



Report to

Council

Meeting Date: 9th November 2021

Public/Private*: Public

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

CITY OF LIGHTS 2021

Carlisle City of Lights was held from 14th - 16th October and was once again a great success. The event was significantly larger than the pilot event in February 2020 and used outdoor spaces at Carlisle Cathedral, Tullie House Museum and Carlisle Castle. Dramatic outdoor lighting schemes including lasers from the top of the Castle complemented the immersive sound & light experiences at Carlisle Cathedral and Carlisle Castle. Around 4,500 tickets were sold, and many more thousands of people came out to see the external lighting of buildings including the Citadel, Court Square, Cathedral and Castle. The event generated an incredible buzz around the City. I would like to thank all of those involved including staff here at Carlisle City Council who managed the event, and our partners Cumbria County Council, Carlisle Cathedral, English Heritage, Tullie House, Eden Rivers Trust, Just Beam It Lasers, SVL Hire and Luxmuralis.

HM THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

These will cover four days, 2nd – 5th June 2022. Hadrian's Wall has been selected by Her Majesty's Pageantmaster as a key location for the Jubilee Beacons Event, planned for the evening of 2nd June. A letter is going to all Town and Parish Councils informing them of the event and local authorities are encouraged to get their whole communities involved, not just those along the Wall.

HADRIAN'S WALL 1900th ANNIVERSARY

Events are being planned throughout 2022 to mark the 1900th anniversary of the start of the building of Hadrian's Wall. It is thought that the Emperor visited Britain in 122 AD and gave the order for construction to start. So far, over £500,000 has been secured to fund the programme, with more bids in progress. Over 60 groups in Cumbria have currently

registered their plans. Some of the intended benefits include the community being more engaged, major international publicity and attraction for a staycation market.

UNCOVERING ROMAN CARLISLE

The excavations at the Bathhouse at Carlisle Cricket Club have mostly come to an end, with some extra days for the volunteers already involved to help with consolidation of the site before it is reburied for preservation. A volunteer “thank you” event on the site had around 100 in attendance, plus talks on discoveries/artefacts displayed. With a target of around 300 Volunteer Days, we now stand at 1,000 and counting. 2,300 visited the engagement section of the site, run by Tullie House. 5,000 approx. visited the excavation, including 469 pupils from eight schools. International media attention included a National Geographic documentary for 2022 filmed on site, the Smithsonian Magazine, British Archaeology, BBC, ITV, Radio Cumbria, Cumbria Crack, News and Star, etc. Post-excavation examination of artefacts (at least five times what was anticipated has been discovered) is ongoing at Wardell Armstrong, with volunteers involved in the process. A touring exhibition is planned for March 2022 onwards. It will involve volunteer contributions and will start at Tullie House and then visit six venues around Carlisle.

TULLIE HOUSE

Tullie House has had a strong six weeks in terms of visitor numbers, driven by the newly opened Costume Galleries and two new popular contemporary art exhibitions in our main temporary exhibition gallery. After much deliberation, the Museum’s Senior Leadership Team decided to move to a six-day opening week (Monday – Saturday) during school term times to support financial sustainability and in response to continuing impacts on staff and volunteer availability as a result of Covid-19. The Museum’s ambitious capital programme *Project Tullie* continues at pace. As Members are aware, the Council submitted an application for the project to the Levelling Up Fund in June (outcome expected this Autumn), and the Museum will be submitting a further project application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (outcome expected in December). The Museum Trust has already secured £2m from the UK Government and a further £900k from the Town Deal Fund.

OLD FIRE STATION

The Old Fire Station has successfully relaunched following the easing of government restrictions under the new operators. There is a varied and full programme for the rest of 2021 and many events booked for 2022. Please visit ofscarlisle.co.uk for more details.

CARLISLE STATION GATEWAY & CITADELS PROJECTS

Good progress continues to be made with the development and delivery of the Carlisle Station Gateway and Citadels projects. These two regeneration projects will transform the southern area of the city centre and secure the long-term future and maintenance of significant listed buildings. The Council continues to explore the options as to how to take

the Victorian Health Suite forward, once the swimming pools are relocated to The Sands Centre and the modern Pools building is demolished.

DISCOVER CARLISLE

The Discover Carlisle team have been working to attract travel influencers to visit the city and district. Two visits have been secured and featured sites including Birdoswald Roman Fort, Lanercost Priory, Talkin Tarn, Tullie House, Carlisle Cathedral, Carlisle Castle, Cumbria's Museum of Military Life and Bitts Park. These were Black Kintsugi and North East Family Fun. Carlisle was featured in the Glasgow Evening Times as a 'family friendly adventure' for half term on 8th October.

<https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/19632462.enjoy-family-friendly-adventures-cumbria-half-term/>

<https://blackkintsugi.com/9-must-do-activities-when-visiting-carlisle-solway-coast/>

<https://www.northeastfamilyfun.co.uk/search?q=carlisle>

Arts Council England visit

We've recently had a visit from Darren Henley, CEO of Arts Council England. He enjoyed a tour of key sites within the city including the new Fraternity building, West Walls Street Art and Tribe Carlisle, concluding with a round table discussion held at Tullie House.