

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES

FULWELL WINDMILL – BI-CENTENARY UPDATE

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to update Members on the Bi-Centenary of Fulwell Windmill which takes place throughout 2008.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Fulwell Windmill appeared on the Sunderland skyline in 1808 and operated as a Windmill until 1905 when the sails were removed and a gas engine installed so that the Mill was able to continue milling animal feed for local farmers until 1956.
- 2.2 Following its recent restoration the Mill is now the only working windmill in the North East, preserving crafts and traditions that span over seven hundred years of English History. The City Council continues to invest in and support the project by maintaining the building and improving both visitor and educational facilities. There is now a video guided tour available in the visitor centre and ground floor of the Mill so all visitors are able to experience the workings of the Mill.

3.0 BI-CENTENARY ACTIVITY

- 3.1 2008 marks the bi-centenary of the Mill and a programme of events and activities are currently being devised in order to celebrate such a milestone in the city's heritage.
- 3.2 National Mills Weekend 2008 took place over the weekend of 10 and 11 May 2008 where more than 400 of the country's wind and watermills were open to the public as part of (SPAB's) the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings National Mills Weekend - an event which celebrates Britain's milling heritage.
- 3.3 As part of the celebrations a series of events and activities took place over this weekend to mark the Bi-centenary of the Mill.

Activity included:

- Thursday 8 May – Official Birthday celebration – an event took place at the Mill and included guest speaker and local historian John Grundy along with the Mayor of Sunderland, and Councillor Mel Speding, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure. Other invited guests included the Friends of Fulwell Mill and others associated with the Mill's history. The event was a huge success with school children from Eppleton Primary School attending the event, reading poetry written specifically for the event featuring descriptions of the Mill itself and allowed for much press and publicity to be raised for the Mill and for forthcoming events. Features were delivered via Tyne Tees, Radio Newcastle, Sun FM along with articles in the Sunderland Echo, Journal, and Northern Echo.

- Saturday 10 May – A Family Fun Day took place, including arts and crafts, entertainers, storytelling, face painting, guided tours, music, activities delivered through the city’s countryside team along with refreshments, picnic tables in the garden and South Tyneside Amateur Radio Club broadcasting from the Mill. There was extensive coverage of the Mill through local press and public relations opportunities and the event was widely publicised through leaflet drops, local press and publications and via the city’s website. Over 350 people turned out throughout the afternoon to enjoy the entertainment and to discover the history of the Mill itself. Many guests stayed for the whole afternoon to enjoy the garden area and listen to the entertainment.
- Sunday 11 May – a four mile walk commencing at Whitburn Mill, passing Cleadon Mill and finishing at Fulwell Windmill took place with walkers receiving refreshments on completion and Alistair Yule (former curator of Fulwell Windmill) was on hand to deliver a talk on North East Windmills in the afternoon.

3.2 Overall the event was a huge success and encouraged families and individuals to come along and appreciate one of the city’s most notable landmarks. Comments have already been received from visitors including:

“We visited the windmill yesterday (Saturday 10 May) and wanted to say a big thank you, we had a wonderful time and enjoyed the range of activities, especially the great music and of course the weather. All of the staff were so friendly, polite and informative which made our visit even better. Thanks again,” G Beckensall.

4.0 ART COMMISSION PROPOSAL

4.1 As part of the bi-centenary a proposal has been developed which would allow for a Visual artist and Sound artist to work with a community group in a number of workshops looking at the history of the acoustic mirror and the mill to create a sound piece and visual projection. The visual artwork created will then be projected onto Fulwell Mill and to launch the project it is proposed that the sound piece be performed live at the acoustic mirror for an audience and could then be played on a loop at the Mill for a specified time.

4.2 The project is still in the development stages and is dependant upon outside funding. Applications for funding have now been submitted to Heritage Lottery (Awards for All) and Community Grant Foundation, via the Friends of Fulwell Mill who are working with Culture and Tourism to deliver events throughout the year.

5.0 MARKETING ACTIVITY

5.1 As part of the programme for the year, a marketing and public relations work plan is currently being devised by the Marketing Team based within Culture and Tourism. As part of this programme activity will include:

- Photo and Memories Exhibition – in conjunction with Sunderland Echo. Material submitted will allow for an exhibition to be developed and used within the Mill and other locations across the city including the City Library, Tourist Information Centre and Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens.

- A Floral display in Mowbray Park is to be created and will be on display from June – August 2008.
- Web page – created and linked to features page on .gov home page and Sunderland events page.
- Contact made and established with Sara Stoner to allow for regular features, a full PR plan to be devised, inclusion in Switched On, Sunrise, adverts and links with AV Fest.
- Introduction of free access to the Mill – agreed and implemented on 1 April 2008 – this has allowed for positive public relations to begin the celebrations for the Bi-Centenary of the Mill.
- Marketing and Promotional Activity to be produced including leaflets, flyers, pens, commissioned glass, flags and other materials.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and to receive further updates throughout the year.