

News in brief

Staccato reports from the cultural typeface

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NCF Leading Learning Programme now recruiting

The National Culture Forum Leading Learning programme, the only programme of its kind specifically tailored to the needs of those working in and with local government culture and leisure services, is currently recruiting for its fourth year. This year the programme is open to leaders of cultural and leisure organisations from both the charitable and commercial sectors who need to develop their skills in leading in the political context and working with politicians. Developed by some of the most respected figures in the culture sector, including Martyn Allison, late of LGID, Derrick Anderson, chief executive of Lambeth, and Christine Fisher, chief executive of NW Leicestershire, the programme has always been highly valued by those who have taken part. Sue Isherwood, Leading Learning Programme director, commented: "In challenging times we all need to be really on top of our jobs and this is what Leading Learning helps you do, as well as giving you the tools to move on both personally and professionally." The programme offers intensive, interactive residential sessions, one-to-one mentoring and 360-degree feedback, as well as personal mentoring and local action learning sets. Isherwood also announced: "This year we are also able to offer accreditation through City University which will earn participants a module of their Cultural Leadership MA." *The Leading Learning programme can be found online at www.ncfleadinglearning.co.uk*

ADUK launched in Camden

The National Association of Local Government Arts Officers (nalgaio) has taken the plunge and re-designed itself under the banner Arts Development UK with a remit to engage and recruit arts developers from all parts of the sector, not just local government. Launched at Camden's Roundhouse to an audience of over 100 agency representatives, artists, producers and investors, ADUK will strive to work nationally and deliver locally. The launch was characteristic of the sector with gloomy discussion of cuts already suffered, cuts to come and job losses contrasting with an upbeat mood as ways of overcoming these challenges were discussed, all coupled with a determined attitude to find ways of ensuring the arts thrive in all our communities. ADUK can be found at www.artsdevelopmentuk.org

STA set the record straight

The Swimming Teachers' Association has issued a statement clarifying the legal situation in a case involving



MERSEYSIDE SPORT AND THEIR MANY PARTNERS have celebrated the 20th running of the Merseyside Youth Games with director Jean Stephens pointing to the long-term development work which underpins games day: "In Merseyside the Games has made a difference to over 1 million young people with year round coaching and competitive opportunities, 2,000 volunteers and officials in developing skills and experience, provided a pathway to clubs and identification for squads and brought people and organisations together for a common purpose to provide opportunities for young people on Merseyside to participate in and be excited by sport."

ten-year-old schoolgirl Annie Woodlands, who was badly injured during a school swimming lesson at Gloucester Pool in Basildon in July 2000 and left with learning difficulties. Roger Milward, the STA's chief executive, has made it clear that the STA "has never made an admission in this case" and indeed should never have been involved. He told The Leisure Review: "On Friday 17 May 2011 the case against STA was finally struck out and STA was removed as the first defendant in this case." It appears that the swimming teacher at the centre of the case had a claim made against her and as a member of the STA "put matters into the hands of the STA's insurers". However, the teacher had only joined the association after the incident and the STA's insurance company had failed to inform the association of the claim. Once the high court agreed to a withdrawal of the acceptance of liability and this was upheld by the court of appeal, the STA sought to be removed from the action and this application was granted.

Edinburgh Leisure sign up with Gladstone

Edinburgh Leisure has signed a five-year agreement for Gladstone Health and Leisure to deliver its membership, ePOS and bookings software solutions. The leisure trust manages 32 venues across the Scottish capital and has been using Gladstone's software solutions for more than 10 years.

Numbers add up for fitness industry

The UK health and fitness industry has maintained a total market value of £3.81 billion, its first flat annual performance in ten years, according to the 2011 FIA State of the UK Fitness Industry report. Since the start of the recession, in 2008, the fitness industry has grown its total market value by 4%, increased the member base by 2% and increased the number of fitness facilities by a further 1.7%. The 2011 reports indicates that the industry has experienced a small but not unexpected dip in membership levels of 0.3% and a small net loss of fitness facilities from 5,885 to 5,852, according to independent leisure market analysts, The Leisure Database Company, who compile the report on behalf of the industry's trade body the FIA. It seems that growth in the industry has been driven by a good performance from public fitness operators. The public sector saw growth across three key performance indicators: increasing sites open by 20, a growth in membership numbers of 2% and an impressive growth in market value of 5.8%. Low-cost operators have also contributed to this. Commenting on the figures, David Minton, director of The Leisure Database Company, said: "The fitness industry continues to defy gravity with this flat performance during the ongoing recessionary period. The strong public sector performance and new facility openings at both ends of the private market signal more growth ahead. Innovation and growth were the hallmarks of the industry during the previous recession and I fully expect to see these features transform our industry over the coming years."

SLC to strategise us, says Warrington

Warrington Borough Council has set out its stall to become the most active borough in the North West by 2016 and has asked the Sport, Leisure and Culture Consultancy (SLC) to prepare a five-year sport and physical activity strategy to tell them how to do it. The strategy will look beyond traditional ideas of exercise to deliver improved outcomes for health and wellbeing and will involve a wide range of partners, including schools, colleges, the NHS, clubs and community

groups. "This strategy is for the community of Warrington, not for the council," said Lesley Brewin, the council's head of communities and third sector partnerships, "so it's vital that a wide range of partners are involved with its development and delivery."

Gobsmacked Bob attacks lifeguarding trademark

In Australia, Gold Coast City Council is consulting its lawyers after Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) trademarked the term 'lifeguard'. The council reportedly believes that the trademarking threatens the future of the council's lifeguard service, which had been operating for more than 30 years. "There wasn't any consultation," said councillor Bob La Castra. "Our lifeguard service is iconic and we have handed the matter to the city solicitor to have a look at it and decide where we go from here." La Castra was also reportedly "gobsmacked" that the federal government's body IP (Intellectual Property) Australia had granted the trademark, adding, "It's like trying to trademark the word 'sunshine'." La Castra said he took no comfort from SLSA's assurances that it would not stop "legitimate organisations from using the term 'lifeguard'".

QE2 fields growing

With one year left until the diamond jubilee, Fields in Trust has announced that 300 recreational spaces have been nominated to become Queen Elizabeth II Fields. The sites vary from a nature reserve in London to a country park in Dorset and a coastal path in Kent. The trust took time out to thank partners and donors for their support and contributions to the project.

Parliamentarians look at women

The most recent meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Sport considered the state of women's sport and the opportunities presented by major events such as the London 2012 Games and the FIFA Women's World Cup. Parliamentarians heard from guest speakers Gail Emms MBE, Sue Tibballs and Kelly Simmons, and the meeting was chaired by Baroness Grey-Thompson DBE. The discussion highlighted the discrepancy between recent successes at the elite level of women's sport and declining participation at the grassroots, and members considered the role of national governing bodies and local authorities, the challenges of funding cuts and the nature of social attitudes towards women in the sporting arena. Also discussed was the extent of government involvement required to make a difference to women's sport, and a number of positive initiatives. Wolverhampton Wanderers community programmes and the ECB's Chance to Shine programme were cited as useful examples for others to follow.