Penpont Multi Use Games Area

Anyone for tennis, or hockey, or football, or...?

A report of how Penpont got a MUGA

Prepared by:
Penpont Community Council
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Why did we build our Multi Use Games Area?

The prompt that led to the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) being built was the construction of social housing in our village.

We were asked as a community how we would like to spend a substantial statutory award of £22,500 in Gladstone Park on an amenity for the benefit of teenagers.

A few suggestions were made to the Community Council e.g. MUGA, skateboard park; and after conversations with officials at the Planning Department and Leisure Services at Dumfries and Galloway Council, the MUGA became the favoured option.

Village consultation

Before we progressed, we knew we had to make sure the majority in the village were behind the project so we leafleted every household (see APPENDIX A) outlining the idea for the MUGA, asking for feedback and any alternative suggestions if this did not prove popular.

The vast majority of those living in Penpont were in favour of the proposal. A few residents whose homes bordered the park had reservations e.g. about increased usage of the park and potential negative visual impact. These views were taken into account in situating the MUGA with its own access point into the park and in making sure that the fencing was sympathetic.
to the immediate environment e.g. dark green to blend with the backdrop of trees behind.

Also in favour of the position of the MUGA is that it is on previously unused ground – the football pitch and play area with swings and slide are at the other end of the park.

**From play pitch to full sports facility**

Initially, based on the funding we had from Loreburn Housing Association, DGHP and Dumfries and Galloway Council we had planned to build a ‘play’ version of an all weather pitch. However, SportScotland suggested that they would consider an application for further funding from them but only on condition that we built a full sports MUGA i.e. with the correct full size pitches for tennis, football, etc., high quality all weather play surfaces and fencing and lighting. So the Community Council set about sourcing additional funding.

**Information gathering**

Our objective for the MUGA had evolved into providing a good quality sports facility which catered for at least five sports that would appeal to as broad a sector of the community as possible i.e. all ages, both genders and all equality groups in or visiting our village.
We set about gathering information from a range of organisations before taking the step to a full sports facility. We thought it was important to find out about:

- Experiences of other (small) communities and organisations in building MUGAs e.g. in Whithorn.
- Most popular sports and relevant MUGA surfaces.
- Planning and building regulations.
- Strategic health priorities of Dumfries and Galloway Leisure Services to make sure we complemented their efforts.
- Potential for Dumfries and Galloway Council to both use the MUGA e.g. to run after school/holiday activities; and to maintain it for us if we built it.

We contacted a variety of experts for their advice at Dumfries and Galloway Council; community organisations; SportScotland; suppliers of MUGA materials and equipment; etc.

**Tendering process**

One of our Community Council members, with experience in tendering for construction projects, took all the relevant information we had collected and drew up a specification for the MUGA and asked 5 companies to quote for the project.
Eventually, we used two suppliers – one for the Stage 1, construction of the base slab; and one for Stage 2 and 3 to completion.

**Fundraising**

When the tenders were in, we knew as far as was possible, what the final cost would be – so we set about finding funds to add to those we already had.

That is where LEADER comes in – and for which we are extremely grateful. Together with the money from SportScotland, LEADER enabled us to build a proper high quality sports MUGA which should last for at least 20 years.

Below is a breakdown of funding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Initial allocation £</th>
<th>Final allocation £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dalswinton Windfarm Community Fund</td>
<td>3,240</td>
<td>3,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGHP</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumfries and Galloway Council</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADER</td>
<td>14,170</td>
<td>9,626.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loreburn housing Association</td>
<td>22,500</td>
<td>22,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penpont Community Council</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SportScotland</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>110,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>105,366.08</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our original estimated cost was £110,000 including a contingency of around £5,000; we did not need the ‘safety net’ contingency and in fact we completed the project for £103,348.39 through a combination of good fortune (the VAT rate changed in our favour from 17.5% to 15% during our build period) and some canny local ‘consultants’ in the village who kept a close eye on specs and costs as well as being very good negotiators on price.

LEADER’s contribution was a crucial £9,626.08 or 9.3% of the total cost.

The build schedule

We set out to build the ‘play’ pitch in 2008 when the slab was laid.
Levelling and preparing the ground.

The tarmac base ‘slab’.

We were then awarded the remaining funds to build a sport’s MUGA which was built over the course of 2009.

The ‘clean’ entrance to the MUGA and secure storage box for tennis nets, etc.
The MUGA is at the southern end of Gladstone Park in the centre of Penpont in a previously little used area.

The MUGA was officially opened in January 2010.

Marketing and publicity

We kept residents updated on the progress of the MUGA Project via Penpont Community Council Minutes, posters around the village and on our website. As soon as we had funding we announced it and thanked our funders through these channels and contacted local press and radio. We were keen to acknowledge the contribution of LEADER (and our other funders) in all publicity and used/sent out the logo. Radio stations and local newspapers spread our good news.

We invited all funders, our local Dumfries and Galloway councillors, representatives from Leisure Services, local media
and of course all residents from the Parish to the MUGA opening. Almost all of those invited attended the ceremony.

Funders - LEADER, SportScotland, DGHP, Dumfries and Galloway Council - our local Councillors, Penpont Community Council Chairman and the Penpont Gala Queen (who opened the MUGA).

Local girls and boys played a display game of football on the pitch at the opening.

Usage of the MUGA 9 months on

Since opening the MUGA, new sports teams have been set up – most notably a ladies hockey team which trains every Friday evening.

Penpont Primary School uses it regularly, as do the Penpont Tigers (a football team for boys and girls – see their thank you letter at APPENDIX C) who are on at least once a week – in all
weathers. Scaur Football Team train at the MUGA and two groups of local teenage boys train and play matches on it.

We also have a group of over 60s who have regularly played tennis over the summer months.

Overall, every week, at least 70 different individuals use the MUGA.

We expect Dumfries and Galloway Council to schedule more events on the MUGA in coming years which will extend its reach further.

Dumfries and Galloway Police are currently planning ‘Midnight Football’ for the Autumn/Winter of 2010-2011.

Penpont Tigers train on a dark autumn evening.
Benefits

As anticipated, the benefits of our project are primarily to physical health of users of the MUGA. Because we installed lighting, the facility can be used all year round with play floodlit in the evenings and ‘dark’ afternoons. The enjoyment in playing on the pitch, and being able to play outside throughout the year have been welcomed and add to the emotional wellbeing of users.

With 70 people regularly exercising every week at the MUGA and prospects of extending this further, the facility is providing a hugely valuable boost to the overall health of villagers and visitors.

Sustainability

Before building the MUGA, the Community Council we were very careful to make sure it could be maintained and be an asset for many years. Dumfries and Galloway Council agreed to provide the same level of maintenance they offer their own facilities in the region e.g. deep cleaning the playing surface. Penpont Community Council makes sure that day to day ‘tidiness’ is maintained.

We have a user’s contract and a key entry system which ensure the facility is treated with respect to extend its life. We
expect, with the proper treatment and maintenance agreed, that it will be viable for 20+ years.

Our health and safety rules will keep users safe but will also go towards protecting the facility from undue wear and tear e.g. not allowing studded footwear on the pitch.

The MUGA is owned and run by Penpont Community Council which is a very active council. There is no reason to believe that the Community Council will not continue to thrive. Should it be disbanded for any reason, Dumfries and Galloway Council would take over its role and control of its assets, including the MUGA.

Lessons

Here are the lessons we learned in the process of our completing our project:

- Gather as much information as possible up-front – it helped us a lot.
- Plan as much as you can in advance e.g. we had a booking procedure worked out well before the building of the MUGA was finished.
• Anticipate such issues as long-term maintenance before you commit any money – it is all part of the costs of the project.
• If you have experienced and committed volunteers you can complete a major project – on time and on budget.
APPENDIX A: Village consultation

All weather pitch
in Gladstone Park

Penpont Community Council are considering options for amenities in Gladstone Park.

Loreburn Housing, as part of their development, must give nearly £30,000 to be spent on the park and to benefit older children and teenagers.

So far, the most popular option is to build an all-weather pitch with fences and lighting. It would be marked out for Netball, Basketball, Five a Side Football, Hockey and Tennis.

The current football pitch would remain—but would likely move along the park. The playground equipment would also remain.

Best place for the all weather pitch is at the southern end of the park and if possible it would go there. But it might have to go at the north (the playground would be moved within the park) to make sure it fits.

We would need to raise a further c£25,000 e.g. from windfarm donations, D&G Council funds, organisations like SportScotland to build it. We are confident this can be done. Thereafter, D&G Council would maintain the pitch.

Before we go any further we would like more feedback from residents.

We see this as of longterm benefit to the residents of Penpont – particularly teenagers who have few facilities in the village at present.

If we do not hear from you we will assume that you approve of this proposal.

If you have any concerns, please raise them with us.

If you do not see this as a good idea, please make sure you give us your alternative suggestions for spending the Loreburn fund which has to be used for amenities in the park for older children and teenagers.

We will discuss your feedback at the Community Council Meeting on 4th December at 7.30pm. You are very welcome to come along and join the discussion with us.

Otherwise, please get back to any member of the Community Council before 4th December.

If you want to write: Margaret Reid, Cairnmill, Penpont, DG3 4LX.

If you want to phone: call Margaret on 330 712.

Or have a chat with any of us.

Penpont Community Council
APPENDIX B: Funding announcement to residents

MUGA Funding

The Community council is delighted to let the village know that we have been successful in our efforts to secure funding for the Multi Use Games Area in Gladstone Park. We now have all the necessary funds in place to complete the project.

Building work will start when the last bit of administration is finished.

We would like to say a big thank you to all of the organizations who have been so generous in supporting our project with financial assistance.

Thanks go to:

- DGHP
- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- Loreburn Housing Association
- SportScotland

We’ll keep you posted on progress.

Margaret Reid
Chair of Penpont Community Council.
APPENDIX C: Thank you letter from Penpont Tigers

Dear All at the Community Council,

I am writing on behalf of everyone here at Penpont Tigers Football Club to express our gratitude for the recent cheque for £50 donated to the club. This money was spent on new Footballs that were greatly needed. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for the use of the MUGA, it has been a huge improvement on the facilities we had at the school, the children love playing on it and it means we can run the football club all year round in all weathers. Thanks again for your continued support.

Yours Sincerely
Stuart Williams

Please sign the indemnity and return before the event. It is important that we have the signed indemnity before the rally.