

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

22 September 2009

Report of the Chief Leisure Officer

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2009

Summary

This report updates Members on preparations for the above event., which takes place on the weekend of 12/13 September.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Heritage Open Days celebrates England's fantastic architecture and culture by offering free access to properties that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission. It is a once-a-year chance to discover hidden architectural treasures and enjoy a wide range of tours, events and activities which bring together local history and culture.
- 1.1.2 Organised by volunteers for local people, Heritage Open Days is England's biggest and most popular voluntary cultural event, attracting some 800,000 people annually. Locally this event has been co-ordinated by Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council in partnership with Tonbridge Civic Society and The Malling Society. The event is taking place during the weekend of Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 September.

1.2 Participants

- 1.2.1 This year, 28 properties across the borough are taking part in the scheme, including five new entries, these being Kits Coty, Aylesford, the Heritage Walk in Tonbridge, the Jane Austen Literary Walk, Tonbridge, a village walk in Wateringbury and the Twitch Heritage Centre at Douces Manor, West Malling. Other places of historic interest participating include Aylesford Priory, Ightham Mote, St Leonards Tower and Pilsdon at the Malling Community. Broadview Gardens, Great Comp and Downderry Nursery are also involved. The event is also supported by numerous churches across the borough.
- 1.2.2 Tonbridge Civic Society has organised a Heritage walk of Tonbridge to take place on both days throughout the weekend. Kent Libraries and Archives has collaborated with the Jane Austen Society (Kent branch), St Peter's & St Paul's Church Tonbridge and Explore Kent to create an audio guided tour, celebrating

Jane Austen's life, work and family connections with the town. This literary walk will be launched on 12 September. A full list of participants can be found at **[Annex 1]**.

- 1.2.3 Tonbridge Castle is offering free partial tours of the Gatehouse on both days and will also play host to the annual Medieval Fair.

1.3 Marketing

- 1.3.1 A leaflet has been produced listing all participants across the borough. These have been distributed to leisure centres, libraries, Tourist Information Centres and Parish Councils. A dedicated web page on the Council's website has been created and various adverts have been placed in appropriate publications to help raise the profile of the event.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 None.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 The cost to the Council relates primarily to staff time and the printing of leaflets, which can be met from the 2009/10 revenue budget.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 Once participants have submitted forms to English Heritage, they automatically receive public liability insurance cover for the days that its properties are open. A separate Risk Assessment and Event Management Plan will be produced in liaison with the Council's Health and Safety Officer for the Medieval Fair.

1.7 Policy Considerations

- 1.7.1 Community, Healthy Lifestyles

Background papers:

contact: Lyndsey Bennett

Nil

Robert Styles
Chief Leisure Officer