

Village sports club is the heart of the community

Holland Sports Club in the village of Barton-under-Needwood, near Burton-on-Trent, is run entirely by volunteers. Charles Theaker, the current chairman, has been a volunteer there for many years.

The club is at the heart of the community and club offers a range of sports for local residents of all ages. One member, who is 75, enjoys regular tennis matches, and parents are encouraged to bring their young children and see which sports they'd like to try. With over 400 adults members, and a similar number of junior members, the club is thriving and its future looks positive.

Charles Theaker is the current chairman of the club, and has been involved as a tennis player and a volunteer for many years. Like many of the volunteers, Charles has used skills he developed at work to the lasting benefit of the club. His business experience proved invaluable when the club committee applied for funding from the local council and from Sport England, for a new multi-sport area for tennis, netball and five-a-side football. They received a Community Capital award of £46,551 from the Sport England Lottery Fund, towards the project costs.

The Holland Club makes a huge difference to the community. The team is looking forward to opening a brand new family room, children's playground and area for petanque later this summer. Volunteers have been carrying out much of the work themselves to maximise the funds available, even persuading a friendly JCB driver to come and level out the land!

Says Charles; "My jobs as club chairman is to do my bit to help keep things going, together with the volunteer team here. We have a limited budget, yet we are able to offer football, rugby, tug-of-war, tennis and netball. Junior sport is thriving, and we are able to fund professional coaching, as well as training by the fantastic volunteers."

Charles plays tennis for the club but his main sense of satisfaction comes from knowing he has been involved in helping to develop the club for everyone, especially the junior members, some of whom may be the volunteer committee members of the future.

Charles adds; "It is very rewarding to go to the club on Thursday evenings and see every pitch being used, and a full range of sports played by all age groups".

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