



Club Development Impact Report 2023-24

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Introduction

The Core Market is at the heart of the Partnership's work and builds on the foundations of HSP, to develop clubs, coaches and volunteers across the county. Club development is a key element to support the sport and physical activity sector, and whilst arguably it has become less of a priority and visible within Active Partnerships, HSP has kept a strong clubs offer at the core.

Project background

Community Sports Clubs form a vital part of the community sport landscape, playing a vital role within their communities delivering sport and physical activity to tens of thousands of people of all ages across the county. Therefore, it is imperative that the Partnership has a strong, robust and wide-ranging support package for clubs that can ensure they have the skills required to ensure they can survive and thrive in the modern world with ever-changing challenges of increased regulation and escalating costs.

It is estimated there are 2,500 clubs in Hertfordshire – with over 500 football alone and a further 120 cricket clubs – based on the amount of affiliated sports clubs to the respective NGBs. Sport has some of the biggest clubs in the county in terms of numbers of teams and some clubs in Hertfordshire are larger than schools in terms of number of members and turnover.



Implementation

To ensure our clubs offer reaches as broad an audience as possible, several different models are used to engage clubs including: Club Forums, Annual Clubs Conference, Sported Project and a project working with local Community Voluntary Services (CVS).

Club forums – We arranged a series of club forums throughout the year with St Albans & Hertsmere Club Forum in June, a specific water sports club forum in September in partnership with the World Canoe Slalom Championships and finally a Dacorum Club Forum in partnership with Dacorum Sports Network, where the project with Community Action Dacorum was formally launched.

The Watersports Club Forum, in partnership with World Canoe Championships, was very successful with 14 attendees from an audience we had previously struggled to engage.

Across the 3 events, we saw over 80 people from approximately 50 clubs. The feedback from each event was overwhelmingly positive and topics included: funding, volunteering, working with councils, governance and more.

The **Clubs Conference** took place in September in partnership with Sported, whose recently appointed CEO gave the keynote address, which paved the way for our project working with Sported and 20 clubs from across the county to improve sustainability and governance.

The annual Clubs Conference is a staple event in the Partnership's calendar and has established a strong reputation across Hertfordshire and beyond. The event brings clubs together, shares best practice, provides networking opportunities, and supports clubs with contemporary issues in the modern world. Creeping regulation,



burgeoning legislation, escalating costs; all set against the backdrop of an ever-dwindling volunteer base means it is a tough time for clubs.

As mentioned above, Sarah Kaye was this year's keynote speaker who spoke about the importance of clubs in communities, their role, and their impact on young lives. We had worked in partnership with Sported to offer a programme to Hertfordshire based clubs to access their support and we used Sarah's speech as the formal launch.

Sported Project

We joined forces with leading sport development charity Sported to work with 20 clubs and groups across Hertfordshire. Suitable clubs were identified and approached by HSP, with strong input from the Active Local team. Sported were then introduced to the clubs to better understand the needs, issues and challenges being experienced along with the local context and nuance.

The programme is being delivered across 2 tranches, with 10 clubs being targeted in phase 1 which began in January and will run until approximately July time. The second phase will begin in September and run until March 2025. In phase one, some of the clubs being worked with include: Cheshunt Amateur Boxing Club, Oxhey Hall Tennis Club and Brookside Boxing Club.

The clubs are required to join Sported as members at no cost, sign a project agreement and undertake a Sported GamePlan survey which serves to ascertain priorities and needs from the club's perspective.

A further discussion between the groups and the Sported team will then enable them to understand their needs. A Sported volunteer, with suitable skills and experience, is then assigned and will provide the support and advice required. Additional Sported resources they may wish to access including webinars, toolkits and templates are also identified and sign-posted to.

As part of the project, a networking group was created which all members join to promote best practice and learning and develop greater networking links.

There is ongoing engagement between the club and their volunteer for 6 months after which they complete their template Action Plan and evaluation form which sets out a sustainable, robust future pathway. Once complete, all clubs are eligible to receive a £500 grant.

Sported will be showcasing the impact of the first half of the project at the Clubs Conference in October.

Dacorum CVS

Community Action Dacorum, Dacorum Sports Network and Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership joined forces in the early part of the year to support the community clubs of Dacorum. The purpose of this collaborative effort was to help clubs become more sustainable, provide more avenues for fundraising, in addition to income generation, and highlight the work and role of Community Action Dacorum and the plethora of services they offer, including access to transport and the volunteer centre which has over 800 registered people waiting to volunteer.

The programme was open to all clubs within the borough and as part of the offer, HSP covered the cost of joining Community Action Dacorum for the first year to enable clubs access to the full array of services. The programme is running for 12 months having been officially launched in January 2024.

The launch event was held at Berkhamsted & Hemel Hempstead Hockey Club in partnership with the Dacorum Sports Network as part of the Dacorum Club Forum. There were over 50 attendees on the night from 35 clubs, all of which signed up there and then to the offer. Since then, a further 17 clubs have signed up taking the total to over 50 clubs that are now members of the CVS who weren't previously.

The project is roughly halfway through, so it is hard to assess progress at the moment beyond the number of sign-ups, however, the acid test will be when the initial funded year comes to an end, how many retain their membership status.

Partnerships

100+

Attendees at
Clubs Conference

4

In person club
events

PARTNERS

Buddle

Local Authorities

CVSs

Funding 4 Sport

Sport Stevenage

Active in the Community

GoVolHerts

NGBs

Outcomes and Benefits

By committing to a series of in-person events throughout the year, we are able to reach and engage large numbers of clubs from across the county. Across the 4 events delivered, we have engaged with over 100 clubs supporting them with key areas such as marketing, funding, volunteers, links with schools and much more.

By supporting the clubs of Hertfordshire to become more robust, better funded and sustainable, we are helping them to further embed themselves within their communities, giving opportunities to thousands of people across Hertfordshire to be physically active and enjoy participating in sport.

“We are blessed to have the Herts Sports Partnership”

“As a club wholly dependent on funding and volunteers, HSP have been so helpful to us to secure funding and recruit volunteers”

“The events are really good and engaging, I have learnt a lot and our club has really benefited”

Key Learnings

The needs of clubs are ever-changing and developing. The cost-of-living crisis has exaggerated club's need for funds, both asset-owning clubs and those dependent upon central venues. Our offer needs to continue to develop and adapt with modern trends to meet the needs of the modern club.

Next Steps

1

Hertfordshire Clubs Clinic

The first ever clubs clinic delivered in the country in partnership with Buddle.

2

North Herts & Stevenage Club Project

Working with the local CVS to raise their profile and provide clubs greater access to their services

3

Hertfordshire Clubs Conference

The annual Clubs Conference being held on Friday 11th October.



Conclusion

A strong clubs offer has always been fundamental to the work of the HSP and will remain at the heart of the Partnership's offer. Having vibrant, dynamic, sustainable sports clubs is in everyone's interests and it is vital we continue to support them.

The Sport England club support offer has recently been rebranded from *Club Matters* to *Buddle* and we have been selected as one of the Active Partnerships with a strong club offer to help embed the rebrand with clubs and raise awareness and familiarity with Buddle with clubs in Hertfordshire. We have a strong series of events and programmes scheduled throughout the year working with CVSs, Sported and Local Authorities to offer as much support and development to clubs as possible.

Working with the voluntary sector to support clubs and align them to the offer of the respective CVS will be a key feature of the next 12 months.



Club development is ingrained in the partnership and is one of our strategic objectives. To meet the needs of the modern-day club our offer needs to continue to evolve and adapt and remain relevant linked to changing needs.

2,500

Clubs in Hertfordshire (est)

buddle.

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