



Cedars Park Community Games Box

Matt Ridley, Waltham Cross Active Local Officer
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Introduction

The Community Games Box at Cedars Park is a community-led initiative designed to promote physical activity, inclusivity, and mental well-being. Developed in partnership with the Friends of Cedars Park Men Shed, it offers free-to-use sports equipment, including a new set of bocce balls for the park's bocce court. The project aims to enhance park visitors' experiences and has already generated significant community engagement. It also supports the Men Shed's mission of addressing mental health through increased social and physical activities.

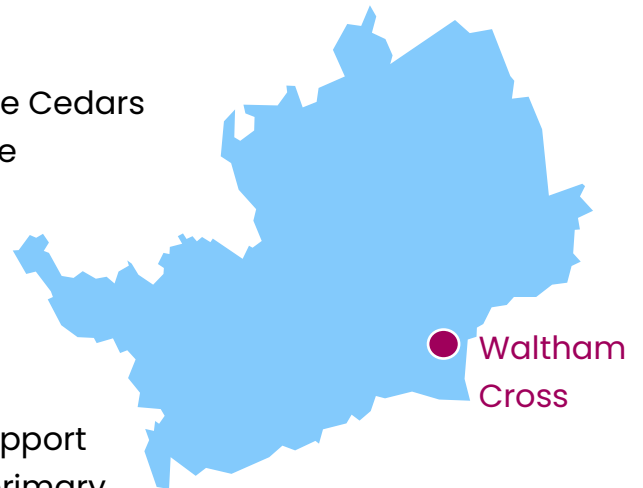
Project background

The Community Games Box was conceptualised during discussions between the Friends of Cedars Park Men Shed and the Waltham Cross Active Local Officer, focusing on better serving park users and enriching the Men Shed's mental health support activities. Built using recycled materials and donated equipment, the box provides free sports gear to the community. This initiative expands recreational opportunities for all ages, strengthening community connections and promoting inclusivity.



Implementation

Over the course of August, sixteen members of the Cedars Park Men Shed project worked on constructing the Community Games Box. Meeting weekly, they carefully followed the design set out, cutting, sanding, polishing, and painting the box, which they attached to the side of their shed. In the meantime, the Active Local Officer designed and produced the box sign and posters and rallied support from local partners. Donations came from local primary schools, community groups, the Broxbourne Council, and the charity Goods for Good, which provides industry overstock to help communities in need.



The box was filled with carefully chosen sports equipment to complement both the Men Shed's offerings and park activities. It was launched on Tuesday, 24th September, with immediate and overwhelming community support. The launch post on social media saw the highest engagement the Friends group had ever received, with residents expressing their love for the project and offering to donate additional equipment. Since its launch, the box has gained 14 more items, and community partners are prepared to replenish or replace equipment as needed. The box is available daily during park hours, with a

simple "Borrow, Play, Return" system. Ongoing maintenance is managed by the Friends of Cedars Park volunteers, ensuring the equipment remains accessible and functional for all.



“We’ve really noticed a difference in the Park. Since launching the Community Games Box, there’s been a wonderful increase in the number of people enjoying the park each day. It’s especially great to see the bocce court getting so much love! Plus, with the Men Shed now running monthly free sports sessions, we’re excited to help promote men’s mental health. It’s lovely to watch our community come together and make the most of these opportunities for fun and connection.”



Partnerships

8

Partnerships
Created

96

Items
Donated

Column

Herts Sport & Physical Activity
Partnership

Cedars Park Mens Shed

Friends of Cedars Park

Goods for Good UK

Cedars Park Bocce Club

Broxbourne Borough Council

Four Swannes Primary School

Public

Outcomes and Benefits

With the introduction of the Community Games Box, park activity has grown significantly. The bocce court is more popular than ever, and the Men Shed's monthly sports sessions are helping support mental well-being. This initiative has strengthened community ties, promoting physical fitness and inclusivity for residents of all ages.

Key Learnings

The success of the Community Games Box highlights the power of community collaboration. By engaging local partners and volunteers, the project demonstrated that simple, accessible solutions can have a profound impact on community health and well-being. It also underscored the importance of inclusivity and designing activities that cater to all ages. Furthermore, the initiative revealed how offering accessible resources like sports equipment can enhance public spaces and foster greater community interaction and engagement.

Next Steps

1

Maintain and Restock

Establish regular check-ins with Mens Shed to ensure the Games Box is well-maintained and consistently stocked with sports equipment as needed.

2

Promote Widely in the Community

Increase outreach efforts, using local media, social networks, and partnerships to ensure the Games Box reaches those most in need, including underserved community members.

3

Strengthen Partnership with Men Shed

Continue developing the relationship with Cedars Park Men Shed to expand initiatives that address mental health challenges, creating more opportunities for physical activity and social support.



Conclusion

The Cedars Park Community Games Box has proven to be a successful initiative, fostering physical activity, inclusivity, and mental well-being. Since its launch, the box has been accessed daily, encouraging park users to engage in sports and recreational activities. The bocce court has seen increased participation, while the Men Shed now offers monthly free sports sessions, providing crucial mental health support. With strong community engagement and positive feedback, the project has strengthened local bonds and created a more active, connected community. This initiative highlights the power of grassroots efforts in promoting health, social interaction, and long-term community benefits.

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Further Donations



Special thanks to the Chairperson of Friends of Cedar Park, David and thier wonderful volunteers.

