

Music and theatre, the focus of Octubre Cultural 2020

This year the pandemic has made it impossible for the people of Beniarbeig to enjoy the traditional Cultural October. The suggestion of the councillorship of culture, headed by Sara Gil Peretó, to hold performances in the open air paid off with a total of 7 consecutive performances in the playground of the old school, from 26th September with a performance of *Tirant de aventuras* by Extraña Cia to the most recent on 7th November, when Tarannà Teatre performed *La història de Ferdinand*. The Lolailo Troupe completed the theatre performances with their show *Què... «fem» ?*.

The musical part comprised a total of four performances, covering a wide range of styles and types, from zarzuela with the performance by *A la luz de la lírica*, to the eclectic Jonatan Penalba, through to fiesta music by the *Unió Musical Beniarbeig*.

But there is no doubt that one of the most anticipated performances was that of Rebeca Mut from Beniarbeig, who presented her new CD *DONES SALVATGES*. More than 160 people watched Rebeca Mut and the five members of her band on stage.

During the show, they performed the songs from the CD, which talks of female empowerment as a tool to continue on the road to

equality, but also the importance of mutual support between men and women, with a positive vision of life and the people who surround us. Rebeca incorporated this into the show, not only with her words and expressions when addressing the public, but also with her choice of accompanists in some of her songs, amongst whom were her children, Ovidi y Lluna, or her former member of the band, Ximo Guardiola.

As for the number of people who attended, Mario Ortiz, one of the organisers, said that “the response of the people has been very good, with an average of more than 100 people, for which we are grateful”. Attendance was also helped by favourable weather conditions, as only one of the performances had to be postponed. As far as COVID is concerned, Ortiz is also happy with the behaviour of those who attended, because “we have

exemplary citizens, all of whom respected the safety measures which we set up, such as hand and foot sanitisation, body temperature, safety distance. On this occasion, we were clear that we wanted to follow the motto “Culture is safe”, so with all the aforementioned measures plus the cleaning of the toilets and writing down the names of all those attending, we were able to enjoy culture in a safe way”.

When asked if the idea is to continue with this format, the councillor explained that “the old school playground has been a real discovery when it came to arranging this type of activity, because it’s easy to control the numbers, it’s accessible, it has toilets and a space where the artists can get changed and, apart from all of that, it’s a very quiet place, so will bear it in mind for future occasions”.



Rebeca Mut, with Lluna and Ovidi during the show

Isabel Vicente López (Salamanca, 1971) has been a member of our team of Policía Local for 15 years, but outside Beniarbeig she is also well known for her long distance sports activities, be it swimming, athletics, hiking or cycling of all kinds. She has taken part in well known international events, such as Titan Desert (Morocco), Pedals de Fuc and Carros de Foc (Pyrenees), Travesía Tabarca-Santa Pola, the Baixada del Renaixement del Ebro (Tortosa) and the Iditarod Trail (Alaska). She has also climbed the two highest peaks in Europe, Montblanc (4,808m) and Elbrús (5,642m).

Recently, through various media, we have heard about your participation in “La Magia del Kilimanjaro” and “Bike for Girls”. What are they exactly?

In “La Magia del Kilimanjaro” I am one of a group of 5 women who, in June, are going to try to reach the roof of Africa, Kilimanjaro (5,895m), on mountain bikes. We aren’t professionals, we are amateur women, each of us has work and a family. Within this project is Bike For Girls, with which we are going to try to donate bicycles to girls in Tanzania, as this gives them access to education. There, the schools are a long way from where they live, and the only way they can get to school quickly and safely is by bike.

What is the route that you are going to take like?

The biggest difficulty we will face is the altitude, because the higher you get, the less oxygen you have. There will be 5

stages and we’ll climb 1,000 metres each day. We will be accompanied by women ‘carriers’ who will carry everything that we need each day. It’s a project which, apart from its sport element, wants to show that women can do work that traditionally has only been done by men.

What drives you to take part in these experiences?

I have always been active in sport, in fact I studied to be a physical education teacher, but I only worked one year, I wasn’t cut out to be a teacher. But I think it was my older brother who awoke in me the attraction of sport. He has always done sport, and is one of the best climbers in Spain.

In this particular case, there is a fundraising element, but I like long distance sport because you are pushing your body to the limit and it’s like saying to it, let’s see how far we can go. So you realise that you can always get further than you thought. This makes you get to know yourself and helps you face the problems you meet on a day to day basis.

On top of this, what a lot of people don’t know is that you are doing all of this with only one kidney.

Yes, when I was 23 the doctors realised that I had two kidneys joined together, so they weren’t working properly. They removed one of my kidneys and said that I could no longer do sport. But I’m very stubborn and started to do sport in secret. Surprisingly, the part of my kidney which remained started to recover. But it’s also true that I’m very careful with food



*Above: Iditarod (Alaska) 2009
Below: Titan Desert (Morocco) 2016*

and I don’t smoke or drink alcohol.

We hope that everything goes well for you and that you can all give the schoolgirls in Tanzania a lot of bicycles.

Yes, I would like to appeal to everyone, because we live in a society in which we all know how important education is, and we are lucky enough to have the guarantee of basic education, but there are countries where this doesn’t happen, and that’s why I want to ask for the participation of all those who want to take part in this project with little donations that can be made through the web page <https://ana.activewoman.es/la-magia-del-kilimanjaro/>

Amparo Mas and Bea Gavilà confirm their second regional title in *pilota grossa*

The pelota school Beniarbeig-El Verger has been in the regional finals of the individual one wall with representatives in all categories.

Fèlix Cabrera and Arnau Montilla in the category “benjamín”. Vicent Femenia and Alejandro Reche in the category “alevin”. Rubén Teruel and Gerard Cabrera in the category “infantil”. Bernat Carrió and Xavi Capellino in the category “cadets”. Xavi is regional champion, Joan Sánchez and Sergio Diego champions in the category “ juveniles” and Joan regional runner -up.

In addition, the pelota school Beniarbeig-El Verger is competing in the pairs “frontón valenciano”, with results which the trainer Basilio Sánchez describes as very good.

As for the next matches by local



From left to right: Bea Gavilà and Amparo Mas

pelota players, on Saturday 14th November they will play in Beniarbeig,, while on the Sunday they will play in the regional one wall finals, in which they compete in the categories of “benjamín”, “infantile”, “cadete” and two teams in the “juvenil”.

In female “ raspall”, the pair made up of Aida Vila and Fanni Mas have gone through to the regional semi-finals which will take place the same Saturday in Borbotó (L'Horta Nord).

Continuing with female “raspall”, Amparo Mas, Bea Gavilà, Ali Escortell and Elena Gómez will compete in the semi-finals of the fourth category this Sunday in Bicorp (La Canal de Navarrés).



Joan Sánchez Mas

The course in “Billing electronic” comes to an end



Tuesday 20th October saw the end of the course in which 5 local self-employed people have learned to process bills electronically through the programme Factura-e, an

indispensable requirement to be able to bill public authorities, such as town halls. The course, subsidised by the Diputación de Alicante, was 18 hours across 12 sessions given by Tere Fullana.

Throwing wipes into the toilet is costing Beniarbeig money

Throwing wipes into the toilet continues to cause real problems in the sewage system. As has been explained here previously, the incorrect disposal of wipes is really damaging, but the problem remains and, far from disappearing, continues to cause blockages and damages the pump. This last week there has

been another significant blockage, which almost destroyed one of the pumps valued at 900€. It's worth remembering that just over a year ago the problems with wipes cost us 4,000€ in just two weeks, a cost which is completely avoidable by simply throwing the wipes in the rubbish bin.



THE INTERVIEW

Christine Cook
(Middlesbrough, 1954)
graduated in French, German and Economics from Leeds Polytechnic (1976) and in Spanish from the Institute of Linguists (1990). In England she worked as a Spanish and German teacher at the University of Sheffield and as an administrator of European projects in a research department at the same university. She is also co-author of *Camino al español*, 2004 published by Cambridge University Press, a text book for students of Spanish. A second edition will be published soon. Currently she gives English classes to children and adults and as councillor is responsible for Social Services, the library, foreign residents, the environment and communication.

Why did you decide to get involved in politics? Were you involved in politics in England?

Well, the truth is that I was never involved in politics in England, nor did the idea ever enter my head when we came here in 2004. But one day in 2006, Celia Ruiz-Oregón, who was councillor at that time, asked me if I was interested in being on the village list for the PSOE for the municipal elections in 2007.

I didn't know anything about Spanish politics, but after several conversations with Celia and Luis Gil Pastor, during which they explained the ideas they had for the village, I agreed, and that was that! In



May 2007 the PSOE won the elections and I started as a councillor. The truth is that at a local level, politics aside, my wish has always been to work for the wellbeing of the village.

Within your areas of responsibility is municipal communication, on which the BIM depends. What are the strong points and what needs to be improved?

For me, the aim of municipal communication is exactly that, to inform people of what is happening in the village. But I see it on two levels. Firstly, it's important to communicate what's happening on a day to day basis in the village, in other words, cultural events, unforeseen emergencies etc, and for this we have a WhatsApp group and a Facebook page.

Secondly, there is information which is important but which, because it isn't so urgent, we try offer in the best way possible. For this we use the BIM, in which we communicate important events which have

happened during the month, be it sporting achievements by people in the village, grants received or planned events. The BIM has a safe future, but I would like to see more contributions from the people in the village, something which we are going to try to work on in the coming months.

You were also responsible for the campaign "No más cacas". What did it consist of?

We all know that we have a really big problem with dog dirt on the pavements in the village. The idea of the campaign 'No más cacas' is to try to make dog owners aware of the need to collect their dogs' poo and leave it in a bin or take it home to throw in the rubbish. During the lockdown the problem increased, I don't know if it's because people were taking their dogs out more for a walk or out of pure laziness, but it's something we have to look at again.

Another public problem is the rubbish left outside the bins, a problem which has existed for years. Is there a solution?

A lot of people have used the lockdown to sort out things in their house and throw out furniture, rubbish etc, but instead of throwing them into a bin, taking them to the ECOPARC or arranging for them to be collected by phoning the police, people have left the rubbish on the floor outside the bins and continue to do so. The Policia Local have fined a few people after finding addresses in the bags of rubbish, but the biggest difficulty is catching people in the act. It's one of our priorities now, to tackle these two problems, dog dirt and rubbish.

Traditionally the library has come under Culture, but not now. Why is this?

When we were sharing out the responsibilities of each councillor at the start of our term of office, we tried to do it according to the competencies of each person and their availability. The area of culture has a lot of time demands and we separated the area of the library to be able to give it the attention it needs. As an avid reader, I took on the responsibility of the library and I have a lot of contact with Pau, the librarian, on a daily basis. At the moment we are working to electronically catalogue the books and I am giving him hands on help by attaching the barcode labels on the books. We have also replaced the furniture in the children's section, so that this corner of the library is more accessible to the little ones.

Maybe social services is one of the least visible parts of your work, but one of the more necessary in difficult times. How are things being managed

in this area in the light of the second wave of the pandemic?

It's true that it is one of the least visible parts but no less important. There were a lot of demands during the lockdown, when some 50 people from the village received help from social services in the form of help with their rent, vouchers for food, help with their shopping etc. We also had daily contact with the volunteers of Càritas, who helped the most needy families with bags of food, and we set up a collection point for people who wanted to donate. It was very successful. For the moment, things are much quieter in the second wave. As far as financial support during the pandemic is concerned, MASSMA (Mancomunitat de Serveis Social de la Marina Alta) is in charge of managing funds. We hope not to arrive at that point, but if it were to happen, we will again offer all our help from the Town Hall. I am in direct contact with the social worker, who frequently informs me of any cases which need more attention.

Finally, what does help to foreign residents comprise?

According to the padrón, there are 563 foreigners in Beniarbeig, the majority coming from the

UK (150) and Germany (100), but it's clear that there aren't as many of us living here all year round, because if, for example, a foreign resident wants to buy a car, he has to have a padrón certificate, whether he lives here permanently or not, and this inflates the number of people on the padrón. So it's difficult to know exactly how many permanent foreign residents there are, but what is clear is that we make up an important part of the village.

The service offered to foreign residents is an unending service, sometimes 24 hours 7 days a week. I help with the paperwork of the town hall, with health services, SUMA bills, questions for the architect, with appointments and many, many more things. In addition, Brexit is bringing with it a lot of complications for the British.

With my knowledge of English and German, and what I can still remember of French, I can communicate easily with most of the foreigners. For me, it's satisfying to be able to help those who still haven't acquired sufficient knowledge of Spanish and it has been a very useful way to learn all about the bureaucratic paperwork of the country.



Reading club, storytelling and the "La Fórmula Secreta": autumn Reading for all ages

Beniarbeig library continues to work to encourage reading and socialisation through reading. For this reason, the Reading Club has been relaunched and strengthened with the novel *El imperio eres tú*, by Javier Moro, work on which is currently being completed in preparation for *Materia de Bretaña*, by Carmelina Sánchez-Cutillas (Madrid, 1927 ? - Valencia, 2009), whom the Academia Valenciana de la Lengua has declared author of the year in a commemoration which also includes the Col·legi Oficial de Bibliotecaris i Documentalistes de la Comunitat Valenciana. In Beniarbeig, apart from the sessions with readers of the book, there will be an exhibition of Sánchez-Cutillas during the week of 7th December for anyone who wants to know more about the life and the works of the writer.

On 21st October, the storyteller Blai Senabre held a reading session within the campaign



Blai Senabre during the storytelling session

“Llegim?”, supported by the Generalitat Valenciana, along with the Fundació Bromera and FULL. Also, this year the library and the Councillor for Youth joined the Fórmula Secreta, a reading project organised through IVAJ. The project kicked off with an escape room on 3rd November in the library in which 14 young people aged from 11 to 15 took part. The project continues through November and December with the reading of *L'efecte Frankenstein*, written by Elia Barceló from Alicante.

Also, at the beginning of



Escape room

November, some new books were purchased, in particular novels, in Spanish as well as in valenciano, but the library now also offers a request service, which means that any user interested in the library buying a particular book only needs to fill in a short form and, as long as it is possible, the library will buy it and incorporate it into its stock.

Grants received

From the Diputació de Alicante:

-Campanya de Difusió de Música y Teatro. Performance «A la luz de la lírica», 600 €

-Promotion of sport. Escuela Deportiva Municipal Multideporte, 5,930.64 €.

-Festival Provincial de Artes Escénicas Otoño 2020. Children's theatre. 1,045€.

-500 face masks received 13/10/2020.

-Purchase of trophies and medals for Sporting activities. 5 sets of trophies and 150 medals. 386.89 €



-Control of water quality for human consumption. Addition to the grant.

From the Generalitat Valenciana:

-Purchase of library materials 1,182.68 €



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