

## **Leisure & Culture Report to Council 30.11.06**

Each year administrative savings have been made but the Leisure & Culture Team continue to deliver more. The following are just examples of a whole variety of events and programmes that are delivered for residents and visitors.

- Attendance at the school holiday programmes for children & young people has tripled over the last 3 years to over 50,000 attendances per year
- record use of allotments from 782 plots in 2005 to 893 this month
- continued increase in the number of people using our libraries
- three Green Flag Awards for our parks
- record numbers attending Arts Action events
- Street Sport has attracted 2400 individual young people against a 3 year Target of 1800
- an increase in the number of children involved in the Summer Reading Challenge from 251 last year to 2028 this year.
- the activities of the City of Festivals team earning a top 20 place for York in the most cultural places in Britain (for the first time ever),

Following the Peer Review Inspection of the Library Service staff have been working on implementing its recommendations. One aspect is the training of staff including the Make a Difference cultural change process and staff consultation has been taking place relating to the forthcoming restructure of the service. The revamp of the Central Library has been successful and visitor numbers to libraries continue to increase with 524,000 visitors from April to October this year – it is possible that over a million people will visit our Libraries this year.

The procurement process, that we are required to conduct, produced three bids that met the criteria for the future management of the Archives. As part of the continuous consultation with the Friends of the Archive and other interested users a presentation was made to them in relation to the bids. The bids will now be analysed and there will be a Report to the Executive in the new year.

The extra investment in parks and open spaces continues to make improvements to these areas. As well as the well publicised successes of Green Flag Awards less well known is the publication of the first York Green Spaces Guide for 30 years (in conjunction with Friends & Community Groups & Session Book Trust). Our parks have also been included in the Royal Horticultural Society Good Parks Guide for 2006/07.

Adults at Pine Trees Centre with the sign they made. A Café was part of the Pinetrees development in West Bank Park which received a Green Flag Award this year.



An allotment at Hempland Lane. Allotment usage is increasing each year and is now at record levels.



Young people participating in the youth TV project helped by the Arts Action Team.



Making a banner about the closure of post offices at Fairfax Court sheltered housing as part of the work of the Arts Action Team

In relation to arts the Arts Action Team continue to deliver opportunities for people of all ages with increasing numbers involved in the activities, making a real difference to the communities and groups they work with. They have also raised significant levels of additional funding often with the Arts Council and this year also saw £50K from the Wellcome Trust for Young peoples film making activities. They continue to act as the European partner for the Youth 4 Media network with four of our young people just recently returned from a media camp in Poland and one planned in York for 2007/08.

York @ Large makes a significant contribution to developing cultural initiatives across the city, including commissioning work to help develop and support the Cultural Quarter. I would like to thank all the people on York @ Large, led by the Keith Jones, Dean of the Minster, for the time and expertise they all give so freely.

The Sport & Active Leisure Team continue to deliver increased participation in sport across the city. The recent employment of three Physical Activity Co-ordinators and a Disability Sports Coach has had a tremendous impact on local activity and sports provision, they have also been instrumental in helping to establish the four Active York 'Sports Zones' in the North, South, East, and West of the City. In terms of Disability Sport over 200 new people have been engaged and included in recent provision.

The Oakland Leisure Centre was recently re-opened after its major refurbishment. The centre will provide new opportunities for the community. When Yearsley pool needed further repairs to repair leaking pipes the opportunity was taken to improve long needed facilities for disabled people.

Our case in the legal proceedings relating to the Barbican development has been vindicated yet again in recent weeks. Absolute Leisure plan to start the refurbishments of the auditorium in the new year and Barbican Venture similarly wish to start work on other aspects of the development as soon as practicable. Significant work has been undertaken on the feasibility of providing a community accessible swimming pool on the university campus. The business planning process is on-going and a memorandum of agreement for the partnership is being drawn up.



**Climbing wall at Oaklands Leisure Centre. One of the new facilities at the leisure centre following the major refurbishment.**



**Street Sport activity. The Street Sport Team have exceeded their target for young people attending their activities.**

Meanwhile involvement in sport across the city has increased considerably aided by the recent employment of three Physical Activity Co-ordinators and a Disability Sports Coach. The Active York Community Sports Partnership is also an important factor in the increase in participation and is viewed by Sport England as exemplar for the Region. All this work means that we are

on schedule to achieve our increased participation target. Feasibility work has been undertaken to consider how to best provide swimming facilities on the west of the city. Consultation is on going on the available options.

The successful Olympic bid to hold the games in London in 2012 brings with it opportunities and threats. There is considerable concern in the heritage field that considerable lottery funds will be diverted to funding facilities for the Olympics. As a natural recipient of such funding York is likely to suffer. On the positive side as Yorkshire was the most supportive region of London in its bid It does provide opportunities for sport and culture. Building on the 5 Key cities approach we developed for the Illuminate Festival Regional Programme we have been working with the other major cities in the region to maximize these opportunities and as there is general agreement that the cultural dividend for the Olympics will be substantial we are working to ensure that York is at the forefront of these efforts. In the next year we will be working closely with these colleagues to maximize the local benefit to Yorkshire hosting the International Indian Film Awards.

We are continually looking at how we can help people who will lose their jobs in the coming months. For example Future Prospects staff have been mentoring library staff in information, advice and guidance for learning and work. The next 6 months will target 6 library learning centres staff with hard outcomes around referral into skills for life courses. Staff will have the opportunity to work towards NVQ level 2 in IAG.