

Inspired Facilities



Sport in Desford

CASE STUDY THEMES

- Multi-sports
- Increasing capacity
- Sustainability

PROJECT SUMMARY

Summary

Multi-faceted project to increase opportunities for participation and improve the sustainability of the facility.

Facility name	Sport in Desford
Lead organisation	Sport in Desford
Organisation type	Community Sports Network
Location	Desford, Leicestershire
Sport	Tennis, Bowls, Dance, Football, Squash, Martial Arts, Table Tennis, Running
Total project cost	£103,627
Inspired facilities funding	£50,000 (48% of total)
Other funding sources	Various, including Biffa Award and Fields in Trust
Tender process	Competitive tender
Contract type	Design and build
Start and end date	January - September 2012
Duration of capital works	Overall duration of approximately 9 months

Achieved outcomes

- Expansion of existing facility to meet demand
- Retention of existing members and continued growth
- Improved sustainability and revenue generation opportunities



Introduction

Sport in Desford (SiD) was established 25 years ago when the local bowls club asked the Parish Council to provide a bowling green for their club. The centre has expanded over the years and the facility, on the edge of the village of Desford in rural Leicestershire, includes a fully equipped gym, dance studio, football pitch, squash courts, café and function room as well as two tennis courts. Over the past four years, Desford Lawn Tennis Club has expanded rapidly, providing coaching for children and adults, and has 10 teams playing in the County leagues. There was an urgent need for another tennis court to help meet this demand, but SiD was rejected by 12 other funding schemes prior to the Inspired Facilities funding bid being submitted.

The Project

This project was multi-dimensional; the main driver for the funding application being the need for a third tennis court with floodlights to support the growth of the successful tennis club. However, SiD also wanted to improve the sustainability of the facility by installing solar panels to reduce monthly energy costs, whilst also generating a significant regular income through the government's Feed-in Tariff scheme. In addition, the sprinkler heads on the bowling green also required urgent replacement to ensure that the rainwater harvesting system which had previously been installed could continue to function effectively. Car park lighting, football pitch barriers and an intruder alarm were also fitted. Approximately, half of the project funding came from Inspired Facilities (£50,000), the remainder was made up of a variety of smaller grants from sources such as Biffaward, HBBC Community and Parish Initiative and Fields in Trust, some of which were secured prior to the Inspired bid being submitted. Around a half of the cost of the Solar Panels (around £30,000) was funded through a 5 year loan from PURE Community Energy Fund.

Outcomes

The Facility

Both the coach and those who use the courts feel that the third tennis court has benefitted the club enormously. In particular, it has enabled the club to continue its expansion, with enough space to provide high quality coaching and host matches. The floodlights allow members to come and play at a time which suits them and mean that tennis matches no longer need to be cut short due to poor light.



Sports Participation

The additional tennis court has helped the club to retain existing members, as previously there had been occasions when members were unable to play due to coaching taking place on the two existing courts. Participation is steadily growing (from a baseline of 100 members at application stage), alongside improvements in the standard of play - the club had three winning league teams this year. Members of the club and the volunteers attribute this to the high standard of coaching and the improved facilities. The coach felt that the new facility had helped retain members, as well as encourage new people to join.

“The new floodlighting is great for matches, it has made a real difference, we now feel like a real tennis club”.

THROUGHPUT	Baseline	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Target	27,600	29,000	30,000	31,000	32,000	33,000
Actual	n/a	-	-	-	-	-

The SiD facility continues to grow and to introduce new sports and facilities. SiD has run a number of inclusion days which have provided the opportunity for disabled people to take part in the sports available at the centre including tennis, dance and the gym. The facility now also runs a regular inclusive club and an older people’s club which has generated new interest. They have also recently started a table tennis club and introduced a new martial arts class for children.

Overall consultees did not think the Olympics had any tangible impact on numbers of participants in sport at the facility, but it did give those already participating a boost.

A total of 25 users of the facility responded to a survey undertaken as part of this case study, the majority of whom (19) had been attending the facility for over two years. All reported that they were satisfied with the facility and the majority (17) noted that their satisfaction had increased over the past six months with the most common reason for this increase being the improved quality of the sports surface. For most respondents (20) the amount of time they spent participating in sport at the facility had stayed the same over the past six months while for the remainder it had increased.

Lead Organisation and Partners

Installation of solar panels on the roof of the building means that the facility can now generate their own electricity and also benefit financially from the Feed-in Tariff scheme. This reduces the overall running costs and benefits all the users of the centre, which includes a newly built Scout Hut which is linked to the SiD building. The model provided by SiD, whereby its management group provides an infrastructure for the individual sports clubs means that SiD takes on the financial, legal and administrative responsibilities, leaving the club managers to focus on sports development. The development manager at the centre was keen to install the solar panels to ensure the future sustainability of the whole facility, both environmentally and financially, which in turn provides a secure future for individual sports clubs based at the centre. The 2013 accounts show that over the last 12 months SiD accrued over £7,000 from electricity generation, although approximately half of that is currently being used to repay the loan which helped to finance the solar panels, which is scheduled to be repaid over 5 years.

Everyone consulted at the SiD facility was optimistic about the future of SiD (including members of the executive committee, tennis players, the dance school principal and the tennis coach) and are already looking towards the next project, to develop the tennis club’s facilities further by building an enclosed shelter next to the courts to enable players and parents to shelter during bad weather. The development officer has already had discussions with Sport England about the possibility of applying to Inspired Facilities for this project. SiD is also pursuing the possibility of hosting a physiotherapist practice at the facility, potentially providing an opportunity to a newly qualified physiotherapist from a local college to set up their own business.

Local Community

SiD provides the village of Desford and the surrounding area with access to significant sporting and leisure facilities. The centre provides a range of activities from bowls to ballet lessons and from tennis coaching to a venue for parties and community gatherings. SiD is the delivery arm of the local health referral scheme whereby those referred are able to use the gym with a dedicated instructor. The centre also has numerous volunteers involved in its activities, such as the committee members of the resident sports clubs, as well as the group of people who support the tennis coach with the children's coaching sessions, all of whom are encouraged to gain their coaching qualifications. A number of work placements have also been provided by SiD to local students.

Key Findings

A key feature of this project is that the income from the solar panels will help to provide a sustainable future for a facility which supports a wide range of sports, drawing participation from all sectors of the local rural community. The solar panels are also a good example of how facilities such as this can take steps to reduce their carbon footprint at the same time as continuing to improve and develop; in this case with additions such as the tennis court floodlights and an increase in sports activities, all of which increase energy use at the facility, but the environmental impact of this is offset by the use of a low carbon energy source.

The development officer reported that he had applied to numerous other funders hoping to gain support to develop the tennis facilities, but these bids were rejected. It was felt that funders were unable to see the benefit an additional court would have to the tennis club, whereas completion of the project has demonstrated a positive impact in encouraging new players and retaining current members. The development manager noted that the Inspired Facilities funding is unique in that it has allowed SiD the flexibility to tackle a number of issues in one application including smaller items such as the car park lighting, the bowls sprinklers and the football pitch barriers alongside the two larger developments (a third tennis court and the solar panels).

The development officer concluded that the application process was very smooth:

"I would have no hesitation in applying again. Sport England supported me throughout the process allowing me to develop the project and use the Inspired funding to maximise the other grants we had secured".

(Development Officer)