

Press Release



Listening Learning Leading

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Multi-million pound arts centre in Didcot nears completion

Builders are putting the finishing touches to South Oxfordshire's new multi-million pound arts centre in Didcot, which will open its doors to the public on 29 August 2008.

The floors are being laid, walls painted and lights fitted at Cornerstone, on the junction of Orchard Street and Station Road, which will provide a new venue for arts, culture and entertainment.

The 2,010 square metre centre incorporates some unique design features created by artists Richard Layzell and Jacqui Poncelet, that have won funding for their ingenuity from the Arts Council, Lottery Fund and other external funders.

These include window walls in which display areas have been cut into the walls of the building, where it overlooks Market Place, and will enable passers-by to view a variety of artwork, from pre-school children's pictures to professional artists' creations.

There will also be an 'Everyday Jewels' display case inside the building, which will comprise a variety of artefacts illustrating Didcot's history.

The centre was designed by architects Ellis Williams Architects, who designed the Baltic Centre in Gateshead. South Oxfordshire District Council has worked closely with the architects and artists, local community groups and schools to give this landmark building a distinctive and contemporary look.

The exterior of the building is encased in silver aluminium cladding and its giant floor to ceiling windows are framed with mustard yellow and bright orange panels.

The centre comprises a seated (up to 278) auditorium for drama, music, dance and comedy, plus exhibition and studio space, and a café, bar and restaurant.

In addition to attracting top quality, national touring acts, Cornerstone, which is funded by South Oxfordshire District Council, aims to nurture and showcase the best local talent.

It will also host a wide range of cultural and creative activities with everything from photography exhibitions and creative writing sessions to Pilates and hip hop classes. There will be entertainment and classes for children and young people too.

Cllr Bill Service, Cabinet member with responsibility for leisure, said: “We are delighted to announce that Cornerstone is nearing completion and will soon open its doors to the public.

“A huge amount of thought and planning has gone into the design of this building and we are very proud of the way it looks and all the wonderful facilities that it has to offer.”

Notes to Editors: Cornerstone is brought to you by South Oxfordshire District Council.

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