

Sport Stevenage AGM Thursday 20th October 2016

Chair's Report

Welcome to the Sport Stevenage AGM as we celebrate 10 years since we changed from the old Sports Council. We say cheerio *and* hello to Louise (from SBC and back as Sporting Futures), and hello soon to Joe Capon the new Sport and Wellness manager, who starts on 31st October. Otherwise we are pretty much as we were last year.

I would like to thank the Exec for their work this year (on top of helping their own clubs); especially Mike for being our evergreen Treasurer and Tina as ever for the website. We also thank Lou and Robbie at SBC, and in particular Councillor Richard Henry (who has the sports portfolio) for being a real champion for us.

The profile of sporting and other wellbeing activities in Stevenage remains really high. That is because of what you, the volunteers, do week in week out.

This year the challenges look pretty similar to last year:

- **Making sure local sporting facilities are available and accessible**

We note the slow progress with **Community Park Life** taking on KGV from SBC, and will continue to support and encourage this process to be completed. Also we will promote full and affordable access for cyclists, runners, walkers and exercise groups in **Fairlands Valley Park**. To this must be added our complete **cycleway network**. The jewel in our local crown, but which needs a lot of work done to parts of it. It's good to see the new **Skatepark** up in Hampson Park being so well used. This is an excellent example of co-operative working, with local residents and skatepark users involved in the location and design.

- **Putting on a range of sporting and wellbeing opportunities** and challenges for both regular participants and attracting newcomers

The **ParkRun** in Fairlands Valley and **RelayRun** in Hampson Park are excellent examples of what can be done. Councillor Richard Henry is to be congratulated on championing both of these.

- **Supporting the sports volunteer backbone** to all our local sporting activities

Sport Stevenage's role is directly hampered by our limited funds, but we will continue to support clubs and groups with grants for coaching. We can advise clubs

looking for funding via the HCC and SBC locality budget schemes. Many applications fail because applicants do not seek support or advice before they make application.

- **Celebrating our sporting successes**, and our amazing heritage (e.g. as visible on the sports wall of fame)

Many of our clubs and groups attended the community launch in November last year of the **Stevenage 70th Anniversary** celebrations, and have showcased themselves during the year under the 70th banner, the Hockey Club getting in first with the Easter visit of Gau-Algesheim. That was lively. The sporting calendar has been pretty full, and we have a demo and “come and try” Finale on 19th November at the Leisure Centre (flyers available tonight).

- **Supporting SBC in particular to put on showcase events** like the **Peal Izumi Cycle races** around the old town (how good was that?!). We need to support SBC and community groups to see the terrific benefit of such events, both for local people, and to remind others of what a sporting community we are!
- **Supporting Talented Young People in Sport?**

Many of you will remember that SBC cut the funding for this scheme in 2014, which cost in the region of £10,000. Although we could see the logic for this at the time, I have to say I bitterly regret we do not have a scheme similar to the Stevenage Arts Guild. They are able to use funds from letting the Community Arts Pavilion. Sport Stevenage has no revenue base at all. I believe one of our tasks this coming year is to review whether there is any scope for re-creating a scheme of talented young sports stars of the future. I would love to get your views and ideas on this.

Even though there is a fuss going on now in national media about TUEs and suchlike (mmm, and just who are Fancy Bears anyway, and er, what is their agenda?!), we really should just look back at what an amazing year we have had. My personal highlights this year were England at Rugby, Le Tour (naturally, Cavendish especially) and both Games at Rio (especially the Women’s Hockey Team).

Finally, I have done the job of Chair for a full Olympic cycle, and think we need some new blood on our Executive, and think that it is time that we should look for a successor to me as Chair, maybe in time for 2017?! Don’t be shy!

Simon Speller

Chair of Sport Stevenage