



Culture, Leisure and Sport Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Oliver Lewis March 2020

LATEST NEWS

London Borough of Culture

Croydon wins London Borough of Culture 2023

Croydon has been named London Borough of Culture for 2023, fending off competition from across the capital. The Mayor of London Sadiq Khan announced the borough's bid and the £1.35m funding award at City Hall on Tuesday 11 February 2020. In total Borough of Culture will bring in over £4.4m to engage residents in creating and enjoying culture in Croydon.

Croydon 2023 will celebrate the borough's rich artistic heritage, creativity and diversity, and its strength and resilience as a town that always looks to the future, promoting inclusivity and ensuring no community is left behind.

At a time when political, environmental and economic uncertainty has dominated the headlines, it will empower local communities, demonstrating how the arts can lead change.

With 10 flagship cultural events and hundreds of community projects, Croydon's ambitious programme will involve 20,000 participants, every school, 300 volunteers, audiences of over 250,000 and over 1,500 artists. More information can be found at www.croydon.gov.uk/thisiscroydon



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Culture

Through our existing culture work we are already investing in our cultural economy. Our work through Music City and Croydon Enterprise Zone brings in millions of pounds to support our live music scene and creative and cultural enterprise sector.

The council also operates 2 grants funds to support culture and creativity:

- Croydon's Cultural Partnership Fund (CPF) is designed to offer partnership funding for cultural projects benefiting Croydon residents. It aims to get more cultural projects, programmes and events taking place across the borough and more funding for culture coming in from other third party funders.
- Youth Arts Fund (YAF) offers grants of up to £7,500 for projects where young people (under 25) are actively involved in the development, leadership and delivery of projects. Priority is given to projects involving young people not previously involved with the arts and from disadvantaged groups and to projects that increase access and participation.

40 applications have been received in the past year, 27 for the CPF and 13 for the YAF. £177,223 has been awarded across 34 projects which has levered in £651,890 additional arts funding – for every £1 invested by Croydon £3.68 has been invested by organisations such as Arts Council England (ACE).

£42.6m has been invested in Fairfield Halls to deliver a high quality heritage led renovation; our partnership with BH Live the operator of the Halls is delivering an inclusive and interesting programme. We are shaping the programme and bringing in additional funding by working with our culture network to create and deliver new Croydon led cultural content at the Halls and beyond.

Parks & Green Spaces

The Allotments Capital Programme, will see £360k invested across our 6 directly managed allotment sites continues and is due for completion by Summer 2020. These improvements to facilities and infrastructure will address common issues experienced on site improving accessibility, security and improving health & safety. This is important as the Council continues to support food growing, physical activity and reducing social isolation amongst our residents.

The Playground Investment Programme is in full swing and an exciting response to the procurement exercise is expected in March. Community engagement will be taking



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place in Spring and early Summer so that our local children will be enjoying the first new playgrounds during this Summer. By the end of the programme in 2021, more than £500k will be spent on delivering 6 innovative and creative playgrounds across the borough, ensuring that our young population have the opportunity to play and be active from an early age.



Our masterplan parks have seen lots of activity of late and this is also set to continue. New fishing platforms and a cricket wicket can be found in South Norwood Lake & Grounds and a new outdoor gym and trim trail at Norbury and Ashburton Parks respectively. Norbury Park will also benefit from the installation of a new non-turf pitch cricket wicket in late Spring, and The Friends of Park Hill Park have done fantastically to raise more than £30k to invest in accessibility infrastructure and a performance area in the Walled Garden, which we expect visitors to be using after Easter 2020.

Meanwhile, officers continue to deliver against the Leisure Facilities Action plan and the flagship project underway is the relaying of the athletics track at Croydon Arena. Expected for Summer 2020, this new track will coincide with the 100 year anniversary of the oldest running club in the borough, Croydon Harriers.

Libraries

Since bringing the library service back in-house Croydon has embarked on a major investment programme, to upgrade, modernise and improve all its libraries. £5m has

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been allocated within the council's capital programme for capital improvements to libraries, which was approved by Full Council on 4 March 2019.

£1.2m has been allocated for updated IT equipment and full fibre broadband network, which has been delivered in 11 of 13 libraries, and is already making a difference to footfall and IT usage. The first refurbishment, and a pilot for the design and technical improvements, was Selsdon Library, which opened in August 2019.



Work on the new South Norwood Library in Station Road is continuing, and the library is now due to open in Summer 2020. The hoardings have recently been removed, revealing a large library frontage in this prominent corner position in a busy shopping area.

Library users in Norbury were invited to a special preview of the updated designs for their new library as the redevelopment continues to progress.

Work is already under way to restore the original decoration of the roof and to update the community hall above the library, which will be re-named in memory of Councillor Maggie Mansell who was first elected in 1986 and died in January 2019.

A new lift will make it easy to access the upstairs space, while new lighting will be installed, creating a brighter, lighter, more modern and welcoming environment throughout the building.

Young readers will be excited to see plans for the children's library which is moving into a new vibrant and colourful space.

The drop-in event took place in Harlow Hall, Oakhill Road, and visitors had the chance to choose their favourites from a selection of photos celebrating the history of Norbury Library, which has been open since 1931. The most popular photos will be displayed in the new library.



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The library's book stock will be refreshed as part of the upgrade. During the works members will still have access to six million books from more than 200 libraries as well as eBooks, online magazines, newspapers and more, now that Croydon Libraries are part of The Libraries Consortium.

Since joining the Consortium, Croydon have benefitted by paying less for more online resources, for example increasing the offer of online magazines (RB Digital) from 50 to over 700 titles for the same price, and offering another collection of e-books and e-audio; comics; and access to The Great Courses, Qello and Indieflix streaming. All these resources are available through the Croydon website and also through MyLibraryApp.

Croydon Libraries have invested in two new National Campaigns from The Reading Agency:

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Reading Well launched on 3 February 2020 Reading Well for Children is a brand new booklist designed by The Reading Agency to help children cope with feelings, worries, daily life and getting through a tough time. Available now in your local Croydon library branch. <https://reading-well.org.uk/news/announcing-reading-well-for-children>



Reading Friends - The first Reading Friends group started in February in a Thornton Heath residential home. Reading Friends is a UK-wide social reading and befriending programme that's been developed by the Reading Agency to tackle loneliness in the community. The main aim is to connect people by starting conversations through reading either in a group setting or on a one-to-one basis. Two volunteers have successfully been recruited to deliver fortnightly sessions and we are hoping to roll out two more groups across the borough.

SPINE Festival 5-14 March

SPINE Festival is for children, young people and families and takes place each year in libraries situated at the heart of London's communities. Croydon is one of 17 London boroughs participating in the Festival. Now in its sixth year, the theme for 2020's festival is Our World. Croydon children will be celebrating young people's power to change the world and the future of our planet. Expect to be surprised, inspired and entertained!

