

**REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**23 JANUARY 2018**

**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
- Armed Forces Covenant
- Events and Festivals
- Greenspaces
- Heritage
- Leisure Services
- Sporting Legacy
- Theatres and Arts
- Tourism

1.2 Achievements for 2017 are detailed by service area below.

## **2. Archives**

The Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre was successfully relocated during the summer to its new premises at the former Strood Library building site on Bryant Road in Strood. The official launch was held on 3 July at which Cllr Howard Doe officially opened the new Medway Archives Centre. The former library building has been completely refurbished to provide a state-of-the-art archives centre with suitable storage, new visitor facilities and equipment as well as a welcoming and visitor friendly environment. The new facility provides two public access search rooms. The first room is 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 and scanners have been purchased to view digitised and microfilmed material in the local studies area. The second room is a separate, secure, environmentally- controlled viewing room where researchers can book desks to view original archive material. This is a new facility for the archives service.

The foyer has been refurbished and now includes a space for people to meet, customer toilets, a kitchen for the adjoining community hall and a large exhibition wall and space which currently houses a World War I exhibition which will be followed by an exhibition about the history of Strood. The foyer is now also home to the Shorts Brothers Seaplane model which used to be at Gun Wharf.

The archives collection itself is now housed in a bespoke archives strong room with tiered racking which regulates temperature and humidity at optimum levels for the long-term safe storage of fragile and delicate archive documentation and records.

The archives collection has also this year been digitalized moving from the old Cityark system to the new Adlib system which will allow documentation and records to be viewed online in early 2018.

## **3. Armed forces covenant**

Medway Council has signed a new covenant and has appointed Cllr Doe as Armed Forces Champion and Martin Hall, Greenspace and Skills Programme Manager as the lead officer. The covenant ensures the council has the policies and practices in place to ensure members of the armed forces are not disadvantaged in their dealings with the Council. An officers group has been established which will work across the council to ensure policies and practices are robust and respected. Training to raise awareness of the covenant is now in place for front line staff and forms part of the Council's ambition to move from Bronze to Silver award.

## **4. 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.

Work has begun on the revision and development of the existing Medway Cultural Strategy which concludes in 2019. Several workshops which will involve members of the Cultural Partnership have been arranged to help develop the new strategy.

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.

Satisfaction with the Council's events programme remains high at around 94% for 2016/17 and 2015/16. This performance is based on post event survey respondents rating their satisfaction of event as 'Very Satisfied' or 'Satisfied'. 2016/17 93.8% (876/934), 2015/16 94.3% (1218/1291).

#### 4.1 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.

#### 4.2 Sweeps Festival

Now in its 37th 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.

#### 4.3 Battle of Medway

The Battle of Medway, which commemorated the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the raid on Upnor Castle, by the Dutch Navy and celebrated the subsequent 300 years of peace between the two countries, was a major event in this year's annual events programme. Consisting of a Civic opening Ceremony, Ships visits from the Dutch and British Navies, a series of cultural activities and a major finale entitled Medway in Flames, the event began with a Royal visit to Upnor Castle by His Highness Prince Maurits van Oranje-Nassau and concluded with a spectacular finale of music, projection and a firework display that was regarded by participants and the audience as one of the best displays ever seen in Medway. The Finale event was attended by an estimated 30,000 people.

#### 4.4 Summer Dickens Festival

The 39th 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. This year, the festival was moved back a week, from its traditional date of the first weekend in June in order to provide substantial support to the commemorations to mark the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Raid on Upnor castle by the Dutch Fleet. The Dickens festival was a very popular element for the many Dutch visitors. Attendance figures were on par with previous years with an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 people attending each day.

#### 4.5 River Festival

In 2017, this formed part of the Battle of Medway event.

#### 4.6 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. The event is used to promote the close and special relationship between the people of Medway and Her Majesty's Armed Forces. It is also used to celebrate the commitment of Medway Council to the Armed Forces. This was illustrated in a speech by the Leader of Medway Council, which included the following: -

- Kent, Surrey, West Sussex, Hampshire County Councils and Medway Council, successfully bid for project funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund to focus on delivering training to frontline staff in Local Authorities, ensuring that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to better serve the Armed Forces Community. .
- Medway Council has achieved the Bronze Award by the MoD Employer Recognition Scheme and intends to achieve the Silver award by 2018.
- Medway Council continue to support the Kent and Medway Civilian Military Partnership Board to improve understanding of the needs of our Armed Forces Community and encourage integration between the civilian and military communities.
- The event which was attended by an estimated 15,000 throughout the day was regarded as a great success by both participants and attendees.

#### 4.7 Castle Concerts

An excellent series of 5 concerts went well and was well received by the large numbers that attended, and with no major incidents. Attendance at each concert was as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Act</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> July	Craig David	4,500 sold out
Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> July	Wet Wet Wet	4,500 sold out
Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> July	Craig David	4,500 sold out
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> July	Magic of Motown	4,500 sold out
Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> July	Castle Proms	2435

The total attendance was 20,435 people, which generated revenue of £799,157 against the total expenditure of £773,630, realising a surplus of £25,526.

#### 4.8 Will Adams Festival

Attendance at this event was estimated at 4,000 people who enjoyed Japanese culture through demonstrations, performance and hands-on activities, including Martial Arts demonstrations; calligraphy; origami and

Taiko Drumming as well as displays, stands and exhibitions of Japanese life and culture.

#### 4.9 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.

#### 4.10 Dickensian Christmas Festival & Rochester Christmas Market

The 2017 Dickensian Christmas Festival was attended by one of the largest numbers of people, (over 40,000 per day) in the history of the 2 day festival. Over 150,000 in total attended the Christmas Market, which ran over three weekends prior to Christmas on 25 and 26 November and 1/2/3 and 8/9/10 December.

#### 4.11 Major Future Work Streams – Events & Festivals

4.11.1 Plans are currently being put into place to organise a ceremony to unveil a ceremonial plaque to honour and commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Major James McCudden being awarded the Victoria Cross. The location and timings of the ceremony will be released as soon as it is agreed with the DCLG, family and organisations associated with Major McCudden, but is likely to be in early April 2018.

4.11.2 Freedom of Medway Status proposed for The Princess of Wales Royal Regiment (Together with Armed forces Day, will form Medway's WW1 events).

A report has been prepared which invites the Council to consider a proposal to confer the honorary freedom of Medway on The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

In preparation and anticipation of the proposal being accepted by the Council, a plan, which contains the necessary activities and formalities that accommodate an event of this nature is being formulated as follows:

- A March ceremonial march through Chatham with a salute being taken by the Mayor of Medway, followed by a civic lunch where the ceremonial casket will be presented to the Regiment.
- It was suggested that The Band of the PWRR could be made available for Armed Forces Day celebrations, which would be held on Saturday 30th June 2018 and subsequently they would also be available for a civic ceremonial march the following day.
- It is therefore proposed that The Freedom March and Ceremonies are held on Sunday 1st July 2018.
- It is intended that the Freedom March will take place in Chatham town centre and proceed along Dock Road, where a salute will be taken by

The Worshipful Mayor of Medway accompanied by other civic and military dignitaries.

4.11.3 The line-up for the Castle Concerts July 2018 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 be made public after agreement has been reached with all parties that we are able to announce. However, it is expected that the standard and quality of the acts in question will result in a total sell-out of the concerts

4.11.4 Work is progressing on a series of new festivals entitled 'Focus on'. These festivals are designed to stimulate the community to participate and/or attend, also to strengthen neighbourhoods and will be based on the tried and tested method of utilising a public open space to provide a community based 'free to attend' entertainment programme with stalls and stands; food and beverage; sporting and participation activities; live music and demonstration, with the Council playing a major part in promoting the achievements and developments that have taken place over the years in Medway.

## 5. Theatres

### 5.1 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 over-all performance for both The Brook and Central Theatres can be summarised in the figures below, which indicate that the projected financial performance for 2016/17 will result in an underspend of nearly £28,000

2016/17 Budget	Actuals	Variance
£682,319	£654,527	£(27,792)

The stand out shows are: Russian State Ballet – The Nutcracker, Rick Wakeman, The Stylistics and Ben Portsmouth (Elvis)

Forthcoming shows in the spring include Rob Brydon, Milton Jones, Nathan Carter, Jimmy Osmond, Ed Byrne and Jasper Carrot.

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

### 5.2 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.

### 5.3 Major Future Work Streams – Theatres

The completion of the external refurbishment works at the Brook Theatre has been hailed as a great success and has given new vitality to the venue. The works were completed at the cost of £415K and involved work on the façade, signage and repairs of the clock, as part of the physical refurbishment of the building.

An event, which included an exhibition of elements of the refurbishment was held at the Brook theatre on 23<sup>rd</sup> October to celebrate the completion of the works

Work continues 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. Consultation is currently being held with members of the Cultural Partnership, The Arts Council, Universities and other similar venues to acquire as much information and advise to assist with the plans.

## 6. **Arts**

### 6.1 Rochester Arts Gallery

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

#### 3 March – 21 May 2017

Enbosu - New prints by Wendy Daws

Enbosu was the culmination of a year-long Arts Council supported project called The Value of Touch, led by award winning artist Wendy Daws. Enbosu ('to emboss' in Japanese).

87% of visitors who commented rated the show excellent

#### 2 June – 28 August 2017

Of Fireships & Iron

New works by Lily Dudley, Laura Dunnage, Xtina Lamb, Adam Newton & Heather Haythornthwaite  
Winners of the Medway Printmakers Bursary

Five Medway based artists, all pushing the boundaries of contemporary printmaking, showed their work in a special split site exhibition as part of the 350 year commemorations of the Battle of Medway and Medway Print festival 2017.

## 8 September – 3 December 2017

### Pigmental

Recent works by renowned abstract painter Karl Bielik

#### 6.2 23 Submarines (Icon Theatre/Libraries/Arts Partnership Project)

The Arts Team continues to support this Arts Council -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 serving 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.

#### 6.3 Wigmore Lecture Programme

Building on the success of the newly expanded Wigmore Lecture Programme, the 2017/18 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. There was also a lecture about the history of Blues music later in the season which included live performances by the speaker.

#### 6.4 SPLAT!

Splat! took place in Rochester Castle Moat on 1st May within the Rochester Sweeps Festival and, as such, was supported by the Events Team.

Performers included a selection of strolling acts, family workshops run by local artists, the Fairyland Trust's Magic Wands, The Shed of Stories, Plungeboom's The Allotment and an interactive theatre performance especially for families. The activities stuck to the general Sweeps theme and were programmed to suit audiences of all ages with The Allotment aimed specifically at the very young. A space was created for children to play with some outdoor games and toadstool play tents.



Local artist Xtina Lamb was commissioned to run a screen printing family workshop at Splat! Another local artist, Natasha Steer was commissioned to run a series of creative workshops for community groups in the run up to Splat! and at the event itself.

Christopher Sacre, funded through See & Create, provided workshop support for the Deaf community at Splat!

## 6.5 Dance and Diversity

In 2017 the Dance and Diversity programme aimed to increase active engagement and satisfaction in dance and the arts and reached approximately 869 people and even more digitally.

75% positive feedback from participants and audience was excellent for the U.Dance Medway 2018 with a talented young people between 11-19 years performed at the Brook Theatre in Chatham.

11 Million Reasons to Dance exhibition aim was to inspire and challenge perceptions around Deaf, sight-impaired and disabled dancers through educating a wider community and raise the profile that the arts are inclusive and can help reduce isolation. Some of the groups who visited the exhibition included; MENCAP, Club Allsome (autism family support), Carers First, CYK, Princes Trust (Talent Match), Moving Minds Project group, Improving Mental Health Provision and Mentoring Community Project (English and Maths).

The Moving Minds project involved participants with mental health issues. They developed 'dance-emotions' group and attended regular sessions delivered by award winning Moving Memory Dance Theatre Company.

Medway Dance Network (private and public dance artists and companies) continues to thrive as a collaborative group to make dance more prominent in Medway by bringing people together with a dance interest to share, explore and raise awareness of opportunities. One of the latest organisations to join is, Walderslade Together (WALT)'s. Their new and exciting Wheel Be Dancing with WALT, Rollator Dance Project is going from strength to strength and is accessed by all ages and abilities including those who have balance issues or limited mobility.

Following the success of Big Dance, running alongside The River Festival on Sun Pier, support for a legacy, 'Dance on the Pier' in 2018, is currently being sought.

## 6.6 Major Future Work Streams – Arts

Research and Development is currently being undertaken for a dance/theatre project with the potential to involve ex-service personnel/community and co-commission/co-create a dance theatre piece to commemorate 100 years of WW1 in November 2019.

'Aesop's arts' and health and wellbeing framework may be used to measure and evaluate the health and wellbeing benefits for the participants and everyone else involved in the project if appropriate.

The story of 'The Sinking of The Cressy and the Sister Ships' with most of the men on board from the Chatham Division will be explored further with particular focus of the many women who descended on mass to the Town Hall (The Brook Theatre) to see if a list of names and hear if the rumour was true that many had lost their lives in the sinking of the ships. Command of the Heights team and Pam Wood a storyteller and Visitors Information Manager from the Historic Dockyard have been really supportive and keen for this authentic WW1 Story to be told.

## **7. Greenspaces**

In May 2017, the team responsible for the monitoring of the grounds maintenance of parks, allotments, play and countryside sites transferred to Medway Norse. Service Level Agreements were developed to support the process and to provide clarity about the on-going responsibilities. Medway Norse actively supported the Greenspaces Development team's work to secure seven green flag awards.

The Medway Citizen Panel was approached in July 2017 to seek their thoughts on their local parks and open spaces. This report indicates that improved maintenance and cleanliness, play areas and picnic / eating facilities were the top three things respondents thought could help improve parks and open spaces in Medway. Three-quarters of respondents had visited a park or open space in Medway during the last year; with local parks / gardens and country parks being the most commonly visited. When respondents were visiting parks and open spaces respondents were most likely to enjoy the fresh air / good weather, walk for exercise or pleasure and spent time with friends and family.

Satisfaction with Medway's parks and open spaces continues to be good, with Citizens' Panel results recording satisfaction between 65 and 70%. 70% being the target. This reflects the ongoing targeted investment into the Greenspaces estate, greater use of sites through joint events / promotion with both Public Health and the Sports Development teams, and the positive external accreditation of the seven Green Flag sites.

Seven Medway parks were awarded the prestigious Green Flag award. The Greenspace Development Team developed new management and action plans for the green flag sites and undertook a range of site improvements. The judge's feedback was positive resulting in the regaining of the Gillingham Park Green Flag (which was lost in 2016).

Approximately 16,500 volunteering hours, for the period of Jan to Dec 2017, were undertaken in Medway's green spaces by 2,200 volunteers (based on individual numbers per volunteer task day). Using the national living wage figure of £8.45 per hour this volunteering effort can be equated to £140,000.

Trip Advisor reports for:

- Riverside Country Park shows 89% scoring their visit either 'excellent' or 'very good' scores;
- Capstone Farm Country Park shows 85% scoring their visit either 'excellent' or 'very good';

- Ranscombe Farm Country Park shows 100% of visitors scoring their visit either 'excellent' or 'very good'.

## 7.1 Greenspace Investments

In 2017 the Greenspace Development team will have invested:

- The Strand has seen £50,000 (s106) in further improving the play offer including assault course and a disabled accessibility roundabout
- The Vines has seen £17,000 investment in its interpretation and replanting;
- The Borstal Recreational Ground has seen £4,000 invested in the resurfacing of all year paths;
- Horsted Valley has seen investment in new fencing and footpaths to promote and manage access;
- Rookery Fields will see £11,000 invested in bespoke training and fitness as designed by a local user group;
- Luton Millennium Green has seen enhanced maintenance of the areas bramble paths to make the site feel safer and more open, and will see a further £12,000 invested in play;
- Hillyfields is seeing £6,000 invested in play and restoration of the community orchard;
- Frindsbury Extra Parish has been supported in investing £30,000 s106 in play provision for Fordwich Drive.

## 7.2 Community Engagement

The team have been actively supporting Broom Hill Friends of Group in the aim to double the size of the park by acquiring the old orchard. S106 funding is support 50% of the purchase costs for this orchard, which, when secured, will be owned and managed by a local charity.

The team have also supported The Friends of Rede Common in their ambition to secure Local Nature Reserve status for their site.

# 8 **Sport and Leisure**

## 8.1 Sporting Legacy

The objective of Medway's Sporting Legacy is to encourage everyone to be active through sport, physical activity and physical education.

The sport and leisure teams offer a range of programmes, projects and events to maximise opportunities for residents to Play – Compete – Spectate, using 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.

## 8.2 Mass Participation

Medway Mile 2017 celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary event at Rochester Castle in July and continues to be a flagship community event with more than 3,000 runners and walkers taking part.

Medway Big Ride is now growing into a cycling festival, encouraging more than 2500 participants while showcasing a range of cycling initiatives, club rides, family rides and a number of longer distance rides (known as Sportives)

This year we officially launched Medway's new cycle routes linked to Medway Cycle Action Plan in partnership with Greenspaces and Transport.

Medway Sport continues to work in partnership with Swim England to develop aquatics and swimming lessons in Medway. As part of this, the annual mass participation swimming event 'The Big Splash' will be held in January 2018, with more than 1,500 participants expected to enjoy aquatic activities across our sports centres.

## 8.3 Major Sports Events

The National Table Tennis Championships took place at Medway Park at the beginning of May for Juniors and Cadets. England Table Tennis were impressed with the facilities and organisation and are looking to host a selection of their Grand Prix at the venue in the near future. More than 100 young people took part in the event from around the country.

A successful Wheelchair Rugby League Grand Final was held on 16 September, and the Rugby Football League is looking to expand the event next year. Mascots from Byron School and Medway Dragons supported the event linking to our PE School Sport programme.

Quote from the RFL:

*"From the outset I was impressed with the staff and volunteers. The attention to detail was second to none all day which added to the experience for players, officials and spectators from lights, music, announcer, singer and branding. I look forward to other events at this venue and working with some dedicated volunteers and staff in the future".*

We continue to develop links with England Handball and capitalise on the growth of this popular European sport. In November Medway Park hosted a, European women's Handball Challenge Cup match, when Lithuanian side

ACME-Zalgiris Kaunas travelled to Medway to take on London GD Handball Club.

Quote from England Handball chair:

*"I would like to take this opportunity to thank Medway Council who kindly hosted our Board meeting and the European Handball Federation's third-round second leg Challenge Cup match between London GD and VSACME-Zalgiris Kaunas from Lithuania. I moved the Board meeting so I could attend the match with board members and we enjoyed a thrilling performance in an exceptional venue from London GD women's team. With Medway Dragons HC in support, the spectator gallery full, the presentation of the event was superb and once again caught the eye of the European Handball Federation officials."*

More than 800 students from universities across the United Kingdom bid for national handball glory on the courts of Medway Park. The British University Handball Championships were held at Medway's centre of sporting excellence on 18/19 March.

The first UK Pickleball International Tournament took place at Medway Park in May attracting participants from over 12 countries including USA, Spain and The Netherlands. Pickleball is a growing sport and Medway Sport now delivers the sport to schools around Medway.

The formal expression of interest for the Rugby League World Cup 2021 has been completed and sent off with a view to Medway being among the hosts for the Wheelchair Rugby League World Cup.

#### 8.4 Volunteers

We are proud of our Medway Sporting Ambassador programme, where local residents offer their time to support sporting events and regular sporting activities. This year so far they have volunteered for an impressive 4,000 hours.

#### 8.5 Outdoors

ParkSport is our Sport England-funded initiative to take coach-led sport into Medway's open spaces, helping to breakdown barriers to participation and attract 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 support our Medway Getting Active programme. Currently this has grown to a regular 400 participants attending the Parkrun at Great Lines and 70-100 juniors take part at the Strand weekly.

## 8.6 PE and School Sport

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 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 now has 8 primary schools and 2 preschools signed up.

The Disability Youth Games continues to be well supported.

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.

We have developed a new programme for school pupils to experience sporting excellence at Medway Park, where over 2000 participants enjoyed our sports-themed taster days over the summer.

## 8.7 Tackling Inactivity

Working alongside Sport England's guidelines and in partnership with Medway Public Health we have developed several new initiatives to help combat inactivity in Medway.

Fit 2 Tackle is our new community programme targeted at anyone who is keen to lose weight and benefit from a healthy lifestyle.

We have joined forces with Gillingham Football Club Community Trust, the A Better Medway campaign, Organic Training and the University of Kent Sport to help kick start healthy lifestyles for men and women keen to get fit and improve their health.

Beginner's Running groups at Medway average 18 participants each session.

Our new Walk and Talk sessions at Medway Park are designed to help people get the most out of walking for their physical and mental health. They are also a great opportunity to meet new people.

Walking Football - Medway Park and Strood Sports Centre's premier 3G Astroturf football venue is host to a popular walking football sessions that provides an opportunity for those who love to play the game at a slower pace.

## 8.8 Disability Sport

We are fast growing as a brand of excellence for Disability sport. As well as being the official home of England Wheelchair Rugby league, we also host 6 disability focused clubs at Medway Park and run regular drop-in sessions where participants can utilise sporting wheelchairs secured through external funding.

## 8.9 The Strand

The Strand swimming pool was fully re-painted in preparation for the 2017 summer season. The plant room was also refurbished before the pool was filled with water. The pool area and surrounds were immaculately presented, which was well maintained during the whole summer season.

A “Friends of the Strand” group was formed last year and we have been working closely with this group to keep the improvements at the Strand going throughout the summer period. Due to this relationship there was a strong volunteer presence to supplement and support the staff on site.

## 8.10 Tranquil Swimming Sessions at Hoo

Tranquil swimming sessions were introduced at Hoo Pool during 2017 to offer residents of Medway an opportunity to have a quiet swim. These sessions form part of our offer for those groups of people that prefer a quieter, more relaxed, environment such as the elderly, those with dementia and customers on the autistic spectrum.

## 8.11 Splashes “Light Wave” Parties

A new lighting and sound system was installed at Splashes Sports Centre to improve the quality of the party sessions at Splashes. The new lighting system has completely transformed the atmosphere at Splashes, enabling us to brighten the pool area up with white lighting, add some ambience with coloured lighting and also provide a disco effect / light show with flashing lights synchronised to music.

A new Light Wave session was introduced on a Friday evening, which is traditionally a quiet time. Following a very successful social media campaign by the staff at Splashes, which resulted in a video being viewed by over 100,000 customers, the Friday evening sessions have been consistently full to capacity. The feedback from customers has been extremely positive.

## 8.12 Medway Sport Open Weekend

The sports centres held the annual Medway Sport Open Weekend on the 16th & 17th September 2017. A variety of events were held across the centres including sport taster sessions, archery tag sessions and pool parties.

### 8.13 Kent Sports Trust FootGolf Event at Deangate

Deangate hosted the Kent Sports Trust's Footgolf corporate cup charity event in March 17 with around 80 participants, including world number 7 snooker player Barry Hawkins and Paralympic gold medalist Charlotte Edwards MBE.

## 9. **Tourism and heritage**

### 9.1 Battle of Medway

The main tourism campaign for 2017 centred on the Battle of Medway, working with the communications team and Visit Kent with promotions to the domestic market and overseas especially to the Dutch market.

This year's Kent Contemporary campaign which targets mainly London and the South East featured a stunning image of Upnor Castle and campaign feedback so far has reflected a very positive response by potential visitors. The campaign uses digital advertising across Kent London and the South East's Railway and underground network using large format digital screens at major London stations. Posters are also used at Southeastern and Eurotunnel stations.

The Tourism team also organised and attended the main travel trade exhibition in Utrecht called Vakantiebeurs and has built good relationships with the Dutch travel trade. Good relationships have also been built with Dutch Offshore Sailing clubs and other Dutch yacht clubs resulting in between 160 and 180 Dutch yachts attending the Battle of Medway commemorations in two fleets. The yacht clubs intend to return to Medway every other year.

### 9.2 Battle of Medway Exhibitions

Upnor Castle hosted the visit of Prince Maurits of Orange Nassau, van Vollenhoven for the official opening of the new Battle of Medway exhibition on 8 June 2017. It was then centre stage for the sail and fly by at which the prince took his salute from the bastion.

The exhibition was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and in partnership with the Historic Dockyard Chatham whose own temporary exhibition was also funded under the same bid. Upnor Castle had its busiest year on record with close to 30,000 visitors.

The exhibition is now a permanent part of the castle's interpretation for visitors. The Guildhall Museum also put on an exhibition looking at the Battle of Medway from the Dutch print and press and showing a projection of Dutch attack.

### 9.3 Eastgate House

The £2.1 million Heritage Lottery-funded scheme to renovate the magnificent late 16<sup>th</sup> Century Grade1 listed Eastgate House was completed in July 2017. An official launch was held on 18 July following a press visit during the day.



The conservation works have included the essential repairs to the roof, windows and floors, a new heating and lighting system, the removal of unsightly pipe work and wiring, the recreation of historic partitions, the replacement of modern plasterwork using traditional methods which will help the long term conservation of the building and the restoration of wall finishes to their original colour schemes.

Improvements to the physical access of the building include the addition of a new lift to the first and second floors of the house, the re-instatement of an internal staircase and protected fire routes throughout the building.

New interpretation tells the many stories of the house during its history, including an exhibition about the Mystery of Edwin Drood. The house is also being used for corporate hire and as a wedding venue. A series of activities and events are taking place to tell the story of the house and increase footfall.

The 16<sup>th</sup> Century walls on the second floor are undergoing conservation from January to May 2018 allowing visitors to see conservation in action as part of the visit.

#### 9.4 Guildhall Museum

The Guildhall Museum has succeeded in being awarded National Portfolio status with Arts Council England. This is as part of a consortium of museums including the Historic Dockyard Chatham, Tunbridge Wells museum and Canterbury museum. It recognises the Guildhall museum as a beacon museum and brings with it approximately £50,000 funding each year from April 2018 for the following 4 years to deliver excellence in customer service training and gallery interpretation.

The museum continues to flourish and has now set an exhibition forward plan for the next five years and is looking at a strategic gallery development action plan to gradually look at investment in the various galleries.

#### 9.5 Research

Two major pieces of research have been undertaken this year in partnership with Visit Kent. One looking at the visitor and non visitor perception of Medway as a tourism destination mainly amongst the domestic market, but also with some samples of people from France, Belgium and the Netherlands. Results will be known in early 2018.

The second piece of research funded by the PROFIT Interreg project run by Visit Kent has been looking at the identity of Medway – its product and the message we should be giving out as a tourism destination.

#### 9.6 Education

The Museum education service continues to provide an excellent service to schools across Medway and beyond. School visits to the Guildhall Museum in 2016/17 were up by 13% on 2015/16 with 9,054 visits in person. The service has also been successful in two funding bids. Children and the Arts funding of £40,000 has enabled the service to work with local schools engaging them in

the museum and its collection and a Heritage Lottery Fund Young Roots project of £50,000 has enabled the team to work with the local Strood Academy to look at the future interpretation and education resources at Temple Manor.

The Guildhall's 2017 autumn lecture series has again proved very popular covering the medieval period with talks on the Knights Templar, Edward III, and King John.

**Lead officer contacts:**

Tomasz Kozlowski – Assistant Director, Physical & Cultural Regeneration  
Email [tomasz.kozlowski@medway.gov.uk](mailto:tomasz.kozlowski@medway.gov.uk)  
Tele no. 01634 338121

Bob Dimond – Head of Sport, Leisure, Tourism and Heritage  
Email [bob.dimond@medway.gov.uk](mailto:bob.dimond@medway.gov.uk)  
Tele no 01634 338238

Carl Madjitey – Head of Festivals, Arts, Theatres and Events  
Email [carl.madjitey@medway.gov.uk](mailto:carl.madjitey@medway.gov.uk)  
Tele no. 01634 338114

Martin Hall – Greenspace Development and Skills Programme Manager  
Email [martin.hall@medway.gov.uk](mailto:martin.hall@medway.gov.uk)  
Tele no 01634 331447

**Appendices**

None

**Background documents**

None