

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

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| REPORT OF | Councillor Chris Meaden |
| CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR | Leisure and Culture |
| CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER | Clare Fish, Strategic Director Families & Wellbeing |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

1. LEISURE AND CULTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Birkenhead Park's historic Swiss Bridge has been restored to its former glory. The Swiss Bridge – a Grade II listed structure and an original feature of the park since it first opened in 1847 - was targeted by vandals who set it on fire last year causing £20,000 worth of damage. The restoration work was done sensitively, using appropriate materials and conservation techniques and the whole structure has been repainted, not just the damaged areas.

The last few months at the Williamson, Priory and Floral Pavilion have been very busy and successful: the annual pantomime at the Floral was held between 9 December and 3 January, with almost 30,000 people enjoying 42 performances. In January 13,000 visitors have attended shows and events at the Floral Pavilion; with many shows selling out. I would like to thank all the staff for continuing to provide a high quality venue that is enjoyed by Wirral residents and visitors.

The Priory hosted a Christmas Craft Fair with volunteers providing the catering and the Williamson has held several successful photographic exhibitions. A notable publication "The Delia Robbery Pottery: from Renaissance to Regent Street" has been published by Liverpool University Press and this contains an essay by Colin Simpson, the Curator of the Williamson. Work is currently progressing on the Culture Strategy to support the delivery of this pledge and this will be considered by Cabinet towards the end of March 2016.

It is also very pleasing to report a continuing positive upward trend in the growth of Invigor8 membership over the last year, with a 25% increase over the past year. Improvements to our golf courses are also scheduled, including the introduction of FootGolf – a concept which is really taking off nationally. The launch is planned for 19 March at Arrowe Park and the Warrens. The leisure strategy is being finalised with contributions from many partners it will go to Cabinet in March.

Wirral Libraries continue to go from strength to strength, with volunteers support at Pensby Library now enabling the service to be open for 32 hours every week. Leasowe Library also continues to be supported by Leasowe Development Trust and a number of reference

volunteers are also providing help at Wallasey Central. The scholls library service will be moving to the Joseph Paxton Building in early March 2016.

A snapshot of the range of activities in our libraries includes two very successful “Harry Potter Night” events held at Bebington & West Kirby libraries on 4th February - over 50 children attended in Bebington. Activities included fancy dress, treasure hunts, competitions and being sorted into houses by the Sorting Hat. National Libraries Day was on 6 February - Wallasey Central library held a coffee morning and film show and raised £122 for their Friends. Birkenhead Library also hosted a “Stress Busting Day” which was very popular.

A Shakespeare event is planned on April 23rd in Wallasey Central – tickets on sale via Floral Pavilion website.