



North Marston Community Sportsfield North Marston Parish Council

The Organisation

The North Marston Community Sportsfield Project Team is made up of local volunteers and parish councillors who have made it their mission to regenerate the disused recreation ground in North Marston. The area, owned by the Parish Council, had been neglected and had not been used by the local community, other than to graze sheep, for 15 years. Following an approach to the Parish Council by a group of enthusiastic residents about bringing the land back into community use a committee was formed to look into the idea, consult with the community and put together a deliverable business plan.

Introduction to the project

The project aimed to transform the derelict recreation ground into a multi-use sport and recreation facility accommodating football and cricket pitches, a Trim Trail, a Nature Trail and a multi-purpose Clubhouse. Beyond the physical development the project aimed to encourage local people to become more actively involved in the community and hoped it would breathe new life into the area and act as a catalyst for the establishment of new community clubs and activities.



In 2007 a household survey confirmed both the need and support for the project which gave the project team the green light to begin fund raising to turn their ambitious plan into reality.

Who was the project working with and supported by?

The Project Team enlisted the support of their local county and district councillors who, as well as providing much needed advice and funding for the





project, became advocates for the regeneration of the recreation ground and lobbied on behalf of the group.

In addition the project sought the help of key officers within the local authority. Receiving help from the Biodiversity Department with the design and creation of the Nature Trail and pond and funding for native pond plants and hedge laying and the installation of bird and bat boxes.

The project also teamed up with the local school, running a competition to design the logo for the branding of the facility. And the school make regular visits to the field for pond dipping and bulb planting and other outdoor activities. Once the new Clubhouse building is complete the school intend to use the facility as an off-site classroom space.

To date the project team has raised £170,000 which has come from grants funding from WREN, Awards for All, Community Chest, LEADER and AVDC, donations and sponsorship and local fundraising activity. In addition the community has given hundreds of man hours on the site; stone picking the field, mowing and weeding, building and installing the pond dipping platform and Nature trail board walk as well as financially supporting the projects fund raising events.



“Without the communities support this project would not be the success it is today.”

What have you achieved so far?

Although the last phase of the project is still on-going, with the new Clubhouse still in construction, the team and the wider community have achieved a significant amount over the past three years. They have; undertaken major groundwork's on the field to make the land suitable to be used for football and cricket; installed cricket practice nets and a Trim trail and developed a nature trail and pond. In bringing this neglected recreation ground back into use they have reclaimed this land for the local community and have brought the community together in the process.

What problems if any have you had to overcome?



The greatest challenges faced by the project were securing funding and find ways of keeping volunteers involved and committed to the project. However good teamwork and the engagement of lots of different people helped the project successfully overcome these obstacles.

What have you learned and what will you do next?

Far from their work being over the project teams' focus will now be on continuing fundraising and the ongoing management of the facility to ensure that it is looked after and that use increases year on year.

"The project has given confidence to the community and has shown them what is possible. It's great seeing lots of people regularly using the field and how amazing it now looks compared to the state it was in at the start."



What is the best thing about this project?

It also seems that the project has acted as a catalyst for the regeneration of other local facilities with plans underway to set up a local community interest company to resurrect the village shop on the site of the Village Hall car park.



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