

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr Stephen Hill

DATE OF MEETING: 18 January 2023

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on areas of activity within my portfolio including performance against strategic priorities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strategic Priority: *Increase ticket sales at town hall performances*

Update:

As we move into the winter season the Town Hall program has continued to be strong. Highlights for November & December included:

- The Stylistics, who received a warm welcome from a well sold audience.
- Jason Manford, who finished his round of his 'Like Me' tour. We hosted four of these shows both before and after the pandemic, as the tour was put temporarily on hold.
- We welcomed back the Middlesbrough College Graduations to the Hall, and these have already been booked in for the ceremonies of 2023.
- We hosted a comedy version of the Shakespeare classic Macbeth with over 300 attendees.
- Neil Warnock, the former Middlesbrough FC manager, hosted an evening discussing his life and career. The Town Hall staff received some fantastic feedback about the venue & the team from both Neil & the promoters.
- Sara Davies (of Dragons Den and Strictly fame) brought her first tour of 'Crafting Christmas' to the Town Hall, and our team again received lovely feedback via email from Sara herself.
- Garth Marengi- the spoof horror-writing creation of comedian Richard Ayoade- held a book reading and Q&A as part of an eight date tour. Middlesbrough Town Hall was one of only two venues hosting this outside of London.

- “Theatre Go-Round in the Crypt – Christmas Gothic” totalled 156 sales which is our highest total audience figures for a drama in the Crypt since its post-COVID relaunch.
- The Town Hall and Centre Square played host to the annual Christmas reindeer parade and the Festive Orange Pip. This iteration of Orange Pip returned to its traditional home in the Main Hall this year (following a very blustery time in Centre Square last Christmas), growing in scale to also include the Civic Centre Car Park for the first time. Pip attracted thousands of attendees, many of whom also got to enjoy the inaugural, ticketed, Pip After-Party, which was headlined by the Arctic Monkeys tribute band, The Mardy Bums, who well and truly kicked off the festive season in style!
- Less Is More presented A Winters Tail family Christmas show, engaging 409 audience members from ages 0+.
- The Southmartins- supported by local artists Jen Dixon (AIR Project) and SHE (who will be performing in the Crypt for the first time in 2023)- finished the 2022 show programme in the Main Hall at Christmas with over 1000 attendees.
- The New Years Day Royal Northern Sinfonia concert held in the Main Hall attracted over 400 attendees from Middlesbrough and beyond.

Strategic Priority: *Increase visitor numbers to museums and attractions*

Update:

The Dorman Museum and Teesside Archives

The Dorman Museum held its Christmas Extravaganza on Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th of December. This event saw the VR sleigh ride attract its usual incredibly high number of visitors, selling out well in advance- though the fantastic team did manage to squeeze in as many extra families as possible on the day, to avoid any disappointment.

As part of the weekend, we also hosted Chloe’s Crafts and an elf trail through the museum, which were both very popular with children of all ages, with lots of sparkly creations made throughout the day for the children to take home as a memento of their visit. The elves also added to the experience, interacting with families and posing for plenty of pictures, and helped to welcome a very special guest who came all the way from the North Pole.

In addition to the family fun, our Collections and Archives teams joined together to offer a combined activity, showing a range of material from Teesside’s past Christmases, with the images and photographs providing an added bonus for our slightly older visitors over the weekend.

The festive market which was held in the learning space also went down a treat, with many of the stall holders saying they much preferred it to the temporary gallery space in which it was held last year. All of the stalls made lots of sales, which provided a great

addition to the museum offer, and, as it was volunteer driven, helped to raise funds towards the museum's income.

Teessaurus Park

Happily, the new, accessible play equipment in Teessaurus Park has finally been installed. This, coupled with the ever popular virtual dino trail and freshly painted dinosaurs, is helping to make the park a go-to venue for many Middlesbrough families.

Strategic Priority: *Aim for all children to get an experience of live theatre*

Update:

Musical events

Over the past few months, several activities and concerts have taken place, many of which were designed specifically for children with learning difficulties or other specialised needs, as well as looked after children and children from migrant and ethnic minority families. These included:

- Performances from Cobweb Orchestra, who are now set to feature in our schools Classical Café programme, and who are aiming to provide at least 1 orchestral concert per year in the Town Hall.
- Classical Café for schools performance of The Snowman. This featured the score of The Snowman performed live on the piano, alongside a number of dances from Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker. One teacher from Sacred Heart Primary fed-back that their pupils had loved the event, and the school had then built on the performance by holding Snowman related craft sessions.
- On 28th November 360 young people attending our Classical Café for Schools: The Snowman concert. The programme featured the score of The Snowman performed live from the piano as well as a number of dances from Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker.
- The Town Hall's first "Big Gig: Rockin' Christmas" event, which was a participatory gig which included festive sing-alongs for children. 600 young people attended from several Middlesbrough schools, including Beverley and Sacred Heart Primary, with feedback from teachers praising the atmosphere, participatory nature and inclusivity of the event.

Play On

Over the past school term, 13 primary-aged young people have been attending "Play On", a new musical instrument club for cello and clarinet tuition, with a focus on classical orchestral music.

These young people have completed their first term of instruction, and shared what they learned in a performance for 20 members of their friends and family, with all of them being very enthusiastic about it.

One child's foster carer commented: "I'm so pleased the sessions are going to continue in the new year, she's got the sparkle back in her eye!"

Strategic Priority: *Implement and extend locality working/ Work with the voluntary sector to create and promote volunteering opportunities and an increase in volunteers.*

Update:

Stronger Communities

Our Stronger Communities team worked together with several partner organisations over the past few months to ensure mothers and babies who are currently seeking asylum received a selection box and were able to attend community events, which allowed the team to identify a particularly vulnerable woman and child in a property, leading to partnership working between our Childrens Social Care team and the NHS.

Our team also organised a Christmas party alongside the Middlesbrough Erimus Rotary Club for Middlesbrough's Ukrainian guests. The party was attended by the local ITV news team who did a feature, and which lead to a BBC Radio 1 interview with one of the families who attended.

The team are also continuing to support a family of 5 Ukrainian refugees who have a child with complex needs. This is in partnership with colleagues in our social care and education teams.

HIGHLIGHTS

- On Christmas Eve, 14 volunteer drivers from Middlesbrough Council and Cleveland Police helped to deliver 393 Christmas dinners to 176 addresses throughout the town. The meals were donated and prepared by The Oven restaurant on Linthorpe Road, with the deliveries being managed by our Stronger Communities team, with three members of the team working all day at The Oven to ensure the deliveries went smoothly. So a huge thank you must go to all of the volunteers and, of course, The Oven, who donated all of the meals and the containers they were delivered in.



Volunteers and staff overseeing deliveries from the Oven.



Two of the volunteers, Alma and Sharon, delivering their meals.

- Our Stronger Communities team won two awards at the annual BME Achievement Awards on the 25th November. The team as a whole won the Public Sector Award, which recognises work undertaken with some of the most vulnerable members of the local community. The team were specifically recognised for always going the extra mile to build strong, resilient communities. One of our apprentices, Gopal Singh, also won the annual apprentice award for his service.



The Stronger Communities team with their Public Sector award.



Gopal Singh collecting his Apprentice-Individual Award.

THE TIME AHEAD

Unfortunately, our Head and Deputy Head of Culture are both leaving the Council this month. Combined, Charlotte Nichol and Leanne Littlewood have given over 2 decades of service to Middlesbrough, and I'd like to personally thank them both and wish them the best of luck in their future careers.

Cllr Stephen Hill
18.01.23