

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

17 September 2012

Report of the Chief Leisure Officer

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 EVENT UPDATE

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Members on a number of events that have taken place throughout the year.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Members will be aware that each year, the Council delivers and supports an annual programme of events across the Borough. Some events are delivered directly by the Council, whilst others are organised in partnership with local community groups. Support from the Council includes funding (where appropriate), event management advice and practical support.

1.1.2 2012 has been a particularly busy year with both the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and two Olympic Torch events, in addition to the usual programme.

1.2 The Queen's Diamond Jubilee

1.2.1 This year Queen Elizabeth II became the second Monarch in British history to achieve 60 years on the throne. To mark this occasion, 2012 beacons were lit across the United Kingdom on Monday 4 June, including one at Tonbridge Castle. The beacon lighting attracted an audience of approximately 300 people with the event receiving media coverage on Meridian TV.

1.2.2 A free concert also took place on Jubilee Day as part of the celebrations with music by the Second Wind Concert Band and Blues Brothers Little Brother. 'The House of Curious Engagements', a circus based performance by the Sondryfolk Theatre Group commissioned by the West Kent Arts Partnership, also entertained the crowds. It is estimated that 500 people attended the celebrations.

1.2.3 The Council also worked with local schools to use the beacon as a way of raising children's awareness of the historical role and significance of the monarchy. Schools were asked to create a board game or a portrait of the Queen with a total of 20 schools submitting entries. A number of schools also held Jubilee

competitions internally with the best judged entry for that school being submitted into the Council's competition. The winners at key stage groups 1 and 2 received a certificate of achievement, a Jubilee medal and some novelty patriotic gifts. The winners of key stage 3 also received a Jubilee medal and a commemorative Jubilee book celebrating the Queen's life.

1.3 Tonbridge Scarecrow Trail

- 1.3.1 This year the Tonbridge Scarecrow Trail, organised by Tonbridge Rotary Club, was moved to the weekend of the 2, 3, 4 June to coincide with the Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend. Local schools and organisations made scarecrows based on the theme of 'Sporting Heroes' with scarecrows including Usain Bolt, Princess Anne, Jonny Wilkinson, Oscar Pretorius, Ade Adepitan and Kelly Holmes. A competition was run with questions requiring the identification and close observation of the scarecrows, with completed competition forms entered for a prize draw. Funds raised from the event were donated to Carers' First.

1.4 Tonbridge Carnival

- 1.4.1 Organised by Tonbridge Lions Club and supported by the Borough Council, this year's Carnival took place on Sunday 10 June with a theme of 'Sport for All' with Lizzie Yarnold, the World Ladies Skeleton Bob Gold Medallist, attending the event. The procession included The Southern England Marching Band Championship, a display of classic cars and Morris Dancers. The Fete on the Castle Lawn included Punch and Judy, clowns, a children's entertainment area, a climbing wall, bungee trampolines, children's rides and a full arena programme presenting local talent.
- 1.4.2 This year's event raised £6,000 supporting various charities including Hospice in the Weald, The Scotts Project, Tonbridge Tennis Club, Tonbridge District Scouts and the Tonbridge branch of the Royal British Legion.

1.5 Tonbridge Castle Festival of Music

- 1.5.1 Members will be aware that following the 2011 Festival of Music, it was agreed that the Council would once again work with Opera Brava to deliver three nights of performances. The Festival of Music took place on 14, 15, 16 June to coincide with the Tonbridge Arts Festival.
- 1.5.2 Various initiatives were used to promote the event. Leaflets were sent to Opera Brava's existing database as well as to those who attended previous Music Festivals at Tonbridge Castle. Banners and leaflets were also put on display at Council owned leisure facilities. Adverts were placed with local magazines and the event details were advertised in the Council's Leisure Guide and Here & Now publications (both of which are delivered door to door to residents), and on the Council website.

- 1.5.3 The public were able to purchase tickets from various sources which included the Opera Brava website, calling the Opera Brava Box Office direct, or by visiting Tonbridge Castle Gateway Offices. Total ticket sales were 362 and this year the Festival was supported by a grant of £1,500 from KCC Member Alice Hohler.
- 1.5.4 Following a review of this year's Music Festival, the concept of a community centred music event in partnership with the Tonbridge Arts Festival Committee is being investigated for next year with a date provisionally reserved for 4-7 July 2013.

1.6 Tonbridge Arts Festival

- 1.6.1 The second ten-day Tonbridge Arts Festival took place from 15–24 June and was organised by representatives from K College, Hillview School for Girls, Tonbridge Library and Tonbridge School. The Council is represented on the Committee and gives event management advice as well as supporting the event financially and providing free access to Council owned venues.
- 1.6.2 A total of 37 events took place during the Festival which included creative writing workshops, an afternoon exploring Jane Austen's connections with Tonbridge, an Open Art Exhibition at Tonbridge Castle, a quiz night, an evening of Alan Bennett, performed by Little Bridge Theatre Company, film workshops by Tonbridge Film Makers, a comedy night with Arthur Smith, Open Air Theatre with Illyria, an Audience with Victoria Hislop, a bands night showcasing local talent at K College.
- 1.6.3 Highlights of the Festival included the launch event of 'The Big Picture' at the Watergate, organised by Tonbridge Art Group. The portrait made from 165 panels was 11 ft high and 15ft long and based on a painting by Russian artist, Alexander Deineka, entitled 'A Race'. There was also the 'Arts in Tents' project which involved ten local schools from across the Borough. Schools were allocated an Olympic country and had to research the culture and traditions of that nation. Research was then presented through different formats such as a dance performance, singing or an art exhibition. The Festival culminated with a performance by the world renowned group, The Three Degrees.
- 1.6.4 This year's event received support from numerous local businesses including Tonbridge Audi, Hilden Park Chartered Accountants and Lindeyer Francis Ferguson.
- 1.6.5 Originally, Tonbridge Arts Festival was going to take place every two years, as members on the Committee were either volunteers or representatives from local organisations delivering the event, in addition to their normal work programme. However, due to the success of this year's event, the Committee has indicated they would like to hold a mini event each year to keep up the momentum and profile.

1.7 Maidstone Triathlon

1.7.1 The Borough Council was approached to support a Triathlon event on 24 June 2012, in partnership with Maidstone Borough Council. The event was organised by Team Outrageous Ltd, and began with a 400m open water swim at Leybourne Lakes Country Park, with competitors then cycling to Maidstone for a 5k run within Mote Park. Approximately 150 competitors took part in the event, which celebrated the 2012 Olympic year and was run in support of Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research.

1.8 Olympic Torch Relay – Borough Green

1.8.1 The Olympic Torch Relay came to Borough Green on Friday 20 July. Three torchbearers chosen by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) carried the Olympic Flame through the village before the convoy moved on to Seal.

1.8.2 The Council were responsible for ensuring that the Torch, torchbearers and accompanying convoy passed through the Borough safely. Other responsibilities included traffic management, road closures and crowd safety.

1.8.3 An estimated 6,000 people attended the Torch Relay in Borough Green. Before and after the Relay, crowds were entertained by Bloco Fogo Samba Band, The Hartley Morris Men, Bosco the Jester and a special Olympic themed dance by the children of Borough Green Primary School.

1.8.4 The Council received support from the local community with 80 volunteer stewards attending the event. Volunteer stewards came from various organisations across the Borough including The Malling Rotary Club, Borough Green Explorers, Hayesbrook School Sports Leaders, Tonbridge School, the Kent Event Team, Council staff and local residents.

1.9 Tonbridge Castle Olympic Torch Event

1.9.1 Tonbridge Castle also played host to the Olympic Flame on Tuesday 17 July as Dame Kelly Holmes arranged an unexpected visit to Tonbridge as part of a 'spider event' taking place away from the main Torch Relay route.

1.9.2 Around 1,500 school children attended the event on the Castle Lawn and all schools were given the opportunity to have their photo taken with Dame Kelly and the Olympic Torch. Also involved in the event was Frank Verge, a 1948 torchbearer, as well as five top young athletes from the Tonbridge area.

1.9.3 Tonbridge High Street was temporarily closed to accommodate approximately 4,000 people who gathered to see the Torch on a stage which had been erected in the Castle grounds by the East Curtain Wall.

1.10 Summer Band Concerts

1.10.1 The traditional Sunday afternoon Summer Band concerts once again took place at Tonbridge Castle throughout August. Crowds were entertained on the Castle Lawn with free entrance to performances by the Band of the Corps of Royal Engineers, Sevenoaks & Tonbridge Concert Band, Jon Hamilton Big Band and East Peckham Silver Band. Between 300–500 members of the public attended the event each week that was supported by the local Women’s Institute.

1.11 Tonbridge Castle Medieval Fair

1.11.1 The Medieval Fair returned to Tonbridge Castle on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 September. Members of the public had the opportunity to come face-to-face with men-at-arms, hear stories of battles past and find out what they wore and ate. Medieval dishes were prepared over open fires and men and women created crafts from 600 years ago. There was also the opportunity to try some archery and Bosco the Jester once again entertained the crowd.

1.12 Heritage Open Days

1.12.1 Heritage Open Days took place on the same weekend as the Medieval Fair. Organised nationally by English Heritage, Heritage Open Days celebrate England’s fantastic architecture and culture by offering free access to properties that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission. Locally the event is coordinated by the Council in partnership with The Malling Society and Tonbridge Civic Society.

1.12.2 A total of 24 properties and events in Tonbridge and Malling were involved in this year’s Heritage Open Days including properties in Tonbridge, West Malling, Aylesford, Hadlow, East Malling, East Peckham, Ditton, Mereworth, Hildenborough, Larkfield, Ightham, Snodland and Trottiscliffe. Tonbridge Castle was open free of charge to the public throughout the weekend with local groups including Tonbridge Historic Society, Tonbridge Civic Society and Tonbridge Art Group exhibiting in the Council Chamber.

1.13 Music at Malling

1.13.1 Organised by former local resident, Thomas Kemp, Music@Malling is an international Festival of music that draws together the community with a programme of events that bring international artists to historical local venues in and around West Malling. Thomas Kemp is rapidly developing a reputation as one of the finest and imaginative conductors of his generation (The Guardian Newspaper). Thomas is also the Musical Director of the highly acclaimed ensemble Chamber Domaine who will perform on various occasions throughout the Festival.

- 1.13.2 The 2012 Festival will take place from Thursday 27 September to Sunday 30 September, entertaining the local community with concerts and providing an outreach project to inspire creativity in local primary schools.
- 1.13.3 The Festival promotes the work of contemporary composers alongside the standard classics. For 2012, Judith Bingham and Huw Watkins are resident composers and their music will be heard alongside Mozart, Mendelssohn and Chopin: composers that were a favourite of Charles Dickens who celebrates his bicentenary in 2012.
- 1.13.4 Full details are available on the Festival website www.musicatmallong.com.
- 1.13.5 The Council supports the Festival financially and provides access to marketing resources.

1.14 Tonbridge Christmas Festival

- 1.14.1 Organised by Tonbridge Round Table, this year's event will take place on Sunday 25 November. The event includes the switching on of the town's Christmas Lights, an afternoon of musical entertainment by local artists on stage at the Watergate including a performance by a Take That tribute band, and culminates in a firework display over Tonbridge Castle. Money raised from the event is donated to the Round Table's chosen charity. This year the event is once again sponsored by Parkers and The Medway School of Dancing and will be delivered with support from KM FM.
- 1.14.2 For the switching on of the lights the Mayor of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council will be joined by the stars of the Tunbridge Wells Assembly Hall Theatre pantomime, Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs.
- 1.14.3 The Council's involvement for this event includes the provision of the Christmas lights, support with traffic management issues (road closures and crowd barriers) and crowd safety (provision of a professional security team) as well as funding of the fireworks.

1.15 Legal Implications

- 1.15.1 The contract between the Council and Opera Brava was prepared with Legal Services and was signed by both parties.

1.16 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.16.1 A number of the events outlined in the report are supported by the Council's arts programme revenue budget. The partnership approach to the events enables the Council's budget to go further, giving good value for money and bringing a programme of arts performances to residents across the Borough.

1.17 Risk Assessment

- 1.17.1 Where an event takes place on Council owned land, organisers are required to complete an Events on Open Spaces application form, provide a risk assessment, public liability insurance and an Event Management Plan where appropriate. These documents are circulated to the relevant Council departments for comment. Feedback to event organisers is provided by the Council's Health & Safety Officer.

Background papers:

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Nil

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