

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT
Overview & Scrutiny (Regeneration and Environmental Services)
20 January 2015

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Ian Moncur	Children, School & Families and Leisure	December 2014

LANDSCAPE SERVICES - Head of Service, Rajan Paul

PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

Engaging with the Community – Community Parks Officers (CPO's):

As part of the aim to encourage more people in the community to play an active role in managing the parks, and increase their capacity and resilience, the CPOs help, support and develop groups and organisations in a variety of voluntary activities.

- Sporting Lights: The Community Parks Officers (CPO's) form a part of the Sefton District Bonfire planning group; a multi-agency partnership aimed at alleviating antisocial behavior across the Mischief, Halloween and Bonfire Periods. For the past three years, the CPO's have created and led on a Sporting Lights partnership initiative in Coronation Park in Crosby, which is flood-lit for the evening when a variety of sports and craft activities take place. The initiative has a highly successful track record for reducing levels of antisocial behavior.
- Christmas Lantern lit Carol Concert: The inaugural lantern lit carol concert took place in December. The events created an over-arching partnership between the friends of Alexandra and Coronation Parks and the Friends of Waterloo Seafront Gardens. The Sing Our Socks Off Community Choir volunteered to lead the carols and the Crosby and District Lions were in attendance along with Father Christmas.
- Tennis For Free: Sefton MBC's Victoria Park (Waterloo) Tennis For Free Scheme has now been named in the top five of the 27 UK wide schemes. The scheme will be continued for a further year of provision of free coaching and equipment at site for all community members. The scheme will start again in the New Year on the 18th January.
- Park Watch: The CPO's met with partner agencies such as Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire and Rescue to discuss the launch of two pilot Park Watch schemes in Bootle and Crosby. The scheme engages with and engenders ownership of their parks by the local community who will act as the 'mouth, eyes and ears' of the park. Local Schools will work with their respective CPO's to create a Park Watch mascot for their park. The scheme will hopefully roll-out in spring 2015.
- Bootle Schools/ Colleges in Derby Park: Year 3 pupils from St Monicas Primary have visited Derby Park for a guided tour by CPO's. As part of their literacy studies, the pupils are writing a story using the park as the setting. CPO's have also been carrying out practical and survey work in the park with pupils that have been referred to Christ Church Primaries 'Nurture Base'. These pupils have displayed behavioural problems

in the classroom and receive pastoral care in school. CPO's are working with Pastoral Care Managers in school to provide activities in the wider community.

Hugh Baird College Performing Arts students, supported by the local CPO's, have been visiting Derby Park, utilising the bandstand area to plan and deliver a performance as part of their studies. Skills for Working Life students from Hugh Baird College have also been carrying out improvement works in Derby Park. Works include the creation of a vegetable bed, painting benches and gutter clearance.

Supporting Friends of Parks and In Bloom Groups

P&GS is supporting over 40 different groups who are helping the Council to manage and maintain their parks and local environment. Groups are encouraged to develop and become sustainable in the long term, to ensure the environment is maintained to an acceptable standard, despite significant reductions in Council funding.

- Northwest in Bloom (NWiB) Awards Ceremony: In Bloom Groups were recently recognised at the annual NWiB Awards Ceremony, held in Southport. 26 Neighbourhood Entries received an Award and ten of these Groups also received a Discretionary Award of some sort. This is a record number for Sefton and shows the commitment of volunteers throughout Sefton. Also, Ainsdale, Crosby and Waterloo, Maghull and Southport all gained an Award for their respective categories.
- Volunteer Celebration Event at St Luke's Church: More than 58 community groups, individuals, businesses, Friends of Groups and charities across Sefton have been thanked for their efforts in contributing to this year's successful North West In Bloom results and making Sefton's parks and green spaces sparkle. The Event was attended by the Mayor of Sefton and the Chief Executive, and there were performances by local artists.

Developing Partnership Working

Work is also on-going to develop relationships with external partners, to help both these organisations and the Council achieve positive outcomes through volunteer work in parks.

- Killen Green Park Improvements: Sefton Residents Association have secured £5000 to undertake some improvements in the park which included turning a grot spot in the park into a 'cottage wildlife garden'. More than 300 plants and shrubs were planted as part of the project, along with improved seating areas. The project also involved L30 Community centre, Sefton Councils Parks and Greenspaces, The Landscape Group and pupils from the Grange Primary school.
- Santander Volunteer Day: In October, Santander got involved in a Project at 'Linacre Bridge Hub' and a Team of 10 staff carried out a range of activities that included; cutting back overgrown shrubs, painting park benches and repairing stone walls. Santander donated £250 towards further community development at Linacre Bridge.
- Lord Street: The Learning Rooms community group have started helping in the gardens, both alongside the existing garden volunteers and by themselves. For now, they help with litter picking and leaf clearance, and in time will help with weeding shrub beds. This means they now help out at Lord St and Kings Gardens.

- Hesketh Park Labyrinth: Hesketh Park, Southport is celebrating after receiving a Special Award for Innovation from the Green Flag Award Scheme. The Award is presented to Green Flag Award or Community Award winning sites that show that they have made changes which have brought outstanding benefits to both their site and the local community. Hesketh Park was chosen as one of 9 sites across the country for the award for the innovative maze in the park and its impact on people who use it, as an innovative remedy for stress, anxiety and depression.
- Prince's Trust Handover at Hesketh Park: Recently, a Team from the Prince's Trust (based at Southport Football Club) carried out its two week project in Hesketh Park. The young people got involved in painting many areas in the Park, including the children's play area railings, the boathouse and the carpet bed garden railings.

Promoting and Facilitating Community Ownership

In an effort to continue to find future savings within the service and create a sustainable model for sports facilities, officers are in talks with three new groups about self-management (Phoenix Football Club, Southport, Redgate Rovers Football Club, Formby and Sandbrook Bowling Club, Ainsdale). The football clubs are both looking for total site self-management, which would be a first for the borough, but could create a good new model for future sites.

Update on proposed surface water charges for parks and open spaces

A north west local authority meeting with OFWAT and United Utilities is scheduled to be held on the 16th January to discuss proposed charges that we impact significantly on Merseyside's parks and green spaces. United Utilities have no far delayed new surface water charges on parks until 2016, after which the 6 Greater Merseyside councils can expect phased in charges of over £2 million. The impact for Sefton's parks will be considerable and the authority has played a leading role in challenging the expectations of the water utility provider and its regulator. Officers are continuing to examine means of sensibly reducing surface water areas ahead of any expected increase.

Registrars

10 December – implementation day for couples to convert their civil partnership to marriage. 4 couples converted on 10 Dec, 2 couples on 12 Dec & 3 couples booked in before Christmas.

Phase 2 of the Immigration Act 2014 to be implemented on 2 March 2015 – extends notice period for couples getting married/civil partnership to 28 days from current 16 days. Also any person who is subject to immigration control will be prevented from getting married if it is thought that they are entering into a sham marriage.

HEALTH & WELLBEING SERVICE – Head of Service, Steve Deakin

SPORTS & LEISURE

- Active Kids/Tots football
Football in Netherton/Litherland continues to prove popular with between 40 - 60 children participating each week. The sessions which take place at both Netherton Activity Centre and Litherland Sports Park engage participants from the age of 2 to 11.

As well as providing an ideal platform for grassroots football, the sessions have enabled progression in to voluntary sector sports clubs and beyond. Over recent months 6 players attending the sessions have been signed up to professional football clubs - Liverpool, Man City, Everton and Blackburn.

- **Sport England Inspired Facilities Funding**

As part of the support given to voluntary sector sports clubs, the Active Sports team have been instrumental in the success of three Inspired Facilities funding bids. Support and advice was given regarding grant applications and development plans, which resulted in £183,963 being awarded to improve sports club facilities. The successful grants were as follows;

- The Northern Club - £50,000
- Southport and Birkdale Squash Club - £75,000
- Hillside Lawn Tennis Club - £58,963

- **Be Active October Half Term**

Following the successful Be Active summer programme, both the free sessions and sports camps proved to be equally successful during October half term.

Key statistics were as follows;

- 17% overall increase in attendance in comparison 2013 (2013 had 1064 attendances; 2014 had 1240 attendances)
- 35% of participants attended the free sessions
- Individual centre increases in attendance were as follows;
 - Litherland Sports Park **83%**
 - Dunes **157%**
 - NAC **42%**
 - Meadows **57%** (Dry side)
 - CLAC **73%**

- **Merseyside Sporting Champions Awards**

Following the Sefton Sports Awards a number of winners were nominated to receive awards at the Merseyside Sporting Champions Awards held on 28th November. In addition open categories were included and saw nominations shortlisted from schools and the Active Sports Team. Sefton had its most successful evening winning 3 of the 9 awards:

Lifetime Achiever - John Rourke

Coach of the Year - Gareth Roberts

Young Volunteer of the Year – Zach Nicholson

Young Sports Personality of the Year – Lizzie Tolman - Badminton **(Winner)**

Club of the Year - Sefton Stars Basketball Club **(Winner)**

Volunteer of the Year – Tommy Walsh

Community Project of the Year

Break the Boredom (ADHD) Programme **(Winners)**

Aspiring Instructors

Primary School of the Year – Churchtown Primary School

Secondary School of the Year

Greenbank High School

Formby High School

LIBRARIES

- **Summer Reading Challenge**

The Summer Reading Challenge is a successful national initiative that challenges young people to continue reading during the summer holidays. This week we were given the very exciting news that Sefton Library service has contributed to this accomplishment by producing the **highest percentage of ‘completers’ in the 23 North West authorities**. **77%** of our young Borrowers that signed up went on to complete the challenge!

Each of the six Sefton Libraries saw in an increase in the numbers of children joining the Summer Reading Challenge, (joiners up 16% to 2684 children) and completing the challenge up 14% to 2073 children.

- **Sefton at War display**

A display highlighting the war time activities of the townships of Sefton between 1914-18 has produced to accompany an educational resource booklet that has been gifted to all school children in Sefton in years 7 and 8. The display and booklet was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund to help Sefton commemorate the centenary of the start of World War I. The display has now travelled around the borough’s libraries and is now to be displayed at Bootle Town Hall ,before possibly going over to Mons.

- **Celebrating Library Volunteers**

The library service is holding a ‘Celebrating Library Volunteers’ event Wednesday 17th December in recognition of all the work library volunteers have done across the library service over the past year. The library service has nearly 200 volunteers who undertake various roles enriching and extending the reach of the library service. Councillor Moncur will be gifting certificates to the volunteers at the event.

ARTS

- **The Atkinson Museum**

The first 25% of the museum has been completed and opened to the public on the 3rd November. The Council’s Egyptology collection is the main exhibit and has attracted just over 20,000 visits in its first 3 weeks. The target attendance figure agreed with the Heritage Lottery Fund was 64,000 in the first year following opening, so we are well on the way to meeting and exceeding that target. Egyptology is a main element in the National Curriculum so a large number of Sefton Primary schools have either visited or booked to visit the exhibition, which is the first time for more than 40 years that it has been on public display.

- **Chorus of the Coast**

Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership Scheme, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, commissioned The Atkinson to deliver four special projects to interpret the 20 miles of the coastal path through artists’ eyes. The music inspired by working with children and young people, Friends of King’s Gardens and the Alzheimer’s Society to explore the sounds of the coast. The concert was delivered on 24th November with participants from St Elizabeth’s Primary School, Formby High School, Merchant Taylors School, the Sefton Youth Jazz Orchestra and Sefton Music Service. The event was well attended with over 300 people listening to the children recite the poetry they had written and sing and play to the new piece of music recorded about the sounds of the coast.