

Creetown Health and Participation in Sport project (Creetown Muga)

Final Report

In 2006 a series of meetings were held with young people in the village of Creetown. The purpose of these meetings was to gauge what young people wanted to see happening in their village and to get them involved. A range of subjects were discussed but the main point of interest to them was the derelict tennis courts, which they wanted to see redeveloped. A steering group was set-up which included members from the Community Council, Creetown Primary School, Creetown Initiative, Creetown Youth Group, Creetown FC and Ferrytoon FC.

As a result of these meetings Creetown Initiative was asked to research what it would cost and how we could raise the finance to redevelop the Tennis Courts.

The objective of the project was to develop a facility which would achieve the following objectives.

1. Create a facility which could be used all year round for sporting activity.
2. Create a facility which would engage young people.
3. Create a facility which would provide activities for young people in the village.
Before the project was considered there were no such facilities.
4. Create a facility where different sports could be played.
5. Create a facility which people of all ages could enjoy.
6. Create a facility which would promote health.
7. Create a facility which would encourage partnerships between generations.
8. Rejuvenate a derelict facility which had become an eyesore.
9. Create a project which would help bring back a sense of pride in the park, where the facility was.

Discussions followed with Kirkmabreck Community Council who is the owners of the facility. These discussions established that the community council were happy to proceed with the project. Creetown Initiative was then asked to lead the project and Andrew Ward, Creetown Initiatives Project Worker was asked to raise the finance.

The sub-management committee included members of the Community Council, Creetown Initiative, Creetown Primary School and local sports groups. Members include Emma Hyslop, Tess Siad-Tollan (Creetown Primary School students). Eddie Megaw (Ferrytoon FC & Creetown Youth Group). Robert Ross, Isobel Campbell (Kirkmabreck Parish Council), Eric Houston, Andrew Burnett (Creetown FC). Andrew Ward (Creetown Initiative).

The sub-management group got to work and set out what they wanted to achieve. Including the projects objectives listed above the sub-management group also started to consider some key operational and management points.

The key points were

1. A facility which could be used all year round and how this would be managed
2. A facility which was affordable in terms of session rents
3. A facility which could accommodate a variety of sports and how this would be encouraged by the purchase of equipment
4. A facility which would attract Dumfries & Galloway Councils Sport and Leisure team, who would introduce new sports activities and professional coaching
5. A facility which the local primary school could use

As the sub-management team worked on these ideas, Creetown Initiative was given the task of raising the funds. Quotes for the work were obtained which came to £55k and within two years nearly £30k was raised from four Scottish projects focused Charities. These being The Slevin Bequest, The Robertson Trust, Hugh Fraser Foundation and The Gannochy Trust. Our next step was to secure the balance of funds from SportScotland, however we discovered that SportScotland's match funding rules did not allow the charities who had already pledged support to actually do so. We then approached Leader and thankfully Leader was able to assist with the balance of funding, which was £26k.

Funding for the project came from

Leader £26k, The Gannochy Trust £6k, The Robertson Trust £10k, Hugh Fraser Foundation £4k, Slevin Bequest £7k, Dumfries and Galloway Council £500 In-kind And Creetown Initiative £2k In-kind

Work on the project began at the end of 2008, but bad weather held up progress and the Muga was not ready until early 2009. However on the 27th February Alex Ferguson the presiding officer for the Scottish Parliament opened the facility.



During the development stage the sub-management group also held discussions with Dumfries and Galloway Councils Sports and Leisure team and an agreement was set-up where the council would provide site maintenance in return for free sessions on the Muga. This was a win win deal for the community because it removed maintenance responsibility, whilst providing sports sessions to local children which would be free of charge. The council also agreed to market the facility when they were running sessions. Creetown Initiative also helped market the facility through the Ferry News Letter which we publish every 3 months.

On completion we discovered an under spend of £796. This came about because less replacement kick-boards were required than originally estimated by the contractor. As such we approached Leader and asked if we could spend the money on the adjoining pavilion/changing rooms. The pavilion was in need of repair to its roof, guttering and internally. We had originally considered looking at this repair work as a separate project, but the under spend provided an opportunity to carryout some essential works. Leader officers very kindly agreed to this and the work was carried out. After all the work was completed, including the repairs to the pavilion, we under spent by £6.03p so in general we were pleased as to how the budget worked out.

The long term future of the project looks good. Dumfries and Galloway Council are providing free sports sessions, Creetown Primary School are using the facility as well as providing pupils to the sub-management group. Six sports teams are using the facility on a regular basis and ad hoc groups are also using the facility. The adjoining changing rooms have been refurbished and a long term maintenance agreement is in place. New equipment such as goal posts and footballs has been purchased.



Now the facility is up and running a wide range of people are benefitting from it. Used daily, the facility is being used by young and old alike. To date the facility has been used for 103 sessions with 1171 people involved in those sessions. The management group meet every six weeks to review how the project is going and what improvements can be made. A local business, the Barholm Arms Hotel very kindly agreed to act as key holders. Users call in pay a £10 deposit for the keys and their rental fee. On returning the keys they get their £10 deposit back. Rental fees are recorded in a book kept at the Hotel and the money is checked and collected by the community council, who are responsible for bill payments such as electricity.

In the future we hope to replace the floodlights to a more energy efficient type. We hope to introduce a token payment system which will be easier to manage, and we hope to buy more equipment to broaden the type of sport which can be played on the muga.

Overall the project has been a pleasant and rewarding experience. Funders were all superb; the contractors who carried out the refurbishment were excellent. To date football, rugby and tennis are played. In time we hope to purchase more equipment to broaden the range of sport which can be played there. This equipment will be paid from revenue generated from lets.

Creetown now has a facility which it can be proud of, a facility which is well used. At the same time it is helping to deliver a healthier community by providing a facility where sport can be played 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The facility is also attracting users from outside the immediate boundaries of Creetown, so the benefits are not solely restricted to Creetown, but the wider area of Dumfries and Galloway.

The key lessons we have learnt are that generations can work together to achieve a worthwhile project. The usage has taught us that young people were in desperate need of such a facility and once provided it promotes responsibility. We learned lessons from another community (Port William) that have a similar facility, mainly in terms of operational matters.