

Report to COUNCIL 1st November 2023

Cabinet Report of Communities and Culture Portfolio

**Portfolio Holder:
Councillor Peter Dean Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture**

This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to portfolio responsibilities. Council is requested to note the report.

District Working and Placed Based Integration

The first round of District Community Council meetings have been completed. Feedback has been positive. The work will further strength partnership collaboration in each neighbourhood. The next round of meetings will take place before Christmas, focusing on a more in-depth discussion on of one of the key issues identified by Members in each patch. Council teams and partners are starting to share office space with the District Teams, this will further improve collaboration. It will result in better problem-solving, nipping issues in the bud, improving outcomes and lead to quicker problem resolution.

Work is also continuing to rollout face-to-face support in each of our Districts. Council and partners working closely together to bring vital services closer to our local communities, through our network of hubs. We want to provide a more holistic response, that allows people to access help for a number of different issues in one place.

This year, the Doorstep Engagement Team were aligned to our five Districts, to strengthen our Place-Based working approach. From April - August they have knocked on over 37,000 doors, speaking to more than 12,000 people, and supporting people to access information and services over 5,000 times.

Heritage Libraries and Arts (HLA)

As part of the town centre regeneration schedule, HLA collections and services from 84 Union Street will be moved into temporary facilities by the end of February 2024. Collections will be stored in secure temporary accommodation until Spindles site is complete.

Archives and Local Studies service will close at 84 Union Street on 30 November 2023. A temporary service will operate from Oldham Library from March 2024 until the Spindles site is ready. There will be no access to physical archives during this time, but digital resources will be available as usual.

Oldham Theatre Workshop will move to Gallery Oldham's vacant café space in January 2024, until their permanent new home in the Old Library Building is complete.

HLA have delivered a range of high-quality participatory festivals and programmes, some of which are highlighted below:

Summer Reading Challenge - Over 2,000 children (aged 4-11) took part in the Summer Reading Challenge, with 4,274 attending 75 events. 24,566 physical books issued and 19,001 digital loans.

Children's Literature Festival - We partnered with Christina Gabbitas and her charity 'Children's Literature Festivals' to pilot a children's literature festival in Chadderton. The mission of the charity is "*to give children and families from less privileged back-grounds and areas of deprivation access to FREE literature festivals and books*". We worked with 10 schools, 2,000 children participated, 9 authors and illustrators delivered interactive sessions. The charity distributed £3,000 worth of books to families, and we held a community celebration day that was attended by over 320 people.

Histories Festival - We delivered a successful Oldham Histories Festival that included 31 individual events delivered by 19 organisations. The most popular event was the Oldham Shree Swaminarayan Mandir Temple open day (150 visitors) the Oldham Microscopical & Natural History Society open day (101 visitors) and the Oldham International Brigadiers talk (50 attendees, including the Spanish Consul General to Manchester).

Festival Oldham and Coronation- Over 9,000 people attended across the two festivals, working with over 160 artists. The coronation celebrations were featured in BBC Northwest Tonight. We secured £17,500 from DCMS for the Coronation and £11,00 from Without Walls for Festival Oldham.

Oldham Theatre Workshops Summer show - The outstanding summer show 'Three Times Table' was performed by 45 passionate and talented young people, with audiences of over 1,000.

Successful Funding and Partnerships

- Library On Funding: £42,150 to update the Gallery Oldham and Libraries website. This will improve user experience with the introduction of an image-led and intuitive information architecture, with bespoke interactive elements.
- Zarah Hussain Artwork - £10,300 funding secured across two funding bodies (Art Fund and the ACE/V & A Purchase Grant Fund) to acquire Zarah Hussain's 'Root 2: Yellow Blue' artwork, which was previously showcased at Gallery Oldham in 2022.

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- £5,000 from The National Archives Records at Risk fund was awarded to Oldham Local Studies and Archives in July to secure the digital archive material from Oldham Coliseum alongside documentation of the Coliseum collection.
 - Library Improvement Fund Round 2 from ACE– £151,520 secured from Arts Council to refurbish Northmoor Library.
 - Invited to submit full bid to ACE for LIF Round 3 to make improvements to Oldham Library.
 - GM Libraries have secured UKSPF funding to continue to the delivery of the Build a Business Programme – supporting start-ups and small to medium sized businesses.
 - GMCA Spirit Fund - £38,000 to deliver Placed based celebratory arts projects.
 - Development of Oldham Live Music Network

For upcoming events please visit the <http://www.visitoldham.com/whats-on> and [https://www.oldham.gov.uk/directory/169/live at the library autumn 23 - winter 24](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/directory/169/live-at-the-library-autumn-23-winter-24) websites.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.