hertfordshire rural forum

&

Herts Sports PARTNERSHIP

SPORT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

"Increasing participation and access to sport & physical activities in rural areas"

Wednesday, 26th November 2003

9.30am - 4.00pm

All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney

Workshop Outputs

Parish Plans and Community Strategies

Workshop led by CDA (Herts) and North Herts District Community Strategy Officer looking at how community and parish plans can provide for sport and physical activity.

Opportunities

- Help to establish what communities need through audits of existing facilities.
- Help a community come up with new ideas for sports and leisure.
- Help draw down funding to local levels.
- The evidence of need can support sports and leisure groups that can contribute to meeting a community's needs.
- 'Active Parish' scheme supported by EEDA through the Herts Rural Forum's Rural Innovation Strategy may help prepare parishes for undertaking a parish plan.
- Community Strategies and Parish Plans can be read by anyone.

Barriers

- People do not know about them, what they aim to do, how they can be used to support bids and ideas etc
- People do not know how to get hold of the information. Community Strategies have to be produced by all local authorities, but Parish Plans are voluntary. There are currently only 7 underway in Herts and there is no readily available information about which ones they are.
- Copies of Community Strategies are available from local councils on request. Electronic copies are likely to be available through the local authority's website.
- Parish Plans should be available but the print run is limited by how much of their funding the group has allocated for it. Electronic copies of PP may not be available.
- Funding is perceived as urban-centric for sports and leisure.
- Many activities are aimed at young people, which is no good if your sport and leisure activity is aimed at adults.

Actions/Solutions

- Local authorities and CDA to promote completed Parish Plans to other relevant organisations once they are complete. This will help to publicise the results and share any best practice arising.
- Need to encourage more partnership working at a parish level
- Parishes need to ensure that when they form a Parish Plan that they involve their local sports development officer to maximise opportunities
- Need a survey of the existing Parish Plans to establish what the sport and leisure needs and actions are to see where links can be made

What's stopping you?

Workshop led by Sport England (East) and Herts County Council to identify issues effecting access to sport and physical activity in rural areas.

Define what are the sporting Issues

- Transport
- People
- Facilities
- Cost
- Equipment
- Structures – Organised Clubs etc…

Detailed Issues

- Knowing where to secure funding
- Knowing how to secure funding – completing the forms
- Capacity to complete forms and lead projects
- Specialist kills to manage project meetings, organise groups and deliver activities
- Engaging young people – where, how etc…this is fundamental to the success and failure of many projects
- Coaching and Leadership – the fear factor of litigation, hassle of attending courses, bureaucracy – knowing who can support you to access skills
- Rivalry between villages, communities and clubs – this can be detrimental to sharing good practice, working together to pool resources and ideas.
- Access to existing facilities – schools etc, during community hours to embrace the extending schools agenda – fear amongst teachers of vandalism and costs incurred. How do clubs develop Service Level Agreements with schools and how can we make better of what we have already?

Define what are the Social Issues – there is a link between the two

- Health Inequities
- Crime Intervention & Prevention
- Social/Community Harmony
- Education – lifelong learning
- Lack of recreational activity for young people, women and girls, ethnic minority groups and older people

How do we address these problems?

- We need a strategy & plan that will be based upon local need
- Consider what we have at present – audit people, facilities, clubs, coaches, structures, equipment through use of questionnaires, open forums, consultation married with activity

Who will help us to do this?

- Local authority Sport Development Officers
- National Governing Bodies
- Senior clubs from nearby towns/cities
- Primary Care Trusts
- Local Strategic Partnerships
- Rural Development Organisations & Rural Community Councils

How will this programme be successful?

- Clear strategy & vision based on local need – use parish plan process
- Community driven through a local framework
- Community ownership/engaging young people
- Lasting involvement & support from professional agencies
- Funding plan– internal & external
- Robust monitoring & evaluation planning

Where's the money?

Workshop led by Sport England (East) and Herts External Resources Network. The workshop was primarily around information giving and a comprehensive pack was available to delegates. Further information can be found by visiting the following website:

www.hertsdirect.org/hern

Volunteering

Support for volunteers to deliver

- Giving volunteers identity/ownership
- Empowering volunteers
- Training/welfare/growth of volunteers
- Retention of volunteers
- We must recognise the value of volunteers
- Attracting young volunteers – opportunities to tackle youth inactivity through volunteering

Healthy Communities (Workshop 4)

Workshop led by North Herts Health Development Officer and Herts County Council Healthy Schools co-ordinator exploring the opportunities for linking with the health agenda and health related projects.

Partnership working

- Before launching a project ensure that you have partners supporting the idea and concept. Ask for their help and expertise in whatever aspect of the project you need advice on. With different agencies giving support to the project there can be a more productive use of time and energy input.
- Share best practice at every opportunity, we can all learn from positive projects that have worked well in other areas. In addition by sharing ideas and experience, mistakes can be avoided and innovative new ways of extending original ideas can be explored.
- Involve your local PCT (Primary Care Trust), Local Council, voluntary groups, other statutory agencies, e.g. Police, Fire, SRTS (Safer Routes to Schools), linking with the Rural strategy, Local Travel Plan etc.
- Bringing leisure to the community, where traditionally the community has had to travel to leisure is one way of potential future working especially in rural areas. For example, students training as fitness consultants could be encouraged to work in the school setting either helping children or using the school facility out of hours to teach adults.

Funding – thinking outside the box

- Using agencies such as the Community Development Agency and the Learning Skills Council, as well as 'Bytesize'. (The latter two can encourage learning opportunities across the wider health spectrum, particularly where a whole family learning approach is taken.)
- Whole family approach is key to developing health initiatives which need to encourage sustained change of lifestyle not only amongst children but also for their parents/carers as well.
- Think creatively! If your project has in interesting, imaginative concept to it may well attract more interest and increase participant benefit. E.g. Cricket skills training for children with disabilities and their parents/carers.

Buildings/Facilities Usage

- The extended facilities plan to utilise school buildings out of school hours for wider community use is an excellent idea. However it is acknowledged that a number of practical implications have not yet been fully resolved yet. Possible issues would include: payment for staff securing buildings out of hours, insurance cover, dual use of school versus community funded sports equipment, child protection issues for volunteers/trainers etc.