

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director Educational Services

Corporate Cultural Sub-Committee: 9 September 2008

Subject: Their Past Your Future Phase 2

1. Purpose:

- 1.1** To advise the Corporate Cultural Sub Committee of The Big Lottery Funding Awarded to West Dunbartonshire Council's Their Past Your Future Phase 2 Project. 'Singer, Sirens, and Silent Heroes'.

2. Background:

- 2.1** Their Past Your Future Phase 2 (TPYF2) is a UK national scheme funded by the Big Lottery, managed in Scotland by Museums and Galleries Scotland.
- 2.2** In 2005-6 Their Past Your Future Scotland Phase 1 (TPYF1) commemorated the 60th anniversary of World War II through a national touring exhibition and a series of community events including local exhibitions, entertainment, and events specifically created to generate intergenerational learning opportunities.
- 2.3** One of the biggest outcomes was the gathering of invaluable firsthand accounts, experiences and veterans stories that otherwise would never have been known. The majority of these were extracted through interaction with schoolchildren or groups of young people.
- 2.4** In TPYF1 West Dunbartonshire Council received ten consecutive awards, during three rounds of funding totalling 98K to facilitate a series of activities, exhibitions and events throughout the year. This was the largest number of awards, and the most funding awarded to any museum or local authority in Scotland. WDC's learning and evaluation programmes were promoted as exemplars nationally.
- 2.5** TPYF1 saw huge success in West Dunbartonshire, with 11,163 people taking part in the commemoration activities throughout the year. In February 2005, Clydebank Town Hall hosted the launch of the national touring exhibition from the Imperial War Museum which attracted 2,500 visitors.
- 2.6** A complementary exhibition, 'Flying Ducks and Antimacassars', captured the imagination of local visitors through local artefacts and stories of interest. The exhibition included a reconstruction of a wartime living room, reflecting the everyday living of local people during the war, and the impact of the Blitz on the Town and people of Clydebank. A wealth of domestic

items from the period sparked enthusiastic discussions and was brought to life by the volunteer veterans who acted as guides.

- 2.7** West Dunbartonshire Council coordinated 12 events from big band concerts to World War II themed film nights and a Singer reunion. Involving a broad range of members from the local community, veterans, schools, families and local community groups, the events attracted over 8,000 visitors.
- 2.8** The project in West Dunbartonshire included the development of learning resources for schools with every Primary in the authority receiving a learning pack and hamper of resources. 'Pixie Hats and Wet Duffels' was an inspired drama reconstruction project involving local primary schools, as actors became teachers and soldiers of the period to recreate the experience of a wartime classroom.
- 2.9** As a result of the project, West Dunbartonshire Council created two informative online web sites – the Clydebank Blitz Online site, and Museum Without Walls, with factsheets, activities and images for school project work. The work produced by WDC in its TPYF projects was recognised with a COSLA Bronze Award in 2006.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Such was the success of Phase 1. that Their Past Your Future Scotland Phase 2 (TPYF2) was launched in Autumn 2007. TPYF2 will bring together young people and older generations in communities across Scotland capturing oral histories focussing on World War II and subsequent conflicts.
- 3.2** The outputs from these oral history projects will be a series of some 300 online mini-exhibitions or 'vignettes' including oral histories and illustrative or contextual items from local and national collections. These may include diary extracts, newspaper articles, old photographs, archival film, documents, paintings, and photographed objects. Together, they will create a vivid story of a person, event or location.
- 3.3** In March Local Authorities and Independent Museums in Scotland were invited to apply for lottery funding towards TPYF2 projects which met the criteria above. In June 2008 West Dunbartonshire Council was among only 10 successful applicants in Scotland, and received the maximum award of £15K.
- 3.4** Details of the WDC TPYF2 project 'Singer, Sirens, and Silent Heroes' are attached to this paper as Appendix 1. The initiatives will be coordinated by WDC Culture and Libraries Sections.
- 3.5** The creation of a series of online oral history 'vignettes', will develop a more intimate and personal legacy of online materials and resources for learning to complement existing archive collections. Stories will cover a range of

WWII topics including children's memories of the nights of the Clydebank Blitz, evacuation and local heroes involved in the civil rescue.

- 3.6 WDC Young Peoples Libraries Service will develop links with libraries and schools in Gdansk Poland, using Web 2.0 technology e.g. Facebook, Googlemap etc. Gdansk was the home of Polish warship ORP Piorun which fired upon enemy planes on the first night of the Clydebank raids in an effort to protect the town.
- 3.7 The Singer Clock which stood undamaged through the Blitz came to signify the resilience and strength of the local people in the face of the enemy bombing. Building on the Singer reunion which took place in 2005, WDC Libraries will also host a giant treasure hunt aiming to uncover the stories behind missing pieces of the dismantled Singer clock.
- 3.8 A touring exhibition of community venues in West Dunbartonshire will be coordinated by the Culture Section telling the local story of WWII. In addition a young people's drama project 'Weans War' will promote intergenerational working between veterans and local young people. Led by a published author, the project will result in public performances.
- 3.9 TPYF2 Scotland will culminate with the launch of a website in 2010. The vignettes and related historic objects explored by national projects will be available as a classroom teaching aid via Learning and Teaching Scotland's new Scottish schools' intranet, GLOW. This will ensure that these projects become a rich educational resource for teachers, and a global legacy for young people and the wider community involved.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1 There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The proposals within this report amount to £19,100, £15,000 of which will be funded by the Big Lottery Fund. The remaining £4,100 will be provided as funding 'in kind' by WDC Culture and Libraries Sections, representing Best Value to the council. A breakdown of the proposed expenditure is shown within the TPYF2 application attached to this report as Appendix 1.

6. Risk Assessment

- 6.1 There is no increased risk to the Council associated with the contents of this report.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 This paper informs the Sub-committee of the recent Big Lottery Award to WDC's exciting new TPYF2 project 'Singer, Sirens and Silent Heroes'. It

indicates its projects aims and benefits linked to the strategic aims of the WDC Cultural Strategy:

- a) To conserve, interpret and celebrate our culture and heritage.
- b) To promote West Dunbartonshire's cultural identity locally, nationally and internationally.
- c) To increase access and participation in cultural activity for all citizens.
- d) To recognise and promote the role of culture to cross-cutting agendas including Economic Development, Social Inclusion, Regeneration, Lifelong Learning and Health among others.

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Corporate Cultural Sub Committee is invited to:

- a). **Note the content of this paper and the aims and objectives of the WDC TPYF2 project.**

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Date:

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Appendix 1 **WDC Their Past Your Future 2 Application**

Wards Affected: All Council Wards are affected