



Operational Report - April 2010

General

This has been a turbulent year for us, with changes to both the Board of Directors and to the Operational Staff employed at the centre. Over the last few months, working parties have been established to assist both the Directors and the Staff. These Working Parties are made up of Volunteers who work closely with a named Trustee to mastermind a particular Project. These include revising Health & Safety (including 1st Aid) procedures, Marketing, IT & Website and also the Community Centre Kitchen refurbishment. Some of these are anticipated to be implemented and completed this year, whilst others are part of our long term plan and the end date is still under discussion. Other Working Parties that have been identified are Human Resources & Training, Finance and the Wind Turbine Project - volunteers are sought to assist with these projects.

We are very grateful to the Debenham Parish Council who has offered to fund the cost of a replacement Oil Tank for us. We remain grateful to Mid Suffolk District Council for the annual revenue funding received, despite this gesture we still find it very difficult financially with the ever increasing cost of our overheads and the various forms of Legislation that are introduced each year that we have to adhere to.

Sports

We offer a wide variety of sports for all ages and abilities. We continue to host several County and Inter-league matches in Football, Badminton & Bowls and are regularly congratulated on our fine facilities and level of hospitality from our visitors.

We are the home base of Debenham Badminton Club, Deben Vale Badminton Club, Debenham Bowls Club, Debenham Karate Club, Debenham Bridge Club, Debenham Squash Club, The Kickboxing Academy, Debenham Tennis Club, Debenham Football Club, Debenham Youth Football Club, Saxtead School of Dance and Debenham Daytime Ladies Club.

We also run an extensive programme of Exercise, Dance, Pilates & Yoga classes for adults, along with an Art Club, Bridge Club, Carpet Bowls Club, Scottish Country Dancing, Jazz & Modern Tap and Tap Dancing classes.

We offer regular coaching sessions for children in Football, Tennis, Hockey, Cricket, Squash, Basketball, Kick-Boxing, Trampolining, Dance, Badminton, Netball, Karate and, in association with 'Polka Dots', a Drama and Performing Arts Club.

The Football Club based at the centre currently runs 2 adult teams, with the first team playing in the Eastern Counties League and the 2nd eleven playing in the Reserves Section, plus an U18 team in the Eastern Counties Youth League. We now have the Debenham Adult Ladies playing in the Suffolk League and we have been selected to host the Intercounty Final between Suffolk and Bedfordshire Ladies. The Youth Section also has 14 teams, including 3 Girls teams, providing competitive and development matches for children aged 8-18. We also deliver an extensive Summer Holiday Programme with a wide range of activities from just play, to County standard coaching.

Badminton Coaching starts in May and one of our junior members Ben Meade has been selected for the England under 16 Basketball Squad.

The Fitness Studio is very popular, and we are starting to augment this with regular Circuit Sessions from May.

The Skatepark has been closed, due to Health & Safety Risk Assessment. Unfortunately, the Skateboarders keep removing the barriers. We are currently assessing the situation. Discussions are ongoing with Project D regarding funding.



Leisure

The Community Centre continues to flourish and is booked most weekends for events and every weeknight for activities/clubs etc. Over the past 12 months we have had a variety of hirers, from private bookings for weddings and parties to corporate events and conferences. We are pleased to be the home of The Forge Community Church (FCC) and every Sunday morning, FCC bring over 350 visitors to the Centre each week. We have also benefited from FCC's Acts of Random Kindness (ARK) Days, where their members spend the day carrying out repairs/decorating and cleaning on a voluntary basis.

The community centre lists amongst its regular users Debenham Young Farmers, the Women's Institute, Dance East, Suffolk Farm Machinery Club, Debenham Players, Eastern Angles, Bury Theatre Royal, Wingfield Arts, Suffolk Primary Care, Blood Donors, Stowmarket Lions, Mid Suffolk District and Suffolk County Councils, Third Eye Theatre Company, plus most of the local schools also enjoy this facility.

Last week we hosted the Stowmarket Lions Boxing Dinner. This was a great success. Masterminded by Mel Aldis and ably assisted by Sue Thurlow, this was our slickest operation yet.

One of the major DLC events is the Country Music Festival and Caravan Rally. This is scheduled for June this year and is fully booked (it brought in around 450 people to the village for 5 days last year) - this not only helps the Leisure Centre financially but these visitors also support all the other businesses in the village.

Last November saw us host the 11th Bonfire & Firework Spectacular with an estimated 800 visitors to this free event, which was only made possible due to the generous donations by local companies and organisations and the voluntary efforts of a number of villagers. With the increase in the cost of Fireworks we will need to find even more financial support for this year's event, so please direct any possible sponsors towards the Leisure Centre Reception.

The DLC remains grateful to Mid Suffolk District Council for the annual revenue funding received, despite this gesture we still find it very difficult financially with the ever increasing cost of our overheads and the various forms of Legislation that are introduced each year that we have to adhere to.

DLC enjoys an average 2600 visitors per week for Sport and Leisure and the Deben Lounge is still a favourite social meeting place for many people. January this year saw the 1st anniversary of Zeera's Indian offering fine Indian Cuisine to eat in the Deben Lounge or takeaway, this has been a tremendous addition to our services that we offer to the local area.

As well as the Debenham Schools, Hartismere, Stowmarket and Stradbroke High Schools, Bedfield, Occold, Worlingworth, Helmingham and Wetheringsett Primary Schools have all benefited from our facilities in Sport and the Arts.

This Multi-Use-Games-Area (known affectionately as the MUGA) is still managed by DLC in the evenings and weekends on behalf of the High School.

We continue to work with the minimum staffing levels that current legislation allows and so at times the DLC Staff are somewhat stretched, the continued support of the villagers and surrounding district is very much appreciated as we strive to maintain the levels of Sport and Leisure available at an affordable rate to all in Debenham.

Finally, our AGM is on 18th May in the Community Centre and we look forward to seeing you all there. We are holding a Taster Day on Sunday 23rd May from 13:30 at the Centre so why not come along for a chat and have a look at the activities and facilities on offer.

If anyone would like to discuss any of the activities at DLC or like to offer any suggestions or advice please do not hesitate to contact either myself or the Staff at the Leisure Centre.