

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015

It has been a busy few weeks in terms of cultural activity in Middlesbrough. I was pleased to be able to attend the announcement that the Tour de Yorkshire will either start or finish in Middlesbrough – a tremendous announcement, and the culmination of the hard work of our Council staff.

We have also seen the re-opening of our iconic Transporter Bridge by Mackenzie Thorpe and local school pupil Ebony Watts, and with music provided by the local band, Cattle and Cane. This was an event that evoked mixed emotions – a celebration of our Infant Hercules, but a poignant one given the situation regarding Teesside Steel.

October also saw our annual celebration of Middlesbrough: Discover Middlesbrough and Don't Be Afraid of the Dark. Both have been well attended and have received positive feedback. Mima's 'Localism' exhibition, both an art exhibition and a community project, was also launched and is doing very well.

### **Culture**

#### **1. Tour de Yorkshire 2016**

This is a fantastic coup for our town, and the Tees Valley region as a whole. Following the huge success of the inaugural Tour de Yorkshire cycle race held earlier this year, the first details of the 2016 event have been released.

The Tour de Yorkshire 2016 will be held between Friday 29 April and Sunday 1 May 2016. Middlesbrough is one of six towns that have been chosen to host either the start or finish of one of the three race stages, together with Beverley, Doncaster, Otley, Scarborough and Settle.

Work is currently underway to finalise the details of the race route prior to a public announcement on 9 December 2015. As the 2015 event attracted an estimated 1.5 million spectators over three days, the Council's success in securing either a stage start or finish will provide a major boost to the local economy as well as a unique opportunity to promote Middlesbrough and the wider Tees Valley both nationally and internationally.

#### **2. Don't Be Afraid of the Dark**

This event held on 16<sup>th</sup> of October saw 2,000 people visit Middlesbrough between 5pm and midnight. The second event of its kind was a success with sell out tours of the Empire & Middlesbrough Town Hall. Tours to the Transporter Bridge at night also were a sell out with a demand which has led to plans being put in place to offer evening trips on a more regular basis.

Realising the potential of this event, next year the festival will be looking to partner with Arts Council, Artichoke (Producers of Lumiere) and a portfolio of regional artists to develop further.

### **3. Historic England**

I stood in for the Mayor at a Historic England meeting held at Ushaw College, Durham University. The meeting – which was attended by Culture portfolio holders, council officers, and other stakeholders across the North East region – was to discuss Historic England’s approach to our regional heritage, and how we can work together to get the best from our local assets. As a Council, we are committed to protecting our heritage – as can be seen with the recent Executive’s decision to permanently block any attempts to demolish the Crown. Rather we will seek to work with developers and others to bring new life to our historical buildings, while retaining their character. Examples of this include Acklam Hall, and our work on the Historic Quarter on Albert Road.

### **4. Middlesbrough Town Hall Project**

As previously reported, we have now submitted a bid for just under £500,000 to Arts Council England to provide additional resource, to support the renewal of the technical infrastructure of the venue and the fit out of the new bars and catering facilities, which were not eligible for HLF funding. The result of this bid will be known in February. Work continues on the development of detailed designs for the scheme, and tender documentation for procurement of the main contractor. The tendering process will commence in January, with the contractor on site from May 2016.

### **5. Public Poetry Project**

‘Culture’ comes in many forms, and Middlesbrough Council is committed to ensuring everyone has access to it in whatever shape it may be. Soon our town will see ten pieces of decorated literature (poetry, prose, quotations) hand painted on 10 key buildings throughout Middlesbrough town centre, to provide a cost-effective way of animating the town.

The Public Poetry project is part of a wider town centre strategy, and aims to revitalise the town centre and enhance the social, civic and cultural life of its inhabitants. By making the local environment more enjoyable, scenic and surprising, the more vital and viable the town centre which in turn drives economic revitalisation. By choosing a number of texts and imagery that relate specifically the locale and heritage, the more a sense of connectedness and pride is engendered. In addition, the project will be a valuable contribution to ambitions for the Tees Valley City of Culture bid in 2025.

### **6. Stan Hollis Memorial Statue**

There will be an official public unveiling event of the Stan Hollis Memorial Statue on Thursday 26th of November at 11.30am at the Cenotaph. The statue will commemorate one of Middlesbrough’s own, and the only D-Day Victoria Cross recipient. The funds for this statue were raised by the Stan Hollis Memorial Committee via donors and various charitable events.

### **7. Sunnyside Academy Transporter Bridge Unveiling**

I unveiled Sunnyside Academy’s very own Transporter Bridge a few weeks back, as part of the Transporter Bridge re-opening celebrations. This bridge was donated to the school by the Council, and now sits in the school gardens to be enjoyed by the school children.

### **8. Archives**

A number of Archive-held items are currently on display in the Localism Exhibition at mima as well as some featuring at the Festival of Thrift in Darlington that reached a large audience.

For Discover Middlesbrough the Archives opened on Saturday 24th October for a visit by the Magical History Bus Tour, which saw us greet the largest group ever to visit the archives and it is hoped this will become a regular event.

An event called 'Art in the Archives' was held to showcase some of the less well-known holdings. The service has digitised a large number of building plans and these were shown at the Landmarks History and Heritage Conference hosted at the Town Hall. It is hoped the plans will be of use in future projects and the Empire Theatre Plans were used in a recent behind the scenes tour of that building as part of the Discover Middlesbrough Festival.

Teesside Archives has been working with Northern Architecture on a project entitled Bridge Engineering Education which included walks along the Tees and creative writing sessions using archives that culminated in an exhibition in the House of Blah Blah.

### **9. Ceramics Unveiling**

As part of the Middlesbrough Mela 25th Anniversary Arts Programme, local ceramicist Carol Newmarch was commissioned to collect memories and images of Middlesbrough Mela, deliver ceramic workshops in the community and create a commemorative bowl. The final product will be unveiled at Cleveland Centre on Tuesday 24th November at 1pm.

### **10. Dementia Friendly Town: Middlesbrough Reminiscence Books**

Becoming a Dementia Friendly town was a key manifesto pledge of our newly elected Mayor, Dave Budd, and we keep making steps to achieve this goal.

We were approached some time ago by the Senior Radiographer/Clinical Educator in dementia at South Tees Hospital who asked about the possibility of reminiscence books for their X-Ray waiting rooms, as they were finding people with dementia were waiting for long periods and becoming agitated, confused and difficult to engage with.

Reminiscence is understood to be a useful mechanism in the helping those suffering from dementia, and is often utilised by our local Dementia Cafes which are based in Central Library and North Ormesby Community Hub. With the support of a volunteer to carry out the research and the Evening Gazette's support in using all the images free of charge, a reminiscence book was created and will be utilised with patients using the facility.

### **11. Christmas Activities: Christmas Light Switch On, Reindeer Parade & the Coca Cola Christmas Truck**

Plans are well underway for 250 participants (including Santa & his reindeer) who are set to take to the streets of Middlesbrough town centre to launch Christmas on 29 November, featuring fairground rides and 20 plus stall Christmas market, community performers and the new Iron Giants stilt walkers, family audiences will have a great entertainment offer.

The Coca-Cola Christmas Truck will return to Middlesbrough for the third year on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November. This promotional event attracts families who receive a free taster can of Cola and are able to have photographs taken alongside the famous truck. A small fairground will be in place, nearby to further animate Centre Square.

## **12. Invasion at Dorman Museum**

'Invasion', the newest exhibition at Dorman Museum, has opened its doors. It has a sci-fi theme, and features costumes, props and art works from StarGate, Star Wars and other Sci-Fi blockbusters. The exhibition also celebrates our local talent, and includes Middlesbrough based comic artist Marco Capaldi's early Transformers artworks. The exhibition had proven very popular and visitor numbers are significant. The exhibition runs until mid-January.

## **Leisure and Sport**

### **13. Middlesbrough Smile Mile**

Following the success of the 1st Middlesbrough Smile Mile at Clairville Stadium in October 2014, the 2nd annual Middlesbrough Smile Mile took place at 8pm on Thursday 29 October at Middlesbrough's Sports Village. I was pleased to be able to attend and take part in the Smile Mile itself.

The Middlesbrough Smile Mile is an opportunity for all, irrespective of age or ability, to take part in a community fun run on Middlesbrough Sports Village's track. The Smile Mile is about celebrating Middlesbrough's rich heritage in running whether it be competing for medals at an international level, running to keep fit and healthy or running to raise funds for local charities and good causes.

The event will also provide the opportunity for people to have a look around the world-class facilities at the Middlesbrough Sport Village. In addition, Run Middlesbrough's Charities will be in attendance at the event to help raise their profile and provide them with an opportunity to raise additional funds.

### **14. Football Development Programme**

We are keen to promote healthy and active lifestyles of all our residents. One such initiative, Active Middlesbrough Football Development Program, was set up in 2015 and based at Middlesbrough Sports Village to assist the launch and development of new teams for local junior football clubs.

In order to aid children in getting a better first experience of grassroots football, to increase participation and increase retention levels, the project has 3 main aims:

- Educating Parents – on the respect program via regular meetings, letters and social media;
- Educating Players – via our Tuesday night development centre with MFC Academy Coaching and UEFA Qualified Coaching;
- Educating Coaches – putting them through FA courses, regular training days and providing them with help, advice and material on session planning and all issues they may experience coaching children's football teams.

In its first year the project has attracted 120 children, aged 6 to 9 years old, who play a minimum of 3 times a week at Middlesbrough Sports Village along with regular team building days i.e. sponsored walks / runs etc.

### **15. Junior Development Sessions**

Active Middlesbrough has also formed a partnership with a number of local Sporting Clubs based at Middlesbrough Sports Village to deliver a number of Junior Development

Sessions. The local clubs have supplied coaches, who have offered up their time at no cost to deliver these sessions.

The aim of the Development Sessions is to increase participation at the grassroots, and to develop sporting skills and create interests and hobbies. The young people taking part in the Development Sessions then have the opportunity to progress to more advanced clubs which also assists in the growth of the local partner clubs.

Schools have been targeted with a service guide booklet to be distributed, plus clubs marketing within their social media and contacts and also internally within the venue. So far the clubs involved include Bellamy Dance, Stride Out Athletics, Middlesbrough Futsal, Teesside Badminton, Middlesbrough Roller Hockey, Tees Valley Mohawks, Tennis World and Grangetown Netball.

### **16. Go Ride Coach / Track Cycle Procurement**

Through October, Active Middlesbrough in partnership with British Cycling and will recruit a 'Go Ride' coach.

The remit of the 'Go Ride' coach will be to take cycling directly into the community with a view to engaging people, particularly young people, in a positive experience of cycling then signposting the interest generated back to programmes of activity at Middlesbrough Sport Village's cycle circuit and velodrome.

The 'Go Ride' coach post, which will last for 3 years, will also deliver a velodrome accreditation programme to enable people to gain the skills and competencies to cycle at the velodrome.

To assist with the velodrome accreditation programme Active Middlesbrough will purchasing velodrome specific cycle with a view to reducing the barrier to the velodrome accreditation process and continued participation at the velodrome thereafter.

### **17. Active Middlesbrough Social Media**

Active Middlesbrough's Social Media presence has continued to grow on its existing platforms over recent months.

Facebook 'likes' are up to around 4,500, a rise of around 2,500 over this calendar year. This now allows Active Middlesbrough, via that one platform alone, to reach around 15-20,000 people with our message every week. Currently this means that Active Middlesbrough have one of the highest number of 'likes' for any of the fitness providers in the local area on this platform.

Twitter followers across our 4 accounts (@activembro, @MbroSprtsVlg, @5kRiversideRun & @TeesPride10k) are now exceeding 3100 combined with a number of our accounts only being launched in the second quarter of this year.

Further work has taken place in expansion into new social media platforms in order to enable us to reach a wider and more diverse demographic. To this end we have recently launched Pinterest and Instagram accounts for the Service with the aim of reaching a younger audience.