

2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championship Social Impact Report

herts

sport & physical activity
partnership



In partnership with:

University of
Hertfordshire **UH**

 **BRITISH
CANOEING**


Lee Valley
Regional Park Authority

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Introduction and Overview

The 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championship is the qualification event for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

Introduction:

The 2023 ICF (International Canoe Federation) Canoe Slalom World Championship (CSWC) saw around 300 of the world's top athletes head to the Lee Valley White Water Centre (LVWWC) to battle it out across a week of thrilling competition. The event was held in our Active Local area, Waltham Cross, from 19th-24th September.

On behalf of the CSWC, the University of Hertfordshire (UH), Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnership (HSP) acted as the social impact partner to deliver and support several initiatives, aiming to improve the awareness, accessibility, and sustainability of paddle sports in Hertfordshire. UH and HSP also supported inclusion work and helping to raise the events profile.

"It was an honour and a privilege for the Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnership, to be appointed as the official social impact partner to the recent ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships, held in Hertfordshire, at the impressive White-Water Centre within the Lee Valley Regional Park.

We worked closely with the organising committee to ensure the benefits from staging such a prestigious event were felt across the wider area and the event was made accessible to some of those from our most disadvantaged communities facing the greatest inequality who, frankly, would not have engaged with the event without our pro-active intervention.

Included in the programme we facilitated, were visits by almost 200 young people from some of Hertfordshire's most underserved communities who were attendees at our Fit, Fed and Read holiday programme, set up to counter the triple inequalities of social isolation, physical inactivity, and holiday hunger. Coupled with this were activities for our Ukrainian visitors, the Polish Saturday School, the Potential Kids charity that cares for young people with Autism and their families, and a raft of older adults from various programmes across the county.

Hopefully, we have demonstrated the added value that can be gleaned from major events linking with local partners, and the huge difference that can be made when an Active Partnership is involved in this process.

Our involvement was enhanced as we are part of the University of Hertfordshire, who were also granted branding rights for the event to support its aspirations as a global University, and all in all we are delighted that we took part in this initiative."

**- John D O'Callaghan
Partnership Director at Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership**

Objectives

The objectives and direction of the social impact programme were identified from the objectives of the Slalom Championships, as well as utilising the Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnerships 'Active Local' initiative.



'Active Local' is a collaborative place-based initiative, aimed at supporting targeted communities in each of Hertfordshire's 10 districts. Working with Local Authorities, this initiative highlights an area in each district to focus its impact on, identifying the areas strengths, responding to local needs and recognising where support, intervention or extra capacity is needed. This is utilised by creating a more joined-up approach, with local delivery partners, and organisations, to tackle the inequalities within the area, and reduce physical inactivity.

The LVWWC is based within the Active Local area of Waltham Cross, Broxbourne. Using data and insight from Public Health, Sport England's Active Lives Survey as well as IMD data, Waltham Cross has been identified as arguably the most deprived ward within Hertfordshire, including having the highest percentage of children living in poverty. Having the Championships take place within this area was a key detail used in the planning and implementation of the programme, leading to many parts focusing on the residents of Waltham Cross.

A secondary focus for the programme was bringing new audiences to the venue, matching one of the CSWC objectives. This was achieved by focusing opportunities to the residents of the other nine 'Active Local' areas, who often face disadvantage and inequality, and would not have been able to attend a world class venue such as this.

Implementation

The partnership between British Canoeing, the Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnership and Lee Valley Regional Park Authority made up the social impact group.

On behalf of UH, HSP invested and repurposed £40,500 to shape positive environmental and social change in communities facing the greatest disadvantage and inequality. This investment was used to bring opportunities for Hertfordshire residents to access the event, as well as offering activities at the centre in the build-up, and raise awareness, of the September event.

Between April 2023 and the CSWC, the social impact programme was built upon the foundations of HSP insight, pushing the boundaries of existing partnerships and projects to meet our aims. The programme grew rapidly with HSP creating an array of opportunities for Hertfordshire residents to engage with, bringing a variety of audience to engage with the event.



“

The 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships provided a wonderful platform to demonstrate and evidence the wider social impact of hosting an international world class event in Hertfordshire. By working collaboratively, we were able to utilise the Championships to reach new audiences and engage people in physical activity who otherwise might not have considered doing so.

– Jack Pringle, Sports & Active Recreation Manager at Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

Key Dates

The following are key dates from the social impact programme.

Saturday 8 th July	Promotion of event at the Launch of the Summer Reading Challenge in Hoddesdon Library
Saturday 22 nd July	This Girl Can Festival at LVWWC
Wednesday 2nd August - Thursday 17th August	Nine Fit, Fed, and Read Camps visit LVWWC to take part in kayaking.
Wednesday 9th August	Promotion of event at the Cedars Park Teddy Bear Picnic
Thursday 10th August	OPALS event at LVWWC
Thursday 10th August	Duck Slalom Championship at LVWWC
Thursday 17th August	Promotion of event at the B3 Living Celebration Day at Holdbrook Primary School, Waltham Cross
Thursday 24th August	FFR Celebration Day at UH with athlete Kimberley Woods
Friday 1st September	HSP Team Building Day at LVWWC with Phoebe Spicer
Friday 8th September	Hertfordshire Sports Village Activity Day at LVWWC
Monday 11th September	Watersports Club Forum at LVWWC
Thursday 19th October	HSP Sustainable Sports Learn & Share with British Canoeing presenting

Funded Ticket Group Attendances

Tuesday 19th September	Four Swannes Primary School Potential Kids OPALs Live Longer Better in Hertfordshire
Wednesday 20th September	Care homes Community Alliance Volunteers
Thursday 21st September	HSP Staff Team and Board Student Success & Widening Access Team UH canoe/kayaking team
Friday 22nd September	Watersports Club Forum Partnership Duck Slalom World Championships race winner
Saturday 23rd September	Herts Young Careers (Broxbourne) B3Living Association of Ukraine in Great Britain
Sunday 24th September	Welwyn Hatfield Polish School B3Living

Partners

The social impact programme could not have been successful without the wider group of partners which were worked with throughout the programme.

Delivering the social impact programme on behalf of UH could not have been done without the partnership work from the wider social impact group. This impact group for this key event consisted of, HSP, British Canoeing and Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA). The impact group's collective efforts were fundamental in ensuring the aims and objectives of the project were all delivered to a high standard. This included always linking areas of the project together where possible, to strive for maximum impact.

Special thanks to British Canoeing athletes – Kimberley Woods, Adam Burgess, Mallory Franklin, and Phoebe Spicer. Kimberley supported and attended our 'Duck Slalom World Championship'. Adam and Mallory attended and supported one of our camp visits to the White-Water Centre, whilst Phoebe completed a Q&A at one of HSP's development days.

HSP also worked with multiple Hertfordshire-based organisations, to collectively reach the aims of the programme, and make a difference to the lives of Hertfordshire's residents. Some of those organisations' logos can be seen on the right.



Marketing and Communications

Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnership's marketing team worked closely with the partner marketing teams to promote and raise awareness of the event.

Over the course of the social impact programme, HSP used several channels of communication to raise awareness of the CSWC and the social impact programme events. These included:

- Social media posts and sharing of partners posts
- Features in HSP newsletters
- Promotion through channels e.g., Hertfordshire's Head Teacher Advocate Group, School Games Organisers, and the HAPpy programme
- Partnership communications through emails, virtual meetings, and face to face e.g., Herts Care Professionals Association and Hertfordshire Sports Village
- Press releases
- Leaflets
- Banner placements
- Event attendance

The marketing of the Duck Race Canoe Slalom played a pivotal role in its success, fostering crucial relationships with key stakeholders. Our partnership with the University of Hertfordshire (UH) provided valuable resources and fostered a strong sense of community around the sport, including features in local newspapers.

Furthermore, our collaboration with LVWWC and British Canoeing opened new avenues for growth and development.



Funding

Funding of the social impact programme activities helped raise awareness and brought in new audiences.

The below summarises three key avenues of funding who were targeted: **school settings, community groups, and professional organisations:**



Schools:

Local schools that either attended the event, or are part of the legacy programme:

Funded:
£12,000



Community:

Hertfordshire groups, who were funded to either access the facilities during the event, or in activities held at the center prior.

Funded:
£23,500



Professionals:

Professional sporting organisations who engaged with events run as part of the programme:

Funded:
£5,000

Total: £40,500



The funding for this programme covered various elements, which served to enhance awareness of the event to a range of demographics and promote the benefits of physical activity for a healthy lifestyle. HSP played a significant role by investing £40,500 into social impact and awareness, bringing people from all over the county to the venue, and/or the event.

HSP and LVRPA worked together to fund 590 tickets to the World Championships, which were distributed to communities in and around Hertfordshire. This allowed people from different backgrounds to experience the world-class event and feel the excitement of the sport.

The LVWWC, operated by GLL, offered reduced pricing for activities run at the centre through us, as well as waiving the fee for hiring of wet boots and wet suits. Such initiatives made it easier for people to participate in the activities run at the centre, which had a positive impact on the key aim of “Engaging core and new audiences”.

Outcomes

The strategic aim of the social impact programme was to focus on targeting communities within 'Active Local' areas, whilst utilising the Canoe Slalom World Championship's main objectives from the event.

Using the agreed objectives, the social impact group was able to track and measure the success of the programme and its impact on the participants, leading to four successful outcomes. The group had a focus on engaging with residents from 'Active Local' areas, with a specific emphasis on Waltham Cross. This strategy enabled the impact group to reach a diverse audience, most of whom were new to watersports, or the venue.

The residents from these 'Active Local' areas were from a wide range of demographics. The social impact programme offered multiple activities, including activities for children, older adults, local sports clubs, as well as activities for a Polish Saturday School, emphasising the range of people the programme was able to work with. The variety of audience which the impact group were able to engage with, was one of the key factors in its success, and helped drive these impactful outcomes.

There were four key outcomes from this work:

1 } Inspiring People

2 } Access to World Class Facilities

3 } Event Profile

4 } Sustainability, Access and Environment

Inspiring People

One of the event's primary objectives was to inspire and engage with both new and core audiences.

The programme inspired residents to be more active, and either start or continue taking part in paddle sports. This result has been highlighted from the survey feedback results, taken from adults who have been to an activity at the LVWWC throughout the social impact programme.

The social impact group worked with multiple communities and audiences to appeal the event to a wide range of people. Utilising feedback from attendees, this objective was reached successfully, as 96% of people from different ages, backgrounds and levels of experience said they were inspired to come back to the venue again.

HSP collaborated with local community groups to organise paddle sports activities for neurologically diverse young people, women, and girls, as well as older adults who struggle with physical activity. The activities were designed to create a safe and welcoming environment for everyone in paddle sports, with the aim of those participants inspired to take their experience forward into continuing in the sport.

“ I have found new friends in this group and feel a part of a team which is something I have not experienced in a new situation for such a long time. It makes me feel I can do so much more and that I can help others do things and have fun.

– Participant from over 50's kayaking session



Access to World Class Facilities

Lee Valley White Water Centre was designed specifically for the 2012 London Olympic Games.

The venue boasts a world class course with rapids that can be adjusted to suit different levels of difficulty, making it the perfect location for the World Championships, as well as recreational activities. Additionally, the LVWWC has become a popular destination for visitors, and water sports enthusiasts alike, offering a range of activities such as white-water rafting, canoeing, paddle boarding and kayaking. Furthermore, as a leisure space, the centre has a café that boasts views of the centre, and rapid course to spectate any activities going on. Its accessibility and location have made it a valuable asset to the local community, providing opportunities for people to try out new experiences.

Among the community activities offered as part of the event, we linked up with the Willow Foundation Charity, to host a Duck Race on the rapids. The race itself was attended by local residents, organisations who donated to the cause, and families benefiting from Willow’s great work, bringing new and unique audiences to the facilities for the day.

Overall, the LVWWC not only served as an outstanding host for the CSWC, but also as a hub for sports and leisure activities in the Hertfordshire region.

“

The event raised over £1,200 for Willow, which is amazing. Thank you to Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnership for all their support and allowing Willow to be part of a great event ahead of the World championships in September. The Duck Race has opened the ICF Slalom World Championships and the venue to a different audience that will hopefully return soon.”

- Mark Caldwell, Willow Foundation Event Manager

“

The whole group really enjoyed the day. They were amazed at the facilities on-site. The paths were easy for the wheelchairs to move along and were smooth enough that the unsteady walkers did not have trouble. The amount of seating on the banks by the event course was great and meant that we could rest while watching.

- Donna Bowman from The Waterside Centre, Day Care Centre

“

I live locally and have visited the centre a number of times. The staff are friendly, helpful, the food and drinks were good and it’s fun to watch activities whilst relaxing.

– Local resident attending the Duck Race

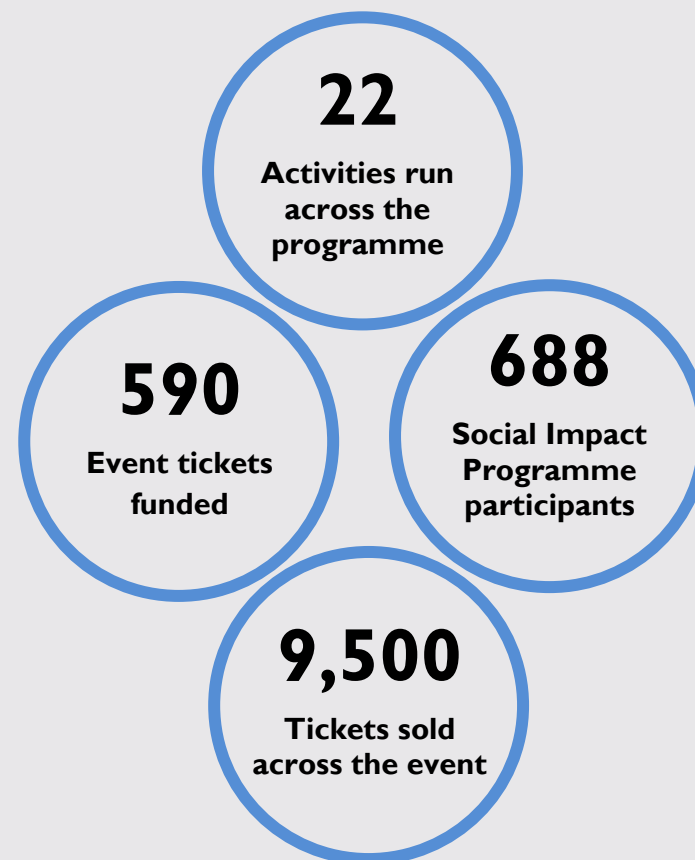
Event Profile

Promoting the events profile to new audiences was a key objective of the Canoe Slalom World Championship.

As one of Hertfordshire's largest international sporting events in 2023, it sought to bring as many families and residents to the event as possible, through the provision of free and concessionary tickets.

In total, HSP and LVRPA funded 590 tickets to the CSWC, for residents of Hertfordshire. The investment in these funded tickets not only allowed for a larger audience to attend the event, but also helped to make the event more inclusive and accessible to those who may not have had the opportunity to attend otherwise. By distributing tickets to local schools and families from low-income backgrounds, the social impact group of the CSWC were able to give back to the community and provide an exciting day out for those who may not have had the chance to experience this type of event before.

Overall, the social impact group wanted to focus on groups who may not have come into contact with the sport before, to reach new audiences and increase the profile of the event. From survey results, 87% of responses hadn't heard of the CSWC before attending the centre, expanding the profile of the event to new audiences.



Sustainability, Access and Environment

Over the course of the programme, part of the aims, and in turn outcomes, was to encourage participants and attendees to reduce their carbon footprint when travelling to the venue.

Through working with the Fit, Fed and Read (FFR) initiative, the programme successfully utilised ways in reducing its carbon footprint, by organising coach transfers to the venue, instead of individuals driving, helping to reduce vehicle pollution. In addition, a group of 13 children from a nearby FFR holiday activity programme took part in the "Big Paddle Clean Up." During this initiative, the group worked together to remove litter from the local river, inspiring them with the significance of environmental sustainability.

Furthermore, HSP designed and delivered a Sustainable Sports Learn and Share Webinar. This interactive webinar was attended by 34 partner sports and community organisations and was a brilliant introduction to sustainable sports for many clubs across Hertfordshire in attendance.

The interactive workshop included practical hints and tips from expert presenters (Kate Chapman – Sustainability Advisor for many sports and Rich Stacy-Chapman, lead on the sustainability project for the CSWC) including:

- Creation of a sustainability vision
- Setting of clear targets and measuring impact
- Working with partners and suppliers
- Using the event as a platform for staff, participant and volunteer education and training
- Focusing on the areas that will have the biggest impact

Feedback from the attendees was highly positive:

- 91% of respondents were extremely or very satisfied with the event.
- 73% of respondents thought the webinar has given them tangible tools and tips that will help to design and deliver sustainable sports events in the future.

The recording from the event can be found below, and the slides and recording are available on the HSP website which will provide a fantastic legacy resource for organisations planning sustainable sports events.

https://youtu.be/UK_dTxqGadE

Quotes

**David Connell,
Director of Sport, University of
Hertfordshire.**

“The opportunity for an away day allowed us to escape the normal workplace and have an incredibly valuable 4-hour meeting where we could decide our priorities for the coming year and set key objectives (and associated results) for all areas of Hertfordshire Sports Village. The impact is that we have secured a new strategic direction, which all managers understand and will buy into.”

**Student,
Welwyn Hatfield Polish
School**

“Was a really enjoyable day. Watching, cheering on and supporting my country in a completion as big as the world championships made me feel good. I enjoyed spending time going out with my family to a big event and hope to do it again.”

**Representative,
Willow Foundation**

“The event raised over £1,200 for Willow, which is amazing. Thank you to Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnership. Not only did the event raise vital funds but also raised the awareness of Willow in the local community, which will hopefully lead to more young adults reaching out to Willow or assisting us with future fundraisers. We look forward to working with HSP again in future events.”

**Gemma Wiggs,
Head of Events and International
Affairs at British Canoeing**

“The 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships provided a unique opportunity for partnership work to use the event to enhance the great work already taking place in Hertfordshire through Herts Sport and Physical Activity Partnership. Huge credit must go to the HSP team who worked with young carers, older volunteers, schools, watersports clubs and local partners to provide activation and engagement opportunities through the event which will see benefit well beyond the event.”

Next Steps

The following bullet points represent the scheduled, and possible areas for action going forward beyond this programme:

Community Sessions

- HSP was able to help organise funding for LVRPA to offer two different health walks at the White-Water Centre, and surrounding park areas, as well as offering a group exercise class.
- The Partnership is continually looking to secure funding to give more local communities the opportunity to access water sports, or water-based facilities.

Women and Girls Inclusion

- Inspired by the CSWC, one HSP Board Member has chosen to become a British Canoeing #ShePaddles ambassador. HSP will be supporting our Board member, who will be using their own paddlesport journey to inspire others over the next year, focusing on women and girls' participation in watersports, and raising awareness of paddling opportunities in Hertfordshire.

Clubs and Schools

- Funding for St. Mary's Church of England High School in Hoddesdon to upskill the whole PE department in teaching water sport activities. This will lead into water sport PE lessons for pupils of the school in coming terms.
- The Watersports Forum, which formed part of the programme, will be the foundation of our future support of clubs – around areas, such as funding and volunteer recruitment.



Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership

University of Hertfordshire | de Havilland Campus | Hatfield | AL10 9EU