

COUNCIL: 30 NOVEMBER 2023

CULTURE, PARKS & EVENTS STATEMENT

Cardiff @ Christmas

There is no mistaking that Christmas has arrived in Cardiff and, to coincide with switching on of the Christmas Lights, Winter Wonderland is already welcoming visitors to its two iconic sites. Cardiff Castle is, once again, providing a breathtaking backdrop to Cardiff's Winter Wonderland Ice Rink and Ice Walk, whilst City Hall Lawn is playing host to a selection of rides and funfair games, the Sur La Piste après-ski bar, plus a full line-up of free, family entertainment – not forgetting the ever-popular ice bar.

There is a plethora of treats in store for anyone visiting Cardiff this Christmas, from the mesmerising Christmas at Bute Park Light trail, which is 50% longer this year, to the perfect hand-crafted gifts on sale at the Cardiff Christmas Market and the return of the 500-seat Spiegeltent, which is located in Sophia Gardens this year. Further information about everything that the city has in store this Christmas season is available on the Visit Cardiff website at: <https://www.visitcardiff.com/>

Welsh Museums Festival 2023

The Museum of Cardiff was proud to take part in the Welsh Museums Festival 2023. The festival ran from Saturday 27 October to Sunday 5 November during the school half-term holiday period and attracted over 1,700 visitors to the Museum. Highlights included Portrait of a City illustration workshops with author and illustrator, Jack Skivens; and Songs and Rhymes featuring Mymuna Soleman, a Somali-Welsh resident of Butetown and founder of the Privilege Café. A spoken word artist, Mymuna was joined by Cath Little, a storyteller from Llanrumney and author of Glamorgan Folk Tales for Children. Together they shared their favourite traditional stories, songs and rhymes and explained how and why their families came to live in Cardiff. The Museum also received several lovely comments from visitors who enjoyed the festival.

Cardiff Local Nature Partnership

I wanted to update Council on the continuing positive work of our Local Nature Partnership (LNP) in Cardiff. The LNP has been funded by the Welsh Government since 2020, providing capital and revenue sources to support projects and mainstream activity which enhance and promote biodiversity. Fourteen organisations are represented on the steering group, including the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Woodland Trust, Natural Resources Wales, Wales Biodiversity Partnership and Buglife Cymru.

There has been a wide range of practical activity, led by the Community Park Ranger Service, involving our volunteer workforce over the last couple of months. This has included cut and lift operations linked to our wildflower areas, grassland surveys, dormouse surveys, bulb planting, habitat management and conservation volunteering taster sessions. Further activity is planned up until the end of the financial year, which includes the planting of marginal pond vegetation, herbaceous perennials, tree planting, maintenance of permanent planting, bird and bat box installation, and outdoor learning sessions with schools for pupils in Year 6.

The LNP plays an important role in developing the Cardiff Nature Recovery Action Plan, which will outline the essential steps needed to restore and improve nature in Cardiff, while also responding to both the declared nature and climate emergencies. Public workshops and drop-in sessions have been taking place to gather views and ideas for action to support nature recovery in our city. Details of the remaining drop-in sessions and workshops are provided below:

Drop-in Sessions

- Bute Park Visitor Centre – Saturday 25 November 2023 (11am-2pm).
- Dusty Forge, Ely – Monday 27 November 2023 (1.30pm- 3.30pm).

Community Workshops

- In-person workshop at Sport Wales National Centre, Sophia Gardens – Tuesday 16 January 2024 (6pm-8.30pm).
Book a place at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cardiff-action-for-nature-community-workshop-tickets-744055860107?aff=oddtcreator>
- Online workshop – Thursday 18 January 2024 (6pm-7.30pm).
Book a place at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cardiff-action-for-nature-on-line-workshop-tickets-744063543087>

Green Flag ‘Best of the Best’ Awards

I am delighted to report that the Council’s Community Park Ranger team, based at Forest Farm Country Park, won the Parks Team of the Year Award at this year’s Green Flag Awards UK ‘Best of the Best’ Awards. This is a particularly pleasing outcome following on from the success of the Bute Park team in winning the same award last year.

The ‘Best of the Best’ Awards recognise employees who make an exceptional contribution and I’m delighted that the team has been recognised for its work in engaging local communities in the management of Forest Farm. The awards scheme, which recognises excellence in innovation and service delivery, is managed by Keep Britain Tidy who also manage the Green Flag Awards Scheme.

Partnership Working with Linc Cymru Housing Association

Earlier in the month, council officers and I met with representatives from Linc Cymru Housing Association to discuss outline proposals for a pilot partnership project aimed at improving local parks and green spaces through engagement with local tenant communities. The city's parks and green spaces make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of local communities, particularly in areas of deprivation, and I was very pleased with the positive response received from Linc Cymru. Officers are now collaborating to define detailed proposals and it is my intention to engage with local members in pilot wards in due course.

Councillor Jennifer Burke
Cabinet Member for Culture, Parks & Events
24 November 2023