



Meeting Date: 3rd January 2023

Public/Private*: Public

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

Councillor Stephen Higgs

EVENTS

The Christmas Light Switch On was held on 20th November and featured local schools, theatre and dance groups. The Mayor of Carlisle was joined on stage by Twist & Pulse for the countdown and switch on followed by our headline guest Simon Webbe from Blue. The city centre was packed for the event with an estimated 14,000 people in attendance.

New Christmas Market

Carlisle's Christmas Market was held in the city centre between 2nd and 11th December. The market featured a fantastic range of local, national and international traders selling a variety of Christmas gifts, food and drink. The market provided the perfect backdrop to welcome the annual Santa Dash, and hosted carols by Newtown Primary School and a performance by the Salvation Army Band.

Carlisle, Allerdale and Copeland Tourism Breakfast briefing

Officers from the three District Councils have come together once again to host a joint Tourism Breakfast Briefing. 30 businesses attended the event at Rosehill Theatre, Whitehaven on 16th November to hear updates from each area and listen to specialist speakers from the University of Cumbria and Intro PR.

Old Fire Station - update

Greystone Leisure Limited have now been running the Old Fire Station on behalf of the City Council for over a year. In the first year:

- 149 events have been hosted (music, comedy and exhibitions) with 22,585 people attending
- 75% of attendees are from Carlisle with 46% being over the age of 50
- 174 events have been booked in for Year 2
- The venue worked with local schools and Carlisle College to host student events

City of Lights 2023 will be held on 23rd, 24th & 25th February 2023 at Carlisle Cathedral, Tullie House and Carlisle Castle. Once again the interior of the Cathedral will be used to produce a truly immersive experience. The theme for the event will be Science.

TULLIE HOUSE

Tullie has had a mixed quarter in terms of **visitor numbers**, with admissions at c. 65% of 2019/20. This is in line with the national trend for museum visits and is a significant increase on 2021/22, showing that visitors are returning but slower than we had initially hoped for. Footfall has been boosted this period thanks to Tullie participating in the fantastic 'City of Light' events and the University of Cumbria's graduation ceremonies. The museum's **learning programmes** continue to show strong numbers, with over 1,000 pupils taking part in visits in October on topics including Prehistory, the Border Reivers, Habitats and the Egyptians. We are currently working with the British Museum on research and development for digital resources for their major new national learning programme, 'Culture Bus', which starts in September 2023 and will see free coach travel and subsidised visit costs to Tullie House offered to all primary school pupils in Copeland and Allerdale. Community engagement continues to go from strength to strength. As well as our at-capacity monthly sessions for adults with dementia and adults experiencing loneliness and isolation, '**Frontier Voices**' has seen members of our Art Group work with artist Karen MacDougall to produce a beautiful mixed-media installation exploring themes of frontiers and borders, currently on display in the Roman Frontier Gallery. We are proud to be supporting the wellbeing of **people seeking refuge** in Carlisle: thanks to funding from CDEC's Green Places project we have been hosting a group of Syrian refugees every fortnight in the Secret Garden. As part of the national Heritage Open Days event we also ran a day of activities and events for Ukrainian families in the city. Finally, we have recruited a new **Thriving Communities** Project Development Coordinator who will start in January 2023.

Project Tullie has made significant progress this period with procurement and recruitment. As well as external project management services and quantity surveyors, the capital development programme now has its design team of architects, structural engineers and mechanical and engineering consultants in place. We have also successfully recruited for project staff, including Client Project Manager and Lead Curator. These posts will add vital internal capacity and allow the project to continue at pace.

CUMBRIA'S MUSEUM OF MILITARY LIFE

The museum turned 90 on 7th December 2022 and opened to the public between 10.00 a.m. & 2.00 p.m. for sixpence (1932 admission price). There was an afternoon celebration event to thank our supporters for their help, advice and assistance. Currently we are closed mid-week and only open at weekends to allow behind the scenes tasks to be completed. We are thankful to our volunteers who help us with maintenance and collections-related tasks during this period.