

COUNCIL: 27 OCTOBER 2022

CULTURE, PARKS & EVENTS STATEMENT

Christmas 2022

I would not hesitate to recommend a visit to Cardiff at any time, but the capital city at Christmas is always an extra special treat for residents and visitors alike. The Christmas Lights will be switched on from Tuesday 15 November 2022 to officially herald the start of the city's Christmas festivities.

Highlights this year include the addition of the Cardiff Castle Christmas Festival; a spectacular new entertainment attraction being staged inside a beautiful 570-seat Fortuna Spiegel tent in the grounds of Cardiff Castle. Built from wood, cut mirrors, canvas, leaded glass and detailed in velvet brocade, Spiegel tents were once the number one attraction at Belgian funfairs and, this year, the festive shows in the Spiegel tent will transport visitors to a nostalgic and magical world. The Cardiff Castle Christmas Festival will present three shows offering something for everyone. The shows include The Nutcracker – a Christmas ballet with a Welsh twist; Santa's Wish – a brand new magical musical adventure for the whole family; and Castellana – a sensational blend of circus, burlesque and cabaret acts set to live music.

Cardiff's Winter Wonderland Ice Rink and Ice Walk will also return to the grounds of Cardiff Castle this year, whilst all the fun of the fair and the popular Ice Bar will return to City Hall Lawn. In addition, the award-winning Christmas at Bute Park light trail will return to Cardiff from 24 November 2022 to 1 January 2023 for its second year and will include a host of new sights. A mesmerising 1.4km light trail promises to be an unforgettable experience for the whole family to enjoy.

Cardiff Christmas Market will open on 10 November 2022 and run to 23 December 2022, offering bespoke silver jewellery, original artwork, fused glass work, hand-thrown ceramics, handmade quilts and textiles, seasonal food & drink, and much more. The Christmas Market will, once again, be complemented by the traditional and ever-popular Bavarian-themed Festive Quarter.

Finally, no Christmas is complete without the traditional panto and, this year, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs will entertain festive visitors to the New Theatre from 10 December 2022 to 8 January 2023. St David's Hall will also host performances of Coppelia, The Nutcracker and Swan Lake by the critically acclaimed Varna International Ballet Company over the Christmas and New Year period.

As always, I would encourage Members to visit www.visitcardiff.com to keep abreast of everything that Cardiff has to offer over coming weeks and months.

Allotment Strategy

I am pleased to report progress on the implementation of the updated Allotment Strategy for Cardiff, which was approved by Cabinet in March 2022. The strategy provides a framework for management and ongoing improvement of the service until 2027. A Strategy Working Group comprised of representatives from locally managed and non-locally managed sites has been established to oversee the implementation of the strategy, with a focus on key areas including increasing representation, supporting non-locally managed sites, creating capacity, improving infrastructure, information management and digitalisation. Achievements to date in these key areas include:

- The election of a new committee at the Fairwater site and preparations for elections to be held at the Greenway Road and Pengam Pavilion sites.
- Phased vegetation clearance has been completed at the Ely Farm, Fairwater and Pengam Permanent sites, with works also planned at the Lynton Terrace and Greenway Road sites between October and December 2022.
- The implementation of new allotment management software, which will improve the availability of information to site representatives and reduce the time and complexity of getting access to up-to-date data.
- Working with local sites to deliver plots to meet different needs – for example, at the Pengam Pavilion site, a group of small starter plots in the form of raised beds has been supported through the Travis Perkins Legacy Fund, which provided project materials, and implemented by site-based volunteers with the assistance of staff volunteers from Travis Perkins.

Coed Caerdydd

Building on the progress made last year, which saw an increase in planting numbers in excess of 350% compared with previous years, a second phase of consultation with local Ward Members took place over the summer. All Ward Members have now been notified of proposals for our tree planting programme for the 2022/23 season and I anticipate a further increase in numbers compared to the 2021/22 programme. A key feature of the 2021/22 programme was the engagement with local communities and the work undertaken by the volunteer workforce, which saw 730 individuals involved and 1,880 hours generated. Further engagement will be secured as part of the forthcoming programme and through the network of project participants, which currently total 1,132 individuals. The forthcoming programme will also see a continued focus on planting in areas of low canopy and on land in private ownership. The latter will be critical to the Council achieving the ambitious targets set for canopy cover across the city as part of the Coed Caerdydd project.

Parc Mackenzie

Earlier this month, major improvement works commenced on the University Lawns site on Park Place in the Cathays Ward, transforming the site into Parc Mackenzie. Once completed, provision will include a natural play area featuring log trails and climbing nets beneath the tree canopy. An open lawn area with seating, new natural stone paths, lighting, sculptures and a new entrance plaza & rain garden will also be created. All existing trees will be retained, and new trees will be planted.

The park has been named after Professor Millicent Mackenzie who was a Professor of Education at the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire (now Cardiff University) from 1910 to 1915. She also campaigned for women's rights, founding the Cardiff branch of the Suffragettes, and went on to become Wales's first female parliamentary candidate and the only woman standing at the 1918 general election. A pioneering voice in the women's rights movement, highlighting the importance of women's participation in academic and political spheres, Professor Mackenzie was also a driving force in the early decades of the humanist movement and was one of the first vice-presidents of the Union of Ethical Societies (now Humanists UK).

Horticultural Apprentice Award

I am delighted to advise that one of our park apprentices, Teaka Scriven, who recently secured a permanent gardener post with the Parks Service, was named as the UK's Horticultural Apprentice of the Year 2022 at an Association of Public Service Excellence awards event on 19 October. The award recognises Teaka's achievements during the term of her apprenticeship and the quality of training provision delivered by the Council, ensuring that there is a succession of skilled staff to meet current and future needs of the service.

Grangemoor Park

Grangemoor Park is scheduled to reopen to the public during the week commencing 19 December 2022. The area was closed to the public to enable safety work to be undertaken on the former landfill site beneath Grangemoor Park. The existing pathways and access to the park have also been upgraded for park users and to ensure that the critical infrastructure on site can now be easily accessed and maintained by the Council. Due to the nesting season, some of the planned works had to be delayed this year, but this work is now progressing well and the park will be re-opened by Christmas.

National Exercise Referral Scheme

Building on the success of the Cardiff Exercise Referral Scheme, the Cardiff National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) Team, in partnership with GLL, Cardiff's leisure provider, has recently devised a new delivery model incorporating qualified exercise referral leisure staff from GLL to work closely with the NERS Team to benefit low-risk clients. An additional programme of activities has been implemented across the leisure centres to run alongside mainstream NERS classes, increasing options and improving physical activity adherence. All low-risk clients, with no additional health complications, will be able to access the programme allowing the highly qualified NERS staff to focus on higher risk clients and chronic disease pathways. This new initiative will allow a smoother transition for low-risk clients into mainstream leisure programmes with the aim to increase physical activity levels and impact on long term behavioural change. In addition, a new patient management system is also being introduced by Public Health Wales, which will link directly to NHS patient numbers and Health Boards giving medical professionals easier access to refer their patients and better evaluation and evidence of cost savings for the NHS in Wales.

Vocational Education Cardiff

Our Vocational Education Cardiff and Stepping Stones programmes continue to offer meaningful opportunities for young people of secondary school age to gain the practical skills and hands-on work experience needed to progress in a range of exciting vocational subjects, such as Motocross and Mechanics, Animal Care, Health and Fitness, Outdoor Sports, and Music and Video.

Building on this programme, we have also recently started offering the Junior Steps Programme, which offers KS2 Primary School children fantastic learning and development opportunities in a range of exciting subjects. The programme aims to encourage, engage and support pupils as they learn and develop new skills and experiences throughout the course. Sessions are held one day a week at a number of different venues across the city for the duration of the school year. The programme also covers literacy and numeracy, life skills/PSE workshops, as well as a practical subject of the student's choice. Our structured programme offers courses in Land and Water Adventurous Activities delivered by Cardiff International White Water (CIWW), Play Work delivered by the Children's Play Team, Animal Care delivered by Cardiff Riding School, and Music & Movement delivered by Cardiff Music School. There are currently around 200 learners on roll and the number is growing daily.

Councillor Jennifer Burke Davies
Cabinet Member for Culture, Parks & Events
21 October 2022