

Year One of the Vale Park Community Initiative

October 2005 – October 2006



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Federation of
Stadium Communities

Project Aim

The project aims to develop community initiatives focussing on Port Vale Football Club using the power of sport to tackle inequalities in health, education and employment for all population groups living in the neighbourhood of the stadium.

Work Plan

An updated work plan was produced following the 2nd round of community consultation in line with the recommendations that came from the consultation this was agreed by the VPCI Steering Group at the meeting in June.

Port Vale Community Facilities Plan.

During the 2nd period of the project Port Vale FC have, as part of loan agreement, entered into a partnership with the city council to produce a Community Facilities Plan. The majority of the work has been to look at the community work already undertaken at the club, produce baselines for the work and implement monitoring and evaluation procedures for the future. This will also see the production of a community strategy for the club, which in partnership with the city council, VPCI has agreed to undertake the research, development and production of. This will help to integrate the good work already underway with future work in what promises to be a significant tool in the clubs community work.

The facilities plan will look at the work done by the club itself, through charitable donations, player appearances and facility use. The work of the Football in the Community scheme throughout the area and the work of the VPCI. This will then produce the baseline for the community strategy which will show the clubs commitment to its community.

Activities

- **Re Objective 1 –Raising aspirations in learning – developing links between club and local schools and training providers.**

0-6 Months

A physical activity project is being developed with Hay wood High School, Haywood City Learning Centre, the School Sports Development Officer and Port Vale FC, in which Sports Leaders will act as volunteer placements to help organise and run a rolling programme of activities for older and younger people using both the school, the Learning Centre and Port Vale FC as venues. The project will be piloted at the end of the summer term and will become part of a regular programme of activities.

6-12 Months

After a short delay in the Sports Leaders being trained then the impact of the summer school holidays it is hoped this project will run as a pilot shortly after

the October half term holidays. The project will include access to a Community Sports Leaders Award program for the pupils and the community.

Creative Partnership Project – Stadium City

0-6 Months

The project is working with BBC Radio Stoke, Creative Partnerships, creative artists, Stoke City FC Port Vale FC and pupils from Haywood High School and St Thomas Moore School using Stoke City and Port Vale Football Clubs as creative settings to engage the imagination of young people and explore issues of cultural and civic identity. This will involve:

- 30, Year 9 students from St Thomas Moore and 30 from Haywood High School to work with creative partners to make a total of ten 2 minute films (five per school)
- Five of these films to be broadcast over a week on local BBC TV, the remaining 5 to possibly broadcast at a later date
- The ten films to be edited together to make one 20-30 minute film, possibly with links by the Radio Stoke sports presenter.
- The 10 short films to be very different, using contrasting approaches, foci, and media (film, stills photography, animation) for making professional TV. Within this, it will be up to the students, working with creative partners, to generate ideas and interpret the brief creatively.
- In addition to creating the films, the students to participate in the process of developing the longer film (eg.writing links, editing).

The films will be premiered at the clubs in September

6-12 Months

The participants attended ideas creating days at Port Vale FC, and then spent time at the club producing the short films. The launch of the films will be on October the 11th with a follow up meeting and evaluation of the project set for December. This will include ways in which the project can continue and look at addressing the issues and themes raised by the participants.

The Arts project

0-6 Months

In partnership with the Conference and Banqueting team at Port Vale, the VPCI ran a competition for local schools art students to design the new fascias for the Conference and Banqueting facility at Vale Park. The prizes included having the designs made up for the side of the stands and a full executive match day experience.

Through the work of the community consultation the Vale Park Community Initiative and Birches Head High School are looking to create a 'Local Pride'

mural underneath one of the stands at Vale Park. This project is in the early stages of looking to set up a student led group to identify the possibilities of the project.

6-12 Months

The project has moved on to incorporate work with a local youth centre. After consultation with the Young People at the centre and in partnership with the Vale Park Community Initiative, the group are in the process of making an Awards For All bid to work with a local community artist to create a mural for the stadium based around civic pride. This will include a series of design and ideas sessions at the club throughout the coming months. This also links with the work the youth group is working on around the area of civic pride.

Healthy Walks Initiative

0-6 Months

A series of identified healthy walks with Port Vale as the main start point is being developed with the support of Staffordshire Moorlands Healthy Walks Co-ordinator and the national government initiative 'Walking Your Way to Health.

Walking Your Way to Health Walk Leader training is being held 10th May, with the continued development of healthy walks from Vale Park encompassing the ground itself. A total of 12 people are taking part, and it is hope to run further courses to meet the demand that has been generated. This project will link the club to the extensive 'greenway' walks and canals and Burslem Park. In partnership with Burslem Park Development Fund, local walking clubs and historians it is hoped the project will develop into a Healthy Walks Group led by a participant from the Walk Leader Training.

6-12 Months

The project has now identified a series of walks and is in the process of developing a partnership with the local PCT to use the ground as a focus point for its childrens obesity campaign. This partnership will hopefully lead to gaining funding to produce a pack to identify the walks and the health benefits associated with walking. This would also link into the ongoing Healthy Stadia work.

- **Re Objective 2 – Intergenerational Activities**

A Taster Event was held in October which included a demonstration event of gentle exercise for older people, in which pupils from Haywood High also took part; indoor bowls in which older people instructed younger people to play; reminiscence work looking at former remedies ;and conversations with former Vale Park players, and looking at Vale Park memorabilia

Vale Park Community Initiative - Interactive DVD

0-6 Months

Funding was secured from Staffordshire Learning Fund to run three workshops held at Haywood Learning Centre and Port Vale FC to record interviews with former players and their wives and to digitally archive memorabilia gathered by the Sproson Fund.

The group of young people from Haywood High School and a group of older people from the Burslem Community have together created an interactive DVD which shares their experiences of Port Vale.

The process has led to the proposed development of three further projects:

An oral history project now being discussed with Heritage Lottery Sports leaders leading a rolling programme of physical activities identified during the process of making the DVD, that younger and older people could both enjoy (see above)

Regular reminiscence sessions with pupils and players

6-12 Months

After the production of the DVD and further consultation with the groups involved the project was seen to be a valuable tool for the community and through the FSC are in the process of applying to the Local Heritage Fund to develop an oral history project, based around the club and its community. The project will capture and celebrate, the stories of former players, their families and people living in the neighbourhood of Port Vale FC during the 1950s and 60s.

It will work with students from Haywood High School to make the recordings and to produce, in partnership with the Sproson Fund, Haywood Learning Centre, Port Vale FC, the Library service and City archives, a variety of means (including an exhibition, CD ROM, inputs to websites and educational material)) of sharing the material with all sections of the local community.

- **Re Objective 3 Support for Valiants Against Racism**

0-6 Months

April saw the launch of the phone line for reporting racist incidents at Port Vale home games. The VPCI Development Worker is the link between VAR and the club and in charge of reporting messages left on the line.

VAR is also on the verge of achieving level one equity standard, the nationally recognised Kick It Out standard for the promotion of anti-racism projects and programmes at football clubs, which the VPCI has played an important part in helping. This included gaining funding for VAR from the Stand Up Speak Up fund totalling £4500.

6-12 Months

Working in partnership with the VPCI and the Port Vale Volunteers group. VAR held the Valiants Against Racism Community Cohesion shield, 5-a-side football tournament. The tournament saw over a hundred people take part, with participants from numerous BME communities, including a team from the Refugee and Asylum seekers Piccadilly project. The tournament was a huge success and it is hoped to become a regular feature of the VAR Action plan. VAR also received the Kick It Out Level 1 Equity Standard for the work to combat racism at Port Vale. The work includes the Anti-Racism hotline, training for matchday staff and stewards and also a website and membership scheme. October will also see the annual Kick It Out Day of Action with the Vale Park Community Initiative being the main contact within the club for the campaign.

- **Re Objective 4 Support for The Supporters Trust**

0-6 Months

Throughout the season the VPCI has helped the supporters trust to engage local voluntary organisations and charities in executive match day experiences in an executive box very kindly provided by funding from the Valiants Supporters Trust. This has allowed groups who may otherwise never have the opportunity to have such an experience through low income, physical or mental disability. Throughout the season this has proved a very popular experience and one in which the project is hoping it may be able to find funding to continue.

6-12 Months

VPCI is continuing to work with the supporters trust in applying for an awards for all grant to create a community arts project in a local museum. The trust are also engaging in the oral history project.

Also working in partnership with Port Vale FC 'Boot Room Club', in which local businesses pay for various sponsorship opportunities at the club, but also get 50 tickets to distribute to local community groups and charities. The VPCI is working with the businesses to identify relevant local groups that can access the 'community tickets' by working on the various community projects at the club.

- **Re Objective 5 Community Engagement**

Partnership Agreement

The Steering Group is now meeting bi monthly at Port Vale FC. A Partnership Agreement has been signed by all founder members and this will be displayed in various key locations around the ground.

Community Consultation

0-6 Months

A second round of community consultation has now been completed. (Appendix 2) This involved focus groups with 8 different groups. Recommendations on future action will be taken to the next Steering Group meeting

6-12 Months

The next phase of community consultation will be in conjunction with the clubs community facility plan and will be done in partnership with the club and city council. The information gathered will form a large part of the work in the clubs community strategy.

Community Pricing Structure

0-6 Months

In partnership with the Conference and Banqueting team at Port Vale the Vale Park Community Initiative has developed a community pricing structure for the use of facilities at Vale Park. This agreement allows local community groups, charities, schools and projects to access facilities and catering at a reduced rate, sometimes free of charge.

6-12 Months

The community pricing structure is still very much in place and working alongside numerous community groups to provide access to meeting and training rooms at the club. Work on a pricing structure for new venues currently being developed at the ground is underway, and all will carry the partnership statement of conference and banqueting working in partnership with the VPCI.

- **Re Objective 6 Health Promotion**

Active in Age Training

0-6 Months

The Beth Johnson Foundation completed an initial three week course aimed at providing older people with the necessary capabilities and opportunities to run community activities. The course took place at Vale Park and attracted a lot of local participants. It is hoped that some of the participants will go onto lead some of the Healthy Walks and other community activities.

Beth Johnson have now held a second series of training at Vale Park with members of projects attached to VPCI. The walk leader training was also promoted through the Beth Johnson network and will have attendees from the course.

6-12 Months

VPCI continues to host Active In Age training at Port Vale. Through the partnership the participants of the program are also involved in the oral history project, through both the training aspect of reminiscence work and the participants for the intergenerational work. A selection of the Active in Age participants also took part in the Walk Leader Training and it is hoped they will use the identified walks around Vale Park with the groups they are working with.

Healthy Eating at Vale Park

The project has worked with Port Vale Conference & Banqueting and North Stoke PCT to introduce healthy option menus. These are now offered to anyone using the stadium and are recognised as 'healthy' by the NHS. The healthy options menus have been a great success and received excellent feedback at the club. In conjunction with Conference and Banqueting at the club it is intended to run trial days with healthy options in the kiosks on matchdays.

- **Re Objective 7 Environment**

World Environmental Week

0-6 Months

VPCI working with the Environment Agency will host an environment awareness day at Vale Park, combined with a cleanup of recreational land adjoining the club. This will involve local schools and environment agencies. Four local schools will also design 'Promise Trees' made from recycled material, to show their commitment to raising awareness of environmental issues. Hopefully long term this project will see the area made into a much clearer open walkway, creating improved access between the leisure centre, the club and the high school.

6-12 Months

Working with the Environment Agency the VPCI hosted a World Environment Day Awareness Day. This included a volunteer clear up of some of the community spaces around Vale Park, with volunteers from Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Environment Agency and Groundwork West Midlands. Over 45 volunteers turned up on the day and took part in the clear up and also an afternoon awareness session on ways we can help the environment. Through the work carried out environmental work will form part of the club community strategy.

- **Re Objective 8 Cultural Diversity**

Adult Learners Week

0-6 Months

In partnership with Haywood Learning Centre, Haywood High School, College in the Community and Port Vale Community Initiative. With funding from NIACE the project will run a competition for Adults to write a short story or poem about their experiences of sport, football, supporting a club or games they used to or still do play.

6-12 Months

The adult learners event proved to be a large disappointment after a last minute change of venue and the inexperience of working with the initiative, led to a very low number of participants not only attending but also taking part in the competition. It is proposed to take part in next years event but with extra planning time and much clearer outline for the project.

BRIEF REPORT

- **COMMUNITY BENEFIT**

The community has continued to benefit from the project through use of facilities at Vale Park but also from the improved relationship the initiative has with Port Vale FC. This is allowing the club to develop its approach to community work on many more levels and through many more subjects and avenues. The project has gained recognition on both a local and national level as being a pioneering and unique way in which communities can influence and benefit from the positives in which the local club can have on its neighbourhood.

- **ANY PROBLEMS**

The project has encountered a couple of projects in the last 6 months which are not directly connected to any of the parts of the project. Unfortunately I, Jonathan Pace, Community Development Officer for the project was involved in a serious road accident and ended up having a considerable amount of the 6 months off through illness. The other major subject to affect the project in this period was that of the school holidays. With all community work the school holidays and staff on annual leave left some of the projects moving quite slowly. Something that will not doubt be taken into consideration for this time period next year.