

Notes from presentation given by Frank Brown, Leisure Manager, Dartford Borough Council

Provision of Leisure Services in Dartford

As a Borough Council we have invested approx £12 million over the past couple of years in the award winning facilities of Princess Park Community Stadium and the Dartford Judo Club facility.

Our future plans, after successfully securing £200K funding from the Big Lottery for Play, plus £50K from Dartford Borough Council include:-

1. Three Teen Chill out zones associated with existing multi use games areas at the playgrounds in Hesketh Park, Wilmot Road and Attlee Drive – opening late summer 2008.
2. Enhancing the skate park in Central Park to provide “starter” facilities – opening autumn 2008.
3. A new Water Play facility in Central Park playground – opening spring 2009.

In addition there is the £100K secured for the Safe Routes to Schools, the answer is in the title getting young people to walk/cycle to their daily commute to and from school, on safe and appropriate routes. This shall be added to the £600K secured for the Sutrans Connect 2 project.

Projects I am dealing with include the extending of facilities at Princess Park Community Stadium to include two floodlit mini soccer pitches, meeting the need for facilities for under 10s football. DBC is working with the British Judo Association to provide a Judo Performance Institute which will be the home of the elite athletes who shall be competing at the 2012 London Olympic Games and beyond.

Funding has been secured from Sport England to recruit an Outreach Manager for Dartford Judo Club, to ensure growth and a legacy for the club into the future.

We have three facilities (Dartford Judo Club/Princess Park and Arrow Riding Centre) being included in the Pre Games Training Camp Brochure, which will be circulated to the visiting nations at the Beijing Games.

Brooklands Lakes – We have just completed installation of stone surfacing of many of the paths and seats around the lakes together with fishing pitches for disabled persons. It is planned that Central Park and Brooklands Lakes will be linked by a footpath under Princes Road by the end of the year; advanced work of paths and CCTV have already been undertaken.

Central Park – The Darent Valley Path has been upgraded through the town with new signage extending through the Park and including new seating.

The summer bedding displays will be planted with approx 32,000 plants in Central Park. The theme of the carpet bed this year is the centenary of Dartford Museum.

Dartford Heath – a £90K grant has been received from SITA (landfill tax grant) to restore some of the Heath to heather heath land. Following vegetation clearance, a thin depth of soil will be stripped and sown with heather seeds this autumn and this will also continue next year. Following grant aid from CLG new signs, seats and interpretative material have been supplied to the Heath. Volunteers are always welcome to the Tuesday volunteer day – contact out Country Parks Officer, Richard Pullman on 01322 285497.

Darenth Country Park – a new pond is being installed as a part of the A2/M25 widening works and new signs and interpretative material for the Orchard of historic fruit trees. Volunteers are always welcome on a Monday – contact out Country Parks Officer, Richard Pullman on 01322 285497.

Darenth Woods – The historic coppiced woodland which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is now more accessible following works carried out last winter. New paths have been created and old ones surfaced whilst the coppice regime has recommenced. Although to some this may initially look destructive, it is restoring the historic management and will improve the ecology of the woodland. Volunteers help maintain some of the wood and meet on Sundays every other month - – contact out Country Parks Officer, Richard Pullman on 01322 285497.

We are spending money to further aspirations and involvement rather than just to meet existing demand, so all of our new facilities incorporate ambition and achievement to increase the level of expectation for our residents.

We have also invested £1m plus on playgrounds and local facilities for young people and families and we have taken a forward step in ensuring the new development, such as that at the Bridge, Ebbsfleet Valley etc incorporate play and leisure facilities that offer challenges and interest.

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