

**COUNCIL: 24 JUNE 2021**

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**CULTURE & LEISURE STATEMENT**

**AGENDA ITEM:**

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**COVID-19 Impact on Culture & Leisure**

Covid-19 continues to impact on large parts of my portfolio, with many functions remaining suspended or closed despite the positive progress through the alert levels. Whilst we have moved some way forward, the legal requirements in respect of two-metre social distancing makes the reopening of many of the city's venues and activities financially unviable. As a consequence, the Council continues to use its facilities and staffing teams to support the critical city recovery.

This has included the successful delivery of four of the recent Welsh Government test events; two of which, Tafwyl and Eid Prayers, were hosted at Cardiff Castle with a further two spectator-attended fixtures hosted at Cardiff City Stadium and Sophia Gardens Cricket Ground. I would like to thank all officers, host venues and partner agencies for their support in this joint endeavour.

It is now possible to host events in the city, subject to strict social distancing criteria and the Council will be working with event organisers to facilitate the safe delivery of these events as the sector transitions to a new normal.

Although the Council is sadly not in a position to reopen St David's Hall to the public, I am delighted that it has been able to host the prestigious Cardiff Singer of the World Competition in the National Concert Hall of Wales once again this year. I would like to thank both the team working at St David's Hall and the Council's Health & Safety team for all of their hard work and commitment in making this possible. It is encouraging to see that even in these difficult times we can still promote Cardiff to the world through music.

Whilst the Council's cultural venues remain closed due to social distancing considerations, we continue to liaise with Welsh Government to assist in mitigating the associated financial pressures. In the interim, staff continue to support the response to the pandemic, including supporting services such as the Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) service. Colleagues are also continuing to prepare and support plans for the city's recovery which currently includes supporting the installation of the Churchill Way temporary improvements and the Summer of Smiles programme, planned for City Hall Lawn. We also continue to work closely with the grass roots music sector to support them out of lockdown as restrictions are hopefully eased over coming weeks.

## **Apprentice, Trainee and Graduate Opportunities**

I am pleased to report that the Parks Service, Play Service and Cardiff Harbour Authority have embarked on a recruitment drive for a new cohort of apprentice, trainee and graduate opportunities. Four opportunities within the Parks Service have arisen as a result of apprentices progressing successfully from schemes into full-time permanent posts and two new opportunities for a Trainee Urban Park Ranger and Trainee Community Park Ranger have also been advertised. In the Play service, a new Play Traineeship post has been advertised and, within Cardiff Harbour Authority, a new graduate engineering opportunity over a five-year term has been created.

These opportunities underline the Council's commitment to providing high-quality training and development, which includes a comprehensive and tailored programme of practical experience, along with day and block release study, leading to recognised qualifications in related disciplines. It is also pleasing that the Council is able to continue to offer these opportunities at what is a critical time for youth employment and officers within my portfolio area have been working closely with officers within Cllr Merry's portfolio area to ensure that these opportunities are widely communicated across stakeholder networks.

In addition to these opportunities, officers within my portfolio area are working closely with officers within Cllr Hinchey's portfolio area to provide further opportunities for Children Looked After under the Bright Start Traineeship Scheme. The scheme provides opportunities for young people aged 16-24 and four placements are being created within the Parks & Leisure Service for the first cohort commencing next month.

## **Flat Holm Project**

I have provided updates on progress with the development of the Flat Holm Island project, A Walk Through Time, in previous Council Statements and I am delighted to report that, last week, National Heritage Lottery confirmed a grant award of circa £600k, enabling the unlocking of further investment from partner organisations, which will see the implementation of a £1.1 million project over a three-year term.

The project, in partnership with the Flat Holm Society and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), will see improved habitats for the island's colony of lesser black-backed gulls and maritime flora, extensive renovation of the Grade II-listed fog horn station, the stabilisation of the cholera hospital and laundry buildings and repairs to the island's Victorian water catchment system. Renovation of the World War II searchlight station to provide a 'seascape hide' for visitors to watch the sea, ships, and birds will also take place, as will on-site interpretation improvements enabling visitors to embark on a journey through the history of the island.

I am confident that the investment will appeal to a wide-ranging audience, stimulating interest, increasing footfall and securing the long-term future of the island.

## **'Craft Your City' Initiative**

The 'Craft Your City' initiative invited children and young people to help shape the future of an area of land located behind the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff. This was a unique competition that provided school pupils with the opportunity to redesign the area using Minecraft Education, which is a multi-platform video game that enhances creativity, problem-solving, self-direction, collaboration, and other life skills by using building blocks, resources discovered in the game and users' own creativity. Entrants were provided with a geographically accurate representation of the site in which young people could create their own worlds and experiences, with a focus on preserving and promoting green spaces.

Winners were chosen by a judging panel of representatives from Cardiff University, Child Friendly Cardiff and a young person from the Child Friendly Cardiff Advisory Board. Individual winners came from Llandaff City CIW Primary, Radnor Primary, Rhiwbeina Primary and Rhydypenau Primary Schools, with one of the winning team entries also coming from Ysgol Plasmawr. The winners were awarded for their creativity, innovation and technical ability, and their ideas and themes will now be taken forward and influence the repurposing of the land adjacent to the National Museum of Wales.

This was the first of several projects that will enable children and young people to engage and express their ideas on major developments through the familiar medium of Minecraft Education. Such projects also form a key part of the Council's Child Friendly City agenda and provide a great way for young people to share their ideas of how they would like Cardiff to look in the future.

**Councillor Peter Bradbury**  
**Cabinet Member for Culture & Leisure**  
**17 June 2021**