

East Grinstead Sports Development Group (Sports Council)

Notes from the meeting held at 7.30 pm, on Wednesday 18th March 2015

Venue: East Grinstead Sports Club

Present: Simon Hardy (Mid Sussex DC), Richard Leman (EGSC), Jeff Morris (EG Sports Club and Dunnings Squash and Racquetball), Rex Whittaker (EG Town Council), Bob Shelley (Dunnings Squash and Racquetball and Chairman), Jan Johnson (CD Phoenix Netball), Richard Tramontin (EG Town Football), Eddie Vermeer (EG Athletics), Philip de Jong (EG Business Association) Lester Medcalf (EG Athletics Club), Julie Holden (EG Town Clerk), Steve Hill (Schools Coordinator), Cliff Barrow (Disability Access), Dave Brown (EG Sports Club), Mickey Bushell (EG Bowls Club), Roger Bean (EG Tennis, Squash and Racquetball Club), Judith Potter (EG Tennis, Squash and Racquetball Club), Stuart Scholes (EGBA), Dave Watmore (EG Triathlon Club), Barney Durrant (East Grinstead online), Annabel Farley (Springfit Gymnastics and Trampolining Club)

Apologies: Andy Hayes (EG Cricket Club), Tony Steer (Southdown Netball Club), Ben Knight (Chartham Park Golf)

1 - Bob Shelley opened the meeting and welcomed all

2 – Get to Know the Clubs – East Grinstead Cricket Club - Andy Hayes

Regrettably Andy was ill with a virus and unable to attend the meeting so the presentation would be moved to a later meeting.

3 – Fundraising – Richard Leman

Oaks Initiative – Clubs have continued to make applications with help and support from the consultants and £167k has been applied for with £102k already successful. It is hoped that by the end of August we could meet the target of the £200k awarded which is great news for the sports and opportunities in the town. Any clubs still not taking advantage are encouraged to talk to Richard and the Oaks to see if they can be helped. If there is an idea it may be able to be brought to fruition. The Group will need to decide at the next meeting whether they wish to continue beyond August as the initial contact runs out then. A reminder that a new application can come forward every 12 months means this could perpetuate for a number of years as long as ideas keep coming forward.

A reminder that the most popular bids are to Awards for All and small grants through Sport England. Both are available up to £20,000 in bids.

Dunnings Squash and Racquetball, Phoenix Netball, Southdown Netball, EG Cricket Club and the schools have all taken advantage of this. It was clarified by EG Triathlon that the support from the Oaks, while not taking over the bid, helped to reduce the time that the club needed to pore over form filling. The bid always remains the ownership of the club, it is your idea and your bid, Oaks are just there to help with pointing to the fund pots and completing the applications, recognising that the clubs are sports people who have the ideas but not necessarily the experience of applying for grants.

Philip De Jong offered to help explain / pass along the opportunity to clubs who have not taken advantage should a list of members who have not made a bid be passed to him.

There was some concern as to putting any example applications on websites, however case studies can be used showing how the money is benefiting the club and the town as a result and hopefully inspire others to make applications.

4- East Grinstead Online

Barney Durrant came along to explain to the group the origins of the hyperlocal website which is an online community newspaper, with updates as they happen on local events. Geraldine and Barney are happy to cover local sport. However as they are only two of them, it will be better if the groups send their news and events to EGOnline to allow them to publish it. Pictures and editorials will of course be acknowledged.

The site was launched a year ago and has gone from strength to strength with presence on twitter (1600 followers) and facebook (over 2000 "Likes"). The site intends to be positive about the town and have positive stories, so all contributions are welcome. With the following that they have established they are a good medium to get information passed around and heighten awareness.

Springfit Gymnastics advised that they have used a local 'Mumsnet' which they have found very effective in advising of new classes and events.

Barney explained that advertising and sponsorship to pay the costs of the site were being sought (they already took google-ads) more income would mean that the site could develop which could mean staff or gadgets such as video streaming.

Barney advised that egonline@gmail.com is a way to send items or sign up for the weekly newsletter, the site and stories can be viewed at www.egonline.com, or as Facebook and Twitter feeds.

The Chairman thanked Barney for coming along and hoped that EGOnline could be a good tool for the clubs to drive membership, publicise events and activities.

5 – Active Sussex

The Chairman advised of a meeting he had attended at K2. Interesting news was the launch, with Lottery funding, of Club Matters. This is a new website that offers an online 'one stop shop' for sports clubs. Amongst the host of useful material was toolkits on governance / finance / marketing / creating business plans / club improvement for sports clubs.

6 – Club updates

Springfit: 2 new classes (preschool and homeschool groups) had been launched. They had a fund raising event for BHF and CRY charities.

EG Triathlon: They are making an application for funding to provide more coaching and equipment to encourage women over 18 in to sport. They have an aquathon on 19th March and the 30th anniversary of EGt tri is on 10th May starting at 7.30 am.

EG Athletics: Season is starting shortly, more coaches and volunteers needed and their club is open to school year 6 and above.

Steve Hill: Leagues and festivals starting in the schools, he is working with the Oaks on a school wide application for coaching mentoring and sports leaders. The 321 running scheme has funding and is getting underway.

EG Squash Racquetball and Tennis: Marketing for the club is underway to improve awareness and a younger membership drive. Targets are late teens, 20's and 30's.

Cllr Whittaker commented that this was the last meeting he would attend under the current Town Council administration as elections were looming. He wanted to thank the organisation of the group (chair and clerk), the innovative approach of all and wished continued strengthening of sports clubs in the town.

Phoenix Netball: Funding for coaches and obtaining more adult volunteer help is their current focus. They have 2 senior teams playing regionally, including travel as far as Guernsey. They boast the youngest A Grade umpire in the country and have a good number of umpires. They have players from 8 to 58.

EG Bowls: The season starts at the end of April. There will be a new board with new Chair, Secretary and Treasurer this year. They were looking to work with Oaks for financial support and the focus was on keeping going as a club. One frustration for them was the lack of access to the pavilion for hospitality to visiting teams, as they did not own it and shared it with another hirer during the week.

Simon Hardy said the Active People Survey 8 had been released showing that 40% of people are active in Mid Sussex for at least 30 minutes a week, making Mid Sussex quite high on the list and they topped the list for club membership, which is encouraging. We were also high on the list of areas for volunteer numbers.

Annabel from Springfit offered to make a poster with all clubs logos that clubs could display at their premises or classes to help make parents and members aware of the other offerings in the town. If anyone is interested please email your logo to her.

Dave Brown said that there was a proposal for a running track in EG and Eddie Vermeer said he was supporting "Back the Track". A campaign was under discussion and ideas for a venue and how this would be funded and maintained were needed. A track would be great, they take up a lot of space and need maintenance – but where there is aspiration it could be achieved.

EG Football Club: Their focus was on the marketing of the club's location. So many people seem to struggle with knowing there is a football club in the town. They continue to look at funding bids to improve the stadium. Volunteers remain an issue and they could always do with more. The annual fireworks display would be on 31st October this year.

EG Sports Club: Planning applications are being submitted to expand the car parking capacity. Grant applications have been successful for a new boiler and also coaching opportunities. They have made 2 successful grant applications to Awards for All and Sport England.

Dunnings Squash & Racquetball Club: They are implementing two successful grant bids for taster courses and coaching. They need to increase the publicity to encourage youngsters to come and take advantage of these now and would be talking to EGOnline to see if they can help.

Any Other Business

Julie Holden advised that the Mid Sussex marathon would be taking place on the the first weekend of May this year. The 10 mile EG leg is on the Saturday and will start and end at the Rugby Club. Please could people sign up to run it/ steward it / support it. Contact the Town Council / Mid Sussex DC or Places for People to get involved.

Eddie Vermeer suggested that the Sports Council could take a stand at the May Fair and publicise all of the clubs. Julie Holden suggested that the Sports Council could share the EGTC gazebo, but if volunteers to staff the sports side and co-ordinate any posters etc could be put together that would be helpful. The offer is there.

The Chairman advised that he had heard that Weirwood sailing club were having some problems and hoped that they would overcome these, as they have been a long established club for the area.

The Chairman closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending, he thanked the EG Town Council current administration for all the support over the past 4 years and hoped that this would continue. He would advise of the next date in due course, which would be in June, and welcomed any offers from clubs to host the meeting.