



**Armagh City  
Banbridge  
& Craigavon**  
Borough Council

**Leisure Transformation Programme**

**Staff Engagement**

**Weekly update from the 'Leisure Transformation Project Team**

**11<sup>th</sup> December 2020**



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## **Staff Engagement**

As you are aware that despite the disruption, the 'Leisure Transformation Project Team' continue to plan for the opening of SLLC, and to move forward with the Transformation Programme as far as is practicable.

The team have committed to communicate with our indoor leisure staff as effectively and as regularly as we can.

In this update, we will focus on a number of issues: Covid-19, 'Leisure Transformation Project Team' update and staff questions/queries.

The next edition of this publication will be available on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021 due to the Christmas holiday period.



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## Covid

Christmas can be a particularly stressful time for many people, so it is important that everyone takes some time to look after your personal wellbeing, and to be aware that support and guidance is available if you, or a member of your family, are struggling at this time of year.

A useful guide to mental and emotional wellbeing resources has been placed on the Intranet with easily accessible links to relevant websites and information. The guide includes links to the Minding Your Head website, the free online Stress Control classes, the Healthcare Apps Library, the virtual CovidWellbeingNI Hub, free Psychological First-aid E-learning module, free Towards Zero Suicide training module, bereavement resources for those who have been bereaved during the COVID-19 pandemic and many more.

Click here to find out more: <https://bit.ly/3IE7x5f>

## Thousands log on for the borough's virtual Christmas lights switch-on!



**The virtual switch-on took place on Saturday night, with more than 37,000 households watching it happen!**

Replacing the traditional live ceremonies due to pandemic restrictions, the online event was a phenomenal success. Viewers watched Santa, Mrs Claus, the Lord Mayor and his family spread some Christmas sparkle and festive cheer!

The switch-on was dedicated to keyworkers who have gone above and beyond during the pandemic, with Mrs Claus reciting a beautiful poem thanking them for all they have done for us throughout the year. One of Santa's very own elves then helped switch on the Christmas lights throughout the borough, bringing some festive sparkle to the towns!

Well done to all the Officers involved. If you would like to watch (or re-watch!!) the switch-on, log on to [www.lightupourborough.com](http://www.lightupourborough.com)

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**'Christmas from the Cathedrals' will beam virtual festive joy**



The iconic splendour of Armagh City's Cathedrals will bring a beautifully crafted programme of festive musical joy to households near and far, during the 12 days of Christmas.

To lift everyone's spirits and bring Christmas cheer into homes across Northern Ireland and beyond, Visit Armagh will showcase songs from a variety of Northern Ireland's top artists and groups online, from the majestic surroundings of the city's Cathedrals. Enjoy this heart-warming musical extravaganza from the comfort of your living room, and sing along to get into the spirit of Christmas through song during these strangest of times.

The Visit Armagh team were keen, despite the current situation, that everyone could still experience a little piece of Armagh's Christmas magic this festive season. To create this virtual experience Malachi Cush has produced and collaborated with a variety of well-known artists and acts such as the Banbridge Musical Society, Cup O'Joe, Karl McGuckin, Gypsy's Wish, Catherine Grimley-Hughes, Church of Ireland lay ministers' choir and many others to create a festive programme for all the family.

The programme will also include special Christmas addresses from Archbishop McDowell, Archbishop Martin, Author Byddi Lee, with the 'Christmas from the Cathedrals' programme culminating in a special broadcast at 7.30pm on Christmas Eve featuring the Armagh Pipers Club and the Lord Mayor of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Kevin Savage.

For further information on how to tune into the performances each evening at 7.30pm, from the 13th – 24th December, log on to [visitarmagh.com/christmasgeorgian](https://www.visitarmagh.com/christmasgeorgian) or follow Visit Armagh on Facebook or Twitter.

Click here to view the promotion trailer: <https://vimeo.com/483867542/fd10a3fbb0>

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**Before you click – think Our Borough Online**



Christmas shopping will be a very different experience for all of us this year but it is vitally important we continue to support our local businesses in whatever way we can during these challenging times.

To help local businesses in the run up to Christmas, and to provide the public with helpful retail information, Council has developed a directory entitled 'Our Borough Online' which offers a platform for local businesses to promote their services available at this present time including click & collect, online shopping, delivery service, Christmas club etc. For further information, or to view the retailers taking part, click: <https://bit.ly/2Jxh9kX>

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### **NI Children's Hospice need our help!**

**The Lord Mayor, Councillor Kevin Savage, has made a donation to NI 2020 Big Night In, a fantastic event taking place tonight at 7.00pm, in aid of the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice.**

The Big Night In 2020 was formed by the Northern Ireland Hospice Ballymena Support Group, with the aim of raising funds for the only Children's Hospice in Northern Ireland. What started out as a local fundraising event, has grown to include local and international stars, pledging their support and offering performances on the night.

It's going to be a very exciting night, with some of the acts confirmed including the recently formed, Boyz on Block, which includes former Boyzone member Shane Lynch, as well as the 'Master of Musicals' singer Peter Corry. The line-up also includes the legendary singer songwriter Phil Coulter, X factor finalist Andrea Magee, stage and television comedian William Caulfield, former world champions Field Marshall Montgomery Pipe Band, lead dancer with River dance Lauren Smyth and a host of others.



To watch the event and/or donate click on any of the following links: [NI Children's Hospice Facebook Page](#), [NI Hospice Ballymena Support Group](#), and [NI Hospice YouTube Page](#). All support and donations will be gratefully appreciated.

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### **£640k Investment at Kinnego Marina Gets Underway**

Kinnego Marina is set to see an investment of over £640,000 for a new state-of-the-art Lough Neagh Rescue Centre and high-spec glamping pods.

Led by 'Southern Organisation for Action in Rural areas' or more commonly known as SOAR ABC, the highly anticipated project received an investment of over £480,000 from the NI Rural Development Programme with additional funds coming from ABC Council's Financial Assistance Programme and the Ulster Community Investment Fund.



This exciting scheme will deliver a modern, fit-for-purpose rescue centre for the Lough Neagh Rescue team and four new glamping pods as well as aesthetic enhancements to the area, helping the popular recreational and visitor destination reach its full potential.

Starting last week, the project will see the construction of a brand new Lough Neagh Rescue Centre, establishing it as the central base for rescue, training and cooperation activity, as well as the development of four new high-spec glamping pods, providing an added boost to the local tourism offering and economy. The revamp, due to complete in early 2021, will also include new fencing, road resurfacing, a utility block refit and an upgrade to the rescue centre's 'Gary Breen' vessel.

The regeneration works at Kinnego Marina represent one element of a wider collaboration initiative between SOAR ABC and neighbouring local action groups: Mid Ulster Rural Development Programme and GROW South Antrim. Working together under the Lough Neagh Cooperation Project and funded through the All Island LEADER Cooperation Scheme, the joint venture is committed to delivering larger and more integrated improvement schemes across the Lough Shore enhancing its accessibility and utility.

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## **Update from the 'Leisure Transformation Project Team'**

The 'Leisure Transformation Project Team' would like to give information regarding some of the projects that we have been working in relation to indoor leisure across the Borough;

## **Transformation of the Wider Indoor Leisure Centres – Update 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

As you are aware it was the intention to continue on the journey with the transformation of Indoor Leisure; however, this was unfortunately delayed by Covid-19.

It is now great to report that the transformation process has re-commenced at the following eight indoor facilities;

- Banbridge Leisure Centre
- Dromore Community Centre
- Gilford Community Centre
- Keady Recreation Centre
- Rathfriland Community Centre
- Richhill Recreation Centre
- Tandragee Recreation Centre
- Orchard Leisure Centre

Completion of transformation across Indoor Leisure and a re-structure of staffing at the listed sites is necessary to achieve a consistency of resources and approach, for the following reasons:

- Indoor Leisure, as a whole, share;
  - The same objectives and targets – to be an industry leader, and deliver an improved leisure service.
  - The same ABC wide customer membership/charging system.
  - The same need to demonstrate that the “In House Model” can transform and perform.

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- Good employee relations - fairness and consistency are necessary in this regard and currently staff have different job descriptions and pay grades for the same roles in many cases.
- Management and staff resources are currently inconsistent from site to site.
- Job roles (new and existing) need to align with South Lake LC and with best industry practice.
- Banbridge LC and Orchard LC, as wet/large centres, need to change to early morning (6am) opening (Monday to Friday) to align with best industry practice and South Lake LC as soon as possible in 2021.
- The need to improve staff flexibility and sharing across all sites.

### **Consultation**

The Indoor Leisure Manager (Stephen Tully), is working in partnership with trade union representatives ( Catherine McNeill - NIPSA, Ronald Conn - UNITE, and Kieran McParland - GMB) and Caroline Brennan - HR Officer, are currently engaging directly with staff, by visiting each site in a face-to-face consultation process (these meetings are being managed and operated in line with current PHA guidance and protocols).

This consultation/engagement process mirrors the methodology and partnership approach adopted at South Lake Leisure Centre.

The details of the consultation are;

- A two-week informal staff consultation on new job descriptions to gather staff feedback/input for consideration - commenced.
- Formal consultation with trade unions on new Job Descriptions - should be completed in early Jan 2021.

- Evaluation of new job descriptions – should be completed in Jan 2021.
- Consultation on new staff rotas, where necessary - commenced.



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- Recruitment for new job roles – should commence in Jan 2021.
- Individual consultation on a small number of necessary staff re-deployments – commenced.
- Sales and marketing training for management and front line staff planned for Feb 2021.
- Other transformation training has been delivered already along with South Lake staff and other training is planned.
- Weekly update on the Leisure Matters intranet page, which staff can access from any device.

### **NI Executive restrictions**

As you are all aware the NI Executive announced a new round of restrictions which came in to play on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November with a finish date of the 11<sup>th</sup> December. These restrictions meant that we had to close all of our facilities during this timeframe (apart from those providing child care services).

Given that we were unable to provide a service to our customers the decision was made that all existing members would not have to pay their direct debit fees for the month of December; therefore, when we open our service from the 11<sup>th</sup> December all existing members will be using our service free of charge as recompense for the disruption they have had to endure over the last number of months.

It was also agreed that if a new customer took out a membership during the month of December that they too would be able to avail of the service free of charge until the end of the month.

This was advertised through social media.

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### **South Lake Leisure Centre Vaccination Programme**

The Department of Health has confirmed that South Lake Leisure Centre's Sports Hall will be used as the Southern Trusts Vaccination Programme Centre.

In total seven sites across Northern Ireland will be used to distribute the vaccine. The others include the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast, the Ulster Hospital (South Eastern Trust), Seven Towers Leisure Centre in Ballymena (Northern Trust), and the Foyle Arena in Londonderry, Omagh Leisure Centre and Lakeside Leisure Centre in Enniskillen (South Eastern Trust).

At the moment decisions are being finalised by the Department regarding how this facility will be used to provide this vaccination service, but it is anticipated that the roll out will commence early next week.

### **12 days of Christmas**

The getactiveabc team believe in Christmas and to celebrate we have planned a special 12 days of 'Christmas Activity Challenge' so watch this space over the weekend as it will be an interesting view to say the least !

**So watch enjoy, like and share.....**

<https://getactiveabc.com/christmas/>

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**Thank you to staff**



As this is the last edition of Leisure Matters before the Christmas holidays the 'Leisure Transformation Project Team' would like to thank all members of staff for their hard work and dedication shown throughout this very challenging year.

The situation that we have found ourselves in has been demanding and new to all of us, our staff stepped up to the plate adapting and changing how we delivered our services to the public.

Thank you to everyone and we wish you a very Happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year .....



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### **Staff Questions/Queries**

The 'Leisure Transformation Project Team' are interested in hearing from you, if you have any questions/queries or have a specific issue that you would like us to address during this unusual period of closure, please contact: [joanne.grattan@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.grattan@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk) with the detail.



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