

REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 JANUARY 2017

ATTENDANCE OF THE DEPUTY LEADER AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Report from: Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and
Community Services Councillor Doe

Summary

This report sets out progress made within the areas covered by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services Councillor Doe which fall within the remit of this Committee.

1. Background

1.1 The areas within the terms of reference of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee covered by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services Councillor Doe are:

- Archives
- Events and Festivals
- Theatres and Arts
- Greenspaces
- Sporting legacy
- Leisure Services
- Tourism
- Heritage

1.2 Achievements for 2016 are detailed by services area below.

2. ARCHIVES

2.1 Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre

The Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre will be moving to a new premises in Spring 2017. The vacant Strood Library building on Bryant Road is being completely refurbished to enable the historic documents collections, to relocate to new storage and public access areas.

The new facility will provide two public access search rooms: one will be for researchers to view local studies collections such as historical maps, books, photographs and postcards, microfilmed newspapers, and provide access to online research facilities. New equipment will be available to view digitised and microfilmed material in the local studies area. For the first time there will be a separate, secure, environmentally- controlled viewing room where researchers can book desks to view original archive material.

The building will have a large entrance area where customers can view exhibitions and there will be seating areas and facilities for service users in the reconfigured reception space.

The project is currently on schedule for its Spring 2017 opening. The installation of the bespoke archive racking in the archive strong room will take place during January, which will allow time for the environmental conditions to equalise, enabling the historic collections to be moved from late February. The racking installation will create additional accrual space for those historical documents that require permanent storage.

To facilitate the preparation of collections, the archives will temporarily cease to be available to the public from the end of January until the Spring opening. Access to the main local studies collections will continue throughout February (which includes access to facsimile copies of key archive collections) then the service will close at the beginning of March to enable staff to effect the removal of collections and office equipment.

The new centre will open for business at the end of April 2017, with an official launch currently being arranged.

3. EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

The Service area that covers Festivals, Arts, Theatres and Events is responsible for the delivery of the creative and cultural elements of the Leisure and Culture Division, including one of the largest free events and festivals programme in the country, two professional Theatres, a contemporary arts gallery of regional status and a prestigious wedding and conferencing venue.

The service continues to deliver high quality successful activities for the people who live in, and visit Medway. The following highlights are an indication of some of the achievements of the service, this year, which is helping to gain the reputation for the area as one of the regional leaders in the creative and entertainment sector.

3.1 The English Festival

The numbers attending were in keeping with the previous years with between 12,000 – 15,000 people enjoying the very successful event.

3.2 Sweeps Festival

Now in its 36th year, the 3 day Sweeps Festival continues to celebrate Morris dancing and folk music throughout Rochester. Changes to the activities included a new Artisan Product Fair to supplement the existing Record & Musical Instrument, Psychic and Folk-Art Fairs.

3.3 Dickens Festival

The 38th Dickens Festival continued the tradition of attracting visitors from as far afield as Japan, Australia and Europe as well as across the whole country. The festival is still regarded as the best tribute to one of the country's greatest writers.

3.4 Armed Forces Day

This event is now regarded as the most prominent in the region and is regularly attended by Ministers as well as the Lord Lt. of Kent. Due to inclement weather, the event finished earlier than normal, however feedback from the 12,500 attendees was excellent.

3.5 River Festival

Numbers attending were 10,000 with a 96% satisfaction rate from 100 questionnaires.

3.6 Castle Concerts

An excellent concert series went well and was well received by the large numbers that attended, and with no major incidents.

3.7 Will Adams Festival

Attendance to this event was estimated at 3,200 people. Satisfaction levels were 90% good, which is in keeping with previous years.

3.8 Capstone Festival

This event is focussed on a 'celebration of outdoor pursuits'. Numbers attending – 3,117 – eagerly took part in the activities, which included a climbing wall, hovercraft racing and laser shooting.

3.9 Dickensian Christmas Festival & Rochester Christmas Market

The 2016 Dickensian Christmas Festival was attended by 45,000 per day for the 2 day festival. Over 140,000 in total attended the Christmas Market, which ran over three weekends prior to Christmas on 26 and 27 November and 2/3/4 and 9/10/11 December. There were 290 pre-booked coaches from various parts of the Country as well as Europe.

3.10 Major Future Work Streams – Events & Festivals

Battle of Medway – 8 June – 17 June 2017

Planning is currently taking place for this major event in June 2017 to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Dutch raid on Upnor Castle and the Chatham Dockyard. This event, greatly influenced and informed the creation of the British Royal Navy and subsequently Britain's supremacy and command of the world's oceans, during the age of sail. This will be one of the most spectacular events to happen in Medway and will feature a Civic opening ceremony with representation from both the British and Dutch Navy, and conclude with an event entitled "Medway in Flames", which promises to put Medway on the Map.

Castle Concerts – July 2017

The line-up promises to be very popular indeed and although most of the acts have been secured, due to contractual obligations, the announcement of these acts will not be until February 2017. However, it is expected that the standard and quality of the acts in question will result in a total sell-out of the concerts

4. THEATRES

4.1 Central Theatre

The Central Theatre continues to attract internationally famous artistes, delivering very popular and successful shows including one of the most successful Pantomimes in the region – selling just under 25,500 tickets, yielding over £420,000. The standout shows include Russell Kane, Menopause the Musical, Chas 'n' Dave and Billy Ocean, which all sold extremely well. Other very successful shows have included truly iconic artistes, such as; Justin Haywood; Jimmy Osmond; The Stylistics; Josh Widdecombe; One Night of Queen and Kevin Bloody Wilson.

The opening of the Sir Thomas Waghorn Pub nearby has certainly improved the overall customer experience, as many are taking the opportunity to have pre or post show food and drinks.

4.2 The Brook Theatre

The Brook Theatre is now established as the 'Creative Factory for Medway' and the four professional creative resident companies all continue to thrive - with the latest addition, Square Pegs, settling in well. After departing to other venues recently, we now have Medway's prime amateur dramatic companies (Gillingham Dramatic Society, Kentish Players and Three Towns) all now back and operating in Medway.

4.3 Major Future Work Streams – Theatres

A study has begun on the processes and major considerations required to transform the Brook into an iconic powerhouse of creativity – A Quadruple

Helix Centre of Excellence for Performance Arts Innovation, which will bring together the public, private, voluntary and University sectors to enable end-to-end culture and arts delivery.

5. ARTS

5.1 Rochester Arts Gallery

The Rochester Arts gallery continues to deliver an arts programme to develop audiences, increase active engagement and satisfaction in the arts.

Exhibitions during this period:

26 Feb – 15 May '16 Rust & Bloom – works by Hannah Maybank, a sought after artist who studied at the Royal College of Art and is now represented by Gimpel Fils gallery in Mayfair.

27 May – 14 Aug '16 Billy Childish in Print – Billy Childish, Medway-based painter, poet and musician, has been active in the field of printmaking and small press publications since the mid-70's.

26 August – 12 Nov '16 Occupation Steve Mace – This exhibition embraces Steve Mace's involvement with heavy industry, industrial landscape and those who work within it.

5.2 23 Submarines (Icon Theatre/Libraries/Arts Partnership Project)

The Arts Team continues to support this ACE-funded partnership project with Icon Theatre and Medway Libraries, providing advice, guidance, ideas and contacts, support with marketing public engagement opportunities, examples of best practice and sitting on the Advisory Group.

Inspired by the story of 23 WW1 Submarines that lie hidden in the mud of the Medway, this project has seen the successful delivery of open mic poetry nights at three libraries, which included performances by professional poets and also members of the community, who shared the poems they wrote during poetry workshops earlier in the project.

According to figures available to date, the workshops have attracted 274 participants of all ages, with more than 50,500 visitors to libraries having the opportunity to experience the exhibition, with the final public performance engaging more than 80 community performers and attracting an audience of more than 500 people.

6. DANCE

6.1 Dance for Life Classes - 6 venues in Medway, both internal and external, to increase active engagement and accessibility for Medway residents. These venues include;

- St. Thomas' Church Hall in Rainham
- Hook Meadow in Walderslade
- Strood Library

- Lordswood Leisure Centre
- Parkwood Community Centre
- The Brook Theatre, Chatham

Between April and June, 98, sessions were delivered to 1105 of Medway residents engaging in the dance sessions.

6.2 Big Dance 2016 - took place alongside the River Festival on Saturday 9th July 2016. 14 groups/organisations/departments performed and delivered free dance workshops for all ages and abilities.

6.3 Education and Outreach – Arts Development

Continues to deliver an arts programme to develop audiences, increase active engagement and satisfaction in the arts.

6.4 Wigmore Lecture Programme

Building on the success of the newly expanded Wigmore Lecture Programme, the 2016-17 season has achieved another popular programme.

As part of the core Wigmore Lecture programme this year we have included more challenging lecture events in order to develop the content, provide our existing audience with new experiences and to increase engagement from people who had not attended the lectures before. These include more performance/demonstration-based events or interactive/ participatory elements. Interspersed among the usual tried and trusted popular lecture format, topics and speakers, the October lecture for example, was a one-woman theatre show 'The Story of Marie Curie' by award-winning Brook Theatre company-in-residence Play On Words Theatre Company. We also had a lecture about the history of Blues music later in the season which included live performances by the speaker.

6.5 Francis Knight / Regen Team - Chatham Placemaking Project.

The Arts Team continues to support Francis Knight Consultants, the Regeneration Team and the appointed artists (writer-in-residence, film-maker and print-maker) as they develop and deliver public engagement opportunities, which will feed and inform the final decisions about the capital works on the route from rail to bus station in Chatham Town Centre.

6.6 Wendy Daws – Value of Touch.

The Arts Team supported local artist Wendy with an ACE G4A funding application for visual arts projects with Blind and Visually Impaired participants and her own professional development. We gave her advice and support on the project plan and bid, and we provided £1,500 of match funding to strengthen her chances of success. The bid was successful and she was granted £14,500.

7. GREENSPACES

Satisfaction with Medway's parks and open spaces continues to be high, with Citizens' Panel results recording satisfaction over 70%. This reflects the ongoing targeted investment into the Greenspaces estate and external accreditation secured via Green Flag.

Six Medway parks were awarded the prestigious Green Flag award. While Gillingham Park was judged as not quite meeting the standard, work is underway to ensure that, when it is reassessed next year, the park meets the judging standards.

Approximately 18,000 volunteering hours were undertaken in Medway's green spaces by 3,000 volunteers (based on individual numbers per volunteer task day).

Capstone Farm and Riverside Country Park visitor's centre numbers are up by approximately 34,000 per annum due to additional people using the sites for an array of free activities such as walking, cycling, rambling and bird watching.

Trip Advisor reports for Riverside Country Park show excellent reviews scoring 4.5 out of 5, with 237 'excellent' or 'very good' scores, 24 'average' and only 6 scores lower than 'average'.

Trip Advisor reports for Capstone Farm Country Park show excellent reviews, scoring 4.5 out of 5, with 58 'excellent', 50 'very good', 21 'average' and no scores lower than 'average'.

Adoption of winter working hours from 1 October to 31 March for the Ranger Service from 08:00 to 16:00 (*summer hours 08:30 to 17:00 from 1 April to 30 September*) – the working hours maximise ranger time in the field, allow the visitor centres to open an additional hour a day and increase available hours by approximately 1,000 throughout the winter months, due to losing daylight hours on the old shift pattern.

7.1 Greenspace Development Team

- **Investments**: By the close of 2016/17 Greenspace investment in the Vines will ensure the site is more welcoming and offers new natural play provision. The Borstal Recreational Ground will have new outdoor gym equipment and Broomhill will have additional sport and play provision - both of these investments to sustain Green Flag ambitions. The Strand will see the provision of an inclusive roundabout and Gillingham Park will have path surfacing and edging, bin rationalisation, improvements to the shrub beds and the laying of resin bound gravel around the memorial sculpture. Luton Millennium Park has seen investments in a new community orchard, three raised beds for plants and herbs, the provision of natural play equipment and the creation of a trial wildflower area.
- **Community engagement**: The Greenspace Development team has held five community focused Let's Talk events drawing together stakeholders interested in the future of greenspaces in Gillingham, Horsted and

Rochester. The 'Have a Go' events attracted over 250 people to The Strand and Queen Elizabeth Playing Fields when visitors came to try out a BMX Pumptrack, American Football, archery and Parkour.

8. SPORT

8.1 Sporting Legacy

Medway Sport's new four-year strategy was launched in the summer of 2016.

Play, Compete, Spectate sets out how we will continue to use sport to:

- encourage active and healthy lifestyles
- maintain and develop the quality of sports and facilities
- support and inspire local talent
- cement Medway's reputation as a centre of excellence for sport.

It shows how Medway will respond to and meet the challenges set out in both Sport England's Sporting Future Strategy and its new investment strategy Towards an Active Nation.

Sporting legacy is also embedded in Medway's Cultural Strategy 2014-2019 and the important role of physical activity is a key theme of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Medway 2012-2017.

8.2 Mass Participation

Medway Mile 2016 returned to Rochester Castle in July 2016, as more than 3,000 runners and walkers took part in a mass participation running/jogging event, which highlights the benefits of developing a healthy and active lifestyle. This year's event was themed on the Rio Olympics with an emphasis on new sports opportunities for residents to try.

The previous month saw the staging of the 2016 Big Ride, with more than 800 participants enjoying the mass ride and 500 more serious cyclists setting off on 30, 50 and 80 mile sportives.

There was also The Lord Taverners Celebrity Charity Ride led by former Kent and England cricketer Geraint Jones and TV host Jonny Irwin.

Medway Sport continues to work in partnership with the Amateur Swimming Association to develop aquatics and swimming in Medway. As part of this, the annual mass participation swimming event 'The Big Splash' was held in January 2016, with more than 1,000 participants enjoying activities across our sports centres.

As part of the legacy of the event, we have also introduced a new aquatic development centre to our swimming lesson programme, offering young people the opportunity to learn diving, synchronised swimming and rookie lifeguarding.

8.3 Major Sports Events

Medway Park has been chosen by the Rugby Football League as the official home of England Wheelchair Rugby League, preparing the squad for this year's world Cup in Australia.

Sean Mellor, Clubs and Competition Manager for the Rugby Football League, said: "Medway Park had previously hosted International Wheelchair Rugby League on a number of occasions with great style and distinction and is justifiably proclaimed as the Home Of England Wheelchair Rugby League."

Medway hosted a succession of international sporting events in 2016.

These included the European Veterans Fencing Championships in May, with 99 teams from 22 countries taking part.

Also in May we helped our friends in Canada prepare for the Rio Paralympics by hosting a series of international friendlies against Great Britain (who did not qualify for the Games).

In September, the Grand Final of Wheelchair Rugby League came to Medway Park with a host of elite England players taking part.

November brought a weekend of European Club Handball to Medway, followed by the European Women's Table Tennis Team Championships qualifier where England defeated Slovenia in a nail-biting finale.

8.4 Festival of Sport

A fantastic programme of summer sporting opportunities were delivered by the Medway Sport team with 51 events running from May to September 2016, with 21,332 participants actively engaged and a total of 1454.5 voluntary hours support delivered through our successful sporting ambassador volunteer scheme.

8.5 Outdoors

ParkSport is our Sport England-funded initiative to take coach-led sport into Medway's sports and open spaces, helping to break down barriers to participation and to showcase new and exciting sports to new audiences. It includes weekly multi-sport sessions throughout the summer targeted at 14-25-year-olds and weekend ParkSport Festival days through the summer for all ages. Sports delivered included Archery Tag, American Football, Bubble Football, Pop Up Tennis, and Touch Rugby.

Parkrun and Junior Parkrun programmes are free weekly run sessions, run by volunteers that supports our Medway Getting Active programme. Currently around 200 – 300 participants attend the Parkrun at Great Lines and 70-100 juniors take part at the Strand weekly.

Meangate is a new programme, an extreme cross country obstacle course run on the rolling hills and woods of Deangate Ridge Sports Complex. The

first two events have attracted more than 500 participants, with another event scheduled for March 2017.

The Mini Youth Games primary school series continues to grow in popularity and can boast nearly every primary school in Medway taking part at some stage throughout the academic year.

The leading competitions this year were:

- MYG Football – 56 schools participating
- MYG Kwik Cricket - 53 schools
- MYG Athletics – 51 schools

The MYG series has been enhanced this year with the introduction of two new projects, Digi Leaders and Medway School Mile.

The aim of the Medway School Mile is to improve the physical and emotional health of our children. The simple concept encourages every school to take part in a programme to have every student running a mile each day. The project was launched at Fairview School in Gillingham with more 500 pupils and their teachers running a mile around the newly formed Fairview mile route.

The Digi Leaders project trains primary school pupils to report on the Mini Youth Games through the use of social media and other IT technologies, thus broadening each school's involvement with the Games series.

The Disability Youth Games continues to be well supported. Six schools participated in the DYG skiing event with 60 participants at Capstone Ski Centre.

Medway Sporting Academy is our programme to help identify and nurture young people with potential in sport and works with them to improve their athletic ability and develop pathways to excellence within sport National Governing Body settings.

The academy works in partnership with the University of Kent to deliver a programme of support for Medway's most talented athletes. We currently have 80 young people on this programme based at Medway Park.

9. LEISURE

9.1 Official Opening Of Strood Sports Centre

Sir Geoff Hurst was the guest of honour for the official opening of Strood Sports Centre on 14th July 2016. The new Medway Sporting Legacy 2017 – 2020 was also launched at this event.

A 1966-style football tournament, featuring 16 local primary schools representing the 16 nations from the 1966 World Cup, was held on the day. After presenting the winning nation with a Jules Rimet replica Sir Geoff officially opened the newly-refurbished centre and then spent time meeting customers and signing autographs.

This event generated a huge amount of interest at Strood Sports Centre with coverage by press and TV.

9.2 New Fitness Equipment

New state of the art cardiovascular equipment has been installed at all Echoes gyms this summer following feedback from customers.

A deep clean, repaint and reconfiguration was also carried out at the same time to give this busy area a fresh new look.

9.3 Changing Room refurbishment at Hoo Sports Centre

The family changing area for Hoo swimming pool was refurbished over the summer, resolving long-standing ventilation problems in this area, as well as providing new cubicles and lockers.

9.4 Membership Promotion

A 12 day "Gym & Swim" membership promotion was held between Wednesday 8 June until Sunday 19 June 2016.

The objective of the promotion was to provide an incentive to increase membership sales by reducing the price during this short window to create a sense of urgency and generate a high volume of sales during what is traditionally an off-peak sales period.

The marketing for this promotion focussed on digital channels including websites and social media. We sold a total of 522 memberships in the promotion period, generating a potential £106k per annum income.

9.5 Open Days

Medway's Sports Centres had an open day on Sunday 18 September 2016. A wide range of free taster sessions and activities were available including: pool parties, sports camps, laser tag, bubble football, tri-golf, footgolf, bubble football and a taster of the Meangate obstacle run.

The open day was also used to launch our exclusive Premier Membership offer. 235 memberships were sold, representing a potential annual value of around £73k.

9.6 Elections

Medway Park hosted the EU referendum count in June 2016, while Strood Sports Centre hosted the Police and Crime Commissioner Election the previous month.

10. TOURISM

10.1 Research

The value of tourism to Medway continues to grow, as demonstrated by independent research.

Using the industry-respected Cambridge Economic Impact Model, the research showed the value of tourism to the Medway economy reached £313,164,600 in 2015 a rise of 3% on the previous (2013) study.

The number of day trips grew to 4,099,000 and the number of overnight trips to 528,500. This had a positive impact on the jobs front with 6,112 people in Medway now employed in this area, a rise of 5.2%. Tourism now represents 6.9% of all employment in Medway.

10.2 Battle of Medway

Medway will be centre stage in 2017 when we commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Battle of Medway.

The Tourism team is working hard to develop the plans surrounding the commemorations, working closely with internal and external partners to deliver a programme of events throughout the period from June 8-17 June 2017.

Among the highlights planned to date are:

- Medway in Flames, a spectacular son-et-lumiere telling the story of the battle, which was the highpoint of Dutch naval success and subsequently formed the start of Britain's dominance of the seas through the age of sail.
- A prestigious civic event featuring senior dignitaries from the UK and the Netherlands
- Two major exhibitions, at the Historic Dockyard and Upnor Castle, funded by £89,000 of Heritage Lottery Fund and expanded Summer and Education programme.
- Royal Navy and Dutch Navy warships berthing in Medway
- Two fleets, combining more than 200 small craft, arriving from the Netherlands
- Music, arts and sports exhibitions and events, including the summer Dickens Festival

The plans are being extensively promoted in both countries. As part of this they will be holding 'Vakantiebeurs', a major tourism and leisure fair held in the Netherlands each January working alongside Visit Kent, House of Britain and Chatham Historic Dockyard.

10.3 Dickens

Extensive work continues to brand Medway as the home of Charles Dickens, creating an internationally-recognised tourism brand for Medway.

An original theatre production inspired by Dickens early years called 'The Trials of Charles Dickens' was shown during Summer Dickens 2016. In the run up to Christmas, the Dickens Country Experience bus tour was running as well as street entertainment and a Christmas Carol children's trail., which supported the sell-out production of A Christmas Carol staged at the Guildhall.

Longer term, the tourism and heritage teams will be developing plans to commemorate the 175th anniversary (in 2018) of the publication of A Christmas Carol and in 2020 the 150th anniversary of Dickens' death.

10.4 National and International Promotion

Kent Contemporary is an annual summer brand campaign on which Medway partners with the Historic Dockyard.

The aim of the campaign is to build awareness in the London market with a striking image that offers a unique perspective on Medway. The campaign uses digital advertising across Kent, London and the South East's rail and tube network including large format digital screens at London Victoria train station. The campaign is further supported by posters at Southeastern stations and on Eurotunnel trains. In addition to the Kent Contemporary campaign Medway also utilises one of the digital screens at Bluewater shopping centre to promote Medway and its events with each advert showing six times per hour.

11. HERITAGE

11.1 Facilities Improvements

In the Spring of 2016 the Guildhall's magnificent 17th Century façade was restored. The historic High Street frontage was renovated and the Rochester crest, weathervane and bell were restored by local craftsmen due to the generosity of the Friends of the Guildhall Museums, the City of Rochester Society and the Rochester Bridge Trust, who made donations totalling £16,000 for the work to be completed. The historic market bell, dating from 1811, now rings twice each day to announce the opening and closing of the Museum.

The £2.1m scheme to renovate Eastgate House to bring it back into sustainable use is nearing completion. Work had been delayed due to the insolvency of the original contractor in 2015, but work recommenced with a new builder in March 2016. The renovation of the House will be completed by February 2017 and, after the installation of the interpretation, the House will reopen to the public in May 2017.

11.2 Audience development

Visitor attendances at all Medway's heritage sites have been strong. In the calendar year 2016 visitor attendance numbers were:

April 2014 – March 2015

Rochester Castle	71,385
Guildhall Museum	83,747
Upnor Castle	21,491

April 2015 – March 2016

Rochester Castle	80,763
Guildhall Museum	101,469
Upnor Castle	24,113

The Guildhall's exhibition programme continues to attract many new and repeat visits. The Prehistoric Medway show was seen by more than 50,000 visitors including 4,900 schoolchildren in organised groups. The current exhibition 'Weird & Wonderful' displays unusual and, in many cases, previously unseen items from the Museum's collection's They are displayed alongside artwork produced by the Kent Association for the Blind's Medway Art Group. Their display, 'The Value of Touch' is part of a programme of activities that looks to increase use of the Council's heritage sites by audiences from people with disabilities. Other activities have included signed workshops for families with deaf family members.

Other exhibitions and displays have featured work by the University of Kent's School of Museum and Fine Art. Three small, interactive displays were hosted by the Museum in 2016.

The event programme at the Old Brook Pumping Station has developed in 2016 and now includes historic vehicle shows. An increasing number of school groups are now using the station, as part of their course work.

11.3 Education

The Guildhall Museum is a lead partner in the '100 Objects that Made Kent', an initiative funded by the Arts Council.

The project is designed to increase participation by young people in cultural activities by focussing on Kent's fabulous museum collections. Ninety of the 100 objects have been chosen by the participating museums and the remainder will be chosen by schools who participate in the project.

School visits to the Guildhall Museum by have reached record levels. In 2015/16, 7,911 children visited the Museum in organised groups, an increase of 24% on the previous year. In the first three quarters of the current year more than 6,200 school children have made visits in organised school parties.

The Guildhall's 2016 Autumn lecture series was very successful. Five lectures were offered and tickets sales overall were at 90% capacity. The series has proved very popular and an expanded series of lectures is planned for 2017.

11.4 Weddings

Couples getting married at the Guildhall now benefit from an improved service offered by the Medway's Registrar's office who now manage all the Museum's wedding bookings. With improved marketing the result has been an increase both in the number of weddings and in income. Registrar James Brown and Heritage Operations Manager Andrew Freeman, were nominated for an innovation award for this initiative at the 2016 Make a Difference staff awards.

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Appendices

None

Background documents

None