



WOTTON COMMUNITY SPORTS FOUNDATION

Developing a multi sport environment for Wotton and the surrounding area

Welcome to the first WCSF Newsletter

No 1: June 2014

Introduction

Thanks to a most generous donation from Sir David McMurtry, and after many years of hard work, in May 2013 Wotton Community Sports Foundation were able to commence construction of the much needed sports facilities for the people of Wotton-under-Edge and the surrounding area.



We are also extremely grateful for the long term support of KLB School, Wotton Town Council, Stroud District Council, Kingswood Parish Council, and the many other organisations and individuals who have supported us or been on our committee over the years, without whose input and encouragement we would not have this marvellous facility today.

It is just a year ago that the first turf was cut at the beginning of the building of our two all weather pitches – flood-lit, secure with CCTCV, well drained and in one of the most beautiful settings to be found.



By July, they were ready for the all weather surfaces to be installed and by 27th August, the pitches had been completed to an extremely high standard and were officially handed over to WCSF by developer Swinhay Ltd, supported by artificial pitch contractor, Verde Recreo.



During the summer, we worked with Wotton Hockey Club and Wotton Rovers Football Club to begin building a booking system for the winter season ahead. Word soon got around, and by July we had been joined by KLB School, Dursley Hockey Club, Dursley Rugby Club juniors and Charfield Football Club seniors.

By the time the pitches opened for the very first time on Monday 2nd September, Bristol Rovers Football Academy had a regular booking, and over the course of September, October and November a further 8 teams had secured places on one or other of the pitches.

Our lighting generator – fondly known as Big Bertha – arrived in the second week and allowed teams to play right up to 10pm. It was a love/hate relationship for the hardy volunteers who arrived on site each day to start her up for the first booking and dragged themselves away from the warm sofa to put her to bed at 10pm – come wind, rain or snow. Our users just couldn't stay away and turned

up week after week over the wettest winter on record. But to see both pitches full of enthusiastic sports fanatics day after day made it very worthwhile.

Although play had already begun, we held our Open Day on Saturday 21st September 2013. Sir David McMurtry kindly cut the ribbons to officially open the New Road site pitches and the newly refurbished KLBS Sports Centre. It was a day of celebration and sport, with hockey, football, handball, tennis and rugby all taking place. There was a barbeque, hot drinks and cakes, sweets and ice cream, children's activities and fund raising stalls and the day would not have been complete without Wotton's international, award winning Town Cryer, George Carpenter, and Kingswood's much loved Blowaway Band on hand to make it a most memorable occasion. Wotton's already thriving sporting hub was now officially open for business.



Anyone using our new pitches has been able to use the large car park and the superbly refurbished changing facilities at the Wotton Sports Centre on the Katharine Lady Berkeley School site – now linked by a well-lit path from the car park to the New Road pitches. KLBS pupils are making extremely good use of the pitches throughout each day and for many after school sporting activities.

In the first few weeks of our pitches being used there were almost 1200 people using them each week. By November this had increased to 1500 per week and it peaked for the season in February to almost 2000 enthusiastic users playing and training for hockey and football, and training for rugby each week. We always said "Build it, and they will come" and indeed they did. By the end of April, 25 different groups had made bookings, in addition to 20 teams from Wotton Rovers and around 12 teams from Wotton Hockey who had regularly enjoyed the experience of playing on the superb new surfaces.



On Monday 3rd February, we said goodbye to the generator and were connected to mains electricity for the first time. We are grateful to the staff of both KLBS and Stroud District Council from the Sports Centre, now working with us to maintain, and open and close the pitches.

Both pitches stood up well to the constant rain and remained playable throughout the winter, with many extra bookings being made for junior football games and rugby practice when grass pitches elsewhere became waterlogged.

If you would like to help us in any way – join the committee or work on a particular part of the project - or if you would like to book any of the pitches:

Please telephone Sarah Watt on 0787-592-6190 or email sarahwatt100@yahoo.co.uk

Or telephone Barnaby Beere on 0789-420-7780 or email bbeere@btinternet.com