

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Culture, Heritage and Libraries	27 May 2014
Subject: Celebrating the 120th Anniversary of Tower Bridge's opening ceremony	Public
Report of: Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	For Decision
Summary	
<p>This report presents details of the promotional activities and events planned in celebration of the 120th Anniversary of the opening of Tower Bridge by the Prince and Princess of Wales on 30 June 1894.</p>	
Recommendation(s)	
<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the report 	

Main Report

Background

1. The original report of the opening ceremony of Tower Bridge as published in the Times newspaper on 2 July 1894 states 'On Saturday at noon, under a cloudless sky and as part of a pageant which delighted tens of thousands of people, the new Tower Bridge, which deserves to be reckoned among the greatest engineering triumphs of the Victorian age, was declared open for traffic by land and water by the Prince of Wales with every circumstance of pomp and splendour.'
2. The centenary of the official opening ceremony was celebrated by the City Corporation on 30 June 1994 with a ceremonial Bridge Lift and unveiling of a plaque by the Prince of Wales with 400 invited guests in attendance. An animatronic exhibition at Tower Bridge was also installed in 1994 to mark the centenary year.
3. With 30 June 2014 marking 120 years since the official opening of Tower Bridge, this anniversary has already received interest internally within the organisation and outwardly in the national media. This level of interest and expectation illustrates a public demand for activity in recognition of this milestone in the Bridge's history.

Planned Activities

4. The anniversary provides opportunities to actively promote the tourism business at Tower Bridge and to engage in a collaborative Exhibition project with the Guildhall Art Gallery. This should generate additional footfall to the Gallery and be mutually beneficial in sharing best practice and pooling resources between the two attractions.

5. It is proposed that there should be a special offer for admission to Tower Bridge Exhibition during the day on 30 June only and that ticketed event open to the public should be held in the walkways in the evening..
6. To ensure a high level of public awareness and in recognition of the Anniversary throughout 2014, the marketing team at Tower Bridge will feature the anniversary in all proactive efforts for media coverage regarding other elements of the tourism business at the Bridge, including Engineering Tours, competitions and promotion of the upcoming glass flooring feature in the Walkways.
7. The activities and events being held in recognition of the 120th anniversary of the opening ceremony support the City's theme of being 'Vibrant and Culturally Rich' in encouraging visitors to two of the City's visitor services.

Temporary Exhibition at Guildhall Art Gallery

8. An exhibition which will showcase circa 60 paintings, etchings and memorabilia consisting of Wyllie's glorious painting of the opening day in 1894 through to modern day interpretations, primarily comprised of pieces from the City's own collection and archive material held by London Metropolitan Archives will be held at Guildhall Art Gallery entitled 'Tower Bridge: Celebrating 120 years'. This has been designed by the Principal Curator of Guildhall Art Gallery working closely with the Business and Marketing Manager and Exhibition Manager at the Bridge.
9. The exhibition will open with a private view on Monday 2 June and run until mid-July 2014 when it will require to be taken down to facilitate construction works for the installation of the Heritage Gallery and other improvement works to the Gallery including a new lighting system. It will however be reinstated in September when these works have been completed and will remain in place until December 2014.
10. A high-quality souvenir guidebook to the exhibition and in commemoration of the bridge's 120th anniversary has been created and will be on sale in the Tower Bridge Exhibition and Art Gallery gift shops. The content for the book consists of full-colour reproductions of the artwork displayed in the exhibition.

Tower Bridge Exhibition

11. For one day on 30 June 2014, visitors will be admitted to Tower Bridge Exhibition for the discounted price of £1.20 (120 pence). As the standard adult admission charge is £9.00, it is confidently expected that the exhibition offer will be popular with the public and the Bridge will have an exceptionally busy and exciting celebratory occasion as the bargain admission will be open to everyone.
12. Each visitor will receive a special ticket in the form of a replica of the original invite to the 1894 opening ceremony as a memento of the occasion and in order to enhance the visitor experience on the day, footfall enticement activities will be increased and a series of Victorian costumed actors will be deployed at key stages of the exhibition journey to interact with visitors. These will include Victorian tourists, policemen and workmen 'running' the historic boilers and engines.

13. The offer will be promoted through London and national publications and listings. In expectation that the significance of the anniversary will prove newsworthy, the marketing team are in the process of securing media coverage promoting the day in advance.

Walkways Evening Event

14. The celebratory excitement doesn't stop when the exhibition closes on 30 June and ticketed evening events have been arranged at the Bridge in the high-level Walkways. . Tickets will be promoted and sold in advance through a third-party specialist website and will be priced at £1.20 per person in continuation of the anniversary theme, again providing excellent value for money and be guaranteed to be highly popular.
15. The first event will run from 18:00-20:00 with tickets being sold on a first come first serve basis and a premier time slot of 20:00 - 22:00 will be a mixture of invited guests and members of the public who have purchased tickets. The views and the atmosphere in the walkways will be incredible for both slots with the possibility of a spectacular sunset over the river and the City for the later slot.
16. Victorian-themed entertainment and music will be arranged and of course refreshments will be available throughout the evening to enhance the occasion.
17. I hope that Members of your Committee will join our key stakeholders and community engagement partners at the later event.

Implications

18. Funding for the activities and events detailed in this report is provided for in the Tower Bridge tourism budget.
19. The cost of these celebrations will result in a number of beneficial outcomes for the department and the wider organisation, including positive publicity, increased footfall and meeting the expectations internally and externally of outwardly celebrating this significant milestone in the history of 'the most famous bridge in the world'.

Consultees

20. The chamberlain has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Appendices

None

David Wight

Visitor Development and Services Director

T: 020 7332 1791

E: david.wight@cityoflondon.gov.uk