

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 20 MAY 2016**

**Statement from: Councillor C N Worth, Executive Councillor for  
Libraries, Heritage, Culture, Registration and Coroner's  
Service**

### **LIBRARY SERVICES**

Following their successful bid, the contract with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) has been signed with a seamless handover of operations on 1 April 2016. Members of the public saw no difference in service at handover and no IT or operational issues were reported.

The new service was officially launched on 4 April 2016 with 'welcome and words' from myself, followed by a statement from GLL and a meet and greet at Lincoln Central Library. Myself, a senior team from GLL and a number of the operational staff were present and their feedback on their first days of working with GLL were all positive.

The sale of the Isaac Newton shopping centre in Grantham has created a delay in the transfer of this site to GLL and we are yet to receive agreement from the landlord to our sub-letting the site to GLL. Grantham Library staff therefore, remain LCC employees for now, although they are supported operationally by the GLL management team. There is no indication that the owners will reject the request.

The Community Hub roll-out is well progressed. 31 Community Hubs have gone live, including five in communities which previously had no static library provision. In addition, the Community Hubs in Waddington and Saxilby, which were developed as pilots to these new Hubs, continue to operate.

All sites have been received well in the local communities and are receiving ongoing support from library officers and community advisers.

A further three sites (Sutton Bridge, Swineshead and Wainfleet) are scheduled to go live over the coming months, bringing the total number of Community Hubs to 36.

I am delighted that overall, this change will see more libraries open for more hours than before, whilst delivering a significant saving to local tax payers.

I am sure that you appreciate that this has been a period of fundamental change for the library service with many greatly valued colleagues leaving after many years of dedicated service and I would like to put on record my gratitude and appreciation for all their hard work and commitment to the County Council over the years.

GLL is an excellent partner and I am sure you will all look forward to seeing these services come into their own again over the next few years. An excellent library service, making a further significant contribution to our financial challenge, is a great outcome for everyone.

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has a duty to oversee the delivery of each library authority's delivery of its duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service to its local population. In the early part of 2015 a Lincolnshire citizen made a complaint under these provisions that this Council's service would not meet this test after our new model was introduced.

The Secretary of State has considered evidence from the complainant; other local people and Council Officers in the intervening period. I am pleased to be recently in receipt of correspondence to the complainant, from DCMS, confirming that the minister is not minded to order an enquiry into their complaint.

This decision removes the final potential risk to the success of our new model of service, and the efficiencies it is already achieving.

## **HERITAGE AND CULTURE**

### **Lincoln Castle**

The Castle continues to go from strength to strength since its spectacular re-opening in 2015. The appreciation of the site by the public is now beginning to reap recognition from industry bodies and I would highlight that:

- The Castle has been shortlisted for the National Museums and Heritage 2016 Awards in two categories – Best Conservation Project and Best Marketing. Being shortlisted in itself is a significant achievement and the winners will be announced at a ceremony in London in May 2016.
- In addition, the Castle Learning Team has been inspected for the Sandford Awards for Museum Education, a national award scheme. The result of this will be released in the summer.

In the meantime, plans are progressing well for the Castle to host 'The Poppies: Wave' between 28 May and 4 September, a fitting tribute in this 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year to the seven Lincolnshire Battalions that fought in The Battle of the Somme.

### **Aviation Heritage**

Following the successful completion of a four year Arts Council funded Aviation Heritage learning project, the Aviation Heritage team has supported West Lindsey District Council in their submission of an application for funds for the next stage of development for aviation heritage. A substantial Heritage Lottery Fund application will develop projects to tell the stories of the anniversaries of the beginning and growth of military aviation in the county.

## **REGISTRATION AND CORONER'S SERVICES**

### **Registration Service**

The Registration Service wishes to be proactive under the Greater Lincolnshire devolution agenda. Meetings are being held with North Lincolnshire and North-East Lincolnshire to discuss collaborative working; for example, this could include the use of shared marketing materials and training resources. Senior managers and councillors will be kept updated regarding these positive talks. A mapping exercise will now be completed including benchmarking from other areas and then a further meeting will be arranged.

The Registration Service completed an intensive General Register Office (GRO) Stock and Security Review in March 2016 and is awaiting the final report.

A review of the impact of the introduction of new legal and standard wedding ceremonies in 2014/15 has found that this change delivered approximately £20k in savings.

Two Marriage Registration Private Members' Bills were debated in parliament in January 2016 regarding adding space for mother's details in marriage registers and introducing a schedule system for marriages (similar to the one already in use for civil partnerships) which would replace marriage registers. Further information will follow as it becomes available.

### **Coroners Service**

Professor Forrest resigned from post as Senior Coroner to South Lincolnshire on the 1 April 2016. He has been temporarily replaced by Acting Senior Coroner Paul Cooper for a period of twelve months. This post was approved by the Ministry of Justice and the Chief Coroner. He will be assisted by the appointment of Assistant Coroner Marianne Johnson, and the existing Assistant Coroner Murray Spittal.

On the 5 April 2016 the Council's Executive Committee approved the decision to amalgamate Coroners areas within Lincolnshire to a Single Coroner Area. This will involve the merger of the South and Central Lincolnshire Coroner areas. There will be an appointment of a full-time Senior Coroner, supported by a part-time Area Coroner. The detail of the merger is still in its early days, and a business case is to be submitted to the Ministry of Justice.

### **Coroners' Court Support Service**

Coroners' Courts Support Service (CCSS) is a charity run volunteer service, who provide practical and emotional support to both family members and witnesses throughout the inquest. I am delighted that they will be providing their services to Lincolnshire shortly. CCSS have carried out the recruitment and selection process and volunteers are currently undertaking their training. It is anticipated that they will be providing volunteers at inquest from June.

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