

VALE PARK COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

2ND YEAR REPORT

COALFIELDS REGENERATION TRUST



VALE PARK COMMUNITY INITIATIVE – Second Year Report

The second year of the Vale Park Community Initiative has seen the further development of links between Port Vale FC and the Federation of Stadium Communities. The second phase of the project concentrated on working to deliver aspects of the ‘taster activities’ carried out during the first twelve months.

PORT VALE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

After the taster sessions held in the first year of the project a successful application to National Lottery Heritage Fund has seen the FSC able to employ a part-time development worker to co-ordinate the popular Port Vale Tales. Building on a series of initiatives at Port Vale with former players and local school pupils the project captures and celebrates the stories of former players, their families, supporters and people living in the neighbourhood of Port Vale FC from the 1950’s to present day.

The project focuses on the following main themes:

Match days – spectator perspectives, characters, food, traditions and chants.

Players Perspectives – training, playing and diet.

Family – day to day life living near a stadium

Kit and Equipment

Port Vales past grounds

Memory mapping – the hidden and forgotten links between people, places and the club comparing maps over time.

It will create valuable educational material for use in the local secondary schools. It will engage with all generations, including those that are housebound and by the process of sharing stories bring generations together.

PORT VALE FOOTBALL CLUB PAYP PROJECT

The last couple of months have seen the development of a partnership with Port Vale FITC, Vale Park Community Initiative and Staffordshire Connexions. The initial project is to deliver two courses for 10 young people within the NEET category. The project is funded by Connexions and will include a ‘living well’ element to include job searches, cv writing and money advice. This will run alongside two physical activity elements, a Level 1 Football coaching course and a Community Sports Leaders Award.

The first two courses are pilots for a bigger funding application and delivery program in the new year.

VALIANTS AGAINST RACISM

July saw the 3rd annual Valiants Against Racism Community Cohesion football tournament. As a partner the VPCI was an integral part of what is a very successful and well attended event in the VAR calendar. Over 100 people from

various communities took part in the tournament which was hosted by the local leisure centre. The eventual winners by means of a penalty shootout were the previous years winners Grange Park Rangers.

Summary of event

On Sunday afternoon, 22nd July, around 100 players from a range of ethnic backgrounds will come together to play in the fourth Valiants Against Racism Community Shield Football Tournament at Dimensions Leisure Centre in Burslem.

The tournament will feature ten teams from across Stoke-on-Trent and will feature players from White-British, Black-British, and British-Asian backgrounds as well as from Kurdish and African asylum and refugee communities.

Previous winners of the tournament have included Fusion Link Community All-Stars of Hanley, Real Macot of Normacot and Grange Park Rangers from Cobridge.

All players and their families will be invited to Vale Park immediately after the tournament for a special trophy presentation where they will receive medals from leading Port Vale players and local MP Joan Walley. Participants will be provided with multi-cultural food, refreshments and with badges, stickers and magazines provided by the national Kick It Out project. Players will also have a chance to look at the nationally acclaimed History of Black Footballers exhibition and Valiants Against Racism display boards.

VPCI has also played an important role in gaining the funding for VAR to produce its own interactive website due to launch on 27th October in conjunction with National Kick Racism Out of Football fortnight.

GAME ON.

In partnership with North Staffs Racial Equality Council, Reveal Theatre Company, Valiants Against Racism and VPCI funding applications have been submitted to deliver an anti-racism theatre project across three schools. Funding from the Home Office was obtained to run a pilot across two schools initially. The proposal is to deliver a three phase project to combat anti-racism in schools and work to address the issues around transition from junior school to high school. Phase 1 - To deliver workshops around the anti-racism work already underway in sport.

Phase 2 - Devising and rehearsals

Phase 3 – Delivery of theatre production. Each of the schools will perform their plays to one another and also perform on a launch night at Vale Park.

PORT VALE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SCHEME

The volunteer scheme is aimed at recruiting local people (16+) to be trained as sports leaders with a view for them to access community groups to plan and deliver a programme of sport to young people. The scheme has been developed by Stoke on Trent Council's Closing the Gap Programme and the Vale Park Community Initiative (FSC). It aims to increase the skills and opportunities of local adults, increase the levels of sporting participation of young people and improve the relationship of Port Vale Football Club and the local community.

The first recruitment drive took place earlier this year at Port Vale Football Club where members of Closing the Gap handed out leaflets promoting the scheme and explaining the benefits of volunteering. Posters were put up across the north of Stoke-on-Trent in community centres, sports facilities, libraries and youth clubs. From this initial drive 8 volunteers came forward, 6 of which were put on a Community Sports Leaders Award.

This course lasted 10 weeks, 5 volunteers completed. These individuals are in the process of setting up their own sessions with the help and support of Closing the Gap. 2 sessions are scheduled to start at the beginning of November. 2 volunteers have consulted with the young people at the youth inclusion project in Burslem, to help them understand the needs of their group. The session with YIP will be held at Dimensions on a Wednesday night from 6- 7.30 pm. This will be a multi- sports session for young people aged 8- 12. The second session will be held at Swan Bank Methodist Church and will be open to all young people aged 7-11. An introductory session will be held on the 15th Nov, where volunteers will explain the session to the young people and give them a taster of the sports they will experience. This session will then start fully on the 23rd November. Certificates will be handed out to all young people who attend at least 8 of the 10 sessions, and prizes will be arranged for young people who show exceptional enthusiasm or improvement.

The second phase of recruitment is due to be held on 6th November during the home game at Port Vale Football Club, where current volunteers will help to recruit the second group of potential Sports Leaders. Information will be available to anyone who is interested and leaflets will be handed out.

The overall aim of the volunteer scheme is to produce a number of sustainable volunteer groups, working across the North of Stoke-on Trent, each with its own volunteer co-ordinator. The most enthusiastic and able volunteer will be trained in volunteer management by Closing the Gap, enabling each group to function independently.

HEALTHY WALKS PROJECT

After working closely with the City Councils 'New Life Officer' the project proposal for a Healthy Walks initiative was developed, unfortunately due to the loss of the

New Life Officer post within the city council, the project has been re-designed and a new application for funding will be submitted to the British Heart Foundation funding stream in Jan 08.

GRAFFITI PROJECT @ PVFC

Over the summer the Stoke-on-Trent young offending team together with unity delivered a 6 week summer college program to persistent young offenders on. The summer college was developed by the arts council and the youth justice board with the aim of using creative media to engage and train young people in a unique way. The session plans also embedded literacy and numeracy into the lessons, resulting in nearly 50% of the group improving in basic skills by going up a level by the end of the 6 weeks.

As part of the summer college's visual arts strand the young people had to work with a graffiti artist to create a mural in a public place. Working in partnership with VPCI and Port Vale FC the group took part in site visits and development afternoons at Vale Park. The piece was created over a number of sessions which included preparation of the wall, drawings, sketching, and the final completion of the mural which was themed over the regeneration and heritage of Stoke-on-Trent together with images relevant to Port Vale and its surrounding communities.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

Into the second phase of the Community Strategy, the VPCI continues to act as the main point of call for the plan. Work has continued to improve the links between the club and the City Councils local strategies.

PORT VALE FC PLAYER AMBASSADOR SCHEME

The project aims to link the players of Port Vale with a number of community and school projects to allow the players to develop relationships with projects going on at the club and in the surrounding area. The project will be documented by Staffordshire University Media department, and at the same time be offering the players the opportunity to receive media training.

PORT VALE OPEN DAY

This year saw for the first time a designated area at the open day, for local community groups, projects and initiatives to showcase their work and develop links with Port Vale FC.

PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

The project has continued to actively seek and engage with other partners and has been presented at a regional PCT Conference, a national Supporters-Direct conference, National Football League presentation and also now sits on the local Area Implementation Team steering group.

OUTPUTS FOR VPCI

No of Community activities supported – Target 10

Achieved – 15

This period – VAR Tournament / PVFC Open Day / Graffiti Project / Port Vale Tales

No of New Volunteers – Target 48

Achieved – 37

This period – Community Engagement scheme / Port Vale Tales

A second planned recruitment drive for the Community Engagement program was slightly delayed due to changes in the management structure at the football club, it is now re-scheduled for 6th November – Port Vale v Crewe Alexandra.

No of People benefiting from the project – Target 935

Achieved - 1108

This period – VAR Tournament / Game On / Community Engagement Project / Graffiti Project / Port Vale Tales

No of Young People Benefiting from the project – Target 750

Achieved – 862

VAR Tournament / Game On / Graffiti Project / Port Vale Tales

Number of New Groups Supported – Target 5

Achieved – 5

Community Engagement / Teams in VAR Tournament / Port Vale Tales

FORWARD STRATEGY FOR VPCI

Future management

The aim of the project to develop community initiatives focussing on Port Vale FC has been met as detailed in the evaluation report. The project has demonstrated that sport and the stadia can engage marginalised groups. The challenge is how to turn the successful one off or short term initiatives into the delivery of sustainable projects.

At the beginning of the project the Supporters Trust was a key and enthusiastic partner, and it was envisaged that the project would build their capacity to eventually manage an on-going project working to the same Steering Group. Unfortunately, The Supporters Trust ceased to function effectively for over a year and is only now slowly reforming. It does not therefore as yet have the capacity to manage the project.

The Steering Group and it's make up, is a key element of this project. It has always had local community representation, but members have recognised the need to encourage and support further grass root membership. This is an on-going process.

Future Funding

Feedback indicates those ‘tasters’ that have the support to be developed as full projects. There is a need now:

- To focus on the management and delivery of those projects that experience shows most effectively use the power of sport, the brand of the club and the facilities on offer, to engage local communities and address local issues.
- To support community individuals to play a fuller role on the Steering Group

The project as a whole will focus on delivery of:

- *Projects to address the health and well being needs of the local population.*
- *Projects to address local community cohesion and inclusivity issues*

The budget to continue the project is:

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Salary | 21,579 | 22,246 | 22,934 |
| NI and pension | 3,279 | 3,380 | 3,484 |
| Admin | 500 | 500 | 500 |
| Training | 500 | 500 | 500 |
| Travel | 2,000 | 2,061 | 2,124 |
| Publicity/promotion | 500 | 500 | 500 |
| Management | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| TOTAL | 31,357 | 32,187 | 33,042 |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Funding has been secured from the Football Foundation for a 3 year MEND (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do it!) Programme. This child obesity project will be the first such Programme designed with a specific football element. The Programme will be managed by the Vale Park Community Initiative manager who will also deliver the theory elements. The Funding will contribute £10,000 to the overall project budget.

An application has been submitted to the TSB for a further £15,000 to support the community cohesion and inclusivity element of the project.

Further smaller bids will be made for example to Awards for All for the delivery of projects such as Healthy Walks, and a bid will be made to Playful Ideas (Big Lottery) for a collaborative project with Staffordshire University to research the impact and value of using Port Vale FC as the first football club venue for a Children's Centre