



Report to

Council

Meeting Date: 28th March 2023

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Culture, Heritage & Leisure Portfolio Holder's Report –
Councillor Stephen Higgs**

CITY OF LIGHTS

The 2023 City of Lights event was held between 23rd and 25th February. Themed on Science, visitors were able to explore the contributions of science and human understanding of the physical world around us.

The event was bigger than ever before taking in internal spaces in Carlisle Cathedral, the Fraternity, Tullie and Carlisle Castle.

The event provided a significant draw and motivation for people to visit the City, both locals and those from further afield. The event had widespread appeal attracting a variety of groups. 31% of those who attended were visitors to the City. The event was extremely well received with very high satisfaction rates across all aspects (99% of visitors said the event was good or very good), and a very high percentage of people said they would return for a similar event in the future.

Average spend for those attending the event was £27.20, an increase of 134% on the inaugural 2020 event resulting in an economic impact of just over £220,000 over the three days.

LAKES HOSPITALITY SHOW

The Discover Carlisle Team attended the Lakes Hospitality Show at Crooklands on 1st and 2nd March. The show is a celebration of the hospitality industry and a hub for both local and national companies to showcase their business to the sector. The show is a focal point for the region's hospitality industry bringing visitors and suppliers together. Discover Carlisle attended in partnership with Carlisle Ambassadors, Allerdale Borough Council and Copeland Borough Council.

The stand also hosted the launch of Adventure Smart in Cumbria. Cumbria is the first region in England to join the initiative. The aim is to reduce the number of avoidable incidents which the rescue and emergency services deal with each year by promoting a comprehensive set of safety messages and to work with the outdoor sector to promote these far and wide.

INTERNATIONAL MARKET

The ever-popular International Market returns to Carlisle 6th – 10th April. The event provides a significant draw to the City Centre increasing both footfall and dwell time. The event will feature gifts and crafts as well as food and drink.

TOURISM BREAKFAST BRIEFING

The next Tourism Breakfast Briefing will be held on 21st March at the Old Fire Station. The event is hosted by Carlisle City Council (Discover Carlisle) in partnership with Allerdale Borough Council and Copeland Borough Council. Speakers include Adam Phillips from the Lake District National Park Authority, Ben Heslop from Cumbria County Council, Rachel Bell from Lake District Estates and Officers from the three District Councils.

EVENTS

There has been a vibrant and diverse events offer over the last four years, with some key successes being:

- Bitts Park hosting international artists such as Paloma Faith, Tom Jones, Jess Glynne and Madness over the last four years
- In 2022 65,000 attendees at the Community Events programme (Upperby Gala, Big Jubilee Lunch, Fireshow, Christmas Light Switch on)

LEISURE

Successes in the last four years include:

- Delivery of the Sands Centre Redevelopment project to deliver modern, energy efficient facilities for residents of Carlisle district
- Stony Holme Golf Course became operational again after the previous operator went into liquidation and has been a real success with increasing use year on year
- Since August 2021 the Old Fire Station venue has been run on behalf of the City Council by Greystone Leisure. In the first year of trading from August 2021 to August 2022 the venue has had 22,500 visitors of which 75% come from Carlisle. 149 events have taken place comprising of a mix of music, comedy and arts

TOURISM

In 2020 tourist numbers fell from 9 million to 4.6 million. In 2021 these figures increased to 7 million. There is still some way to go in terms of recovery, but international visitors are returning, in particular from the USA and Canada. Tourism still makes a significant contribution to Carlisle's economy and in 2021 was worth £452 million.

TULLIE HOUSE

It's been a very busy six weeks at Tullie since we launched our new brand and opened a new exhibition: **The Legend of King Arthur: A Pre-Raphaelite Love Story**. Visitor figures have been extremely positive, with this year's February Half Term our busiest week since April 2019 – over 1,700 people visited the museum with over 1,500 families taking part in craft activities, storytelling, workshops and completing a King Arthur themed trail over the week.

This period has also been a busy one for community engagement, particularly in connecting with **people seeking refuge** in Carlisle. Our current projects are funded through Cumbria Development Education Centre's Green Place Project (funded by the government's 'Green Recovery Challenge Fund' & delivered by NLHF, (Natural England the Forestry Commission) – since last summer we've been running fortnightly sessions in our Secret Garden for people seeking refuge. Many members of the group were engineers, builders, gardeners and trades people in their home countries so they've really welcomed this opportunity to use their skills to support their new community. The group also supports with language and communication skills, building social confidence and connections, and encouraging community integration. Members of the groups have since attended events in the Museum. When the new group of people seeking refuge or asylum arrived towards the end of last year, we reached out via partners including Multicultural Cumbria and Carlisle Refugee Action Group to offer support – this resulted in us running workshops and open garden sessions for the predominantly women and children staying at the hotel in Stanwix. The women are particularly inspired by activities relating to art and craft – for example, in one of our sessions we visited the Hair: Untold Stories exhibition with them and helped them make their own lavender scented hair oil! Through our Once Upon A Planet project we will be increasing the number of Secret Garden based sessions we can offer these groups and plan to hold more open events where the groups can meet other community partners and feel more integrated and welcomed in the city.

Our **Young People's Engagement** programme continues to grow, with monthly sessions for 14–16-year-olds (Arts Explorers now at capacity). We have also been recruiting more young people for our 16+ Young Producers group. Our Young Advisors group who have been leading on activity with our natural science collection as part of our ongoing 'Once Upon A Planet' project delivered an amazing day of activities, talks, tours and workshops for young people interested in conservation and biodiversity – over 50 people attended the 'Wild Futures' conference which was delivered with the support of partners including the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre and Cumbria Wildlife Trust.

Together with **Thriving Communities Carlisle** partners, we are planning two new strands of activity in Phase 2 of the project which will focus on co-developed activity with Community Centre partners that deliver arts, culture and nature based social prescribing opportunities for vulnerable adults.

This month we've also launched our **Tullie on Tour** outreach programme as part of the Project Tullie Phase 3 NLHF funded Development Phase. Our new Community Curator started in January and has programmed in a huge range of outreach opportunities at Community Centres, city events, parks and venues around the city and beyond. The programme will run until the Autumn and is focussed on bringing museum collections into the community, as well as hearing from people about the stories and collections they'd like to see on display as part of Project Tullie developments going forward.

Having agreed a design scheme and consulted with neighbours and community groups/users the Planning, Listed Building and Landlord Consents have been submitted to the City Council for Phase 2 of **Project Tullie**. Phase 1 saw the creation of first floor spaces to create new galleries for the museum's outstanding costume collection in 2021. The exciting Phase 2 scheme drawn up by architects De Matos Ryan proposes a new, more visible and welcoming main entrance; a community space on Castle Street with lifts to make the whole suite of property accessible; a new exhibition gallery telling stories about Carlisle life; and improved visitor facilities. Retaining, and for the majority, enhancing the architectural heritage is key to the development. Should all the consents be approved work is planned to commence in late summer with a view to minimise disruption for visitors and the museum operation.

CUMBRIA'S MUSEUM OF MILITARY LIFE

- The Military Museum continues to tell the story of the local infantry regiment in its home within Carlisle Castle. We are currently open six days a week until Easter when we reopen 10.00 a.m. -5.00 p.m. seven days a week
- Our Tuesday talks programme continues to engage audiences. For 10 months of the year, we bring in local and national speakers to talk on a variety of subjects to a local audience, which is proving popular. We are in the process of planning for 2024
- We actively engage with schools and will be refining our offer for the 2023/24 academic year, working with both the Cathedral, English Heritage and Tullie House. We continue to work closely with the Teacher Training Department at the University of Cumbria to showcase our collections and promote the use of using Museums as a resource for teachers
- We continue our work with veterans, hosting 32 at our last Veterans Lunch in February. We also have some veterans who volunteer at the Museum, and we are looking at developing this further in the future. We actively engage with other organisations who support veterans across the County and have become a local point of contact for the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment. We maintain a good working relationship with Kohima Company 4LANCS who are based within the Castle and in Workington
- Our temporary exhibitions programme will be relaunched this summer showcasing some of our art collection. We are currently in the early stages of planning an Arnhem related exhibition in 2024 with accompanying study day to link in with the 80th anniversary

- We appreciate the support over the years of Carlisle City Council who have supported us and helped promote the Museum as part of the cultural offer within the City. Long may it continue!