



Culturing Connections

August 2008

Culture West Midlands to close

Arts Minister, Margaret Hodge has announced the closure of the Regional Cultural Consortia by March 2009. Her intention is that in their place, the DCMS four key agencies in the regions - Arts Council England, Sport England, English Heritage and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council – will have a duty to work together to jointly deliver a core set of shared priorities across the culture and sport agenda. These priorities include:

- Regional Strategies;
- Local Area Agreements;
- Local Government commitment to culture and sport;
- Place Shaping; and
- LOCOG liaison on 2012 and the Cultural Olympiad.

This alliance, working with partners in local authorities, the Regional Development Agencies, and other partner organisations, will agree top priorities and create joint plans of action for the culture and sport agendas for their region.

Culture West Midlands – the Cultural Consortium for this region - has therefore started the process of winding up the company whilst working with the Regional Directors of the four agencies along with Government Office and Advantage West Midlands to assist in the development of future plans for how culture can continue to support regional priorities.

It is anticipated that some of the work undertaken by Culture WM with funding from other regional partners including 2012 Coordination and the Cultural Olympiad will transfer to another organisation.

The closure coincides with plans for a more focused regional presence at MLA and Sport England at the same time as the strength of regional partnerships is being assessed ahead of preparations for a new Single Integrated Regional Strategy.

We will endeavour to keep readers of Culturing Connections informed of progress over the coming months as and when significant developments occur.

24th August 2008 - London 2012 Official Olympic Handover

On the afternoon of the 24 August London will officially be handed the Olympic Flag. The official handover is a moment for the entire country to celebrate and highlights of the celebrations will include:

- A free concert – ‘The Visa London 2012 Party’ in London for more than 40,000 people;
- Big screens across the country will broadcast the handover moment and closing ceremony of the Beijing Games;
- Towns and cities all over the UK marking the handover moment with their own celebrations;
- A special London 2012 flag being offered to every local authority in the UK to join in with the celebrations.

In Beijing, London 2012 will stage an eight-minute performance, which will be watched by around 1.5 billion people worldwide and include performances from dancers from the Royal

Opera House, CanDoCo and Zoo Nation. Cities across the UK will host screenings of the official handover moment via BBC Live Sites as part of a special programme to be broadcast live on BBC1 that afternoon

Olympic Handover in the West Midlands

The West Midlands will shortly be announcing details of a number of events and programmes of activity taking place right across the region that weekend as part of the nationwide celebrations. In the meantime, Lord Coe, Chair of the London Organising Committee for the 2012 Games (LOCOG), has written to all local authorities with details of how they can get involved in the Handover celebrations – including details of how to apply for an official L2012 flag to be raised as part of a nationwide ‘Flying the Flag’ moment between 3.30 and 5.30pm on Sunday 24 August. Authorities need to register soon to secure an official flag. For more information see www.london2012.com or contact LOCOG’s Handover Flags Co-ordinator, Bruno Peek at hand-overflags@btconnect.com

17 September: L2012 Paralympic Handover celebrations

On 17 September, the Paralympic Flag will be handed from the Mayor of Beijing to the Mayor of London and kick-start a nationwide celebration of the Paralympic Handover led by schools and colleges across the country. LOCOG has provided all schools, colleges and Local Authorities with a Paralympic Handover pack and launched a new web-based resource with tools, ideas and activities to inspire educational institutions to lead on Paralympic Handover celebrations in their area. Further details and registration can be found at www.london2012.com/paralympichandover

26-28 September: Cultural Olympiad Launch Weekend

On the 26-28 September 2008, the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad will be launched nationwide. A four-year celebration of the UK’s rich and diverse cultural heritage, the West Midlands will soon be announcing details about its own programme of activity to run throughout the four years, as well as a smaller programme of events to mark the official launch weekend in September. In the meantime, applications are now open for not-for-profit organisations in the West Midlands with ideas or projects that could form part of the Cultural Olympiad between now and 2012. As well as becoming part of the national Cultural Olympiad, successful applicants will be granted full rights to use the official **L2012 Inspire Mark**. For further information visit; www.culturewm.org.uk/culturalolympiad or www.london2012.com/beinspired

New Strategy for Sport England

‘Playing to win – a new era for sport’, is a new DCMS strategy outlining a vision for sport which focuses on increasing the number of people playing and staying involved in sport. It is the next step in building an integrated sports development system. Underpinning this vision, is a government led review of the direction and structure of Sport England. The resultant new strategy for Sport England focuses on widening the talent pool by creating clear talent pathways and encouraging people of all levels to be the best they can be. At the local level Sport England will continue to support the network of County Sports Partnerships, who will focus on promoting sport whilst continuing to link up with those responsible for encouraging health related fitness activity such as the new DCMS / DCLG / Health partnership aimed at offering free swimming for key user groups. To view the Sport England strategy visit; http://www.sportengland.org/index/about_sport_england/about_who.htm To sign up for the Sport England newsletter visit; http://www.sportengland.org/the_latest_from_the_pitch

West Midlands World Record-Breakers!

Thousands of people from across the West Midlands are set to become joint-world record holders in August, after taking part in an ambitious Arts Council England project to create the largest photo mosaic in the world. The Big Picture project saw over 100,000 photos submitted from people across the region, and uploaded onto the online gallery. The pictures will be used

to create a huge, record-breaking photo mosaic, the size of three tennis courts, to be unveiled at Birmingham's Thinktank at Millennium Point on August bank holiday weekend (23 - 25 August). The Big Picture team is also looking for volunteers from across the region to help create the final record-breaking mosaic. For more details, visit www.inthebigpicture.co.uk.

New Cultural Olympiad website section launched

A section devoted to Cultural Olympiad related activity in the West Midlands has gone live at www.culturewm.org.uk/culturalOlympiad. As well as updates and information about the Cultural Olympiad – what it is, how to get involved and what is happening to launch the Cultural Olympiad in the region – the subsite also contains information about the official L2012 Handover and Paralympic Handover moments in August and September.

RegenWM Prizes 2008 - Open for entries

RegenWM is the West Midlands Regeneration Centre of Excellence. Entries are now open for their awards, Prizes 2008, and are a chance to showcase your good practice. Prizes is much more than one special day- many projects have gone on to win other awards. The rewards are high including guaranteed publicity for each project and a free place at RegenWm's convention just for entering. Entries close on 12 September 2008. For more details see; http://www.regenwm.org/activity/activity_practice.asp?pid=10

Groundbreaking regeneration partnership gets results

Place Space & Identity, a programme of investment in North Staffordshire led by Arts Council England, West Midlands, co-funded by Renew North Staffordshire and delivered in partnership with arts organisations, B Arts and AirSpace, has produced an exciting collaboration which has responded to, and documented the dramatic social, economic and environmental changes, including housing demolition, which are taking place in the area. The programme has been very successful in opening up dialogue between the regeneration sector and arts practitioners.

www.placespaceidentity.net

The Future of Cultural and Leisure Services - 18 September 2008, London

This annual conference will explore how the cultural and leisure sector can meet the challenges that lie ahead and promote its position in providing high quality public services responsive to the needs of communities. This year's event will discuss how to negotiate and deliver the critical role culture and sport can play in meeting the new indicators in Local Area Agreements. In the context of Comprehensive Area Assessments delegates will also examine how to realise the contribution of culture and sport to improve the quality of life and performance of services in local areas.

Find out more at: <http://www.neilstewartassociates.com/se221/>

Unlocking Children's and Young Peoples Talent: The Culture and Creativity Challenge

16 October 2008, BT Convention Centre, Liverpool. This is a national conference which will focus on the government's "Find Your Talent" scheme and other policy initiatives which seek to unlock children's talent through culture, creativity and the arts. The Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, will give a keynote address at the event which will bring together decision makers from schools, children's services, cultural services and the creative and cultural sector, to look at how to deliver the government's ambitions to provide children and young people with 5 hours high quality culture and creativity per week, in and out of school.

<http://www.neilstewartassociates.com/kd170/index.html>

Their Past Your Future - West Midlands Grants Awarded

Their Past Your Future 2 is the second phase of the hugely successful Their Past Your Future Programme. The programme, which receives cash from the Big Lottery Fund, is managed and delivered by the MLA Partnership. This second phase is focused around an annual grant

programme open to all museums, libraries and archives in England. Four candidates have been successful for TPYF grants in the West Midlands: Staffordshire Arts & Museum Service working together with Staffordshire Library and Information Service, Bath Place Community Venture Archive, Bishops Castle and Royal Air Force Museum Cosford. The TPYR year 2 grant scheme has now closed. A further and final grant round will be announced for 2009/10. http://www.mla.gov.uk/programmes/their_past_your_future

Glory of India- International Award for two citizens of Wolverhampton

Mrs Maitreyee Sarcar and Mr Bhajan Singh Devsi have received the “Glory of India” award – at a time when Wolverhampton is celebrating its historical link with India through the Wolverhampton India Summer project. The India International Friendship Society [IIFS] selected Mrs Maitreyee Sarcar for the award in recognition of her excellence in strengthening the Indo-British ties. The award was given in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the building of Indo-British friendship through her voluntary work as an honorary director and Company Secretary of Surdhwani – a Wolverhampton based organisation which promotes Indian classical music and dance.

Further information about the organisation from: www.surdhwani.org.uk

SkillsActive Playwork West Midlands – new address

SkillsActive Playwork West Midlands have relocated. Please update your records with this new address.

PO Box 14762, Birmingham, B45 5DB

<http://www.skillsactive.com/playwork/arounduk/westmidlands/playwork>

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