

Enfield Equalities Board meeting: 15th July 2021 - Summary briefing on Events Calendar for 2021-2022

Purpose

This paper is designed to give board members a summary briefing on our current portfolio of member-led events and community celebrations coordinated through our Cultural Services Team.

This resonates strongly with our new Fairer Enfield aspirations - particularly to the action plan commitment to overcome racism in Enfield and to:

“Celebrate and promote the rich diversity of the borough by supporting an annual programme of educational, challenging and inspiring events celebrating ethnic minority communities.”

Set out below is a recap on the current member-led and Culture Services led interventions for the year.

We would welcome comments from the Equalities Board as to whether there are more events, days of national/world significance that could be co-opted into the existing programme. A main consideration when considering this question would be what value is added through recognition of newly identified events that could further strengthen and unite our dynamic and diverse communities.

The paper is split into two parts:

1 Member-led Events programme coordinated through Corporate Strategy

A key function within Corporate Strategy is the successful facilitation of an annual member-led events calendar that seeks to reflect the diversity of our community and the how this reflects and informs the values of the local authority.

These events tend towards ‘flagship’ events that carry local and national significance. To give a flavour of what is encompassed in the suite of events currently encompassed they include events such as:

- Armed forces commemoration
- Black History Month
- Carers Week
- LGBT+/Pride celebration
- Holocaust Memorial Day
- Inter-Faith Week
- International Women’s Day
- Srebrenica Memorial Day
- Windrush Day

(The current full version of the Calendar is attached at Appendix 1.)

Events of like these help us highlight the positive contribution residents from all backgrounds make and have made to the borough and our country. They provide a strong narrative that can counter underlying issues/tensions that incubate racism,

prejudice and discrimination, hate crime and other threats to community cohesion that we would not wish to see gain prevalence in our borough,

The Events Officer in Corporate Strategy with support from the Head of Service and often with support from our diverse officer cadre and special staff Networks, work with the Cabinet Member, our local community groups, local schools and others to craft inclusive events that can add most value.

The Covid pandemic has permitted us to innovate as standard memorial gatherings have not been possible in the past 18 months with any regularity. We have sought to use digital media and film creatively with support from colleagues and the engagement of local film makers and community figures.

This has evidentially been hugely successful. In 2021, our Holocaust Memorial Day and International Women's Day Films of 2021 have racked up the highest viewing figures for any films of this nature on the Council YouTube channel and in late 2020, our partnership with Enfield Caribbean Association to create an online discussion around race and activism also gained an impressive audience.

This has alerted us to the fact that we really can reach more local people by stepping positively into the realms of digitally based broadcasting as a counterpart to traditional gathering and events in public.

Internally, the team works with our Ethnic Minority Network and other equalities-based staff network groups to help give advice and guidance on how staff focused events can be best developed. For example, this has recently involved discussions on Black History Month 2020 and Windrush Day 2021.

2 Community events coordinated through our Cultural Services Team

The new Culture Strategy approved in November 2020, "Culture Connects 2020 – 25" places strong emphasis on the role of cultural activity in connecting the full diversity of borough residents. One of the strategy's three priorities is "Culture Everyday" – the ambition to create cultural opportunities for everyone in the borough, no matter who or where they are. It also has a focus area on "Celebration" – enabling events which celebrate the heritage and identities of the borough.

The culture service will both deliver directly and enable others to deliver activities which achieve on this priority and focus area.

Delivery

Our venues (Millfield, Dugdale Centre and Forty Hall) all aim to achieve the highest possible levels of accessibility: free or affordable pricing, welcoming of all abilities and groups, offering wide ranging programmes and staffed by diverse teams.

Each venue programmes and supports a wide range of festivals, events and activities which celebrate the local community. Due to the pandemic there is currently less pre-planned that would normally be the case, but a sample of recent and forthcoming programming gives an indication of the breadth and depth of our inclusive approach:

- Regular performances from drag artiste Sissy Lea create a welcoming space for LGBTQ+ community (Dugdale)
- FaceFront inclusive theatre group are the company in residence (Dugdale / Millfield)
- Come Make We Larf, the best in Afro-Caribbean comedy, regularly sells out (Dugdale / Millfield)
- Greek Orthodox Easter celebration event (Forty Hall)
- Date night for disabled teens (Forty Hall)
- New COVID-safe exhibition for children about the lives of children who have lived and worked at Forty Hall (launched May 2021)
- Asureli Yanik Helva, Theatre show performed by Turkish and Kurdish migrants (Millfield Theatre, June 2021)
- “Dugdale on the Green” – six days of free, outdoor arts and entertainment in Enfield Town free for all residents during half term (May 2021)

In summer 2020, we commissioned five artist-designed street crossings to bring light to the community in a difficult time. The Enfield artists commissioned demonstrate our inclusive and celebratory approach, including declared neuro-diverse, BAME, gay artist Patrick Samuel; Turkish artist Hasan Balucek; Palmers Green community arts organiser Dan Meier; BAME artist Kareen Cox; and collaborative duo Hive Studios.

To replace the Christmas Light Switch-On during the pandemic, Culture commissioned a short Christmas film from a local participatory arts company (Tiger Monkey) which celebrated Enfield’s diversity with seasonal greetings from many residents, young and old, able and disabled, in a wide range of languages.

This year, the cross-borough summer festival “A Month of Sundays” will provide five days of fantastic street festivals free to all. This will celebrate the borough’s diverse cultures through its food and creativity. The opening event on 1st August will have over thirty stalls from local food producers, including Greek bakers, Forty Hall organic farm, Mauritian curries and fish and chips, whilst performances across the festival include Bulgarian dancers, a Turkish choir (tbc), Bangla performers, Enfield Harmonies and many of our young performer groups.



Enabling

Culture Service works closely with the Corporate Strategy team on celebrations of calendar events, bringing our technical and programming staff and wide network of borough contacts. For September this year (when Pride parades take place) we will be staging a special event with Sissy Lea on the roof of the Civic Centre to demonstrate the welcome in Enfield to the LGBTQ+ community, and our venues will continue to programme contextual events.

In line with the Culture Strategy, we also support the borough's culture and creative community through provision of performance and rehearsal space, networking, skills and training, information on funding, assistance with event planning and delivery. A regular newsletter helps create dialogue and this autumn we will launch a Creative Forum to run alongside our existing Heritage Forum (average attendance 35).

Some examples:

- Over 50s Forum and Platinum Dance Academy hosted at Millfield House
- Support to Livestock, Mauritian and Ghanaian festivals in planning around COVID restrictions
- Support to Enfield Caribbean Association in preparation of their successful bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund

The £200k Stories of Enfield project 2020 – 22, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, is providing training, support and funding to a range of Enfield community organisations. 40+ individuals are currently receiving training in cultural heritage work, and in autumn we will fund c15 projects celebrating Enfield's heritage.

Discussion Points

We would welcome the views of the Equalities Board on the information presented in this summary report. Particularly we would be very happy to take suggestions as to whether there are events not currently in either the member-led or culture team led events programmes that could be incorporated into future events calendars.

Shaun Rogan
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