

**CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT**

<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>Councillor Chris Meaden</b>
<b>CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR</b>	<b>Leisure, Sport and Culture</b>
<b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b>	<b>Clare Fish, Strategic Director, Families &amp; Well-being</b>

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to her portfolio.

**1. RANGERS SUMMER ACTIVITIES**

This summer was busy and successful for our rangers. The highlight of the summer holiday in Birkenhead Park was National Play Day run with the Play Council and Children and Young People's Department - around 3,500 people took part and Birkenhead's Rangers have also been out and about leading sessions in Prenton and Rock Ferry libraries.

The Junior Ranger shop in the Pyramids shopping centre, open for 3 days a week throughout the school holidays, attracted over 12,500 visits. It was very popular and some families went back repeatedly. The highlights included interactive virtual tours of Central Park New York each Friday via Skype. Other activities which went down really well with children included: Storytelling with Yarn Spinner, face painting, crafts and owl workshops with Moonshine Owl sanctuary. The Ark Animal experience visited showing their exotic animals. Trespass, Vesbim Productions and other shop holders in the Pyramids were involved and helped with resources, as did Cheshire Regiment and Wirral Met College. All the activities have helped the children develop a greater appreciation of the natural world and the international importance of Birkenhead Park.

**2. PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY**

The new Parks and Open Spaces Strategy have recently been considered by Cabinet. The aim of the new Strategy is to provide direction during an anticipated period of financial challenge and change. The Strategy sets the strategic direction for future parks and open space service planning and partnership working. It has been informed by findings of the Wirral Parks User Survey, Visitor Research Study and consultation with a wide range of partners and stakeholders.

**3. LEISURE**

Work has begun on the improvements to the artificial 5-a-side pitches at Guinea Gap, which will be completed by early October.

Also at Guinea Gap work has now commenced on the conversion of the Sports Hall in to a 50 station fitness suite. The new facility is expected to be open early in the New Year.

At West Kirby Concourse – The development of two squash courts into an additional aerobics studio has started. The refurbishment of the fitness suite is due to begin later this year.

A Large scale marketing campaign has commenced and will continue with a planned programme of marketing and promotional activities.

#### **4. SPORTS DEVELOPMENT**

##### **Wirral National Citizen Service Summer Graduation**

Throughout summer 2014, Wirral Council Sports Development Staff worked together to deliver a fantastic NCS Programme to a wide range of young people across Wirral. They held a Successful NCS graduation ceremony took place on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2014, at Upton Hall School. 116 young people aged 16-17yrs olds, were presented with a range of certificates such as 1<sup>st</sup> Aid and food Safety certificates from the Mayor of Wirral Councillor Steve Foulkes as a result in them completing the 6 phases of the NCS programme, which is a government led initiative spear headed by David Cameron. NCS runs during the summer autumn and spring holidays.

#### **5. WIRRAL NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE SOUP KITCHEN**

NCS cohort 3 worked closely with Charles Thompson Mission in Birkenhead to survey the community for homeless people and what soup kitchens were available on Wirral, they realized that there was nothing on offer to the homeless from Friday – Sunday and therefore they decided to do something about it. Through applying for their own £300 o2 think big grant, and through fundraising within their own family and friends, they raised enough money to be able to host a Friday night soup kitchen where they cooked Scouse and Ice cream deserts to the homeless of Birkenhead. The young people hosted another soup kitchen on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 7-9pm at Charing Cross Methodist Centre and had an outstanding turn out with fantastic comments regarding the young peoples positive attitudes, they are currently seeking funding to keep the project sustainable and run it on a monthly basis.

#### **6. LIBRARIES**

Wirral Libraries large range of literary and cultural events has continued and last week held the annual Book fest for Wirral with a wide range of talks showcasing both national and local authors, poets and historians. My thanks to all those who supported this popular event and I am sure that in previous years it will have been well received and enjoyed.

Last month we launched a small Birkenhead Park Reading Room project which sees books available at the Pavilion in the park and my thanks to local author, Margaret Murphy in helping launch this and it has been well received by park users already.

The programme of improvement at our main sites has seen Bebington Central complete in July and work at West Kirby continues to provide a remodelled space on the ground floor. My thanks to all users for continuing to support the sites during the work and am sure they will enjoy the improved facilities.