

## **Project D Debenham Skate Park Project Report for Parish Council Meeting 23/5/2011**

### **Aims and Objectives**

The overall project aim is to provide a wheeled play facility that will allow young people to participate in safe, affordable (free to use) and enjoyable activities in their local area by regenerating the existing skate park site at Debenham Sports and Leisure.

### **Projected Outputs**

The provision of a much needed recreation/ sporting facility for young people providing a space where they can safely and legitimately participate in their chosen sport and meet friends. *(Young people are often without the means to travel from the village which is poorly served with affordable recreation facilities for young people).*

Good play provision, which offers those seeking it genuine challenge and excitement, can help prevent bored children and young people behaving in ways that are socially unacceptable.

There will be an improvement in the physical health of the young people using the skate park. *(Participation in sports/ physical activity drops dramatically when young people reach their mid teens and/ or leave school. This facility will encourage greater participation, providing an enjoyable, sociable way to keep fit. Physical fitness is known to bring with it a more positive state of mind, increasing confidence and self esteem).*

### **Progress**

Since April 2010 there has been very little progress with the project. The meeting scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> May 2010 to select a design for the skate park was halted due to a communication received from DS&L raising several concerns with the project which needed addressing i.e. unaccompanied children under the age of 16 not being allowed to use the centre. Until this had been clarified by the insurers for DS&L we were unable to proceed actively on the project.

The group continued to hold fundraising events throughout the year as planned, hosting stalls at the street fair, Dove Cottage, the Christmas shopping event, selling Project D t-shirts and hoodies, etc. We even hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Debenham Apple Day.

During the summer holidays Project D organised an Urban Art Workshop which was a free activity (funding being provided by Extended Schools and Debenham Youth Club), there was also an Under 18's Club Night "Soundz like Summer" held at the Community Centre.

July 2010 the old ramps were removed from the skate park site by DS&L. People were continuing to use them and DS&L were concerned that there was no insurance provision for the skate park. We were advised this was happening.

At the end of August we met with DS&L to discuss the concerns raised in May. The result of this meeting was a request for a formal proposal for the skate park project to be submitted to the Board

of DS&L for consideration. This was duly delivered in October 2010 – a formal response to the document has never been received.

February 2011 a working party was established with representatives from all interested parties to address the youth shelter and the skate park projects.

Following a number of meetings (and at time of writing) we are still waiting for confirmation of a figure for rental of the skate park site before we can proceed any further. In principal the location of the skate park at DS&L has been agreed as has the requested extension of the site to provide a more versatile design to allow greater accommodation of disciplines, abilities and age ranges.

### **Mobile Skate Park**

We have been fortunate to work with Peta Jones of Mid Suffolk to bring the mobile skate park twice to Debenham. The first time during the summer holidays 2010 and because of the responsible use and behaviour of the users it returned at Easter 2011 (resulting in a wonderful double page spread in the EADT). This was made possible through Lottery Funding via Mid Suffolk.

The outcome both times supported the need for such a facility in Debenham and also showed those unfamiliar with skate park etiquette that users of all ages and abilities are able to use the facility at the same time.

We are hoping that there is just enough money left in the pot for the mobile skate park to return this summer. In addition we are currently investigating the hire of the Babergh Mobile Skate Park.

### **Next Steps**

Once confirmation of rental amount has been provided in writing we are in a position to seek provision/ funding to secure the site and the future maintenance and insurance of the facilities.

We will then approach the design companies again requesting them to submit further designs for the improved site, accommodating the agreed requirements/ conditions.

Once we have a design and documented costs we can start funding applications for the project.

Project D will continue to fund raise as a group with a number of activities in the pipeline.