

**CABINET BRIEFING
CABINET MEMBER LEISURE AND TOURISM
10th JUNE 2010**

Park Ranger Service

A review has been carried out recently into the performance of Sefton's Park Ranger Service, which started in November 2008. The results indicate that the team is performing very well in their aims of engendering community ownership, pride and involvement, making the parks better used and increasing the perception of safety. User satisfaction has increased, incidents of vandalism have decreased, and thousands of local residents of all ages have engaged in park activities.

Silver Surfers Day

Libraries across Sefton took part in UK Online Centre' "Face your online fears" publicity campaign leading up to Silver Surfers' Day at the end of Adult Learners' Week. The campaign was aimed at over 55s who are uneasy about getting online, and library staff were on hand to offer reassurance and give basic assistance in logging on the "myguide" website. This provides simple IT self-help courses, email facilities and access to searching the Internet. The idea was to demonstrate that computers are not as intimidating as they might at first appear, and to encourage people to go on to learn more at their own pace. The day was a success, with more details to follow.

Southport Library

The library closed in April. The local history service is now operating from Southport Library. The mobile library is parked in Tulketh Street for three half days per week. Work is beginning on the temporary premises at the Visitor Office, with an expected date of completion at the end of June.

Arts and Cultural Services

As part of the process of stripping out Southport Arts Centre prior to its redevelopment, the removal of the foyer carpet has revealed the original highly decorative tiled floor. Officers are now investigating the possibility of restoring it to its original 1878 condition.

The interim arts service is well under way with events happening in alternative venues in Southport, Maghull, Bootle, Crosby and Formby. These include exhibitions, youth drama, courses and workshops and a full professional programme at Crosby Civic Hall.

Dementia sufferers are one of the groups now benefiting from the provision of specialist arts based courses and classes. This is working alongside the Creative Alternatives programme which uses arts activities to help those with mild to moderate depression.

Active Workforce

Continuing to get the workforce active, the Active Workforce team have recently added two new partners to the portfolio of organisations running the programme and now include Autism Initiatives and Mersey Care NHS Trust.

Aiming to meet the needs of people with Autism, their families and carers, Autism Initiatives is a charity organisation while Mersey Care NHS Trust is a major employer within Sefton, which aims to provide specialist mental health and learning disability services for the people of Liverpool, Sefton and Kirkby.

Positive Futures

Positive Futures have continued to provide positive activities for disabled children and young people most recently running an "Ability Counts" football programme for disabled young people to play football. After following a course of games the team were entered into a Disability Football league at Greenbank Academy by Liverpool County FA where they competed against a range of teams, including Everton and Liverpool, to achieve second place.

Tackling hard hitting issues which are relevant to today's youth market a range of "Breaking Cultures" workshops have been run by the Positive Futures team including gun and knife crime. Proving popular with young people, more than sixty young people have attended the Behaviour & Attendance programme meeting ex offenders, family victims and participating in role-plays, presentations and workshops.

Meadows Leisure Centre and Library

Meadows continues to impact on the local community and held its official opening ceremony this month with the Mayors of Sefton and Maghull officially opening the centre. With children in attendance from a local school a time capsule containing articles from the day was buried in the courtyard of the facility with a plaque denoting that it would be opened again on the same date in fifty years time. Since the opening of Meadows the usage of the library has increased significantly. There is an increase of 190% for visits, 400% for new members, and 40% for stock issues

Quality Coast Awards

The Department has been successful in its application for the Keep Britain Tidy Quality Coast Award with all four of our main beaches entered now being able to fly the award flag during summer 2010. The beaches are Crosby, Southport, Formby and Ainsdale

The Quality Coast Award was introduced in 2007 with its main focus being on raising standards at the coast. The Award reflects the great achievements of England's beach managers and significantly helps them in future planning for beach improvements and developments. Although beaches that fly the Quality Coast Award can often be very different, the flag is a symbol of quality which guarantees that the beach that you are visiting is one of the highest standard.

Tourism Award

Sefton has won a national award for its work with the travel trade industry. We were acknowledged as being the UK's 'Most Coach Friendly Local Authority' at an awards ceremony in Manchester on 28 April.

Travel Trade

Work we have done with the industry (exhibitions attended, travel trade newsletter, new travel trade guide etc.) continues to produce results. Coach figures have shown a substantial increase during the first 4 months of 2010 – over 25% up on the same period last year.

Events

Southport Food and Drink Festival took place 13 – 16 May and attracted approximately 40,000 visitors. New Gala Awards ceremony took place with over 6,000 nominations received for the various categories attended by 140 people from local businesses.

Southport Summer Classics now programmed – Friday 30 July, Magic of Soul and Motown, Saturday 31 July is traditional proms style concert with the Northern Chamber Orchestra Sinfonia.

Business Tourism

Following the bumper last quarter of 2009/10, when 17 conferences confirmed with an estimated economic impact of almost £13m, the team has got off to an excellent start for the new financial year. So far this quarter they have secured 11 conferences worth an estimated £5m to the borough.

Building on the success of collaborative exhibiting earlier this year plans are being drawn up to once again partner with Liverpool Convention Bureau and ACC Liverpool at Event UK in September and International Confex in Feb 2011.