

LEISURE & CULTURE NEWS

No.27 December 2005

COMMUNITY REGENERATION

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY

Kick it Out Campaign Hailed

As part of the trust's commitment to diversity we have been working with partner agencies on the Wigan Borough 'Kick Racism Out of Football' programme.

The 2005 campaign has been hugely successful, with over 3,000 people from across our community being involved in the campaign in one capacity or another.

The Wigan campaign was successful in winning the Greater Manchester Police nomination for a 'Diversity in Action' award. The campaign was then put forward to represent GMP at the Police Review Gala Awards in London on the 17th November 2005.

Eighteen police forces were represented at the awards with three winners. The Wigan Borough submission did not achieve one of the three winning places but it was the only submission that highlighted partnership working to make an impact on diversity.



The awards ceremony was attended by Abida Niaz (GMP), Mark Shackleton (English Schoolboys' Association), John Hasketh (WLCT) and Andrew Bond (WLCT).

Greater Manchester Police's Community and Race Relations Officer for Wigan, Abida Niaz said: "Wigan's Kick Racism Out Of Football campaign has gone from strength to strength and I am really pleased that the team has been nominated for a national award. This campaign clearly demonstrates how Wigan's partners and different communities can successfully work together to break down barriers."

Contact: John Hesketh on 01942 486916

Hag Fold Pantomime 2006

Residents from the Hag Fold Estate, Atherton, with support from Kirsty Atherton the trust's Hag Fold Community Development Officer are rehearsing for their annual pantomime. 'Snow White and the Seven Aliens' will be performed on 14th January 2006 at Dorset Road Community Centre.

Thirty-eight local residents of all ages have volunteered to take part in the production with another four working behind the scenes. The night is always a huge success thanks to the dedication of local people.

There are plans to form a drama group with a hope that pantomimes and other performances will be put on throughout 2006 and for many years to come.

'The fact that the entire cast are local residents is a real achievement and a positive step towards forming a drama group. The pantomime is always a huge success with around 150 local people attending on the Saturday evening. It is nice to see so many committed volunteers of all ages working together towards a common cause,' says Kirsty.

Contact: Kirsty Atherton 01942 893725

ARTS AND FESTIVALS

Designs for Life at the Turnpike

Some of the North West's most creative artists are appearing at the Turnpike Gallery in Leigh this winter. 'Designs for Life' opened on Friday 9th December and runs to 28th January, with an opening event taking place starting at 6pm. The opening day also featured a high-quality Christmas Gift Market.

Featuring the work of four young, local designers, 'Designs for Life' is an opportunity to witness the wide-range and quality of work being produced across the region. From mass-produced textiles and gift items to one-off commissions, the exhibition will give an insight into the design process from initial idea to final product.

"All the artists featured in 'Designs for Life' have a vibrant evocative style, reflective of the energy and enthusiasm currently surrounding the North West arts scene. We are delighted to be hosting such quality exhibits," says Louise Clennell, Turnpike Gallery Co-ordinator.

Contact: Louise Clennell 01942 404469

Borough set for Dance Fusion

As dance fever grips the nation, Wigan Borough is bracing itself for the biggest dance festival the area has ever seen. Dates have been confirmed for 'Dance Fusion', a week long festival of dance activity, featuring performers from across the borough.

Organised through a partnership between Wigan and Leigh Dance Network, the trust's Arts Development team, the Active Living team and Fred Longworth High School, the festival will be launched with an evening show case event on Saturday 18th March 2006 at Lowton Civic Hall.



The event will see over sixteen dance schools performing, with styles ranging from Latin, ballet, street dance, tap, and even belly dancing!

"This will provide a fantastic opportunity to showcase and celebrate the dance scene in the borough as well as developing and increasing access to dance workshops for the wider community," says Vicky Fletcher, Arts Development Officer for the trust.

A range of dance workshops and events will take place throughout the borough from the 18th to 25th March. The community will have the chance to participate in a diverse range of dance activities and workshops. These events will be open to young people, adults, senior citizens and people with disabilities.

"Dance is the most natural form of physical activity and is a fun and social way to increase your health and fitness. Our workshops are suitable for all abilities and it is a great way to get all of the family involved," says Judith Kershaw, from the trust's Active Living team.

Contact: Vicky Fletcher 01942 486918

PLAY

New Adventure Play area at Firs Park

The Mayor of Wigan opened the new adventure style play area at Firs Park Leigh at half term in October, with hundreds of children turned up for the event.

Substantial work was undertaken by Firs Park User group, local schools and children's groups. Local councillors and the trust's Parks team also helped with the project.

Everyone working together helped create the largest outdoor adventure style play area in the Wigan Borough. The NRSI (National Road Safety Initiative) paid for the new facility.

Play'in Out Team Spread Xmas Spirit

The Play'in Out Team are busy delivering their planned 48 Christmas parties of this festive season!

The team are expecting over two thousand children to take part in the fun with all sorts of Christmas party games and creative arts and crafts taking place in venues as varied as Teinan Lodge homeless unit to a travellers site in Bickershaw.

Contact: Deborah Freeman on 01942 877386

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

HAIGH HALL

Busy Times for Haigh

The Stables Café is currently being refurbished and is due to re-open early in the New Year. A £38,000 investment, made possible through Wigan Leisure and Culture Enterprises Ltd., will see the café redecorated and fitted with improved kitchen facilities. The café will serve a completely new menu to promote healthier eating and will be renamed 'Stables Tea Rooms'.

Meanwhile, Haigh's Sunday Carvery service, launched in October, has gone from strength to strength. The number of customers has risen from 80 in the first week to over 150 by week three with feedback from customers being excellent.

Haigh's Golf Complex are also launching a breakfast golf promotion in the new year, with golfers being

offered the opportunity to play a round of golf and tuck into a bacon sandwich for just £10.

Contact: Tim Sharratt, Gary Povall or Ian Lee on 01942 832895

PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE

Kipling Park Re-opened

The residents of Worsley Mesnes are celebrating following the official opening of a brand new purpose built neighbourhood park, on Saturday 10th December. The park situated near Clifton Street and Kipling Avenue has been christened Kipling Park.

An investment of £171,000 has transformed a debris-ridden piece of wasteland (formerly the site of Worsley Mesnes Primary School) into an excellent recreation and play area that will become a focal point of the local community.

The Worsley Mesnes Community Partnership, a group including local residents and elective representatives from Wigan Council, Economic Regeneration, Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust and the police, has been the driving force behind the scheme. The whole consultation process has taken over twelve months and has included generous input on the design of the play facilities from local children, youth groups and mother and toddler groups.

"This project has involved a great number of partners and is an excellent example of how a co-ordinated community-led approach can have fantastic results for local residents," says Dave Owen, the trust's Parks' Community Liaison Officer.

The new Kipling Park facility includes play areas for all children aged up to eleven. Further funding is also being sought through SRB6 to provide a ball park facility for older children and young people in the neighbourhood.

Contact: Dave Owen 01942 828923

Improvement Work at Upton Play Area

Improvements to the Upton Play Area site are underway. Work is being carried out to stabilise the slope that is now considered to be in a dangerous condition due to natural erosion and children digging into the slope.

Soil will be imported and used to fill in the depressions before reducing the angle of the slope. The work will mean a machine being temporarily present on site

To reduce the damage caused by inappropriate play, the bank will then be safeguarded with a thorn hedge and planted with low growing plants. The area will then be more wildlife friendly and the risk from children making tree houses will be greatly reduced.

The initial re-grading is targeted to be complete before Christmas with informative notices being positioned at the site entrances so that local people are kept informed.

Hedge and other planting will progress in the spring when growing conditions are better. The work is funded by the trust and will compliment the improvements to the play facilities currently being planned by the Play section.

Contact: Mike Berry on 01942 828904

CORPORATE SUPPORT

LEISURE VENUES

Monaco Hosts Another Comedy Star

Phoenix Nights star Paddy McGuinness is heading to the Monaco Ballroom, Hindley in the new year, as part of his first national solo tour, 'The Dark Side'.

Paddy's appearance at the revamped Monaco on Thursday 23rd February, follows in the footsteps of fellow Phoenix star Dave Spikey, who recently played two sell-out shows at the Monaco.



"The Monaco is building a good reputation as a comedy venue and we are keen to enhance that. We are determined to provide people with quality entertainment at an affordable price," says Brian

Yates, Leisure Venues Manager. "We will have more surprises on show at the Monaco over the next twelve months."

Tickets, priced £15, went on sale from Thursday 15th December from the Tourist Information Centre.

Contact: Brian Yates 01942 486953

ICT

Trust Website Hits One Million Mark

On the 15th December, the trust's website received its one-millionth 'hit' for the financial year. Interestingly, this landmark visit to the site was traced back to Zimbabwe! Website visitors come from over 100 countries. After the UK and the USA, Zimbabwe is the third biggest visitor with regard to individual visitors.

The popularity of the trust's website has increased immeasurably since its inception. In its final year as the Leisure Department, the site had 423,352 hits, in its first year as the trust this had risen to 677,411 and in 2004/2005 the number reached 912,042.

The trust's website was established in April 2003. Originally consisting of 300 pages the site has now grown to 1622 pages of valuable information.

The website is currently updated up to 600 times per month and gained W3C-AAA compliance. The site has also recently added links to the BBC's news and headlines.

Contact: Andrew Busby 01942 486968

SPORT AND HEALTHY LIVING

ACTIVE LIVING

With Christmas nearly upon us and waistlines across the borough getting set to expand, volunteers from Wigan and Leigh have been sending out a healthy message whilst raising money for one of the borough's most important charities.

The trust's Active Living team have teamed up with Wigan and Leigh Hospice to organise a series of sponsored health walks during September. To date the walks have raised over £11,000 (this year) with sponsor money still flooding in.

Over 300 people from across the community took part in the Wigan and Leigh Hospice *Walk For A Life* which included guided health walks around the Three Sisters Recreation Area (6km) and Pennington Flash (9km). This is the third year of the walks and the amount raised over the last three years is well over £40,000.



"We were delighted to help the hospice raise this money Health Walks are ideal for people who want to improve their general health and well-being and can easily be built into your everyday routine," says Judith Kershaw from the trust's Active Living team.

Contact: Judith Kershaw on 01942 828572

ACTIVE LIFE

Robin Park to Host Gymnastics Again

Robin Park is celebrating the news that the British Gymnastics Association has selected them to stage the British Men's Championships in 2006 and 2007. This follows the success of the event in September which saw record numbers turn out and watch the event thanks to the 'Kids Go Free' initiative. The event even featured a live link on BBC regional news.

"We are very proud to stage events such as championship boxing, international badminton and the gymnastics and even more thrilled that British Gymnastics have been so impressed with our delivery that they wish to come back for the next two years," says Mike Woodruff, Centre Manager. "To secure these sorts of events important to local people who not only have a chance to participate in quality facilities, but can also watch, live, athletes at the top of their trade."

The British Gymnastics Championships will return to Robin Park on the 4th & 5th November 2006.

Contact: Mike Woodruff 01942 404957