

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Christine Spriggs
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Culture and Tourism

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism to Members of the Council on matters relevant to the portfolio.

It has been a year for unforgettable experiences in Wirral as we've celebrated being Borough of Culture for Liverpool City Region. Over 400,000 people took part in this year's incredible events and cultural projects, which took us on a cultural journey from local stories and legends to the far reaches of the universe – all inspired by discovery, exploration and the great outdoors.

Wirral Borough of Culture 2019 triumphed at the Wirral Life Awards in November, picking up a Special Recognition award for this remarkable year. The Borough of Culture team, along with Chef Paul Askew, also received the Gold Event of the Year award for the inaugural Wirral Food & Drink Festival which transformed Birkenhead Park into a foodie destination over a sunny September weekend.

The final chapter of the Borough of Culture year has included a cluster of interstellar events featuring the work of world-renowned artists. Following the large-scale mural on the Dips in New Brighton by celebrated artist Saype, thousands flocked to West Kirby's Marine Lake last month for Constellations – Joanie Lemercier's breath-taking installation on the water.

Luke Jerram's mesmerising Museum of the Moon attracted 21,000 visitors at Birkenhead Town Hall over three weeks, while tens of thousands turned out for the annual fireworks extravaganza River of Light in New Brighton, which proved a dazzling finale for 2019's events.

This year's events programme has brought new visitors to Wirral, created memories which will last a lifetime, and enabled culture and creativity to thrive. It's been a celebration of what makes Wirral special, and contributed significantly to improve perceptions of the peninsula, with over 70% of attendees stating that they now feel better about the borough.

Wirral Borough of Culture 2019 wouldn't have been a success without everyone's support, and we have been overwhelmed by the positive response to events – 9 out of 10 visitors rating their experience at events as 'good' or 'very good'.

The Borough of Culture baton will now be handed over to Sefton, whose year will be a celebration of their place and people, with more memorable moments in store. Here in Wirral, the Borough of Culture programme will be a springboard into even more exciting events for next year and the years to come.