

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

12 March 2014

Report of the Director of Street Scene & Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 COMMONWEALTH CELEBRATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Members on two key Commonwealth celebration dates for 2014.

1.1 Commonwealth Day

1.1.1 Commonwealth Day is a traditional annual celebration taking place on the second Monday in March with the centre piece of celebrations being the Commonwealth Day Observance in London.

1.1.2 This year Commonwealth Day was held on Monday 10 March and all Local Authorities throughout the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man were approached to take part in a new "Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth" event. Local Authorities were encouraged to raise the Commonwealth Flag from 10am to midnight and flags were also taken to the top of the UK's four highest peaks by four charities: Help for Heroes (Ben Nevis, Scotland), Walking with the Wounded (Mount Snowdon, Wales), Cancer Research UK (Scafell Pike, England) and Fields of Life (Slieve Donard, Northern Island).

1.1.3 As part of the "Fly a Flag" initiative, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council raised the Commonwealth flag at two locations within the Borough: Tonbridge Castle and Liberty Square, Kings Hill. The Mayor attended the event at Tonbridge Castle, whilst the Mayor Elect was present at Liberty Square, Kings Hill. As part of the ceremony, the Commonwealth Affirmation and a message from Her Majesty the Queen was read and the Council invited local primary schools in Tonbridge and Kings Hill to attend. In addition to these formal events a flag was also flown at the Council Offices, Kings Hill.

1.2 Commonwealth Games Baton

1.2.1 This year the city of Glasgow will be hosting the 2014 Commonwealth Games from the 23 July to 3 August, with the Games being described as the third largest multi sport event in the world after the Olympic Games and the Asian Games.

1.2.2 The Queen's Baton Relay is a much loved tradition of the Commonwealth Games and over a period of 288 days, leading up to the opening ceremony, the Baton visits 70 nations and territories, covering 190,000 kilometres. Unlike the Olympic Torch Relay, the Baton will only be making an appearance at a selected number of venues and is not being carried in relay between them. The Baton Relay was launched on 9 October 2013 at Buckingham Palace. This year, the UK section of the relay will commence in Manchester on 31 May and the baton will visit 12 different cities/counties including Kent.

1.2.3 Kent County Council has advised that the Commonwealth Baton will be welcomed to the County of Kent on the 5 June and, in liaison with the Borough Council, have selected Tonbridge Castle to host a morning event. The Borough Council is now liaising with Kent County Council regarding details for the event and Dame Kelly Holmes, as President of the Commonwealth Games England, will take an integral role. A meeting was held on 27 February with Kent County Council to initiate discussions on details of the event and I will be able to verbally update Members further at the meeting.

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 None

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 Costs will be incurred in relation to staging of the event and a draft budget is currently being developed and will be considered in liaison with Kent County Council.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 A risk assessment will be undertaken for Flag Raising ceremonies on Council owned land and an Event Management Plan will also be developed for the event. The Council's Safety Advisory Group will also be consulted.

1.6 Policy Considerations

1.6.1 Community, Healthy Lifestyles. Equalities/Diversity

Background papers:

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Nil

Robert Styles

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