

## CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND HERITAGE – COUNCILLOR WRIGHT

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### Arts

Blackpool Council, through Cultural Services, has been successful in securing £150k of investment from Curious Minds for a two-year programme. The funding is to support the development of the cultural offer for young people inside and outside of school and will support various activities including the creation of a strategic partnership, Arts Award training for young people, a new 'place-based curriculum' for schools and a new Youth Arts programme for young people outside school settings.

The Arts Service organised and managed the highly successful Fylde Coast Shakespeare Festival that took place earlier this year to mark the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. The festival saw nearly 800 people of all ages come together to take part in promenade performances, readings, live radio broadcasts, workshops and discussions. Twenty seven community groups from Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde took on the challenge performing in 21 venues across the coast.

LeftCoast, the partnership established to deliver the Creative People and Places Programme in Blackpool and Wyre, has been successful in a bid to the Clore Prize Fund and has been awarded a prize of £50,000 for an innovative project based on the traditional Bed and Breakfast experience. A new social enterprise will be set up to create the first ever "Art B and B", which will be a fully functional space. The project will support people recovering from addiction, enabling them to work alongside artists to create every element of the B and B experience from a virtual landlady to the bedroom décor. Blackpool's bid was the only successful award in the north of England.

### Heritage

Pupils from primary and secondary schools across the town have been using the world famous illuminations to learn a range of new maths skills as part of a Heritage Lottery-funded project focused around the Blackpool Illuminations historic collections. The Illuminations have been used to create special activities to teach children about patterns and sequences, as well as simple tasks like multiplication and division. The pupils also learn more about the art and history behind one of Blackpool's most famous attractions.

The children have also been out to visit this year's display at the Illuminations depot, studying each illumination to understand the design and symmetry that goes into making them so popular. This was followed by a trip along the Promenade, with their families to see the famous lights in position, so that they could understand how the different designs came together.

The work is having a positive impact on the way that the pupils understand the relevance of mathematics in everyday life and is directly linked to the maths curriculum. The Mathematical Illuminations project is part of the Blackpool's schools cultural programme, which is funded by Heritage Lottery Fund, the Arts Council and Blackpool Council.

### Libraries

The library service continues to provide a crucial role in assisting residents with Internet access and online transactions such as national government e-services through [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). The team is receiving training to enable them to work with benefit claimants to support access to universal credit, which is due to be rolled out in Blackpool in December. As well as developing people's digital skills, residents are also signposted to other sources of support, such as debt advice, adult learning activities or cultural opportunities to help people rebuild their confidence or learn new skills. Our digital offer

also has a creative learning element two monthly tech clubs were launched at Palatine Library in September.

The Mythical Maze Summer Reading Challenge attracted 779 children, 60% of these becoming members in order to take part. In the lead up to the summer holidays, a local storyteller told mythical stories to children in school assemblies to help to support the challenge.

A Micro Festival of Poetry for National Poetry Day was held on the theme of Remembrance. The day included various workshops and poetry readings and culminated in the announcement of the Wordpool poetry competition winner and a drive through the illuminations to see the winning poem in lights. Blackpool is also leading on a shared reading project with Lancashire libraries.

Plans are currently underway for the national launch of the Reading Well Books on prescription for dementia in January 2015. A launch event is being planned for people with dementia and their carers. To date, two thirds of the staff are trained as Dementia Friends and the target is for all staff to be trained by the end of 2014. Libraries are increasingly used for community-based health activities including weekly memory screening clinics, and mental health Information clinics, and blood pressure checks.

### **Grand Theatre**

Grand Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, Montgomery High School and Blackpool Council have developed a partnership to increase children and young people's understanding of Shakespeare and to improve their literacy and English skills both at primary and secondary level. Around 900 children have been involved, with approximately 2000 in the audience at the Grand, along with 50 teachers. Part of the programme focuses on offering high-quality training to teachers so that they can improve their approaches in the classroom. Montgomery's Ofsted report demonstrates this impact on improved attainment for English as a direct result of the project. Another eight schools are involved in the wider cluster. As a result of the Grand being part of this partnership the RSC has chosen the theatre as one of its 10 national venues for their number one tour DREAM:16.