

# **COUNCIL**

**29 JANUARY 2014**

## **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

### **1. John Mallon**

Following a further recent traffic accident at the junction of Chestnut Ave and Bury New Rd (A56) in Whitefield, this it is clearly a dangerous junction and we have been extremely lucky that to date no one has been seriously injured.

Can the Council please confirm for the residents of the Trees Estate that funding will be approved and announce a start date for the work to be carried out to install much needed traffic lights.

**A. The funding for the A56, Bury New Road / Chestnut Avenue junction signalisation has been approved. The works are due to commence on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014 and are programmed to be completed by April 2014.**

### **2. Andy Miller**

Could I have an update from the Leader of the Council on what is being done in respect of making parks safer?

**A. Due to work carried out over the past decade, the parks have risen in standard and safety, so much so that 12 parks have gained and retained the National Green Flag standard which includes being assessed on personal safety as well as other criteria. Designing out vandalism has been a priority of the Council in this time which includes installing robust equipment like metal benches and fences surrounding bowling greens.**

**Due to the year on year improvement of the parks in Bury many more people now use them than ever before, providing a safe environment for all users. Some of the more recent improvements include refurbished/painted tennis courts, installation of table tennis tables in some parks and run routes in others, together with increased activities through the "I Will If You Will" programme.**

**The parks are regularly inspected by a number of Officers for hazards, health and safety and we have many volunteers who help in many and varied ways to keep standards up.**

### **3. Rob Trueblood**

The plans for the sculpture centre appear to be based mainly on the art gallery manager's conjecture about mounting world class exhibitions and the subsequent attraction of visitors ready to spend money in Bury. Is there proper evidence in the form of market research and a strong business plan to back these claims that can be made available for public viewing?

**A. The model is based on the experience of many similar developments using new cultural facilities as drivers contributing to local economies. A business plan has not been written because the model of international partnership and external funding for the Sculpture Centre is simply an extension of the existing successful business model operated by the Bury Art Museum – which in terms of business was acknowledged as in the top 3 in the UK as evidenced by its commendation for Trade & Enterprise in the 2013 national Museums & Heritage Awards.**

### **4. Sue Smith**

The success of the sculpture centre seems to rest heavily on the art gallery manager's contacts and deals in the art world. Is there a contingency plan should it not be successful?

**A. It won't be unsuccessful. As you acknowledge, the borough's Arts Manager is a leading expert in the field with extensive contacts and network experience in international art. It is difficult to gauge what lack of success will look like in relation to this question. The opening programmes are already confirmed: The first exhibition features one of the most famous artists in the world; the second exhibition of European & Chinese art is being curated by a leading art world figure – a former Turner prize judge. The third exhibition will feature textiles and contemporary crafts specifically responding to the borough's active knitting community. 2015 is already in negotiation with even high profile events aimed at bringing visitors to the town. Culture and tourism are major sectors of the local economy and one of the biggest employers in the town. Expanding Bury's cultural offer can only contribute to that economic impact.**

**Indeed, the challenge isn't whether the Sculpture Centre is successful but more how can Bury maximise the benefits such high profile programmes can bring.**

**The track record of the Art Museum is built on flexibility and rapid response to changing conditions – this capacity to innovate would be part of any contingency actions.**

## **5. Susan Pye**

With regard to the Bury Library and Sculpture Centre, in a time of cutbacks how much will the Sculpture Site cost to run each year?

**A. It will cost no more than it would cost to leave the space empty. In maintaining library services and arts/museums in the complex, the running costs in terms of heating, light, maintenance, etc., are the same as if nothing had changed. Staffing of the Sculpture Centre is achieved by minor alteration of museum staffing patrol rotas and extensions of the CCTV systems in the building.**

## **6. Ruth Yates**

The council has raised the problem of funding Bury Library staff's salaries and quoted this as a major reason for the proposed re-sizing of the library. Where will the funding come from to pay the salaries of the staff for the Sculpture Centre?

**A. Staffing of gallery spaces is much less labour intensive than staffing libraries. The operation of the Sculpture Centre is possible with minor changes to the way Bury Museum is programmed and staffed, and with extended CCTV, re-location visitor assistants to the Sculpture Centre without additional costs.**