

Inspired Facilities



Fir Tree Fishery CIC



CASE STUDY THEMES

- Increased throughput
- Stronger long-term financial stability
- More coaching opportunities
- More competition opportunities
- Strong community focus
- Increased capacity of use

PROJECT SUMMARY

Summary

Fir Tree Fishery installed an extra 40 specialist coaching pegs and built a boardwalk around Fir Water to make the facility fully accessible for all users.

Facility name	Fir Tree Fishery
Lead organisation	Fir Tree Fishery
Organisation type	Community Interest Company (CIC)
Location	Wigan, Lancashire
Sport	Angling
Total project cost	£49,872
Inspired facilities funding	£47,582 (95% of total)
Other funding sources	Applicant (£2,290)
Tender process	Used specialist supplier
Contract type	Design and build
Start and end date	November 2013 - January 2014
Duration of capital works	9 weeks

Achieved outcomes

- Facility is now fully accessible to all users.
- Stronger long-term financial outlook due to negotiation of long term contracts with user groups.
- Increased participation (number of different users) and increased throughput (total visits).



Introduction

Fir Tree Fishery is a “not for profit distribution” angling facility based in Wigan, Lancashire. It was set up as a Community Interest Company (CIC) in 2011 to increase participation in angling amongst disability groups and provide education/training opportunities through BTEC's targeting NEET (young people not in education, employment or training) groups in Wigan. Due to the popularity of the fishery, the facility had become oversubscribed and, after various consultations and research by stakeholders at Fir Tree Fishery, it was clear there was a significant amount of latent demand, particularly from disability groups, schools and other services.

The Project

The installation of 40 specialist coaching pegs has provided additional capacity and also allows disabled anglers to work in groups with a coach. Alongside the installation of the coaching pegs, a 400-metre 'access for all' boardwalk was built around the outside of the lake to connect each coaching peg together. All the plastic materials used in the project were 100% recycled and this linked into the overall theme of the project being sustainable in the longer term and eco-friendly. The aim of the project was to increase participation within disability groups and to use angling as a channel to develop disabled users' skills.

PREVIOUS FACILITIES



NEW FACILITIES



Outcomes

The Facility

The capital investment of £47,582 made by Sport England with partnership funding of £2,290 to enable the following work to be undertaken:

- Feasibility report (£720)
- 40 Accessible fishing/coaching pegs (£23,335)
- Installation of an access path made of interlocking geo-grid sections (£25,937)

As a result of the funding Fir Tree Fishery has increased its capacity by 80% and the facility is now entirely accessible for wheelchair users. Due to this increased capacity, Fir Tree Fishery has been able to negotiate contracts with a significant number of local services for disabled users and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to come and use the facilities for enrichment, rehabilitation and educational purposes. This has increased the revenue generated at the facility from £30,000 in 2013 to £200,000 in 2014 and allowed Fir Tree Fishery to create new employment opportunities for apprentices, Level 2 angling coaches, tutors and Specialist Educators. The increase in participation has allowed Fir Tree Fishery to increase the capacity of the educational opportunities within the facility to incorporate Traineeships, Apprenticeships, SEND programmes and link with more local schools. Fir Tree Fishery now offer several pathways for students to study a BTEC course in Assisting Others in Angling, Land-based Studies and Fishery Management at the facility. Learners undertaking a BTEC course at Fir Tree Fishery gain experience by providing one-to-one angling coaching to disabled users from the local Stroke and Brain Injury groups. Martin Taylor (Founder & Managing Director at Fir Tree Fishery) stated that the funding from Sport England has allowed the business to really develop because it has allowed the business to meet the demand of new contracts and expand those they already hold. This has allowed them to focus on developing the educational side of the facility and supporting new people of all ages and abilities. They now have significantly more young people on programmes such as the BTEC in Fishery Management, and also now offer apprenticeships in this subject. Furthermore, the facility will allow them to deliver Adult Community Learning (ACL) provision for adults of all abilities who would like to get involved in the sport of angling but have little experience.

Participation

THROUGHPUT	Baseline	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Target	-	800	1,500	2,200	2,750	3,500
Actual	230	1,120	No data	No data	No data	No data

Fir Tree Fishery have had a full year of operation since the completion of the project and the headline figures show throughput has increase by 890 visits (490%) compared to the period before the project. Fir Tree Fishery surpassed its participation target for Year 1 by 320.

The facility does not have a membership scheme as it is a public facility that is available to all. The main users are disabled adults and this has increased due to Fir Tree Fishery being able to expand its services and provisions with local disability groups. Since the re-building work the fishery has also hosted competition matches for fishing clubs and charity days to help support and raise funds for several local charities.

Lead Organisation and Partners

Inspired Facilities funding accounted for the majority (95%) of the project cost. Fir Tree Fishery raised the remaining £2,290, they invited local businesses to sponsor individual coaching pegs for a fee of £100 and this enabled the facility to generate a proportion of additional funding. Without the funding from Sport England this project would not have gone ahead.

Local Community

Since Fir Tree Fishery was founded in 2011 it has forged strong links with several partners, most notably Wigan Council which currently funds educational programmes at the facility and Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust (which Fir Tree Fishery work in partnership with). In addition to this, since the completion of the project Fir Tree Fishery has been able to create and sustain links with several other disability groups. This is a direct result of the fishery having increased capacity and therefore this has given Fir Tree Fishery a sustainable revenue stream, and allowed the development of educational and community aspects of the business.

Together with the goal of increasing the participation of disabled users in angling, Fir Tree Fishery aims to engage users from NEET groups within Wigan to provide them with a channel to develop skills and gain qualifications through BTECs in fishery management and angling coaching courses offered at the facility. Due to the success in terms of uptake of disabled users, Fir Tree Fishery has been able to expand educational opportunities, and therefore engage more NEET young people.

Fir Tree Fishery has a strong community focus, after the project had been completed; the facility took the decision to introduce a junior angling academy and an Adult Community Learning provision, which created a link with local schools and residents in the local community. This was a user group that had not initially been targeted. The success of the project has allowed Fir Tree Fishery to focus on developing opportunities and programmes for this user group.

The following key findings were found from user surveys completed by Fir Tree Fishery:

- All respondents stated that they were very satisfied with the facility, and 79% of users stated their satisfaction of Fir Tree Fishery has increased following the completion of the project. Helpful staff (57%) and the quality of the facility (36%) were the two main reasons for satisfaction.
- 36% of users stated their participation at Fir Tree Fishery increased following the completion of the project, and the increase in use was almost 3 hours per week.
- 64% of users said that they would not have increased the time they spent at the facility without the improvements, and 14% of users stated it would have been unlikely they would have found an alternative facility if the improvements to Fir Tree Fishery had not been made, and therefore not participated as they do now.

Key Findings

There have been a number of key findings from Fir Tree Fishery, around participation, financial stability and wider social and community benefits, as summarised below:

- The expansion and accessibility improvements at Fir Tree Fishery have added significant capacity and this has allowed throughput to increase by 490% from pre-project to one year after completion.
- Due to the added capacity, Fir Tree Fishery has been able to negotiate several contracts with local authority, schools that will in turn support disability groups and disabled users under their care to come and use the facilities. Furthermore, increased opportunities in the education and coaching sectors have increased use.
- These additional opportunities and links have given Fir Tree Fishery a sustainable revenue stream and, as these contracts are long standing, it has allowed the facility to plan for the future and focus on other areas of the business too.
- Fir Tree Fishery has been able to expand the number of young people, and particularly NEET young people, taking qualifications at the facility. This part of the business has been really successful, already reaching capacity. Fir Tree Fishery is planning a project to open an educational eco-centre to further increase capacity in the educational side of the business.
- Due to the increased throughput levels, Fir Tree Fishery now has a secure financial future. Turnover pre-project was £30,000 per annum and after year 1 post project saw turnover increase to £200,000 per annum.

