will offer greater insulation and energy efficiency to the first floor Learning Rooms and ground floor Children's Library. Shared Prosperity Funding has paid for replacement of the library carpet. All areas are now completed except the Children's Library, which will be finished once the new windows are installed. Both projects are proceeding well and scheduled for completion by mid-November.

Southport Incident Response / Tribute Management: the Atkinson has repurposed several back of house rooms to enable the temporary storage of tribute items donated by the public. The items include c. 2,500 teddy bears, artwork, messages of condolences. Through the Community Impact and Resilience cell options are under consideration for how to manage the collection. Representatives will attend a workshop at Manchester Art Gallery in November to learn more from other institutions who have faced similar scenarios with spontaneous memorials to tragic events.