

ROTHERHAM CULTURAL CONSORTIUM

Venue: Town Hall,
Moorgate Street,
Rotherham.

Date: Wednesday, 6th December
2006

Time: 2.00 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th September, 2006 (copy herewith). (Pages 1 - 10)
3. Matters Arising
4. Service Development Update (Phil Rogers). Elected Members' Summary herewith. (Pages 11 - 14)
5. Rotherham Cultural Diversity Festival 2006 (Trevor Kippax/Lizzy Alageswaran)
6. Representation of Black and Ethnic Minority Communities on the Cultural Consortium (Tony Preston/Lizzy Alageswaran/Trevor Kippax)
7. Rotherham Active Partnership (Jackie Thornhill)
8. Sports Facilities Regeneration Programme (Tony Preston)
9. Rotherham Public Art Programme (Jennifer Booth)
10. Cultural Conference 2007 (Tony Preston/Lizzy Alageswaran)
11. Any other business
12. Date of next meeting

**ROTHERHAM CULTURAL CONSORTIUM
WEDNESDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2006**

Present:- Councillor Ian St. John (in the Chair); Councillor Jane Austen, Brian Beeley, Michael Bishop, Ron Bye, Christine Cox, Stuart Lister, David Rowley, Esme Temple, Roy Wells and Joyce Williams.

R.M.B.C. Officers:-

Phil Rogers	Head of Culture & Leisure
Tony Preston	Project Development Officer, Culture & Leisure
Marie Hayes	Commercial and Promotional Services Manager
Steve Blackburn	Principal Officer, Museums, Galleries & Heritage
Jackie Thornhill	Manager, Sports & Physical Activity
Bernadette Burbridge	Town Centre Management Team

77. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Littleboy, Swift, Wardle and Wyatt, Joanne Edley, Guy Kilminster, Jeremy Blundell and Roy Newman.

78. WELCOME TO NEW CHAIR AND INTRODUCTIONS

A welcome was extended to Councillor I. St. John in his capacity as Cabinet Member, Lifelong Learning, Culture and Leisure and as Chair of this meeting.

Introductions were made.

79. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd February, 2006 were received as a correct record.

80. MATTERS ARISING

Ulley Park

Phil Rogers, Head of Culture & Leisure gave an update report on Ulley Park.

Staffing structures were now in place for Ulley and Thrybergh country parks and the future for Ulley was reported as being positive. The process was progressing smoothly with a successful launch of the Friends of Ulley Park, with a total of 81 members.

Officers are working with the Friends Group to allay fears of a closure and

in seeking a Green Flag Award for next year.

Walker Mausoleum

Steve Blackburn, Principal Officer, Museums, Galleries & Heritage, gave an update report on the current situation with regard to Walker Mausoleum.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services had been instructed to instigate legal proceedings against the site owner to sign a new Legal Agreement in order to enable works of restoration and repair to the Mausoleum to proceed. The site owner had written to the Council stating his willingness to do so but due to other delays on the part of the site owner this had not yet been signed.

As the restoration and reopening of the Mausoleum is a fundamental part of the Service Development Plan, this matter would continue to be pursued in order to allow the tender process to start for building work to begin as soon as possible. Officers were working closely with Friends' Groups and were in a position to move expediently once the legal proceedings had been resolved.

One member stressed the urgency of this matter and referred to the amount of public interest in the project.

81. CULTURAL SERVICES INSPECTION JULY 2006

Phil Rogers, Head of Culture & Leisure gave a presentation in respect of work prepared for the Cultural Services Inspection which had taken place during July, 2006.

The information included a DVD and a verbal report on service development and activities over the last six months in all aspects of Culture and Leisure delivery for all generations.

The information on the DVD drew particular attention to:-

- Catcliffe Glass Cone
- Allotments/Gardening
- Watersports
- Libraries
- Urban and Country Parks
- Rotherham Show
- Kashmere Project
- Park Ranger Service – Rosehill Park
- Clifton Park Museum – Granary Café

The following figures were given:-

- 80,000 visitors to this year's Rotherham Show

- 100,000 visitors to Clifton Park Museum since its re-opening – now recognised as one of the main tourist attractions in Yorkshire

Other issues reported were:-

- Recent death of Margaret Holland, Librarian for Inclusive Service. Margaret had carried out a great deal of work with ethnic communities.
- Burst water main at Herringthorpe Athletics Track – now restored by Yorkshire Water. Thanks were extended to the Athletics Club for their involvement.
- All swimming pools awarded the National Standard Aquamark for quality of teaching and instruction.
- Park Rangers – Paul Spriggs had received a National award for the best park worker in Britain. He was to travel to Central Park, New York in the Spring to work in partnership with the New York parks department.
- Recent significant article in The Times in recognition of Rotherham parks.
- E-Librarian of the Year – awarded to Askander Akram – who was last year's winner.
- Swimming Pools – It was hoped to complete all building work on schedule by the Summer of 2008 (Aston, St. Ann's and Wath), with the exception of the Second Phase of the Maltby Leisure Facilities. The Maltby project will include a Family Health Centre and Contact Centre.
- Pantomime – Peter Pan scheduled for December 2006 – Box office records for last year's pantomime had been broken for the fifth year in succession and the Pantomime had been extended for a further week. A further 3 year Pantomime Contract was presently being re-negotiated.
- Green Flag Awards - National Benchmark Award won for Thrybergh Country Park. Further submissions for Ulley and Rother Valley Country Parks to be made for this year.
- Excellent Summer activities co-ordination involving approximately 20-30 community groups. Action groups had put together a package called "Mega-Active".
- Clifton Park – a great deal of work was taking place on the Heritage Lottery Fund bid for Clifton Park. A great deal of improvements would then take place if the bid succeeded, some of which included new buildings, re-opening of the walled garden, reinstatement of older features, children's water play area, and toilets. Work was to involve partnership with RCAT. A National Funding Panel had visited the Park and a decision on the bid would be made on 22nd September, 2006.
- Officers had been asked to attend Birmingham to speak on Performance Management. This had been led by Steve Hallsworth, Business Manager, Leisure & Green Spaces, and Sheffield University.

- Rotherham Show – thanks were extended to everyone involved in the arrangements and success of this year's show.
- Inspections – Intense inspection had taken place within Culture & Leisure during July, 2006. The result of the inspection which it was felt had been fair, was presently awaited. Members of the Consortium would be invited to attend de-briefing sessions. This is seen as an important area of work in terms of planning cultural facilities for the next thirty years.
- Cultural Centre – A meeting to identify funding streams for a Cultural Centre would be held shortly. A series of meetings had already been held this month with potential developers.
- Town Centre Heritage Lottery Funding – Head of Culture and Leisure to liaise with Civic Society when relevant officers have been consulted.

Other issues raised by members of the Consortium were:-

Lack of community facilities in Kiveton Park. Ownership issues were debated with respect to some community venues in Kiveton Park and the Head of Culture & Leisure undertook to look into the matter and to liaise with the member concerned.

Poor attendance at Friends AGM. Officers were aware of the importance of Friends Groups and were looking at ways of raising the profile. Funding Bodies may be asked to attend future meetings, as a way of attracting more members.

Need for iconic buildings and quality design for new town centre regeneration. The meeting was assured that User Groups would be formed at an appropriate stage of the planning process, which would include representation from this Consortium.

Concert Hall – It was acknowledged that future designs for an auditorium, must be designed for multi-functional use.

Agreed: That the Head of Culture and Leisure be thanked for an interesting and informative presentation.

82. ROTHERHAM ALIVE PARTNERSHIP

David Rowley gave an update report on the present situation with regard to the work of the Rotherham Alive Partnership.

The Board had received a number of presentations on the following Strategies/Plans:-

- NICE (National Institute for Clinical Excellence)
Body responsible for Health Strategy. Work centred around recommending a Smoking Cessation Strategy and an increase in physical activities.

- Public Health Strategy and Alive Team Action Plan
This work aligned with the Arts and Sports activities of this Consortium.

- Older People's Wellbeing Strategy (Adult Services)

- Lottery Bid Presentation (included in a Yorkshire & Humberside bid).

Main themes were Healthy Eating coaches and assistance in Mental Health.

- Lifestyle discussion on smoke-free Rotherham. Some criticism of the hospital in not making Rotherham Hospital smoke-free.

- Update on the Local Area Agreement

Kath Atkinson, Rotherham PCT had felt the need to increase the number of meetings in order to monitor issues.

Agreed:- That David Rowley be thanked for his report.

83. THE BIG SCREEN

Bernadette Burbridge, Town Centre Management Team, gave a verbal report on the evaluation of the current pilot to assess the use of The Big Screen in Rotherham Town Centre.

This included a background report on the matter an outline of her work experience in the BBC on special projects, which had included the setting up of a number of partnerships similar to the one in Rotherham.

The pilot scheme was to end in December, 2006.

The information included a DVD presentation which involved members of the community. This was shown as an example of what could be shown on the screen through learning space. The DVD, which consisted of "real" stories, had been compiled with the help of students from RCAT who had recorded their experiences of adult learning and how this had enriched their lives.

The meeting was informed of the type of feedback received from audiences in respect of:-

- The World Cup coverage – on the whole, very successful - as many as 300 children and families in the square on one particular day
- Number of events planned in conjunction with the Royal Opera House – started to build an audience from the first event of the Royal Ballet show

- Big Dance Event – nation-wide event to get as many people dancing at the same time – 235 people signed up to the event
- Film for Life shown – had attracted a large crowd and had generated lots of fun
- RCAT – (a) Agreement for students to produce some material as part of the 1st year NVQ Media Course. If appropriate, this would be screened. (b) Offer of work placements for students to learn how to produce material for the screen, BBC guidelines and editorial policy.
- Schools and “Get Sorted” Project – screening events planned with them
- Images of Urban Wildlife – recently enjoyed by several people

The point was made that the screen was a new feature to the town and that, as such, would take time to build interest and attract audiences.

Discussion had taken place with a great deal of community groups. Without exception, the response had been extremely positive.

Feedback from all events had been consistently strong and a mailing list was being compiled for future use.

Members of the Consortium felt the DVD was very good and suggestions for future work were made which included more stories from older people and children.

Questions were raised and responded to with regard to the permanency of the screen and costings.

It was clarified that the screen was jointly owned via a partnership with the Council, BBC and ADI (screen manufacturer). A Contract existed with ADI who maintained the screen and provided IT support.

One issue which had consistently arisen was that the screen should not be sited in All Saints’ Square.

In balancing that view, some members of the Consortium felt the siting of the screen should not overshadow the facility in terms of its potential benefits for community involvement, notwithstanding the need to promote a wellbeing of pride in the town and the recognition of the many successes in terms of Rotherham’s higher employment and good school results, for example.

Agreed:- That Bernadette be thanked for an interesting and informative presentation.

84. ROTHERHAM SHOW AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY FESTIVAL 2006

Marie Hayes, Commercial & Promotional Services Manager gave a verbal report on the recent Rotherham Show and Cultural Diversity Festival

2006.

Once again, Rotherham Show had been a huge success and the weather had been excellent.

Trevor Kippax had reported the best year ever of the Diversity Festival and that feedback from everyone had been good.

One e mail stating how much one particular family had enjoyed the event had already been received from someone in North Lincolnshire.

One member present who had worked on the Show agreed that a big proportion of visitors were from outside Rotherham.

85. CULTURAL CONFERENCE 2006

Jackie Thornhill, Manager, Sports and Physical Activity, gave a verbal report on the Cultural Conference 2006 event.

The key aim of the event had been to bring Rotherham people together who shared an interest in developing sport and physical activity.

Approximately 80 people had attended the half day event. Representation had consisted of RMBC, Parish Councils, Colleges, Schools, community partnerships, older people, sports and voluntary organisations, Health Authority, Disability Groups, Funding Groups and learning communities.

Councillor St. John had opened the event and a decision had been made to keep the event to a reasonable timescale in order to maintain interest.

Established groups, consisting of both young and old, had given practical demonstrations of the work of their group, inbetween topical workshops.

One young man in a placement on the EPUIP Project had been asked to say a few words about his experience. This particular group supported young people from the Black and Minority Ethnic communities in order to get people into work and develop work. This young man had spent almost a year with sports development and was now working for the Multi-Cultural Centre as a Sports Development Officer.

Other speakers had included Dave Gent from Sport England who had talked about what is happening regionally.

Rotherham Active Partnership was formed and launched in April to strategically look at the way sport and physical activities is co-ordinated across the Borough. The initiative had produced significant involvement with sporting groups on ideas of good practice. Facilitated by the Sports Development Team and neighbouring partners, the initiative looked at ways of developing funds and sports organisations, and worked with

BME, which included working with older people.

Dave Gent had closed the Conference with an update on the 2012 Olympics by showing a video which it was felt was inspiring for everyone involved in physical activity.

The event had proved successful, had given people a good opportunity to share ideas, and it was planned to repeat the event on a biennial basis. Most of the people in attendance had felt it was excellent.

Issues which had arisen from the Conference, in particular diversionary programming and children being a nuisance, were being looked at through partnership working.

One member present suggested longer workshops at the next event.

86. CULTURAL STRATEGY ACTION PLAN - DRAFT 3RD EDITION

Tony Preston, Project Development Manager, submitted a draft of the 3rd edition of the Cultural Strategy Action Plan which consisted of the Detailed Action Plans of the Future Perfect: Planning our Cultural Futures document for consideration and comment.

The Strategy set out a comprehensive list of projects and initiatives achieved within Culture and Leisure over the past 6-9 months in delivering the objectives of the Strategy Action Plan, in addition to work being undertaken within the voluntary and private sectors.

A significant amount of refresh work had been carried out on the document since its publication last year and in identifying areas of progress within the service in meeting the priorities contained within the Cultural Strategy.

A number of key and successful features of the Strategy were highlighted and reported on as follows:-

- Colourscape Event - Clifton Park
- Pantomime – Last year's Snow White recorded the highest number of sales
- Rotherham Arts Festival
- Museum Events Programming re-started after refurbishment
- Regeneration through increased investment and cultural activity
- Rosehill Park and the Award given to Paul Spriggs, Park Development Ranger
- Excellent partnership working – in particular with Rawmarsh and Parkgate Partnership
- Significant achievements made in public art
- Great deal of tourism achievement
- Magna Active Summer Programme
- Summer Reading Challenge in community libraries – significant

increase in takeup – over 1,000 children completed the challenge compared with around 300 last year

Members present were asked to circulate the Strategy within their individual organisations and feed back any additional information on ambitions and achievements within interest groups.

The Strategy would be disseminated more widely across cultural sector groups, including the “Help in Hand” database off the Council’s website, with a view to publication by next Spring.

The meeting raised a particular question on the future of Rotherham Rugby Club.

Phil Rogers, Head of Culture and Leisure reported that the Rugby Club had now stated they could not afford to go ahead at this stage. A report had been commissioned from Strategic Leisure into the future of Herringthorpe Leisure Centre, including the pavilion, and a report on this matter would be considered by the Cabinet Member, Education, Culture and Leisure with regard to sport development on that site. A variety of options were being considered, all of which involved sport and leisure on the site.

Agreed: (1) That Lizzy Alageswaran, Principal Officer, Community Arts be invited to attend the next meeting to highlight some of the ambitions with regard to the public arts work.

(2) That Joanne Edley, Tourism Manager be invited to attend the next meeting to report on the current situation with regard to tourism activity.

87. REPRESENTATION OF BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES ON THE CULTURAL CONSORTIUM

Tony Preston, Project Development Manager, reported verbally on the need to seek representation from black and ethnic minority communities on the Cultural Consortium.

A discussion took place on this issue, it being recognised that whilst the BME communities represented some of the most creative and vibrant groups, there was a great number of diverse communities in Rotherham who could not be represented by a single person.

Suggestions from members of the Consortium included the need to involve younger members and members from outlying areas of Rotherham.

Agreed:- (1) That Trevor Kippax, Cultural Diversity Officer, be invited to attend the next meeting to aid a discussion on how to attract more membership on the Cultural Consortium from the Black and Ethnic Minority communities.

(2) That Guy Kilminster, Manager, Libraries, Museums and Arts be asked to consider raising this at the next meeting of Rotherham Heritage Association.

88. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting be held on Wednesday, 6th December, 2006 at 2.00 p.m.

CULTURE AND LEISURE SERVICES**ELECTED MEMBERS UPDATE****August - October 2006**

Following its recent inspection the Audit Commission has rated Rotherham Borough Council's culture and leisure facilities, such as libraries, museums, leisure centres, parks and open spaces, as a **good two star service** with promising prospects for improvement.

Library and Information Service

The Library Service's **Safe Surfing CD-ROM** has been developed into a classroom presentation which is being delivered in junior schools to Years 5-6. The presentation is made by library staff and includes an interactive and colourful look at the issues relating to the benefits of the internet and the dangers of which young people should be aware. The lessons about chatrooms, hoaxes, viruses, online bullying and inappropriate web sites are reinforced with a quiz and all children receive a certificate and card as a "Safe Surfer".

The Library is continuing in partnering around 90 other services in the **national online Enquire service**. This service offers a means of members of the public directly contacting a librarian online on a "chat" web site to have their enquiries answered. Through an overseas partner the service is available outside of normal business hours in the UK.

The Rotherhamonline.info web portal for library internet users has been re-designed and launched afresh with clear links to Homework Help, Safe Surfing, the Library Catalogue and user guidance.

For the first time in six years Rotherham Library Service is to produce a written copy of its information database, **'Help in Hand'** that details about 2,000 community organisations and resources across the Borough. Although 'Help in Hand' has been maintained continuously since 1995, it is now six years since the public has been able to buy it in printed form.

Rotherham Libraries joined the national **Summer Reading Challenge (SRC)** for the third year. The title this year was the Reading Mission with a secret agent theme. After library staff visited a number of schools during the summer term we had a massive increase in participants on previous years.

Year	Children starting the SRC	Children finishing the SRC
2005	625	226
2006	1815	826

This represents a 190% increase in children starting the SRC in 2006 and a 265% increase in children finishing the SRC in 2006.

Archives & Local Studies Service

A new Document of the Month series is starting as part of the **Rolling out the Archives project**. The first one to be displayed during November is the newly-discovered oldest document in the collection, a deed in the Feoffees archive dating from 1328. The deed will be on display in the search room during November and on the website thereafter.

National survey of archive repositories results - Rotherham received the second highest overall user satisfaction ratings in Yorkshire and the Humber with 70.2% rating us as Very Good (96.5% Very Good/Good). We were second only to the Borthwick Institute in York, which is in a brand new, purpose-built building with superb facilities for customers. 137 repositories participated nationally, and Rotherham was 16th for Very Good overall rating and 21st for Very Good on helpfulness and friendliness of staff.

Projects have begun with the Youth Theatre group to develop a **performance based on historic events**, and with Kiveton Park and Wales Community Development Trust. These are creating and developing new users of the Service through partnership working. General usage is also up 7% on last year.

Museums, Galleries and Heritage Service

Friends of Clifton Park Museum have been awarded £9930 from Awards for All to deliver a programme of training and events based on

the restored kitchen range at Clifton Park Museum.

Museums, Galleries and Heritage received a **national commendation** for its exhibitions and events programme for Museums and Galleries Month, 2006.

Museums, Galleries and Heritage have been selected as a partner for the **regional Museums Hub** (part of the Renaissance in the Regions initiative) - working on a five year visual arts project with Sheffield Museums and Galleries Trust, Harewood House and Shandy Hall.

Work commenced on planning a community project based around **Catcliffe Glass Cone**, with a Heritage Lottery Fund bid planned for 2007 to restore the cone, implement a programme of events and exhibitions with the local community and develop a new gallery at Clifton Park Museum about the history of the glass industry in the local area.

Exhibitions Programme:

Rotherham by the Sea - first exhibition in five years to feature a wide range of paintings, prints and drawings from our stores.

Inside Story / Infinite Terms of Reference - cultural diversity exhibition, which proved a big crowd-puller to the art gallery, and delivered in partnership with Libraries, MLA Yorkshire, Alchemy, British Library, Rotherham Arts Festival and Bradford Museums, Galleries and Heritage Service.

Living Islam exhibition held at Clifton Park Museum to break down barriers and misconceptions about Muslim beliefs and culture - included a sell-out evening event which featured prayer, a talk on the Islamic contribution to science, and traditional refreshments.

Exhibitions created at Clifton Park Museum by Steve Pool, our **artist in residence** funded by Creative Partnerships.

Repeat visit to Rotherham organised for antiques expert **Eric Knowles**, which included a popular talk at Rotherham Arts

Centre and saw Clifton Park Museum featured on Look North.

2nd annual '**Make a Difference Day**' celebration for volunteers arranged which was attended by over 50 Libraries, Museums and Arts volunteers - this included behind the scenes tours for participants and a chance for them to share ideas and receive thank you certificates from the Deputy Mayor.

Schools Music Service

The Schools Music Service has taken extensive steps to support the Government's pledge to support "**Wider Opportunity**" initiatives to children at Key Stage 2.

4 Primary Schools have piloted whole class schemes for the past year or two where all children from a class are taught the requirements of the National Curriculum Music through the learning of a musical instrument (comprising brass, woodwind and percussion) or an orchestral programme with violin and cello. The schools are Kiveton Park Meadows, Brinsworth Manor, Thurcroft and Wath Victoria.

In addition the Music Service is taking another bold step by piloting class projects with infant children at Brampton Ellis and Thurcroft.

Sport and Leisure Facilities

Successful Evacuation to Herringthorpe Leisure Centre - Avondale Road incident - 29/30 October 2006 - Staff at Herringthorpe Leisure Centre were involved in running the overnight accommodation of 45 evacuees for 24 hours whilst the incident was taking place.

The centre operation was suspended during the period of the incident with only Heartbeat opening, as normal. All staff worked well under pressure and were supported by other agencies and other RMBC departments.

The Amateur Swimming Association Level 1 Swimming Teachers course is designed to give people their first step on the swimming teaching professional ladder. Regular courses are run throughout the year and recently 11 candidates undertook the

course at Charles T Broughton swimming pool. They are eagerly awaiting their results.

The RLSS National Pool Lifeguard course is designed to train the public on the basic skills in becoming pool lifeguards. Regular courses take place at Maltby Sports Centre throughout the year and on the recent course out of twelve, eleven passed.

Working jointly with **the Parish Council at Aston** in October half-term, we provided activities in the morning such as basketball, football, etc., and a variety of games that would see children through to the afternoon pool splash session.

The **Condition Management Programme** is a local NHS and Jobcentre Plus partnership service supported by the Sport and Leisure service. It is designed to encourage and support persons who are in receipt of incapacity benefit, so they can move towards employment. Through a 7 week programme of meetings designed to build self-confidence, and advice and guidance on improving diet and nutrition and increasing exercise, members are supported to manage their illness and improve their physical activity.

We provide access to our facilities for the members for 3 months (free to members paid for by the NHS), with the hope that they have changed their lifestyle and are on a road to gain future employment.

In the last 2 months 4 programmes have started at Dinnington Resource Centre and Herringthorpe Leisure Centre and are serving 28 members.

Working with the Safer Rotherham Partnership **the Drugs Intervention Programme** enables us to give training opportunities to young adults who are referred to us from the Drugs Intervention team.

Heartbeat membership gives them the opportunity to train within a community setting and encourage a healthier lifestyle. Support is offered by the instructors to all participants. At the moment there are 4 members training on the programme.

On 16th October Herringthorpe Leisure Centre hosted a launch event for a **'Train2Gain' programme** for the Learning Skills Council (LSC) in South Yorkshire.

The event was launched by John Healey, MP, and attended by the LSC's Regional Director, Margaret Coleman and Regional Director of Skills, David Hodges.

The LSC produced a promotional video of the day and event. As well as running a video and promotional photographs of the event the newly established Rother FM radio station attended and interviewed a variety of people on the day. From this event it is envisaged that we will be able to access future training opportunities for staff.

RMBC's Sport and Leisure Facilities has added one more feather to its cap as the 'Swimsmart' programme, initiated by the service, finds itself rewarded with the prestigious **'Aquamark'** for its high standard in making the borough's pools the best they can be.

Aquamark, the industry equivalent of the 'Kitemark', is only awarded to the swimming programmes attaining the high standard set by the Amateur Swimming Association and is seen as a giant step forward in the great customer service and activities which RMBC's Sport and Leisure Facilities offer to the public.

For their efforts, the service was awarded with the highest mark achievable, the Premier Scheme Status, which saw staff at all levels praised for their hard work in programme operation, staff planning and recruitment, customer relations and policy and strategy. The staff were particularly praised for their enthusiasm, smart appearance, politeness, knowledge and keenness to help. The facilities themselves were also congratulated, particularly the displays of useful information, the wide range of easily accessible activities and the absolute most being made of the pools themselves.

A Three Day Sports Fest took place at Herringthorpe Leisure Centre over the October half term holiday. Children and young people aged from 8 to 14 years took

part in a whole series of sports activities such as the Mega Active Multi-sport, Hotshots Football and the Rotherham Rockets Athletics Programme. The cost of the three full days was £15 and included rock climbing, with an additional Breakfast Club that ran from 8.30am until 10am, at a cost of £2. Anyone who booked received a free 'Herringthorpe Sports Village' T-Shirt.

Rotherham's **new sports facilities** move one step closer as detailed planning applications for the four new facilities at St. Ann's Rotherham; Aston, Maltby and Wath, proposed in an innovative £37 million partnership deal, have now been submitted to the Planning Department for approval.

The new leisure centres in Aston, Wath and Rotherham are expected to be open by the summer of 2008, along with the new Maltby Customer Service Centre. Maltby Leisure Centre will then follow on for completion by the late summer or early autumn of 2009.

Green Spaces

Thrybergh Country Park has gained the prestigious **Green Flag Award**. This recognises the hard work of everyone working at the park to meet the award criteria, including being a welcoming place, healthy, safe and secure, clean and well maintained, managed in a sustainable way, involving the community, and conserving its heritage.

The Park Development Ranger based at Rosehill Park, Rawmarsh has been judged **Britain's best park worker** in the new Parkforce Awards run by CABI Space; his prize will be a week in New York working with the rangers in Central Park. Paul has worked tirelessly to improve Rosehill Park, involving the community, and staging a varied programme of events and activities that are bringing local people back into the park in increasing numbers.

Work has started on improvements to **Greenlands Park in North Anston**. These will include a new play area and changing pavilion, landscape improvements and car parking. These are being provided in connection with the new Medical Centre that is being built just within the park. It is

expected that these developments will help to attract more visitors to the park

Rother Valley Country Park held a hugely successful '**Party in the Park**'. More than 35,000 people enjoyed a wide range of attractions and activities.

Green Spaces' bid to the **Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for £4.8 million** for the restoration and improvement of Clifton Park has been awarded a Stage One pass. This means that £290,000 is to be made available immediately to allow detailed proposals to be developed to support a Stage Two bid in 2007. This is the largest award nationally in the current round of HLF's 'Parks for People' programme.

A new **Skate Facility** costing more than £100,000 has been opened at Maltby Manor Field, thanks to funding from Barclays Space for Sports, the Big Lottery, Hanson Environmental, and the Town Council. The facility is the first one in Rotherham featuring concrete ramps, and has been very well received by users from Maltby and further afield. It completes the strategic network of five skate parks across the Borough that the Council has been developing with partners since 2003. Off-road vehicle barriers and CCTV have also been installed.

The **new Urban Parks team** is taking shape with the appointment of Donna Morton as a Green Spaces Officer and Nicola Jones as Assistant Green Spaces Officer joining Bob Cummins who manages the team. This will help the Service to plan and seek funding for improvements to more parks than has been possible previously, as well as allowing urban park Green Flag Award submissions for the first time.

Commercial and Promotional Services

The 27th Rotherham Show in September saw a record turnout of approximately 80,000 visitors who enjoyed tremendous weather over the weekend. Highlights included the Diversity Festival, the Vintage Vehicle Rally, the Music Marquee and a whole host of professional family entertainment, dog, hamster and bird shows, trade stands and much more.