

Inspired Facilities



Oxford Boxing Academy



CASE STUDY THEMES

- Boxing
- Asset transfer
- Increasing opportunities for participation
- Partnership working

PROJECT SUMMARY

Summary

Asset transfer from Oxfordshire County Council to the club to provide a dedicated boxing facility.

Facility name	Oxford Boxing Academy
Lead organisation	Oxford Boxing Academy
Organisation type	Community Amateur Sports Club
Location	Northway, Oxford
Sport	Boxing
Total project cost	£60,000
Inspired Facilities funding	£46,000 (77% of total)
Other funding sources	Donations; in-kind support
Tender process	n/a
Contract type	n/a
Start and end date	January 2012 - March 2012
Duration of capital works	Approx. 3 months

Achieved outcomes

- Creation of a permanent home for the club and a dedicated boxing facility.
- Increased number of sessions and opportunities to train.
- Improved attendance and reach.



Introduction

Oxford Boxing Academy was established in 1972 and used to meet twice a week at a youth club based in Wolvercote, Oxford. However, the youth club was due to close, so the head coach and other committee members had to begin the search for another venue. They had always been interested in setting up a dedicated boxing facility and the aim of the project was to purchase the freehold of a disused youth club in another part of Oxford from Oxfordshire County Council through an asset transfer model.

The Project

This project has brought a disused building (which use to be another youth club) back into community use, giving people a facility which can be used four evenings a week and at weekends.

The new facility provides the club with a permanent, purpose-built boxing gym. The building was valued at £165,000 (residential use), but the council sold it to the club for £46,000. A further £14,000 was required for minor internal works and much of this was funded by in-kind support and donations from club members and their parents.

The asset transfer model meant that for a relatively small amount of money the club could own its own building in which to establish a dedicated boxing facility which the club can use as and when it wants. Prior to this (over the past 40 years) the club had to share the facilities at a youth club with other sporting organisations and therefore was only able to operate one session on a limited number of evenings each week.

Outcomes

The Facility

The new facilities are exactly what the club required: a dedicated space which means they do not have to clear the boxing equipment away after every session. As they can now leave the punch bags in place, the facility is ready to use as soon as the members arrive for their session and so no time is lost in setting up. The club has also been loaned a boxing ring which belongs to another youth club in the area and was not being used and this has been a real asset to the club as it enables members to train in a ring before competitions. One user commented that it now feels like a “*proper boxing club*” and the young people interviewed were clearly proud of the new facilities.

Now that the club owns the building, they are free to decide when they hold the coaching sessions. The facility is open four evenings a week, running three different training sessions each evening and one on a Sunday morning. Many of the users consulted for this case study attend coaching sessions at least twice a week and some of the adult members are coaches as well as coming to the facility to train themselves. They have also been able let other organisations use the facility during the day including local schools and a local disabled charity.

The club is now able to offer multiple coaching sessions each evening for a variety of ages and abilities (including sessions for 10-16 year olds, men, ladies and those of competition standard)

Sport Participation

When the club moved into the new venue they had 10-15 boys training each week; 18 months on they now have 80 people attending sessions per week, some attending more than one.

The facility has also meant that those boxers who want to compete (some are at a national level) are able to train as much as they need to and have the facilities available to prepare for high level competitions. Many of the club’s members are from the local community, but others travel up to 20 miles to use the facilities.

Of the 23 club members who responded to the user survey undertaken as part of this case study, nine reported that the amount of time they spend doing physical activity at the facility had increased over the past six months and a further 11 reported that they had maintained their activity levels over this period. The main factors motivating respondents to increase or maintain their activity levels were a desire to improve their health and fitness (mentioned by 12 people), social reasons (11) and the quality of the facility (10).

THROUGHPUT	Baseline	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Target	n/a	7,500	10,000	12,500	15,000	17,500
Actual	1,900	-	-	-	-	-

Lead Organisation and Partners

The club worked with Oxfordshire County Council to complete the asset transfer. The club currently works with numerous partners to provide boxing sessions, including work with the local police force to support reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour in East Oxford. The club works closely with local schools to run sessions for young people who are on the verge of being excluded from school.

Local Community

Initially some people in the local community were unsure about a boxing club having a dedicated base nearby, as some local residents felt that it might bring trouble to the area. However, the club has now become well integrated into the community and the vandalism which use to blight the building, when it was a youth club, has stopped. The club members take pride in the facilities and many were involved in refurbishing the building and converting it into a boxing gym. The club even has chickens in the garden, which club members and the owner of the local post office (which is located over the road from the club) look after.

Many of the users reported that the club has a community feel which they enjoyed being part of and that the head coach was dedicated to helping young people succeed.



Key Findings

This project demonstrates that a small club with a good reputation and committed coaches can expand if it is given the opportunity to do so, in this case the opportunity to own a building which has been turned into a dedicated boxing facility and permanent home for the club.

Specialist boxing facilities are not widely available, but it is clear that this club is able to sustain itself because of the range of sessions it is able to offer, which appeal to a wide section of the community. Now that they have their own facility they can open for as long as they want and have introduced boxing to a wider range of people than they were able to do previously, such as younger boys and women. One coach said; *“we offer more boxing for fitness sessions now, not just competition boxing, which means we attract different kinds of people.”*

For Oxfordshire County Council, the asset transfer model has meant that a community building, which was not well used in the recent past and had been a subject of vandalism, has now become an important part of the local community, providing people with a sporting facility to be proud of which can be used throughout the week. As a Council representative said *“the future of the property has now been secured.”* The Council’s cabinet were keen that the asset transfer model supported the community in doing the types of activity they wanted to do and it is felt that this has been achieved.

