

Cabinet Members Report to Council

23rd November 2023

COUNCILLOR SIMON RING - CABINET MEMBER FOR TOURISM, EVENTS AND MARKETING

5th October to 10th November 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

There seems to be no respite within this portfolio. All areas have been busy with annual events and reacting to the obstacles that life and the weather throws our way.

Marketing and Tourism

For the Halloween 2023 seasonal campaign we continued to promote the largest selection of local Halloween events and activities we have ever compiled for such promotion. As well as a very large array of family-based activities and events held in the area throughout the month, the brand new more adult-based campaign of local event promotions we titled "Fear and Haunting in West Norfolk" was promoted organically by ourselves, with our own created video and image content throughout the month with no negative feedback received.

As such, we hope that this unusual 'dark tourism' aspect for a Halloween promotional campaign, often featuring highlights of our local folklore, will be built upon by ourselves with a paid campaign next year to further support pre-Christmas out-of-season tourism for west Norfolk.

During this autumn period of time we have sent out the following e-shots to our contacts:

- Halloween Events in West Norfolk 2023 (sent to 'Visitor Contacts' on 19/10/2023).
- Small Grants Scheme, Free Training and Growth Programmes (sent to 'Business Contacts' on 26/10/2023).
- Love Your Town Grant Scheme (sent to 'Business Contacts' on 30/10/2023).
- Firework Weekend | Fawkes in the Walks 2023 (sent to 'Visitor Contacts' on 02/11/2023).
- Hunstanton Observatory - How to Hire the Venue (sent to 'Business Contacts' on 16/11/2023).
- Christmas Events in West Norfolk 2023 (sent to 'Visitor Contacts' on 16/11/2023).

We uploaded the following new content on the *Visit West Norfolk* website during this time too:

October Half-Term Activities in West Norfolk 2023 [published 16/10/2023]: www.visitwestnorfolk.com/news/october-half-term-activities-in-west-norfolk-2023/

Promoted 12 attractions and 13 events taking place during October half-term.

Christmas in West Norfolk 2023 [published

02/11/2023]: www.visitwestnorfolk.com/news/christmas-in-west-norfolk-2023/

Features 61 festive events taking place in west Norfolk including Santa's Grottos, Christmas markets and wreath workshops.

Updated: Free Things To Do in West Norfolk | Autumn

2023: www.visitwestnorfolk.com/news/free-things-to-do-in-west-norfolk/

[updated 16/11/2023 to include new free events between November – December 2023].

West Norfolk theatre discovers Medieval Stage where Shakespeare is said to have performed: www.visitwestnorfolk.com/news/st-george-guildhall-shakespeare-discovery/

[published 07/11/2023]. Published before, and in support of, The One Show BBC One coverage of St. George's Guildhall on 07/11/2023.

We also created and uploaded the following social media posts during this time:

o **Social media posts about our blogs:**

- * 'Halloween in West Norfolk 2023' [blog post].
- * 'Fishing in West Norfolk' [blog post].
- * 'Fear and Haunting in West Norfolk' [blog post].
- * '13 Haunted Locations in and around King's Lynn' [blog post].
- * 'October Half-Term Activities in West Norfolk 2023' [blog post].
- * 'Free Things To Do in West Norfolk – Autumn 2023' [blog post].
- * 'Strange Stroll in King's Lynn' [blog post].
- * 'Nature Reserves and Wildlife Parks in West Norfolk' [blog post].
- * '20 Historical Figures with Connections to West Norfolk' [blog post].
- * 'Christmas in West Norfolk 2023' [blog post].

o **Social media posts about local events:**

- * Fear in the Fens [event in King's Lynn].
- * Fawkes in the Walks [event and its rescheduling details].
- * Halloween list of events, including the special weeklong edition of our '#FeatureFriday' posts highlighting extracts from supernatural publications mentioning west Norfolk, including exclusive content for the new 'The Ghosts of King's Lynn and West Norfolk' book by Dr. Paul Lee.
- * St. George's Guildhall Discovery – we live tweeted during The One Show evening coverage on 07/11/2023 to serve as a main point of interest for those searching for more information after seeing the BBC1 special feature.

o **Social media posts about general tourism themes:**

- * Newsletter sign-up.
- * October Half-Term.
- * Safe and Responsible Travel.
- * Rainy Day Activities.
- * Cycling Routes
- * Rover Tickets
- * Coastal Walks.
- * History and Heritage.

We continue to upload events to the Visit West Norfolk website event listings and to proactively contact tourism businesses who are not yet featured on the Visit West Norfolk website for future inclusion.

Finally, we were recently granted authorisation by the BCKLWN ICT Working Group to use the following two programs of software on an initial short-term subscription trial basis, with the aim to better enhance, inform and grow our future promotional interactions with potential visitors to west Norfolk:

Snapsea (www.snapsea.io)
Huq Industries (<https://huq.io>)

- User Generated Content Platform.
- Visitor Mobility Measurement Platform.

Events

This is generally the quiet before the storm of Christmas. However, the storm of Ciaran put pay to any respite for the events and parks team. Despite a great deal of hard work the storm won and Fawkes on the Walks had to be postponed. However, they didn't give up, and after a serious amount of hard work and re-organisation, the event was staged on 10th November, a week late.

We estimate that we had over 18,000 residents once again and the event went off without any issues. It is a testament to the quality of the planning and organisation that the only minor casualty on the night was a young child who reported with some ash in the eye. All washed out and sorted (no pun intended).

The parks and events team are to be highly commended for their dedication and commitment to this event which has now become such a staple for West Norfolk. Whilst it costs us to stage it, let's remember this was staged to reduce the number of private displays, the cost to residents, the cost for us to clean up random fires and the impact on A&E.

Christmas next.

Culture and Heritage

We have seen increased numbers again and more involvement by schools and colleges at the Guildhall.

Exhibition Heads and Tails closed after a highly successful run. It's the first time both galleries have been used in tandem in over a decade and the exhibition was referred to in country life as 'unmissable'. The Shakespeare Gallery also had a brilliant exhibition by King's Oak School.

The Guildhall still is national and international news. Following the coverage reported last month in which over an estimated 200 million people engaged with the story of the floorboards the Guildhall story was on the One show 7th Nov on BBC, in conjunction with the celebration of the 600th anniversary of the first print of Shakespeare's folio of work. This can still be viewed on the BBC iplayer.

Dragon Fest on 4th November was a huge success with dragons, face painting, live animals, weaponry displays, archery, hot food and drink, dragon trails, shows and

cinema viewings. Just under 700 people (670) attended the event during the day with many calls for it to become an annual occasion.

Currently the KL Players are in the Guildhall doing Wizard of Oz.

Leisure

Lynnsport has been as busy as ever.

ACTIVE COMMUNITY – In October we had a Community and Sports Development audit undertaken by Right Directions who sent their lead Quest Assessor. The audit covered:

1. Contribution to Health and Wellbeing
2. Engaging with Children 0-11 years
3. Increasing Participation and Reducing Inactivity
4. Partnerships and Collaboration
5. Active Community Outcomes
6. Talent Development in Sport

The feedback was superb. The auditor said:

“He had never seen a delivery team so well embedded in an organisation”.

“The quality and range of programmes and partnerships are superb”.

“Whilst not a scored audit, if we were to do Quest it would be a max score as its hard to find fault”.

“The only feedback he could offer would be adding a cherry on the top”.

The audit was commissioned to review progress of the Active Community Team since a change of direction 2 years ago. We are very pleased with the progress the team have made and the impact it is having in the community through our variety of programmes including:

- Active Community
- Active Schools
- Kings Lynn Gymnastics
- Kings Lynn Community Football
- Active Now Exercise Referral and our range of health programmes and partnerships.

The Active Community programme has seen a range of free programmes offered around the borough away from AWN leisure sites. The funding for these programmes finishes in December 2023 but due to the success the Health and Wellbeing Partnership have asked for proposals to extend the funding and keep programmes running which they are currently reviewing.

Through the Active Now programme which is a county wide exercise referral programmes we have over 120 referrals and funding confirmed to support the first 200. We have also now received £37k to support falls prevention in the borough and we will be rolling out a new programme from January for 10 week programmes at AWN sites and 4 community venues including Fairstead, Watlington, Marshland and Snettisham.

8 gymnasts attended a 3-day training camp at Yate International Gymnastics centre. The training camp was led by national coaches, many of whom have gymnasts representing GB at international level, with world and European titles. This was the first time we have attended a training camp of this quality, and the training received by the gymnasts and coaches was "amazing".

We attended the Norfolk FA football awards to pick up our FA Grassroots Award for Most Positive Football Environment in Norfolk recognising the range of programmes and culture within our programme.

We launched a new programme in partnership with the 8:56 Foundation called **Time to Talk Football**. The programme supports men's mental health through a 6-a-side league on a Friday night. Players score goals for their off the pitch work maintaining a well-being log, completing wellbeing challenges and checking in with their KLCF Coach each week. These goals are then combined with their on the pitch scores to provide a league table. The 8:56 Foundation are present each week to provide players with any specific support and also cover the costs of all training. Wellbeing training is offered to all players and each team alongside their captain have a 'Wellbeing Captain' who undertakes formal Mental Health First Aid Training.

The first night saw 70 people sign up and we have now reached our season 1 max of 80 with a waiting list in place.

The Sport England commissioned Moving Communities Survey found AWN customer satisfaction, preference for attending venue for exercise and cleanliness all well ahead of national averages. The report also detailed a breakdown of the Social Value of AWN's work over the last 12 months and at our leisure sites this equated to £4.6m, split into:

Physical and Mental £938,435
Subjective Wellbeing £3,242,376
Individual Development £25,965
Social and Community £1,025,821

This is quite new data and does not account for the work AWN do on the Arts and Entertainment side or community programmes.

This financial impact analysis is very useful when justifying the cost of the active leisure delivery in West Norfolk.

The Corn Exchange team have also been as busy as usual.

Cinema:

The cinema has been well attended with a number of main releases including Barbie and Killers of the Flower Moon! Silver, Autism and Dementia screenings have all continued to sell well. The Dementia screening will, from now until March, be all the old MGM films.

Taylor Swift live screening coming up and comedian Kevin Bridges.

Toddler Tuesday, Birthday parties and cinema parties all going strong.

The November film festival in conjunction with the Community Cinema Club begins later this month.

Theatre:

The Corn Exchange shows are booking well. In September and October ticket sales were up 5% & 38% higher revenue on pre-covid levels. We were also 10% higher than the theatres we benchmark against. 25% have been new customers also.

The Mousetrap was a huge success. We needed 3500 customers to break even and ended up with 4600 through the door which worked out at 82% capacity.

The Corn Ex new brochure is being published in November. This is for Dates up to the end of April 2024 and will include the Guildhall.

Part of our health & Wellbeing we will be offering an Audio Descriptive performance for The Mousetrap and Pantomime. We have brought in a specialist company called Vocal Eyes who work in many theatres. They supply headphones and person to narrate what is happening on stage for those who require the service. We are working closely with Vision Norfolk who are extremely pleased we are providing this as the only venue doing this in Norfolk is the Theatre Royal in Norwich. There will also be a "Touch Tour" for customers to go on stage and touch the cast and the set so they can have a feel for what is happening.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

I will be attending many more events over the coming month and have scheduled countless meetings in order to give me sufficient knowledge to enable me to lead on this portfolio.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

I have had numerous meetings with officers and outside bodies

Officers

Oliver Judges
Geoff Hall
Duncan Hall
Martin Chisholm
David Morton
Philip Eke
Bethany O'Brien
Philip Bayfield
Jemma Curtis
Tim Fitzhigham
Honor Howell
David Ousby

Michelle Drewery
Abigail Rawlings

Outside bodies

Civic Society
Hunstanton Action Group
Marriot's Warehouse Trust
Conservancy Board

I have regular scheduled meetings with most of the above officers and will continue to meet and fact find with outside bodies including those already met with.