

## **LONDON 2012: CULTURAL OLYMPIAD**

### **THE BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET 'QUEST'**

**A year-long community project 2011-2012 to mark the Cultural Olympiad in our local area**

**Funded by Future Bath Plus with Bath & North East Somerset Council**

July-Sept 2011: Development & set-up (3 months)  
Oct 2011-Sept 2012: Public engagement period (12 months)  
Oct 2012-Jan 2013: Evaluation & close-down (4 months)

#### **1. The Cultural Olympiad: What is it? And what is the opportunity?**

The Cultural Olympiad is the wider celebration that surrounds the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Previous Olympics host cities have concentrated their Cultural Olympiad into the 12 months leading up to the Games. London 2012 is the first Olympic Games to run a Cultural Olympiad throughout the entire 4-year lead-up period. It was this imagination and commitment which was one of the key reasons leading to London being selected for 2012.

For the UK, the Cultural Olympiad is a massive opportunity to celebrate London 2012; to welcome visitors from all over the world to the UK; to show our pride in both our cultural heritage and our modern, contemporary cultural attractions and events; and to engage the nation in the Olympics values and the Cultural Olympiad themes.

At the regional and local level, we can do the same. Consequently, the Cultural Olympiad presents a fantastic opportunity to promote Bath and the beautiful surrounding area to overseas visitors, and to engage and entertain our own residents with events and activities.

Cultural Olympiad aims:

##### *Welcoming the world*

- Making connections and looking out beyond your usual boundaries

##### *Inspiring young people*

- Engaging and supporting young people [under 24] who are our decision-makers and leaders of the next generation

##### *Delivering a legacy*

- Creating an impact and sustainability of the Olympics values after 2012

## **2. Cultural Olympiad in the South West region: the 'Quest' theme**

Each UK region and nation will be interpreting the Cultural Olympiad themes in a way appropriate for their area.

The Cultural Olympiad for the SW region focuses on a region-wide project theme called '**Quest**', which West of England local authority officers and cultural organisations have signed-up to.

The 'Quest' theme can be interpreted in many different ways, and we have put together a project for Bath and North East Somerset that will be distinctive for our district – *see next section (3)*.

### **What is a quest?**

A traditional quest always has two aspects:

- Physical journey – the hero or heroine undertakes exploration, movement, travel
- Personal journey – the hero or heroine undergoes mental or emotional change, does or makes something new, achieves something they never thought possible

A Quest is therefore essentially about aspiration:

- striving towards a goal
- as sportsmen and women do in the Olympic Games.

These values are the same as those which Future Bath Plus represents:

- change, innovation, challenge

### ***Regional performance for the south-west***

Cirque Bijou and Desperate Men, two well-established theatre and circus skills companies based in the Bristol area, are co-producing the Quest travelling theatre performance.

This will be performed at Weymouth, the Olympics sailing venue, on the last weekend of July 2012, and will involve performers from every county in the SW. Starting from the theme of sailing, the show is based on myths and legend about the four winds and the elements, and will be very visual and magical - bringing surprise, entertainment, inspiration, and imagination.

### 3. The B&NES QUEST

The Olympics ideal is that of personal endeavour and achievement on behalf of the greater whole – pride in achieving in your sport, pride in representing your country, pride in the support from your local sports club and your community.

In the same way, the Quest theme can link the personal and the individual with a community or group. This encapsulates our shared values as a local authority and as the business community: it is our duty to support and serve both the individual and the community, whether this is through the Council's service provision or Future Bath Plus's advice and encouragement to entrepreneurs and new ventures.

The theme also relates to the concepts of citizenship, democracy, and responsibility, whereby people take personal responsibility and contribute to the common good. A good example of this has been the 'clean-up' of Westgate Street where retailers and businesses were prepared to contribute a little of their time and resources to achieve a much greater benefit for all.

These values and aspirations have shaped the community project 2011-2012 to mark the Cultural Olympiad in our local area.

#### **'A Journey through Bath and North East Somerset'**

*Create your own project; set yourself a quest ... Be part of a living map of our unique people, places and history*

This 12-month project will **connect the district** through the concept of **journey** and will encourage residents to be actively engaged – physically, mentally, and democratically:

##### Physical Journey

- Active leisure and gentle fitness; sustainable transport

##### Mental Journey

- Local history & heritage; learning; creating

##### Democratic Journey

- Citizenship; local identity; pride and belonging

The B&NES Quest aims to involve and include the whole district:

- It has the potential to engage all residents, and to involve a range of partners - Council departments and services; Future Bath Plus and local businesses; voluntary sector organisations
- It contributes effectively to achieving the Sustainable Community Strategy themes and the Cultural Strategy aims
- It is led and championed jointly by the Tourism Leisure & Culture Division of Customer Services and Future Bath Plus

### **Driver - Why this project?**

The administrative district is diverse (city of Bath, different neighbourhoods in Bath, the surrounding villages, Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Keynsham, the Chew Valley, more isolated rural areas). It is different in character within quite short distances.

- Within Bath, people in different neighbourhoods and communities have sometimes not often (or ever) been to other parts of the city, or to parts of NE Somerset
- Within NE Somerset, people in the different towns and villages have sometimes not often (or ever) been to other parts of NE Somerset, or to Bath
- People living in the different parts of the district often identify with a small locality (village, neighbourhood) but not with the whole of B&NES
- This leads to poor community cohesion within the district

Both the Council and Future Bath Plus want our residents to be proud of where they live, and proud to contribute to the life of the community, making it an 'even better place to live, work and visit'.

The project uses physical activity and creative activity to connect people and communities.

### **Outcomes of the project**

The B&NES Quest will:

- Bring together people and communities across B&NES
- Get everyone out walking or cycling or using public transport
- Encourage people to go somewhere they have never been before, explore their district, talk to people on their journey
- Engage people in creating their own personal map or picture or story of the district

### **How will the B&NES Quest project work?**

The B&NES Quest can be done as an individual, or in a small group, or a larger group (eg. a primary school).

It could be done as a one-off activity (perhaps a half-day or day), or as a series of small activities over the whole 12 month period (Oct 2011-Sept 2012). Individuals and groups can decide what works best for them.

The Council and Future Bath Plus, as champions and leaders of Quest, will:

- Create some Quest activities and projects for individual residents to participate in

- Promote the idea of Quest and encourage groups, schools and communities to join in by devising their own project, interpreting the theme in whatever way they wish
- Work with partner organisations to engage them in supporting the Quest idea
- Show leadership by having high-profile local individuals in the Council and Future Bath Plus participating

### ***Quest promotion***

Effective promotion of the project through every possible avenue and contact is essential. This will be done in two stages:

- Engagement of key Council officers, schools and community leaders:  
July-Sept 2011
- Engagement of the general public  
From Oct 2011

### ***Quest website***

There will be a Quest project website alongside and linked to the Council website. This will have three functions:

- Promote Quest projects and opportunities
- Enable participating residents to submit documentation and creative responses to record their quests, like an online travel diary or journal or photographs
- Provide a 'library' of information, local history, contacts etc

Participants' documentation might include:

- Photos and drawings
- Conversations with people
- Music
- Journal, story or poem
- Something special about a place
- Account of a personal achievement

As it develops, the website will become an online resource – a combination of museum, gallery and journal - for the whole district, enabling people to discover new knowledge and to share their experiences and findings about where they live. It will be an archive of the project long after it has finished.