

**CABINET MEMBER LEISURE AND TOURISM**  
**17<sup>th</sup> December 2009**

**LEISURE SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

**ROYAL VISIT**

On the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2009, His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent paid a visit to Sefton, taking in two of Leisure's star attractions.

His first stop was at Hesketh Park, where he was welcomed by the Mayor of Sefton and met a number of people who are involved with the park. After touring the park he unveiled a brass plaque commemorating his visit, and was shown a photographic display of the major restoration undertaken in the park as part of the recent Heritage Lottery funded works.

Later, accompanied by the Mayor and Mayoress, he visited Crosby to officially open Sefton's first water based adventure centre. Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre is already in use by clubs and is scheduled to be fully open to the public in the new year, when use by Children's Services will commence. Interest in the centre has been very strong with many bookings already being taken.

**OPENING MEADOWS (MAGHULL LEISURE CENTRE AND LIBRARY)**

A "soft" opening of the new facility adjacent to Maghull Town Hall commenced on 30<sup>th</sup> November. The new library, pool, fitness suite, health suite and Hornby Centre is already proving a great success with nearly 700 memberships for the fitness suite sold and 1,000 visits to the library on the first day (compared to 6,000 visits in a month at the old Maghull Library).

**CULTURAL CENTRE GO AHEAD**

The Cultural Centre in Southport was given the go-ahead when £4 million of North West Development Agency funding and £7.3 million of Sefton Council funding was confirmed in November. Cabinet also decided that the temporary library service for Southport was to be provided through the libraries in Churchtown, Birkdale and Ainsdale with People's Network (IT) possibly going into the One Stop Shop in Southport. This decision was called in, to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny on 9<sup>th</sup> December.

**BOOTLE LEISURE CENTRE**

Maintaining high levels of quality assurance, Bootle Leisure Centre received the highest performing leisure centre status in the UK in November. Based upon their performance in QUEST (a leisure quality assurance standard), the centre has received the highest recorded grading in the last two years, a testament to the quality standards maintained at the centre.

**GOLDEN APPLE**

The Landscape Development and Management Team (Parks) scooped a prestigious Green Apple Award for its 'neighbourhood approach to landscape management'. The awards recognise best practice in environmental management with Sefton being one of the few local authorities in the country to gain a coveted 'gold award'.

## **IN BLOOM SUCCESS**

Sefton had great success at the recent In Bloom award ceremony held in Southport, with Crosby Waterloo coming runner up in the small coastal resort category and Southport winning the large coastal resort. In the neighbourhood categories, Formby, four neighbourhoods in Maghull, Church Ward, Seaforth, Churchtown, Birkdale and Peel Road Bootle all won awards.

## **HEALTHY LEISURE ASSESSMENT**

The Department scored top marks in this assessment of partnership working to improve the health of the borough. The department was noted (for the first time in the country) an exemplar of best practice in all six categories assessed, with the highest score ever recorded.

## **TOURISM DEPARTMENT**

### **MARKETING**

**PR** – Media coverage this month included Weekend Examiner, Gloucester Echo, Peterborough Evening Telegraph, Yorkshire Evening Post, Glasgow Herald & Beyond Magazine (Southport Classic Resort Travel Features). Local events were also covered in Sefton media (Southport Visiter, Formby Times, Champion etc).

**Advertising** – Spring media plan being finalised, will include inserts and online activity as well as press ads

**Print** – 2010 Holiday guide has been delivered and is being distributed. Southport Pocket Guide will be signed off before Christmas. Work has begun on the spring / summer events guide and the 2010/11 Travel Trade Guide

**Golf** – Golf sub group met 18 November. Update from Charlie Grimley on England's Golf Coast. Canadian golf media visit in October (26-30 October) went well, coverage to be monitored by our contact in Canada.

**STBN** – Alliance meeting on 10 December. Membership currently stands at 110

**Website** – The visitsouthport.com website will move to the new platform (Enterprise) in 2010. Work about to commence on the redesign to make the most of the enhanced functionality.

**Group Travel** - Familiarisation visit managed during Northwest Masters weekend. Seven operators and two group publications attended

### **EVENTS**

The third evening of the British Musical Fireworks Championships was cancelled due to the weather conditions. An insurance policy for bad weather was in place for this event and an insurance claim to recover event expenses and lost income is ongoing.

The Southport Comedy Week took place in October and featured a sell out show from headline artist Jimmy Carr and the event as a whole achieved its financial targets.

The Southport Christmas Lights Switch on took place on 15 November including an illuminated parade and entertainment on a stage in the Town Hall Gardens, the event was successful and attracted large crowds.

Formby Christmas Lights Switch on took place on 26 November, the event experienced good weather conditions and was very busy, possibly attracting its largest crowds to date.

The Event Team held a planning day on 27 November to discuss the event programme and business planning for the 2010 programme. Sefton Volunteer coordinators also attended this day with a view to further integrating volunteers in the event programme. Planning for the 2010 events is now underway.

## **VISITOR ECONOMY**

Southport Visitor Economy Strategy is available in draft and being presented at various stakeholder groups.

Tourism Volunteer Programme has been developed in conjunction with Sefton CVS and the Promoting Parents Initiative. The project will target local residents across the borough and encourage them to participate in tourism activity such as the events programme and began in April 2008.

Partners for Growth – Currently commissioning New Mind to develop [visitsouthport.com](http://visitsouthport.com) through the implementation of the enterprise web platform.

Arts & Creative Industries – Work has begun with local arts practitioners regarding the development of a creative quarter in and around the Market Street zone.

Sefton's Natural Coast - 2010 marketing plan is being updated and will support the promotion of Crosby Coastal Park (Another Place, Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre etc) as a destination for leisure tourism and gateway to the wider coastal offer.

## **DISPERSAL OFFICER**

**ICT** - starting the design process in December of moving website to the Enterprise Platform, which will offer more flexibility, economies of scale and offer the customer a more user friendly and competitive offer. The new version of [visitsouthport.com](http://visitsouthport.com) should be up and running February/March. The new website will also ensure its target market includes the Cosmopolitan and Style Hounds as in line with Southport Branding, and see enhancements in booking and search facilities, navigation, social networking, Online Shop for the TIC to generate revenue, etc. With new Branding coming into effect in January, temporary measures will be put in place to reflect this on the site, whilst the new site is being built.

**Southport Ambassador Awards** - due to take place on Wednesday 3 March. Already received approximately 350 nomination forms with closing date Friday 22 January. Current Sponsors include TMP, Southport College, Merseytravel, [Sefton@Work](mailto:Sefton@Work), Express Sefton, Southport Restaurateurs Association and Sefton MBC tourism department.

**STEP** - working with TMP to support STEP (Supporting Tourism Enterprise Programme) within Sefton Visitor Economy. TMP has secured funding from Europe

and NWDA to enable continuation of assistance for SME businesses within the visitor economy.

## **BUSINESS TOURISM**

A final draft of the new business tourism business plan has now been distributed to STBN partners for their buy-in and is currently being instigated. The new Meeting Schedule has been established in accordance with the plan and the first Business Tourism Steering Group is met on the 20 October - agenda items included approval of new reporting procedures etc. The previous two quarterly reports will be presented as follows:

### **Quarter 1 - April - June 2009**

Confirmed conferences	Provisional reservations	Dates Offered	Dates Released	Familiarisation Visits taken place	Future Familiarisation Visits
6	4	1	6	13	6

### **Quarter 2 - July - September 2009**

Confirmed conferences	Provisional reservations	Dates Offered	Dates Released	Familiarisation Visits taken place	Future Familiarisation Visits
6	2	5	2	13	9

Additionally, the first of the Business Tourism Working Group (made up of the destination and venue sales teams) met on 18 November, the discussion during the meeting set the parameters for future meetings – what everyone wanted out of the sessions etc.

The new Business Tourism Researcher/Administrator was selected and started work on 23 November. Her training is well underway and has already proved to be an excellent addition to the team

In conjunction with the Marketing section we have, through a tendering process, selected a national PR company (Davies Tanner) who we will work with to further promote the region as a business tourism destination.

Southport has hosted a number of extremely successful conferences during this period and feedback from both organisers and delegates has been excellent.