

# Melin's Youth Sports Initiative



Here's an overview of our community development team's award winning youth sports initiative. The initiative encourages younger residents to get active by giving them the opportunity to try a range of sports and activities including football, rugby, tennis, fishing, rock climbing and bowls.

It was developed as a result of our Community Development officers who noticed that young people on our estates, with real sporting talent, were excluded from joining local sporting clubs because of a stigma due to where they lived and the affordability of participating.

They addressed these issues by arranging sports coaching sessions, especially during the school holidays and organising activities such as fishing, ten pin bowling and rock climbing.

The initiative has made real inroads into tackling social exclusion by giving our younger residents the chance to try new things. Trying different activities has boosted youngsters' confidence. It has also had a positive impact on health as many maintain an interest in the sport or activity they try.

Many parents have contacted us to describe how much their children's confidence, self awareness and discipline has improved since the introduction of the Sports Initiative. This feedback is really positive as, a theme throughout all our activity sessions, has been to encourage and highlight the importance of teamwork and playing their chosen sport with confidence and within a disciplined framework.

A project in Trevethin, a designated Communities First area, is one great example of the difference the initiative has made:

Trevethin has always had a football club and, with our help, they formed an Under 8's team who now receive regular coaching. Six members of the team recently enjoyed a VIP trip to Newport County and we have also supplied them with new football kits. Before our involvement it is doubtful that these young people would have been able to access coaching or maintain a commitment to a team in an organised environment.

Community Development Officer, Karen Green explained: "Through developing our own programme we have helped young people channel their energy into a whole range of activities with incredibly positive results. It has helped to tackle social exclusion, encourage healthier lifestyles, promote positive values like fair play and respect and build self-confidence. In turn this has enhanced the quality of life on our estates and in the surrounding neighbourhoods."

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## The initiative also helps to:

- Boost positive interaction and improve behaviour on our schemes
- Attract resources to our communities
- Foster citizenship by involving our younger people

## We also have exciting plans to extend the initiative. These include:

- approaching local colleges to invite students studying for sports or leisure degrees to gain practical coaching experience.
- Organising whole weekend activities with a sporting theme.
- Building on our successful partnership work with local sports clubs including Newport Gwent Dragons and Newport County.

If you would like more information on any of the above please contact Karen (01495745910) or Alan (01873 735655) in our Community Development Team.