

**REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR TOURISM,
CULTURE AND HERITAGE
TO THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL
ON WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2015**

Visit Isle of Wight

Visit Isle of Wight (VIOW) has started the consultation for the DBID which was brought before the council's Executive, which agreed to loan £80,000 to resource the bid. The funding is to be in tranches on completion of elements and could see a sustainable way forward if the DBID is successful. I am now awaiting the programme for next year from VIOW, who will be not supported through the next financial year via Isle of Wight Council funding.

Talented Athlete Scheme Returns

This scheme gives support to Isle of Wight athletes who are performing at a high level in their sport with the aim of helping their development and achieving further success. The successful sportsmen and women are given free access to council-run leisure centres, discounted travel on Wightlink and assisted bus travel with Southern Vectis, as well as discounts in selected local retailers and physio services.

I am, with council officers, continuing to put the case for grant funded travel and other opportunities for others less gifted to Sport England. This may assist individuals and teams to be coached and also give an opportunity to compete on the mainland.

Dinosaur Isle Event

Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 November saw the annual free 'Blast from the past' event which celebrated fossil collecting from the Isle of Wight and the local region. It also gave visitors a chance to talk to experts, natural historians and local collectors, and those who attended were encouraged to bring fossils to be identified. There was also a fossil hunting walk. Dinosaur Isle has had a very big year with record visitor numbers in August and recently welcomed its one millionth visitors since it opened in 2001.

Wi-Fi in Libraries

I am pleased to report that free wi-fi is to be installed in ALL Isle of Wight libraries due to a successful bid for grant funding from Arts Council England (ACE). This is but a further step to give more variety of services in libraries. Libraries are being supported by local community volunteers as well as council library staff, and after a two month consultation period we are now in a period where discussion is taking place with the town and parish councils of Cowes, Freshwater and Ventnor with the aim of giving more local control while keeping services at a cost effective level.

**Councillor Ian Stephens
Executive Member for Tourism, Culture and Heritage**