

LEEDS NOW 2008

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Rain fails to dampen enthusiasm

THE best thing about Leeds is its people.

In June, dozens of people from across Leeds, including Bishop John Packer, braved torrential rain to launch a new campaign – Leeds City of Welcome – at the first Leeds Welcome Parade.

Leeds City of Welcome invites people from across Leeds to sign up to a statement recognising the different cultures, contributions and people who have made it the city it is today.

It says: 'I will do all I can to: challenge prejudice and division, live openly and generously with those who are different and help make Leeds a city of welcome and unity.'

Launched with drumming, kids activities and talks – from Solat Chaudhry of the National Centre for Diversity, Bishop John Packer, and Leeds refugee Olivier Nkuzimana – the parade walked through the city centre... and finished with a comforting and very British cup of tea for all!

The organisers – from a range of Leeds communities and organisations including Together for Peace and Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network – were anything but downhearted.

Ed Carlisle, of Together for Peace, said: "We'd have loved great weather, but the fact that people

turned out despite the rain shows real commitment to this project.

"And I think those who came along loved meeting new people, catching the vision, and talking about how to take this idea forward.

"There seems to be lots of energy to make this campaign happen and really make a difference."

Future Leeds City of Welcome plans include partnership with projects such as the Planet Leeds street festival on Sunday 21 September, sports competitions, and people across Leeds hosting meals in their homes.

For more information, or to get involved, contact them on www.leedswelcomes.org or 0113 350 8085.

FOOTPRINTS THAT LAST

A WALK of 200 miles, that looks to foster local community cohesion, started off in style from Leeds.

The WALKTALK team – along with over 80 people from across Leeds, including representatives from the council and West Yorkshire Police – took their first steps on the route to London on 19 July.

The Leeds day started in Millennium Square with the Lord Mayor of Leeds wishing the team every success.

They moved on to the Gurdwara in Ladypit Lane before finishing with a picnic in Cross Flatts Park.

WALKTALK is an independent initiative and the first of its kind in the United Kingdom. It was created by Gill Hicks, a survivor of the 7 July 2005 London bombings, her husband Joe Kerr, Zulf Hussain of Global Promise and Together for Peace, Leeds.

It was made up of a small team of walkers, covering about 10 miles each day, striding through English towns and cities before reaching London in August.

WALKTALK gave those joining in a chance to 'walk in another's shoes' by providing a safe and re-



UNITED: around 80 people tackled the Leeds stretch of the journey. Picture: Michelle Heseltine

spectful environment for open and honest dialogue between people from different backgrounds and walks of life.

People were invited to focus on what we all have in common and discuss the issues that we might not all agree on.

"We talked about our different experiences of growing up in England, and of our common experience of

both nearly losing our wives to acts of violence," said Joe Kerr of MAD For Peace.

Mike Love, of Together for Peace, added: "It's all about the people and the conversations and each of us will have different memories and highlights.

"My overwhelming sense is that there is far more good stuff happening in communities than bad."



Visual arts are among the many activities on offer.

Pictures: Lizzie Coombes and Andy Paraskos

Getting creative

GALLERY 37 Plus is multi arts training for young people, aged 16-24, who are not currently in education, employment or training.

The project is delivered in partnership with 13 of Leeds' largest arts organisations.

This year, 96 young people from different areas of the city are taking part.

There is a choice of eight different activities on offer including dance, photography, drama, film, visual arts, media and music.

The young people work alongside professional artists throughout the five week programme.

They might have faced challenging circumstances in their lives and can learn new skills, develop talents and find out how to get into different creative industries from visiting professionals.

The young people get to visit creative businesses, such as Yorkshire Television and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

Each young person also gets the chance to gain a Bronze Arts Award and take part in an exhibition and live performance at the Carriageworks Theatre.

Gallery 37 Plus is taking place in five different cities in the country and is made possible through a grant from the Big Lottery Fund in partnership with music charity Youth Music.



Everyone for sport

OVER the summer, Leeds Sailing and Activity Centre (Yeadon Tarn) ran disability sailing and canoeing sessions each week.

Disabled people who attended this programme said they couldn't wait to come back again! This is just one of the disability sports and inclusive opportunities that take place in different venues across Leeds.

The programme is supported by the council's Sport and Active Recreation section. People often say getting involved in a disability sport makes them feel more confident – it's also a way for carers, whose invaluable work often goes unrecognised, to take part and enjoy themselves too.

The social side of some of the groups is also a reason why people come to participate – meeting old friends and new friends is a good motivation. Across the city different activities are on offer, such as multi sports clubs specifically for disabled people, adapted cycling, football and swimming, as well mainstream activities such as Bodyline Gyms' Striker Football and gymnastics.

There are lots of ways in Leeds for disabled people to participate in sports. The adapted cycling scheme at the John Charles Centre for Sport is increasingly popular.



INCREASINGLY POPULAR: more and more people are taking part in the cycling at John Charles Centre for Sport

It offers a range of adapted bikes including hand cycles, large stabilised quads and a quad style tandem.

The bikes meet many different people's needs and you can book a

place as an individual or a group.

For more information contact the John Charles Centre for Sport on 0113 395 0000. If you or your child needs someone to support you to take part

in an activity, you can bring a carer or helper free of charge. Breeze Card or Leeds Card Extra holders get discounts on many of the activities. For more information about dis-

ability sport activities – including swimming, fitness and more – visit www.leeds.gov.uk/disabilitysport or contact the Disability Sports Development Officer, Katy Elliott, on 0113 395 0159.

Getting back to nature

DID you know there are hundreds of people who regularly get together and volunteer their time to improve the nature areas of Leeds?

There are over 150 of these sites in Leeds ranging from the beautiful wildflower meadows of Townclose Hills in Kippax to the ancient oak woodlands of Middleton Park and the moors and crags of Otley Chevin.

The volunteers work to ensure these nature areas stay in good condition so Leeds can provide a safe haven for wildlife and a pleasant place for people.

The jobs done by volunteers are varied and include tree planting, dry stone walling, litter picking, pond clearance, hay raking, hedge laying and scrub clearance.

This work is beneficial to the whole range of wildlife that lives in Leeds, including frogs, newts, bats, water

voles, badgers, butterflies, birds, glow worms and wildflowers.

If you are interested in joining in there is plenty to do.

The Leeds Wildlife Volunteers meet every other Wednesday across the city. They do a variety of nature conservation work offering volunteers the opportunity to get out and discover the wild side of Leeds, while helping to maintain it.

Other groups, that tend to meet at weekends, remain faithful to one particular site. These include the Friends of Billy Wood, the Friends of Gledhow Valley Woods, the



HARD AT WORK: Steve Joul of Otley Chevin Volunteers

Friends of Chevin Forest Park, Woodhouse Ridge Action Group and the Meanwood Valley Volunteers.

To find out more contact the Countryside Rangers on countrysiderangers@leeds.gov.uk or 0113 237 5268.

Celebrating Leeds

LOTS of events and activities across Leeds celebrate the diverse communities, people and places that make up our city.

These range from big city events – such as the St Patrick's Day Parade, the Chapeltown Carnival and Leeds Pride – to the more local, such as Otley Carnival, Bramhope Show, Farsley Festival and Garforth Gala Day.

The I Love South Leeds Festival, held over June and July this year, aims to create a greater harmony and understanding between the people and different places of Beeston, Holbeck, Belle Isle, Middleton, Hunslet and Cottingley.

It provided three main attractions for young people: talent showcase South Leeds Junior Superstar, music competition Turn It Up and the South Leeds Olympics. For more see page 12 of About Leeds.

The I Love West Leeds festival, funded by the local area committees, gave people a chance

to take part in Armley the Musical, a roller disco, a tea dance and a village fete. See page 14 of About Leeds for more.

Celebrations in Leeds for the 10th Anniversary of International Day of Older People will be the best yet, with over 40 varied events.

From 26 September, the 'All Being Well' Market Stall at Kirkgate Market will host a week of events about keeping healthy and happy in older age.

Tea dances, walks, celebration meals, talks and themed events will take place from the 6-10 October.

Many of these events are open to the public, including an exciting introduction to art and drawing at Leeds Central Library on 8 October.

For more information, or to get a calendar of events, visit www.opforum.org.uk or www.olderpeopleleeds.info. You can also call 0113 380 4911 or 0113 247 4876.



Working together for people of Drighlington

DRIGHLINGTON was chosen as one of two areas in Leeds to trial a new project called participatory budgeting.

The main aims of the project were to raise the confidence of local people to speak out about decisions where they lived, support ward councillors in their role as community champions and increase community cohesion.

Residents in the area were given the opportunity to decide how £30,000 of funding from the Outer South Area Committee, the Narrowing the Gap Group and Aire Valley Homes should be spent.

In May over 120 local people attended a Decision Day where they voted on which projects, developed by a number of community organisations, should receive the funding.

In all, seven different proposals were supported – these included a summer activities club by the Drighlington Amateur Rugby League Football Club, trips and transport for the Drighlington Pensioners Association and Drighlington Senior Citizens, and the Morley 10th Scouts Group also benefited from funding to improve their base in the area.

A NEW vision for the future of Leeds city centre has the backing of local, national and international experts.

The City Centre Vision conference brought together active members of Leeds' business community, local government, voluntary organisations and community representatives.

Delegates, at the Town Hall event in January, heard from members of the Youth Council and the Leader of the Council as well as Wayne Hemingway, Sir Terry Farrell, Gary Lawrence and other international speakers.

Delegates then attended one of 12 workshops to develop some big ideas for the future of the city centre.

The day generated energy, dynamism and a great host of ideas and proposals which have been turned into eight aspirations for the sort of city centre we want.

These are a city centre that is: welcoming,



WISE WORDS: Wayne Hemingway was a speaker

walkable, cultural, liveable, business friendly, of quality, sustainable and well connected.

Each has specific projects, such as a city centre park, an arena and more welcoming arrival points into the city centre.

A number of working groups are taking for-



Top, Leeds waterfront and above, City Square

ward the aspirations for the city centre and a prospectus is currently in production which identifies the eight themes and project proposals.

This will be available later in the year on the City Centre Leeds website www.leedsinitiative.org/citycentre.

Residents' ideas help form 'delivery plan'

RESIDENTS of West Leeds have helped to shape the future of their neighbourhoods.

Issues including litter hotspots, parking problems, antisocial behaviour and refuse collection were among some of the problems raised by residents at the five What's the big idea? events held earlier this year.

Organised by the West Leeds Area

Management team, local people came to drop-in sessions to talk about their thoughts and ideas with ward councillors, council staff, community police officers, representatives from the health services and other local organisations.

Ideas included improving the shopping in Pudsey Town centre and green spaces across the area, and rolling out the brown garden waste

wheelie bins. Residents' ideas and suggestions have been included in the two new area delivery plans for West Leeds.

There are ten area committees across Leeds made up of elected local councillors.

Each area committee has an area delivery plan that sets out actions to improve neighbourhoods over the next three years.

Partnership means homeless people have places to live

HOMELESS people can learn new skills and move into a new home thanks to a partnership between East North East Homes Leeds, Canopy Housing Project and Leeds City Council.

Canopy Housing Project was set up in 1997 to tackle homelessness and derelict properties in the Hyde Park area of Leeds.

It brings empty properties

back into use with volunteers, including members of the local community, working alongside homeless people to renovate properties.

Canopy is working on ten back-to-back or terrace council properties in Harehills currently managed by East North East Homes Leeds.

These homes have been empty for years and were too expen-

sive for the council to improve on its own. Once brought back up to scratch, the volunteers who renovated the properties become tenants.

East North East Homes Leeds provide financial support for half the cost of materials. Canopy's funds and donations meet the rest and the council provides the houses.



SHAKE ON IT: chief executive Steve Hunt is pictured with colleagues from East North East Homes and the housing association's charitable trust



SUMMER LEARNING: children perform a presentation

TALKING TO EACH OTHER

THERE are now over 130 different languages spoken in our schools, as more people from across the world have moved to Leeds in recent years.

This has meant that Education Leeds experienced a huge increase in requests from schools for support with integrating new arrivals into the mainstream classroom.

The challenge is to make sure this hugely diverse group of pupils – speaking many different languages, some with little educational experience or severely disrupted schooling and who are in the very earliest stages of acquiring English – can get the best out of attending school.

Five wedge-based centres of good practice in primary and high schools are helping to deliver specialist training to school staff. A website has been set up where schools can download learning material to use with pupils.



CHALLENGE: the Education Leeds team at a House of Lords event

English language summer schools have been set up to make sure students continue with learning over the summer break.

Networks of teachers have been established across the city to share expertise and resources.

Working with parent advisers, schools are supported to provide localised English classes to integrate new families into the school community.

In April this year, the Education Leeds Community Cohe-

sion project was one of six nationwide invited to share good practice at the House of Lords.

This project was made possible by grant funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

Welcoming people to our city

LEEDS is home to many people of different cultures, nationalities and faiths, and has a long tradition of welcoming people who want to build new lives here.

To help people coming to live in our city, on the council's website some new information has been added that will help people to find a job, somewhere to live, a school for their children, a doctor and things to do in their spare time.

There is also information about the emergency services and the law such as cars and driving safely, and rights and responsibilities of being a citizen of Leeds.

The information can be found at www.leeds.gov.uk/welcome.

Action plan for equality for all

LEEDS City Council's new Equality and Diversity Scheme 2008-2011 was launched in April 2008.

The Scheme and its action plan sets out what the council intends to do to improve access to services and employment for everyone over the next few years.

It covers our legal duties to have race, disability and gender equality schemes and also includes what we will do around other equality areas such as age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

In July, the council published its Equality and Diversity annual report that highlights our progress over the last year.

Copies of the Equality and Diversity Scheme and annual report are available on www.leeds.gov.uk/equality or by contacting the Equality Team at equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk or 0113 247 4190.



Campaign highlights our diversity

A YEAR ago, Radio Aire ran a three month campaign to highlight the diversity of Leeds.

The campaign was sponsored by the council in conjunction with partners from the public, voluntary and private sectors, including the Royal Armouries, Connexions West Yorkshire, the Kier Group and

Leeds Voice.

The adverts were heard by approximately 380,000 listeners to the station and were supported by a range of campaign posters and postcards.

As well as highlighting the diversity of Leeds, the council also took the opportunity to get residents' views on a range of

issues about the city, where they lived and how well they felt they got along with people around them.

For more information about the campaign, or equality, diversity and cohesion and integration in Leeds, contact the Equality Team by email on equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk or by telephone 0113 247 4190.

KEEP IN TOUCH

THIS Leeds Now supplement shows a number of ways people across our city are getting together to make a difference.

Is there anything you would like to know more about?

Please send any comments or thoughts to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk or Leeds Now, c/o Equality Team, Civic Hall, Leeds, LS1 1UR.