

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL Wednesday 17th February 2016

Culture

1. Crossing the Tees (11-25 June), and Read Regional

Middlesbrough along with other Tees Valley library services have been successful in their application to the Arts Council for £15,000 to continue the highly popular annual Crossing the Tees book festival in 2016. This year sees Mima become a festival partner.

Middlesbrough is also participating in 'Read Regional', which promotes local writers in association with New Writing North. Events will take place throughout libraries

2. Accessing Shakespeare

This year is the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, and work has begun nationally to make Shakespeare accessible with events taking place in libraries across the country. Middlesbrough co-ordinated an Arts Council Bid for the region and received £15,000 to create a visual representations of Shakespeare plays, culminating in a display which will tour the 9 regional authorities. Our drive to be a 'Dementia Friendly Town' takes a central role in this work, and we will be working with the attendees of their dementia café to create a visual representation of 'The Tempest' with local artist Nicky Peacock.

3. Middlesbrough Theatre

Middlesbrough Theatre's 2015 pantomime 'Cinderella' achieved the highest ever level of gross income and played to 92% audience capacity. Advance sales for Aladdin in 2016 have started well with around £35,000 income taken over the Christmas period.

In preparation for the closure of the Town Hall for development work, the spring season sees the move of some of the classical concerts from the Town Hall series to the Theatre. The programme will include performances by the Halle, international Bruckner Linz orchestra and Northern Sinfonia.

4. Museums

The new temporary exhibition at the Dorman was launched on 23 January. 'Pirates, Pants and Wellyphants' exhibits the work by the children's book illustrator Nick Sharratt, who came to Middlesbrough for the launch to meet fans at an all-day book signing. The event was very well attended and excellent feedback has been received about the exhibition.

Work has started at the Captain Cook Birthplace Museum on developing a new exhibition looking at the Aboriginal artefacts in the collection and exploring indigenous Australian culture. For the first time the exhibition will be located in the downstairs galleries and the popular 'Pacific Predators' exhibition will remain in place in the upstairs temporary exhibition space. The Cook will reopen for the summer in March.

5. Public Poetry

The Public Poetry project aims to revitalise the town centre and enhance the social, civic and cultural life of its inhabitants. 10 pieces of literature will be hand painted on 10 key buildings throughout the town centre providing a high-impact and cost-effective way of animating the town. The project will engage with schools, colleges and local literature festival, T-Junction to engender a sense of pride and connectedness to the region and provide a valuable contribution to ambitions for the Tees Valley City of Culture bid in 2025.

Leisure and Sport

6. Tour de Yorkshire:

This is a fantastic opportunity to deliver a world class sporting event, broadcast internationally, which gives Middlesbrough the opportunity to showcase the fabulous attributes this area has to offer. This is also a great platform for the community to get fit/active and ensure that the Tour de Yorkshire and associated events and activities have a lasting legacy. I and a number of other councillors attended the roadshow – designed to maximise business and community participation, which was a huge success and this is followed up by a Members event on 11 February to get Members involved.

A programme of events and activities to get communities and businesses involved in the build up to the Tour de Yorkshire is currently being developed. The Mayor and I were at the launch of Tees Valley Community Foundation who are offering grants for community groups to access. These are designed to help them get involved in the preparations for the Tour de Yorkshire and there are ten grants (of £1,000 each) in total. Businesses and stakeholders have been invited to a series of events to get them involved and assist them to realise the economic benefit an event of this magnitude will bring.

ASO (the organisers) are doing a technical visit in February to confirm the neutral section of the race. Work is already being undertaken to assess the route and any maintenance issues that might need to be addressed prior to the event, this includes making sure the town looks its best, both from the ground and air.

The Tour de Yorkshire have launched a Land Art competition, which follows suit from last year to get communities involved and take advantage of showcasing Middlesbrough from the air. Opportunities are being explored with partners to maximise this opportunity.

7. Service Overview

Rainbow Leisure Centre & Marton Manor

Over 60 new children have joined the learn to swim swimming lesson scheme at the Rainbow Leisure Centre in January resulting in almost 1,000 children taking part in swimming lessons at the Rainbow Leisure Centre each week.

Manor Hub

In line with the Services continued programme development at The Manor, Teesside Ability Support group (TASC) continue to successfully self-manage during the day, building a good relationship with Parkway Day Nursery. Both these organisations have seen an increase in participation for adults with disabilities and young children aged 0-4 years as well as further increasing the venues profile.

Hemlington Recreation Centre

Hemlington Recreation centre is progressing with the Asset transfer proposal. MBC have begun meeting with several interested community groups and organisations.

Programme development at the facility is continuing via a relationship with Middlesbrough Football Club: the Kickz programme. They now use the internal facilities at Hemlington Recreation Centre as well as the external hard standing multi use games court.

The Service has continued to develop the relationship with Middlesbrough College who have signed an SLA to use the lake to deliver water based activities coached activities to their students including Canoeing, Kayaking and Stand Up Paddle boarding.

The Neptune

The Neptune has welcomed Water Polo into the expanding list of activities undertaken at the venue. Sheffield Beacon are now utilising the venue to host an elite squad bringing the best players from the north east counties clubs under the guidance of the Beacons John Stephenson. The first camp was hosted on 16 January with 40 players in attendance and a further 5 bookings to come in 2016.

Middlesbrough Amateur Swimming Club is due to host their first Gala of 2016 on February 20 and 21 following on from the successful MASC Club Championships that were held on 27th December.

On Wednesday 20 January The Neptune Centre hosted the Primary Schools Swimming Gala with children taking part in over 50 races throughout the day. A total of 17 Primary Schools from the area were in attendance from Abingdon, Acklam Whin, Berwick Hills, Corpus Christi, Easterside, Green Lane, Lingfield. Marton Manor, Pallister Park, Park End, St. Alphonsus', St. Augustine's, St. Bernadette's, St. Claire's, St. Joseph's, Sunnyside and The Avenue.

8. Middlesbrough Sports Village

Wrestling

In its commitment to support many different forms of sports and entertainment Middlesbrough Sports Village will be holding a night of American Wrestling on Sunday 7 February. The ticketed event is set to attract a high number of spectators to see the stars of the ring having already hosted successful events at the Rainbow recently and in previous years.

Omnia Fitness Sessions

As part of the fitness programme for Middlesbrough Sports Village, Active Middlesbrough deliver an Omnia Fitness session based in the gym using the large multi-use Technogym Omnia Machine.

Launching soon after the initial opening of Middlesbrough Sports Village in May 2015, the sessions have proved very popular and have received a large amount of positive feedback from customers. Initially delivering 12 sessions a week the venue has recently increased the number of classes on a weekday to 3, delivering a total of 17 sessions each week in order to meet demand.

9. Healthy Habit Promotion

Following up on Active Middlesbrough's November Healthy Habit Campaign (185 signed up for 1 month access to facilities and activities) all participants were contacted and offered a special promotion for signing up to a full 1 year membership.

This follow up campaign has proved successful with around 30 participants signing up for a full year, generating over an additional £9,000 in revenue for the Service and a conversion rate of around 15%.

10. Swimming Development

Level 1 Teaching Course (Swimming)

Active Middlesbrough is continuing its commitment to help in the development of staff and other local swimming enthusiasts by hosting another of swimming instructor course in February.

In addition to the benefit of training enrolees to deliver swimming lessons around the ASA Framework it allows for a number of children to enrol on a free week of intensive swimming lessons which has proved very popular on previous courses.

The course is due to take place over 5 days on the week commencing 15 February.

11. Gym Memberships

January is carrying on the traditional trend of being one of the busiest months in regards to memberships sales for Active Middlesbrough with sales for the full Service being 250 since the beginning of the month. Middlesbrough Sports Village has been performing exceptionally well, selling over 140 memberships alone. There are now 4,000 members of the Council's Active Gym membership scheme.