

Rother District Council

Indoor Sports & Leisure Facilities Strategy:

Consultations

Appendix 3

July 2015



Rother District Council

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## Introduction

Consultations are an integral part of the development of the evidence base for the current and future provision of sports facilities. The Sport England ANOG guidance methodology integrates consultation within the overall methodology.

The consultation programme involved all National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGB's) for the facility types in the study. A questionnaire survey was sent to all the NGB's requesting information on the current and future needs for their sport in Rother. A copy of the questionnaire is set out in this appendix.

The response to the survey was not extensive with detailed responses received from gymnastics, badminton, cricket (for indoor), swimming and netball. More consultations were held with Active Sussex and the NGB team. The findings from this consultation were consistent with views expressed by the national NGB person and from Naa's experience of other studies in similar areas to Rother, such as North Norfolk and Great Yarmouth Districts.

The key finding being that all NGB's are participation focused as their Sport England investment and continuation of the investment is embedded in NGB's improving participation – across a number of performance indicators – total participation, young people, disability and gender are key PFI's. Consequently the focus is for NGB's to focus their priorities and investment in areas of greatest participation return. In effect the cities and big urban local authorities with bigger population numbers. So it is not that Rother is not important it is that the authorities with the higher population are much more important.

NGB's will prioritise an area for their participation drive, based on potential, where they consider demand exceeds supply and there is a solid club base network. An example of this is in Hastings and investment by Badminton England in Summerfield Leisure Centre to upgrade the sports hall floor, lighting and access for wheelchair users. This investment in return for guaranteed ten hours of use per week for badminton for ten years. The leisure management contractor is tied into this arrangement.

Consultation with NGB's also confirmed that protection of venues is very important to and then development of opportunities for club based sport. There is a national Priorities Spreadsheet which captures all Sports England funded NGB's plans, funding awards, and NGB key programmes for development. A review of this spreadsheet did not identify any stated projects or priorities for Rother.

Stakeholders at national and county level involved in sports provision or development programmes in Rother were consulted and a telephone interview held to discuss their views on the requirements of the strategy.

All schools and colleges in Rother District that provide sport facilities for community use were contacted and a set of topics for consultation was sent to all schools and colleges.

A telephone interview was then held with all the school and colleges (including private schools) to collect information on all topics and get their views about continuation of community use and what they consider are the future facility needs and why. All neighbouring local authorities to Rother were contacted as well as



# Consultations

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Active Kent to establish if they had any commitments or plans to change their stock of community sports facilities and if so how this may impact on Rother. Only Wealden District responded and outside of this consultation there was an extensive review of the Hastings refreshed strategy and consultations with Hastings District about the approach, findings, key issues and recommendations.



All the other neighbouring authorities were reminded and phone calls made to try and obtain views.

Regarding local sports clubs, Active Rother provided club contacts details and views about particular sports/clubs. This consultation was an iterative process and developed as particular issues arose during the study. In addition a page about the study was placed on then Active Rother web site asking all clubs to contact naa for a discussion about their views on the needs of their sports club.

Active Sussex provided the Be Inspired database of local clubs in Rother and over 30 local clubs were sent an e mail setting out the topics for discussion and a follow up phone call was requested. Consultations were then held with around 20 clubs who responded. The clubs comprised the swimming clubs and indoor sports clubs identified through the consultations with National Governing Bodies of Sport or from Active Rother or Active Sussex.

A feature of the structured consultations was the need to collect consistent information but where the needs of particular sports do vary. Quite understandably clubs want to discuss the issues which affect their club.

Finally the key personnel in Rother District were consulted to establish the views and the needs of their particular responsibilities in the strategy and telephone interviews were held with four members of the District Council covering corporate development, regeneration, planning, property and active communities.

Collectively, the consultations findings were used in several ways: to verify or not the hard evidence findings about participation, facility provision, access and how well the stock is meeting current needs; gaps in provision and what is most important and why; soundings on the possible future facility requirements, scale type and location; the importance of Rother to NGB's and potential investment

The findings from all the consultations are incorporated into the overall ANOG assessment and in the strategy direction and recommendations.

The remainder of this appendix contains;

- a summary contact details for all consultees;
- a table of all consultations findings in bullet point format; and
- copy of the questionnaire sent to all NGB's.



## Summary Contact Details for all Consultees

Organisation	Name of Key contact	E mail	Phone
<b>Sports halls Providers</b>			
Battle Area Sports Centre (Claverham Community College)	Andy Hodder	andy12hodder@aol.com	01424 774772
Battle Abbey School	Sue Bonell	bursar@battleabbeyschool.com	01424 776813
Bexhill Academy	Lisa Kapllani Facilities Manager	Lisa.Kapllani@bexhillhigh.org	01424 735457
Bexhill College	David Brown Vice principal	davidbrown@bexhillcollege.ac.uk	01424 214545 ext 1112
Bexhill Leisure Centre	Paul Norris	paul.norris@freedom-leisure.co.uk]	01424 731171
Bucks wood School	Head of PE		01424 813813
Claremont Preparatory & Nursery School	Emma Beaumont	enquiries@claremontschool.co.uk	01424 751555
Northiam Primary School	William Wood	enquiries@pretioussportshall.co.uk	01797 252297
Robertsbridge Community College	Tracey Ash	tash@robertsbridge.org.uk	01580 880360 ext 121
St Richards Catholic College	Russell Varney	admin@strichardsc.com	01424 731070
Vinehall School		bursar@vinehallschool.com	01580 880413
Battle Abbey School	Sue Bonell Bursar	bursar@battleabbeyschool.com	01424 776813
<b>Swimming Pools Providers</b>			
Bexhill Leisure Pool	John Storey Tennant	john.storey-tennant@freedom-leisure.co.uk	01424 731508
Bucks wood School	Head of PE		01424 813813
Crowhurst Park	Facilities manager	enquiries@crowhurstpark.co.uk	01424 775644
Rye Leisure Centre	Ian Oliver	ian.oliver@freedom-leisure.co.uk	01797 731508
St Mary's Special Needs School Bexhill	Facilities Manager	'admin@stmarysbexhill.org'	01424 730740
Vinehall School		bursar@vinehallschool.com	01580 880413
<b>Neighbouring Authorities</b>			

Ashford	Ben Moyle	Ben.moyle@ashford.gov.uk	
Hastings	Keith Duly	KDuly@hastings.gov.uk	01424 451189
Wealden	Helen Marwick Community and Regeneration Manager	Helen.Markwick@wealden.gov.uk	01323 443266

Organisation	Name of Key contact	E mail	Phone
<b>Stakeholders</b>			
Sport England	Warren Tucker	Warren.Tucker@sportengland.org	020 7273 1932 & 07767 441345
Active Sussex County Sports Partnership CEO	Sadie Mason	<a href="mailto:smason@activesussex.org">smason@activesussex.org</a>	01273 643869
Active Sussex NGB Lead	Sally Johnston	<a href="mailto:sjohnston@activesussex.org">sjohnston@activesussex.org</a>	01273 643869
Kent Sport	Kevin Day	<a href="mailto:Kevin.day@kentsport.org">Kevin.day@kentsport.org</a>	03000 411936
East Sussex County Council Education	Pauline Young	<a href="mailto:PaulineYoung@eastsussex.gov.uk">PaulineYoung@eastsussex.gov.uk</a>	01273 337207
East Sussex County Council Public Health	Peter Aston Health Improvement Principal Public Health East Sussex CC	<a href="mailto:Peter.Aston@eastsussex.gov.uk">Peter.Aston@eastsussex.gov.uk</a>	01273 337207
<b>National Governing Bodies of Sport</b>			
Badminton	Jonathan Lee	<a href="mailto:JonathanLee@badmintonengland.co.uk">JonathanLee@badmintonengland.co.uk</a>	07825 980644 01908 268400
Basketball	Pete Griffiths	<a href="mailto:Petergriffiths@englandbasketball.co.uk">Petergriffiths@englandbasketball.co.uk</a>	0114 284 1069
Wheelchair basketball	Jo Richards	<a href="mailto:j.richards@gbwba.org.uk">j.richards@gbwba.org.uk</a>	01509 279900
British Amputee Sports Association	Raymond Williams	<a href="mailto:balasaoffice@aol.com">balasaoffice@aol.com</a>	01773715984
Volleyball	Keith Nicholls	<a href="mailto:keithnicholls2@btinternet.com">keithnicholls2@btinternet.com</a>	01603 454471
Table Tennis	Jonathan Bruck	<a href="mailto:Jonathan.bruck@englandtabletennis.co.uk">Jonathan.bruck@englandtabletennis.co.uk</a>	07736 939002 01908 208862
Table Tennis	Kieron Pelling Development Officer (South East)	'kieron.pelling@tabletennisengland.co.uk'	0844 417 0900
Netball	Charlotte Malyon	<a href="mailto:Charlotte.Malyon@englandnetball.co.uk">Charlotte.Malyon@englandnetball.co.uk</a>	
Gymnastics	Dom Elsom	<a href="mailto:dom.elsom@british-gymnastics.org">dom.elsom@british-gymnastics.org</a>	0345 1297129



Organisation	Name of Key contact	E mail	Phone
Cricket	Chris Whitaker	Chris.Whitaker@ecb.co.uk	
Cricket	Roger Newman	Roger.newman@sussexcricket.co.uk	07792 609341
ASA (swimming)	Tom Neale	tom.neale@swimming.org	01509 640 258
<b>Local sports Clubs</b>			
Bexhill Squash Club	Facility manager		01424 219696
Cooden Beach Sports & Social Club (squash)	Malcolm Johnson Manager	info@cbssc.co.uk	01424 844810
Bexhill AA Judo Club	Jason Meek		01424 214912
Hastings Judo club	Roy Sumner		01424 429677
Westerleigh Judokwai			01424 442726
Bexhill Giants (Basketball)			07971 821457
SE Tigers (Basketball)			07986 238738
Table Tennis Rother		admin@tabletennisother.co.uk	07803 138881
Hastings Table Tennis League	Kevin Long	kevin.long@secamb.nhs.uk	01424 431 311
1066 Gymnastics	Matte Hart	matte@1066gym.co.uk	01424 213779
Bexhill Karate Club	Ian Hollidge		01424 218993
Sedlescombe Junior Netball Club	Sue Ham	suzyham@btconnect.com	07710 110767
Bexhill Swimming Club	Chris Sage	membershipbsc@hotmail.com	0845 643 6212
Silverdale Swim School	Trevor and Sue Spinks	silverdaless@fiscalico.uk	01424 893400
Water babies swim school	Kelly Lockwood	Kelly.Lockwood@waterbabies.co.uk	01424 892568
Hastings Seagulls	Graham Furness	graham.furness@fiscalico.uk.	01424 438122
<b>Commercial operators</b>			
Freedom Leisure	Dominic Horner (Area manager)	dominic.horner@freedom-leisure.co.uk	Dominic 07989 198663
Freedom Leisure	Bexhill Leisure Pool John Storey Tennant	john.storey-tennant@freedom-leisure.co.uk	01424 731508
Freedom Leisure	Bexhill Leisure Centre Paul Norris	paul.norris@freedom-leisure.co.uk]	01424 731171
Freedom Leisure	Ian Oliver Rye Sports Centre	ian.oliver@freedom-leisure.co.uk	01797 731508
Harbour Health Club		Enquiries@harbourhealthclub.co.uk	01797 224555
<b>Rother District Council</b>			
RDC Departments			



Organisation	Name of Key contact	E mail	Phone
Project Client and Contract Management	Scott Lavocah	Scott.lavocah@rother.gov.uk	01424 787 583
Sports Development	Adrian Gaylon	Adrian.gaylon@rother.gov.uk	01424 787 583
Active and Healthy Communities	Stuart Ramsbottom	Stuart.Ramsbottom@rother.gov.uk	07817 790003
Planning	Nichola Watters	Nichola.watters@rother.gov.uk	01424 787 000
Corporate Services	Tony Leonard	Tony.leonard@rother.gov.uk	01424 787 000
Property	Graham Burgess	Graham.burgess@rother.gov.uk	01424 787 000



## **Rother District Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy: Record of Consultations**

- 1.1 The table below sets out the details of consultations held with officers of Rother District Council, National and Local Governing Bodies of Sport, stakeholders at national, regional and county level, providers of sports facilities neighbouring local authorities, local sports clubs and commercial operators.
- 1.2 Each consultee was sent an introductory e mail explaining the aims and objectives of the Rother project and reasons for wanting to consult with each organisation/person. This was then followed up with an agreed time for a structured telephone discussion.
- 1.3 Key common topics were discussed relevant to each type of consultee and key topics discussed and then the discussion focused on particular topics raised or key issues.

### **Summary of consultations**

#### **Warren Tucker, Facilities & Relationship Planning Manager. Sport England**

- Warren's responsibilities are to provide advice on Sport England programmes, planning and facility development to sports organisations and local authorities in SE region.
- Very important a sports facilities strategy is evidence based and sets out the Council's strategic direction for sports facility provision.
- The strategy should include/review all providers of sports facilities in the District and consult with neighbouring authorities, not just consider facilities owned/operated under contract by the Council.
- Important to consult with National Governing Bodies of sport to get their views on the needs for their sports in the district. First point of contact should be the national lead person for facilities in each sport.
- Sport England does not have hard and fast guidelines on the strategy duration but consider a 10 year timespan reasonable. Estimating changes in sports participation and demand for sports facilities is more problematic beyond 10 years.
- Important the District Council has ownership of the strategy and it does set out their strategy direction and requirements.
- Important to apply but adapt to local circumstances the Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance – which is the accepted industry wide methodology for needs assessment and development of the evidence base.
- Important to set out the sports and physical activity participation profile for the District as the context for the facility assessment. The purpose of facilities is as a means to an end of creating and developing participation.
- Sport England does not have any set format or preferred way of presenting the strategy. It is the application of the methodology, the rationale of how the findings are used to develop the evidence base and then applied in the strategy which is important with linkages between all aspects.
- Sport England aware that Hastings Council is developing a refresh of the joint facilities strategy and application of the refresh to Hastings. Sport England does not have any views of the two authorities needing to do the same work. Up to each authority to decide its own approach and it is the methodology which is applied in developing the evidence base and strategy which is most important.

#### **Peter Aston, Principal for Public Health, East Sussex CC**

- Peter's responsibilities are (1) to promote public health activity programmes across East Sussex and (2) advise and provide technical support grant aid bids for public health projects by organisations.
- He works with Active Rother to promote public health programmes and activities with Rother District and its partner organisations. The focus is to get people who are inactive active and people who are active developing more activity. Focus is split across both categories but recognition the bigger challenge is getting people who do nothing to do something.
- Uses Sport England data on sports and non-sports participation as evidence base for profiling the scale of the challenge in each area. Also uses health index of physical inactivity data (Note; Both used in the development of the evidence base for the Rother strategy).
- Focus of work is on increasing physical activity not sports participation but hope that one leads to the other.
- Not aware of specific issues/challenges that apply in Rother as distinct from other areas. Levels of non-participation are above regional averages in Rother – so increased challenge.
- Sports facilities play an important part in this area of work but outside space and walking routes are as important as indoor sports facilities. Greater return from getting more people active from outside facilities or just open space than formal sports facilities.
- Sports facilities do present barriers – potential participants can be intimidated - do not feel sporty, self-esteem and not the right clothing. Also sports facilities have business targets to hit and so developing programmes for start an activity have high time and cost requirements counter to business plan.
- East Sussex CC 2012 – 13 research on uptake of GP Exercise Referrals shows that 80% of people referred to a sports centre to start a physical activity programme never made the first trip. Belief not evidenced that the sports facility itself is a barrier and reason but likely to be a low reason more about attitude of the referral to physical activity.
- Programmes work better in voluntary sector buildings such as community centres and village halls than formal sports facilities as these are embedded in community based activity and more attuned to meeting a wide range of individuals doing informal and unstructured activity.
- Overall increasing physical activity by more people is the biggest challenge to creating an active and healthy lifestyle. Sports facilities have a role to play in this but for reasons set out are not the most appropriate place to achieve this outcome of increasing activity by more people.

**Tony Leonard, Executive Director of Business Operations, RDC**

- Key drivers for the project are regeneration of the district and this part of Bexhill. Housing growth of 1,500 committed and ahead of completion schedule.
- Need to boost the employment base of Bexhill and the District to retain and attract a more balanced workforce in age and skills. Create a more balanced demography for the district from current profile and demography.
- Public leisure stock is operating cost of circa 0.5m and needs to be reduced to no cost to the Council. Short term aim with new leisure management contract and longer term aim with new facilities but at no cost to the Council and a return to the Council.
- Council Corporate Plan 2014 – 2021 to support and develop a more active and healthy resident lifestyle by residents.
- The indoor sports facilities strategy and provision of new sports and leisure facilities contributes to these wider council objectives/drivers - as well as being about sports and recreation provision for on for residents.
- Strategy also about application in finding bids – another CP objective – to improve and access more external funding.
- Consider swimming pool provision maybe has to be a wider offer and have appeal and encourage participation across all age

ranges and both genders. Leisure pool has a more narrow market of families and young children for fun and recreation.

- Challenges the need for sports halls and dance studios – why do we need both? Response - sports halls provide for hall sports and consultation and programming suggest that is the main activity – not use for fitness/exercise classes. Dance studios are for individual fitness/exercise activity in classes and both facility types have different markets. Evidence base has to set the case for both.
- Recognition of range of providers for sports halls with schools/colleges/District Council. Understand that need all three to meet the demand but policy, type and amount of community use in the hands of each provider. Current commitment by schools/colleges to provide for community use but could change.
- Past consideration to work jointly with Hastings DC to consider joint provision but recognition by both Council to meet own residents needs but ensure there is not duplicated/over provision. So Rother needs assessment has to take account of provision in Hastings – scale, type, locations and types of use.

#### **Graham Burgess, Economic Development Manager, RDC**

- Graham is responsible for RDC land and property matters. He has been centrally involved in the Bexhill mixed use feasibility study for the new sports/leisure facility development from a Council wide perspective, valuations and economic regeneration.
- Key interest is the relationship between any new sports facility development on the --- site and relationship to the future of the Bexhill Leisure pool.
- View that RDC has to decide what it wants to do and lead the strategy delivery once adopted.
- The sports facility assessment, mix, scale and type of provision has to be what Rother District requires in the long term. Has to consider what happens to existing venues – as part of the needs assessment.
- Council is keen to progress the development of the feasibility study site based on a mixed use development and is looking to secure outline planning consent by end of 2015.
- Did not have views on the type of sports facility mix or sports participation make up and trends. However whatever is set out in the needs and evidence has to be based on these findings and apply to a district wide assessment of need over the long term.

#### **Stuart Ramsbottom, Active and Healthy Communities Specialist, RDC**

- Stuart is responsible for developing and delivering the Active Rother healthy communities programme. Works with East Sussex Public Health. Role to co-ordinate programmes, projects and work with local partners to develop and opportunities for more people to get more active.
- Works with delivery partners to access all types of indoor and outdoor facilities. Recognition that village halls and community centres buildings are more accessible than formal sports facilities – cost of hiring, competing programmes of use, participants unease with using sports facilities. Does however work with Freedom Leisure and supports partner organisations to use the three venues in Rother – but minority of use of these venues.
- Key document is the Active Communities Strategy for Rother. Sets out how to develop a more healthy and active lifestyle for residents with action plans. Focus very much on working in partnership and achieving more by organisations working together. Extensive use of evidence base on health data to set out current levels of health of the Rother population.
- Active Rother web site is main communication channel and this does link to the sports facilities so promotes both activity and venues,
- No definite views on future facility needs but considers more informal buildings that are adaptable and can provide for a range of activities which are fun and adventure based (for younger people) is much more appealing than formal sports halls. So more flexible

adaptable indoor spaces and far less structured activity – emphasis on enjoyment and fun.

**Keith Duly, Leisure Services Manager, Hastings Council**

- Keith is responsible for the leisure services indoor and outdoor for Hastings council. He has completed in 2014 a refresh of the joint Hasting and Rother Leisure facilities strategy.
- Discussion focused on the findings from the Hastings refresh and findings which relate to Rother. The refresh has 8 facility types in it and includes swimming pools and sports halls but not gyms or dance studios.
- We discussed the key findings for compatible facility types. On pools main conclusion from the refresh is that both authorities need to maintain and develop their own swimming pool provision. Whilst there is overlap in catchment areas and shared access there is sufficient demand for swimming in both authorities to develop provision to meet their own resident's needs. Unmet demand for swimming in Hastings equates to over 400 sqm of water (around 70sqm in Rother).
- On sports halls the refresh identifies that supply and demand broadly in balance but the public sports halls are very full. These are consistent with the findings in Rother. Rother does have a more extensive supply of school/college venues than in Hastings.
- On the study methodology Hastings in the refresh had followed the ANOG methodology and used the Sport England data sources to set out findings on quantity, quality, access and availability. For consultations with NGB's they have used a very similar questionnaire in content to the one developed for use in Rother.
- So overall consistency in methodology and findings (initial for Rother) for both strategies. I explained that use of the data is more extensive and reported in more detail in the Rother project, plus there is an extensive profile of participation findings and trends.
- Hastings experienced some difficulties in getting responses from some NGB's and also getting responses from local hall sports clubs.
- Hastings Seagulls Swimming Club is the key swimming club and uses public pools in both districts. Club has waiting list of 100 and is constrained by lack of pool time at venues in both districts. Club is very developmental and successful in developing young swimmers to county standard and beyond.
- Same issue on sports halls as with Rother – no venue bigger than 32m x 18 and a 4 badminton court size sports hall. Increasing pressure from NGB's about lack of run off space and size of main hall restricting use of venues for competitions. Local view as well insofar that clubs travel outside the district to compete/host competitions.
- Hastings view that need for more informal space to develop individual activities around dance/exercise classes as well as formal sports halls. Increasing demand for fun and adventure spaces for young people and which is not really provided for.
- Hastings intention to review and update the strategy on a regular basis and include other facility types. So as to develop more detailed actions based on the strategy direction and recommendations.
- I explained the Rother Strategy will look different to the Hastings strategy insofar as there is more detailed presentation of the data/findings and what it means. However the methodology and sequence of reporting is very similar and both follow the Sport England ANOG methodology. I explained this is not a problem with Sport England in terms of presentation of the strategy and that it is the findings which are important. Keith agreed with this assessment. We agreed to keep in touch as the Rother study progress and with the Rother clients.

**Jonathan Lee, National Facilities Manager, Badminton England**

- Badminton England involved in a badminton community network in Hastings. They have invested £54,000 at Summerfield Leisure Centre in new flooring, upgraded lighting and better access for wheelchair users. Total project cost is £108,000 and in return for Badminton England investment there is guaranteed access for badminton programmes for next 10 years. Contractor locked into this as well.
- Given the investment in Hastings by Badminton England view is that investment in Rother is very unlikely and would encourage the Rother clubs to access the Hastings venue for club matches and league play.
- Overall view is that supply of sports halls for badminton in Rother does meet local demand for recreational and local club play. This based on NGB research on profile of demand for badminton taken from Active People data and their local knowledge of clubs set up/scale and how many venues they can access. In short they think demand is met by supply and the Rother demographics do not support likely increase in badminton participation.
- Main badminton clubs are Bexhill badminton club – use Bexhill 6<sup>th</sup> Form College and Bexhill Sports badminton club which has a junior academy and operates out of Bexhill Academy. Aware of the no strings programme and its operation at Bexhill Leisure Centre. Also Rye badminton club which uses Rye Sports Centre. All clubs are affiliated to Badminton England.
- Big issue for badminton is continuing access to community leisure centres. Given the demographics of Rother a lot of badminton is played by older groups in the day and school sports halls are not accessible then so access to community leisure centres for day time use becomes more important.
- Believes protection of existing venues is important for badminton and aware that some schools do not have formal joint use agreements and therefore could reduce community access. Places even more reliance on public leisure centres but they are only in two locations Rye and Bexhill.
- Quality of sports hall flooring is an issue in Rother - very important for badminton and absence of sprung timber floor is a barrier to development of players.
- Looking forward Badminton England unlikely to invest its capital funds into Rother because of existing investment/commitment in Hastings and would encourage clubs to access Summerfield's – for league play. Would like to see formal protection of existing sports halls venues for community use. Possible access to Badminton England small grant funding for lighting, floor upgrades but this is maximum grant of £15,000 and had to be matched pound for pound by the local authority or applicant.

#### **Charlotte Malyon, Capital Investment and Facilities Manager, England Netball**

- England Netball focus is increasing participation in netball and to increase participation by an average of 10,000 members per year.
- Focus is on club development and growing the club base – affiliated clubs. Recognises it does rely on local authority leisure centres and schools/colleges to provide venues for indoor netball. Increasing work with leisure trusts and commercial operators to promote netball as a main user of sports halls – having some success thought the get back into programme.
- Increasingly netball being played indoors. Outdoor courts are essential for the game at grass roots level especially in schools but increasing problem of age of courts and increased maintenance costs to re-surface courts is limiting court time.
- Get back into Netball was the first of the NGB programmes aimed at getting existing players form school days to return to the sport. Has been very successful with women aged 30+. Now a main focus of the NGB to increase casual and league play.
- Above the participation level the focus the NGB is to increase the network of county and regional netball centres providing central venue 'Homes' for the sport, In Rother there is not enough critical mass of existing participation to develop a county centre based in

the authority (no mention of if doing this in Sussex but Active Sussex consider netball is a growth sport).

- Development of these centres is based on a sustained increase in participation and growth of clubs and raising of standards through local leagues.
- England netball considers there are sufficient venues in Rother to meet the participation levels. Aware that BLC is an increasing the programme time for netball and the get back into programme is driving this increase. Netball is also increasing at Battle Abbey Sports Centre. However not enough programmed time for these to become key venues.
- England Netball recognise this is a bit chicken and egg – how can you grow the sport if there is not programmed time but if there is not enough club demand how can you increase the programme? There are no key netball clubs in Rother – key clubs defined as sustained and increasing growth in participation.
- Five clubs in the Rother area (Wadhurst, Sedlescombe, Bexhill, Battle & Rye). Teams within the Rother area will compete in both Eastbourne and Hastings local leagues as there is no league provision in Rother.
- England Netball has recently highlighted 3 Level 2 coaches who will be rolling out Back to Netball programmes in the East of the county from September 2015 and onwards. As this will be in the winter months there will be an increased demand for indoor facilities in peak times (weekday evenings).
- Netball in the whole of the east side of the county is under developed, predominantly as a result of a lack in coaching availability. In addition the knowledge England Netball has on netball provision and delivery in the east side of the county is also limited. Over the next two years the local league committees in Eastbourne and Hastings will be working towards improving and increasing the provision of netball within Wealden & Rother districts.
- England Netball has no plans to make any capital investment in Rother – would consider if the two bullet points above do create sustained participation and development of local leagues.

#### **Dom Elstom, Facility Development Manager, British Gymnastics**

- British Gymnastics supports clubs to develop their own centres or gain access to existing public/school venues for dedicated use. Recognition the range of gymnastics activities makes dedicated use of public centres very difficult. Clubs are very well organised and experienced at developing gymnastics and increasing participation.
- Gymnasts clubs registered/affiliated to BG in Rother all have waiting lists for entrance into their clubs, indicating a need for a greater number of clubs and facilities in the area to cater for demand. (No details of waiting lists numbers). Barrier is clubs lack expertise and managing and operating dedicated facilities.
- Major club in Rother is 1066 Gymnastics with its dedicated facility BG estimate there are over 800 members currently in the Rother area with over 80% of these registered and use 1066 Gymnastics Club.
- Trampoline activities at local leisure sites are in high demand and account for a high proportion of available time. Provision for expansion is limited by the time available within sports centres. This is confirmed by BLC Centre Manager and high and increasing demand for trampolining. BLC has a high commitment to the sport.
- Nearest club to Rother that it is aware of that is trying to develop its own dedicated facilities is Infinity Gymnastics Club Billingshurst, West Sussex.
- BG does not have dedicated areas or priority locations to develop gymnastics. It works with clubs that have potential to develop and support clubs in developing local partnerships to provide or access facilities. BG does not have capital grant aid programme to

support local club projects.

**Kevin Pelling, Table Tennis Development Officer, SE region**

- **Rother is not one of our designated priority zones for Table Tennis England. However support is available from Table Tennis England Development staff to grow the sport in the area**
- There has been consideration of a facility being built at Bexhill Academy, which even went as far as a draft plan for the building. This facility would have been shared between table tennis and badminton, with additional community use. The changes at Bexhill Academy have however put this project on hold.
- View of the NGB is that there is enough capacity locally to meet current participation; however that participation is mainly small league teams and school site participation. There are no dedicated table tennis facilities in Rother or across East Sussex, which limits opportunities to grow the sport. This problem goes hand in hand with the low number of development clubs and coaches in the area.
- The main table tennis activity takes place on school and college sites, with some committed usage at Bexhill Leisure Centre.
- Not aware of any quality issues with the venues that table tennis accesses.
- Participation in table tennis in the Rother area has been relatively static, despite the best efforts of Table Tennis Rother. The current issue is a combination of lack of available coaches – there is only one coach active in the Rother District - and lack of open table tennis sessions in the area. Table tennis Rother is the only club which operates open sessions.
- Table Tennis England has recognised that providing opportunities to play is crucial to the growth of the sport. They have recently launched 'Loop' brand which is aimed a recreational play. The first product is Loop at Work (<http://tabletennisengland.co.uk/loop/work/>), with offers for clubhouses, colleges, cafes and bars being following over the next year. Table tennis is a flexible sport and can be taken to the people, rather than them going to the sport.
- Also under their 'facilities' offer is outdoor table tennis. They have placed hundreds of outdoor tables for free public use over the past four years. When placed in the right areas, these tables prove very popular. Tables have been placed in parks, schools, community areas and are great at providing a free leisure facility. Outdoor table tennis is a good a relatively cheap way of providing free leisure opportunities, they promote park departments to considering including outdoor tables when reviewing leisure facilities in parks and public spaces.

**Graham Furness, Secretary (and coach), Hastings Seagulls Swimming Club**

- The club provides for learn to swim and swimming squads up to county and regional standard for all age groups and both genders. It has a current membership of 328 and a club team of 55 across all aspects of swimming development and running the club.
- The club has a waiting list of young people wanting to do learn to swim of 100 people and it tries to absorb this waiting list over a 2-3 month period but it is just then replaced – constant feature. Graham's view that local schools are not fulfilling the national curriculum key stage 2 requirement to teach children to learn to swim and this is being undertaken by Freedom Leisure, swim schools and swimming clubs.
- Hastings Seagulls use Battle Abbey School pool in Rother. Club only has access for 3 hours a week with 2 hours on a Tuesday and 1 hour on Friday. Use is for junior squad training. Pool itself is good but changing rooms and pool hall quality does detract.
- Club would like more pool time and lack of pool access is biggest constraint on club development.
- Club has used Rye Leisure Centre but consider it to be on the edge of the club catchment. Do not use Bexhill Leisure Pool because of pool configuration which makes coaching squads difficult (ability to walk along pool length side not possible).

- Absence of a dedicated free standing teaching/training pool within Rother is a constraint on progression of learn to swim programmes. Can use BLP beach area for this but then have to progress into the main pool area.
- Club believe there is a big and growing demand for over 60's recreational/lane fitness swimming – especially early morning in Hastings and this is also constraining their access to pool time in Hastings. View is because of demographics this demand will increase and believes that this age group reluctant to share pool time with clubs.
- Club believe that absence of a pool with a movable floor is constraining developing of activities that need deep water – water polo and synchro. Club has never provided for diving and do not consider there is any call for diving facility. Club believe movable floor should be a feature of a new pool.
- Dry side requirement is for access to dance studios to do yoga and body strengthening. Increasing need for access to dance studios or dedicated activity space for this work – increasing demand from squads.
- Club believe future requirement in Rother from swimming club perspective is for a 25m x 6 lane main pool tank – conventional tank with a movable floor. Plus a 100 sq metre (maybe bigger) dedicated teaching/learner pool. Not averse to teaching/learner pool being part of a leisure form pool but main pool needs to be a conventional 25m x 6 lane pool.
- Comment on wave machine “why do we need it when we have the sea”!!

#### **Dominic Horner, Freedom Leisure Area Manager for Rother and Hastings**

- Freedom Leisure have done catchment mapping for the three centres based on centre memberships. As anticipated catchments are very localised, especially Rye. The Bexhill centres have very much Bexhill catchments. BLP does have a wider draw/catchment membership because it is a leisure pool but also very likely there are lots of one off family trips to use the centres who are not members. Mapping does support that. Bexhill members use Bexhill centre and Hastings members use Hastings centres. Although membership does allow to use centres in both districts.
- Confirmed very large popularity of the wave machine and usage figures do support a leisure/fun recreational usage profile (when compared with comparable conventional pool in areas similar to Rother).
- BLP is used for learn to swim programmes and numbers at swim schools are increasing with a target to increase this financial year.
- No swimming club use of BLP.
- Believes gym at BLC is too small at 75 stations and could support a 100+ station venue. Does not consider gym competition from recent low cost gyms in Bexhill is a competitor because of the quality of the offer at BLC. Customer relations score very highly in customer surveys and big factor in retaining membership.
- BLC sports hall has full occupancy at weekly peak times. Slight issue of set down and put up time for changing activities between gymnastics and hall sports – users keep their hour booking so time is cost to operator. Sports hall very much used for hall sports and not fitness/exercise classes as have dance studios to accommodate those activities.
- Agrees size of sports halls and lack of a sprung timber floor is a quality issue. Believes larger sports hall to meet Sport England/NGB guidelines and provide for run off and full size court areas would be preferable and also allow for more dual use activities.
- Noticeable change in trends for indoor sports activities –more demand for individual based adventure activity and less formal hall sports. Recent trend for skate boarding and roller skating but is it a one year fashion or longer term trend. So more flexibility in indoor space maybe a longer term requirement.
- BLC squash use is good with 70% + occupancy at peak times. Use is recreational and not club based. Seem to have bucked the trend



of retaining level of usage when participation is declining elsewhere. Issue is no day time use of the courts and ideally would have an alternative use for day times. Everyone talks about this but no ideas/solutions known to him.

- Dance studios have full occupancy at peak times and sessions are increasing. Main activities are dance/exercise classes and have created a separate area for spinning classes. Problem of centre layout and dance studios location does mean problem of use for yoga/pilates, if a noisy activity is scheduled at the same time in another studio. Again studio quality an issue in terms of flooring, music system and lighting – expectations of membership are increasing.
- In terms of future provision agrees there is need to meet future demand (unaware of decline in active population total over the next 10 years in Rother) - but also about re-provision to meet rising expectations of customers in terms of quality – sprung floors /lighting/sound systems/also much higher expectations of changing accommodation.
- Driver is get the objectives right and then provide on fit for purpose and what is affordable and deliverable in a long term business case. That's the focus not providing for aspirations not based on evidence and business case.

#### **Paul Norris, Freedom Leisure, Bexhill Leisure Centre Manager**

- Has adapted and converted the centre over the years to adapt to changing trends. For example the former bar area is now a spinning room. The centre had no dance studios when it opened but by re configuring the gym and the meeting rooms/catering area he has created a dedicate dance studio and a separate mind/body studio.
- Demographic profile of Rother means the 30 – 50+ age range is as important as the 18 – 30 age range for gym and studios use. Also older age groups (and over 60's) mean day time occupancy for gym and classes is high. Older people participate less but there are more of them.
- The quality issues with the centre are that it is a 1990s building. The sports hall dimensions are tight as 32m x 18m and limited run off areas. Also solid floor and not sprung timber and lighting is low level. Changing accommodation is OK but layout is team based hall sports style.
- Believes the centre has a core Bexhill market and usage and occupancy across the centre has improved and meets targets set.
- Biggest challenges are retaining gym membership to competing low cost venues. Membership is always around 1,500 but monthly churn is 150 change, with 50 new members and 100 former members returning. Peak time occupancy of the gym is 100% and people waiting to use machines - results in the monthly churn.
- Cardio vascular stations are 75 (database has this as 56) and high level occupancy during day time as well.
- Does manage to get gym users to also do classes as alternative to use of machines. Some migrate more to that and less use of machines. Spinning is male and female almost equal. Dance/exercise classes are only female.
- Sports hall is not programmed as regular club lets for hall sports not reliable, now works on a first come first booked basis. Main activities five a side, trampolining (very popular and good club) martial arts and badminton. Younger people not interested in formal hall sports want more individual adventure type activity – increasing trend.
- Three squash courts and operates these on a casual play basis. 100% occupancy weekday evenings 6pm – 9pm but virtually no day time use. Few alternative uses but does have table tennis. So big area dedicated space for maximum 6 people occupancy for three hours a night weekday evenings. Believes squash participation has held up at the centre and since the squash club migrated to Cooden Squash Club.
- Undertakes regular customer surveys on a monthly basis and regular feedback is customer service/care is the most positive aspect

form customers. Believes this is the main reason that centre usage targets continue to be met.

- Believes the centre has to adapt to trends and fashions. Dedicated space challenging e.g. squash courts. Space that is flexible and can be adapted to several activities much more beneficial e.g. studios.
- I suggested thinking on scale of future provision based on hard evidence/ consultations/ (club and NGB limited so far). (1) main hall of 34.4m x 20m based on Sport England and NGB approved guidelines for best 4 court hall – agreed.(2) 120 station gym and separate room for spinning or some other high intensity activity – agreed but said need to retain free weights as well – otherwise the body building gyms will take the market. (3) 2 dance studios one as high quality for high intensity activity – sound system, lighting and the other as mind/body studio. First to cater for up to 40 in a session – agreed with all/ Squash is a question mark could provide 2 courts but for around 15 hours use a week of maximum 30 people. If alternative day time use could be found – no long term ideas/needs identified then maybe – agreed.

#### **Ian Oliver, Centre Manager, Rye Sports Centre**

- Centre has 200 sq m pool, 4 badminton court sports hall, 32m x 17m, 2 dance studios (second is from recent conversion of one squash court ad can hold around 10 people for a dance/exercise class), gym of 40 stations and a 60m x 34m artificial grass pitch.
- Centre has formal CUA with Rye Community College for day time access to the sports hall and one dance studio, exclusive use in term time for 6 hours a day. College does have its own sports hall. Operationally things work OK but does restrict long term bookings to out of term time for the venues the College has during the day.
- Occupancy levels at peak times for the sports hall is around 80% and for the pool is around 70% but increasing. Dance studios is 90%. Gym is 100% at peak times.
- Main sports hall activities are badminton, karate, indoor football for skills not play and clubs have access to artificial pitch and indoor tennis. Also use of the sports hall for circuit training but only one evening a week and no encroachment of fitness/exercise classes into the sports hall. Basketball tried but demographics do not work for younger aged sports. Broadening of the age bands for exercise class and increasing use in day time.
- Main pool use is casual recreational swimming and learn to swim. The centre does its learn to swim programmes and only two local schools use the pool for learn to swim – instruction by the centre. Centre will teach swimming competency and then pass to LAC for swimming development and teaching synchro. 1066 triathlon use the pool for one session a week.
- Believes absence of a teaching/learner pool with depth of less than 1m is a barrier to confidence building by young children. Kids like to hang on to the side of the pool and takes longer to build confidence – easier to do if they know they can put their feet on the pool floor.
- Catchment area for the centre is Rye and immediate surrounding villages for regular participation.
- Dance studio is fine and the instructors and changing trends and fashions are key drivers. Believes TV coverage and media profiling of new activities is a big driver of what people want to do but it changes quickly.
- Future needs are increase in space for the free weights area, it is only 4m sq. Also need for additional resistance equipment. Cardio vascular equipment is OK. New sports hall floor and upgraded lighting and refurbishment of dry side changing would increase attractiveness of the centre and develop participation.

#### **Andy Hodder, Manager Battle Area Sports Centre**

- Has been the centre manager for four years. Under the former Schools Sports Partnership the centre was lead centre for school club

links and included up to 12 primary schools in the partnership. Still tries to provide/develop school club links and the centre is very active in promoting new activities, developing the programme to provide for new activities and groups. Just about to commence a 13 week activity programme for over 60's based on the sports hall.

- Centre has a winter and summer programme for each activity area/facility type. School has dedicated use of the centre from 9am – 3,30pm in term time and after school clubs are scheduled for after 3.30pm. Community use commences at 5-pm weekdays and all day weekends. Relationship with the school works well because of managing the relationship. Current joint use agreement was updated recently and has another 12 years to run. Centre opened in 1987.
- Centre has a 32m x 18m sports hall with a granwood floor. Cricket is major winter user of the centre for post-Christmas – Easter period. Floor surface very suitable for indoor nets and centre is the main focus for cricket development/winter nets. All sports clubs like the granwood floor surface.
- Main sports are badminton – several clubs use the centre and also a summer league, martial arts, roller skating/roller disco (weekend use) tennis coaching, basketball and indoor archery. Some indoor football but restricted because it can use the artificial grass pitch. Overall a very varied and dynamic programme of activity. Sports hall is not used for exercise classes or circuit training.
- Dance studio converted from former squash courts. To full studio specification with sprung timber floor, high quality sound system and mirrors and air conditioning. Can hold up to 25 participants for pilates and 20 for Zumba class and smaller numbers for dance around 20. Also have separate former school gymnasium now used a small activity area, e.g. spinning classes. Tai Chi and table tennis. Centre also has a climbing wall and outdoor 3g pitch not full size and hard court area of 3 netball court size. All facilities used very extensively. Peak hour occupancy is around 90% and could be higher. Set down/set up between sessions can cause some down time if school over runs on its time for school club use.
- Centre has and does host competitions for judo and hall sports at regional level and has held national competitions. The centre hosts basketball clubs in the Sussex league. Sports hall is big enough for events but very limited run off areas and nor real space for spectating. Does limit completion use when more modern and larger venues are available.
- Changing areas extensive modernised in 2014 .School was the developer and grant applicant for the 3g pitch.
- No area for catering/social area does have vending in the reception area but very busy area for overall centre operation. Centre does need modernisation as all centres do and very high occupancy and wide range of activities does increase wear and tear.
- Would like to upgrade the outdoor hard court area as current open texture tarmac is loose and is slippery surface in cold and wet weather. Expectation by participants of better quality surface. Obtained three quotes for surface upgrade but cost high and funding not available. Would like to create a new grass pitch area but does need pitch drainage system to be installed to create pitches. Demand for cricket and could host summer pitch sports competitions.
- Concern that focus for sports facilities and sports development is on Bexhill and not district wide. Recognition that Bexhill is the main centre but only half the District population lives in Bexhill. Catchment area for the Battle centre is Battle and surrounding villages for regular participation.

**William Wood, Committee Member, Northiam Primary School (for community users group)**

- Two badminton size sports hall. Opened in 2007 and funded by Big Lottery Fund, East Sussex CC. Very active centre of around 15,000 users per year. Main activities are very much what the local village (6,000 population including nearby villages) wants.
- Believes the community use works well because is driven by an active committee and very good networks - has always been so.

- Believes school is passive about community use and does not drive it. School uses the sport hall as dining hall and school functions.
- Community use pays operating costs and contributes to building maintenance – but 8 year old building and main issue has only been lighting.
- JUA works well but the limitation is that it does not define operation in terms of who is responsible for what. Believes they have worked that out and the JU works because local people make it work. Believes reporting and accounting to East Sussex CC is very intense.
- Main activity is badminton – two very active groups, long term users and 30 - 40 members each. Local football clubs use it for winter circuits. Dance exercise is not a long term use – comes and goes based on instructors.
- Biggest issue is school is going to become an Academy in 2015. Chichester Academy Diocese is the trust body and current has one school in the trust and looking to expand, Trust has not engaged with the sports hall user group and fear is if the trust is committed to the community use. Protection is 12 years remaining on Lottery Funding Agreement and JUA with East Sussex CC and so the new owners are locked in or default on Lottery Agreement. Concern is Trust not engaging and how things will operate in the future – who is actually responsible for what in new structure.

#### **David Brown, Assistant Principal, Bexhill 6<sup>th</sup> Form College**

- Confirmed that the college has a 4 badminton court size sports hall, climbing wall Adjacent to the sports hall and a fully fitted separate dance studio.
- The college is committed to community use of the sports facilities. It regards it as part of the College community offer. It also provides link between college sport and PE and local clubs. Also there are job experience and full time employment opportunities for college students.
- The sports hall is let for regular club lets, on a term or longer basis but it does accept pay and play as well if there are slots.
- Main activities are badminton, basketball, five a side football and some martial arts - no details of actual clubs. There are no exercise/fitness classes in the sports hall.
- College does not have a developed business plan for community use it prices hire charge in line with local authority pricing and achieves an 80% - 90% occupancy between 6pm – 10pm weekday evenings for the sports hall and around 70% for the dance studio. Both venues are available for community use year round. Only time sports hall is not available is for exam period for 5 weeks in May and June.
- The college promotes the facilities by its college web site and achieves the high occupancy because of consistency of lets/pricing levels and familiarity by clubs and the college in what works for both.
- The college is in receipt of Sports Maker grant from Sport England to promote greater activity and college involvement in the centre.
- No real contact with other providers of sports facilities. The college does have a continuing commitment to community use.

#### **Lisa Kapllani, Facilities Manager, Bexhill Academy**

- Bexhill Academy is new build school opened 4 years ago. School roll is currently 1,200 and with capacity for 1,400 pupils. Indoor sport facilities built as integral part of the school and are closed off from the school with separate community access. Also have a theatre.
- Indoor facilities are a 32m x 17m 4 badminton court sports hall with sprung timber floor. Dance studio 20m x 18m with sprung floor. Gym with 8 exercise stations. Outdoor is a full size floodlit artificial grass pitch, MUGA, one tennis court size and intention would be to expand/create second one. Two football pitches and a rugby pitch, used as grass athletics track in summer.
- Academy operates full community use form 6pm – 10pm weekday evenings and all day weekend days. Currently contracted out but

that ends this month and community use will then be managed in house by the Academy. The thinking is that there needs to be better control of the facilities and Academy can achieve more from community use. Also manage better the relationship between school and community use.

- Sports hall has around 80% occupancy weekday evenings and around 70% occupancy weekend days. Lettings are on a term basis. No user group forum but feedback on use, access, quality of the venue is very good. Main issue is clubs getting access at the time they want.
- Main users of the sports hall are Commando Fitness who have a block booking of 9 hours a week. Long term user and would like more time. Rother Table Tennis Club, five a side football – no league just casual use, growing in demand, indoor cricket clubs but less use because floor is sprung timber, and dance exercise classes which are too large for the studio. Has been in the past used by local gymnastics clubs/groups.
- Main use of the studio is for dance/exercise classes and let is to instructor who does own promotion/management. Also 1066 swimming club use it for dry side strength and conditioning and yoga.
- No real issues in operation of the centre and quality of the build, layout, changing, and access are not issues. Pricing is based on local competition and charge levels but looking to review under new management operation.

#### **Tracey Ash, Extended Schools Co-ordinator, Robertsbridge Community College**

- Provision is a four badminton court size sports halls 32m x 18m opened in 2013. It was funded by Sport England Inspired Facilities fund and match funded by East Sussex CC and Rother DC. Unsure of the status of any joint use agreement with ESCC and the College. College was the grant aid applicant and has management responsibility for the venue.
- Also small activity hall but no other indoor facilities on site and the requested provision from users is for a small health and fitness suite – less so a dance studio.
- Sports hall operates for college use term time days to 4.30pm with after school clubs use in that time. Community use is 5pm – 10pm weekday evenings and 9am 7pm Saturday and 10am – 5pm Sundays. Occupancy is 100% for community use winter evenings. Less so in summer with occupancy around 70%.
- Main activities are indoor cricket (solid floor and two sets of nets). Trampolining which is in big demand and potential new let to Gatwick Flyers who will take solid booking of two evenings a week and weekend use as well. Indoor tennis and indoor football (no outside all weather pitch). Exercise and fitness classes do use the main hall and increasing demand (no dance studio provision). Badminton demand very small.
- Lettings are on needs of clubs and user groups. Some book on an annual basis, some on a term and some less frequent. Encouraged to book for longer periods to secure slots.
- No real problems in operation and management of the venue – it is only 2 years old. Would like to see more promotion of the sports facilities and develop its own web site. Does use the College web site and does promote through Active Rother but a dedicated web site and use of social media is the way to ensure greater awareness of the centre and link to more users. Need to raise the profile of the venue to wider audiences.

#### **Sadie Mason, CEO, Active Sussex**

- Rother District well organised and very active on sports development, one of few authorities to retain and develop local sports

development. Her view Rother is proactive on sports development programmes and provides support to clubs and local organisations. Good link and integration with Active Rother on healthy lifestyles and promoting work, projects, communications with a range of organisations to use sport and physical activity as the means to improving health and be active.

- I explained limited response from national NGB facility lead on facility requirements/issues in Rother. Her view is that Rother is not a priority for NGB's. Not a Rother issue but more widespread across smaller local authority areas. NGB's are participant increase driven and therefore much more focused on the larger urban area authorities - it's a numbers game to secure/maintain Sport England investment.
- Agreed to follow up on Regional/ County GB leads with Sally Johnston at Active Sussex to get her overview and leads. Also discuss with Gina Rogers club links. Her view that sports most interested in Rother are cricket (said had contacted Chris Whittaker at ECB on indoor cricket needs and he is responding). Netball (said had contacted Charlotte Maylan at England Netball and she is co-ordinating a response with County netball person). Gymnastics (said had received a response from Dom Elsom Facility Officer at British Gymnastics – supportive of clubs and increasing access to existing venues but no mention of need or leadership of dedicated venues). Swimming said had been in touch with Tom Neale at ASA and awaiting response. View that swimming is very important and Freedom Leisure, local swim schools and clubs are leading on learn to swim programmes for young children.
- Understood that St Richards School has extensive land area and is looking to develop indoor sports facilities but no details – said I would follow up. (Note: did so with Nichola Watters at RDC Planning. She confirmed an outline application had received planning consent but this is a renewal for the third time and therefore how serious the intent is unknown. The application is for a 4 badminton court size sports hall, no dimensions but possibly 486 sq metres which would be the minimum size sports hall for 4 courts).
- Explained I had followed up with Anthony Statham on sports club links and used Be Inspired to access details and contacts for local sports clubs to overlay with club data from Active Rother. Have followed up and emailed out to clubs Understand that Active Sussex is doing a comprehensive update of its club database.
- Explained we had placed page on the Active Rother website letting sports club know of the study and asking them to get in touch. Agreed this covered the communication to clubs.

#### **Sally Johnston, NGB Lead Person, Active Sussex**

- This was an e mail consultation. Sally reviewed the Active Sussex database of NGB priority area for the sports facility types in the Rother study. Confirmed that none list Rother as a priority area.
- Rationale is not because of Rother. It is that all NGB's are participation focused as their Sport England investment and continuation of it is embedded in NGB's improving participation – across a number of performance indicators – total, young people, disability and gender are key PFI's. Consequently tendency for NGB's to focus their priorities and investment in areas of greatest participation return, so local authorities with bigger population numbers.
- There are exceptions and where some NGB's select areas based on potential and where they consider demand exceeds supply and there is a solid club base network. Example being Hastings and investment in Summerfield Leisure Centre to upgrade the sports hall floor, lighting and access for wheelchair users. In return for guaranteed 10 hours of use per week for badminton, contractor also tied into this arrangement.
- Confirmed that protection of venues is what is most important to NGB's and then development of opportunities for club based sport.

- Mentioned that the reputation of RDC sports development is well established and respected in the area. RDC one of the few local authorities to have retained and developed its sports development role.
- Reference to the National [Priorities Spreadsheet](https://public.sportengland.org/b2bengage/National%20Priorities%20Spreadsheet/Forms/AllItems.aspx) which captures all Sports England funded NGB's plans, funding awards, key programmes. Link is <https://public.sportengland.org/b2bengage/National%20Priorities%20Spreadsheet/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

#### **Matte Hart, Owner and Head Coach, 1066 Gymnastics**

- Club opened in 2006. It is a purpose built gymnastics centre within the building. Club has long term lease and occupies first floor of the building and one of four units on the ground floor which is the club's second gym.
- Centre is a fully equipped centre for all gymnastics disciplines and includes two pitted areas. Club is financially viable and now has 24 full time coaches, some qualified up to national and international standard coaching.
- Catchment area for recreational gymnastics which is the main activity in Bexhill and Hastings for regular participation. Nearest gymnastics club with their own venue are Crawley and Penguins Centre in Maidstone. 1066 is the gymnastics centre for Rother and provides the district wide venue. Matte used to be head coach at centre at Summerfield's Centre in Hastings.
- Club is particularly successful at attracting and retaining teenage boys for a free style gymnastics programme. Boys like the commitment they make to the club and the freestyle of the programme and they decide attendance to meet their needs.
- Club has 500 membership and no waiting list. Tries to avoid waiting lists and because of the size of the club and number of coaches it can provide a good coach/participant ratio. Tries to balance growth of the club with addition of coaches so it retains the participant/coach ratio.
- Club has extensive day time use with schools programme. Main activity period is 4pm – 7pm and the club runs one hour activity programmes. Also provides parent/toddler sessions and has soft play area.
- Club does host invitational events with Sussex County level at regular intervals. Has hosted up to BAGA Club does not have a sponsored national level events.
- Access to the centre is fully accessible to all with lift to first floor but because the club is located mainly on the first floor it does not have a reception type area – not a problem.
- Club would like to provide more extensive catering than just vending and catering for events/birthday parties is brought in at present. Would also like to improve changing accommodation. These do not however do not detract in any way from the core gymnastics business of the club and its extensive programme of use and scale of operation.

#### **Ian Hollidge, Bexhill Karate Club**

- Has operated the Bexhill Karate Club at Bexhill Leisure Centre since it opened. Current membership is 15 but has been as high as 250. Change not because of declining interest in karate but more sharing workload/leadership/development of the club. Also growth of different karate disciplines and other martial arts.
- Club has weekly let on Wednesday evenings for 2 hours also has meet on Sunday mornings for 2 hours.
- Centre works well for karate but there are limitations - lack of a sprung timber floor being biggest – solid floor does lead to injuries. Quality issues of changing and showers. Building does reflect its age and participants expectations and requirements have moved on. Provision for martial arts at K2 and Spectrum Centres are setting the standards and expectations. Belief that if facility provision is fit for purpose then it will encourage increase in participation.
- Future requirements for karate and for other martial arts would be a dedicated room with a sprung timber floor, mirrors on one wall

and dedicated matting area. If not dedication then need dedicated time and access to a sports hall – with sprung timber floor.

- Other karate clubs in Rother and all use variety of venues, community centres, village halls and converted buildings, for example martial arts at St Peters Community Centre Bexhill. Choice of venues based on what is available and what suits clubs. Bexhill Karate Club uses BLC because they have from the outset and they make it work for them. Support from BLC centre management and the club have a good relationship.

#### **Malcolm Office, Manager, Cooden Beach Sports & Social Club**

- Club has three squash courts and all three are standard courts with viewing gallery. Club opened in 1977 and the courts which are in a 2 and 1 block were refurbished in 2000. The two court block was extensively refurbished again in 2014.
- Club operates as a membership club but does allow/encourage guest players to try and promote membership, Squash participation is steady and membership levels have held at around 40 – 50 members for past three years. Racketball has higher membership of between 60 – 70 members. Very little transfer from tennis membership to squash. Belief that participation levels should hold at these numbers for the future.
- Male membership predominates at 70% of members but female local league play is very popular.
- Court occupancy is 100% between 6pm – 10pm weekday evenings slightly lower in summer months. Very low occupancy outside of these times.
- Club catchment area is Rother for regular club use but does draw members from as far as Eastbourne.
- Members prefer to play in local and club leagues rather than Sussex League which the club also competes in. Time commitment to compete in Sussex League is a barrier.
- Club has not invested in development of junior players because of the time commitment and lack of retention. Not lack of interest in squash amongst juniors but because young people move away and are lost to the club.
- No linkage between Bexhill Leisure Centre as pay and play venue and passing on players who wish to develop and play competitive squash.
- Belief that squash participation will hold its own but lack of media coverage is not bringing it into the public eye – accepts squash is not a good TV viewing sport.
- Would not envisage the club adding to its stock of courts without a sustained increase in participation over several years. Problem is not lack of courts it is everyone wanting to play at the same weekday evenings. Club has tried to stagger peak times by pricing/membership changes but very little impact – price is not an incentive to change participation. Court higher fee is now only £2 a game.
- I explained having trouble contacting Bexhill Squash Club. View was that the club is low key and only around 15 members at the club.

#### **Roger Newman, Development Manager, Sussex County Cricket**

- Regards provision for indoor cricket as good as most indoor sports halls venues have solid floor which is more resilient and suitable for indoor cricket than a sprung timber floor.
- Particular mention of Battle Abbey Sports Centre and Robertsbridge Community College which clubs like and the centres promote indoor cricket for winter nets.
- Quality of changing rooms is a slight issue. Quality of the actual nets is an issue and considers at some venues this is possibly done to



discourage participation.

- No venue is large enough for indoor cricket six a side games but does not regard this as a big issue as there is no groundswell to develop a local league.
- Has not had reports of clubs not being able to access venues for winter nets.
- Would welcome a new venue slightly larger than existing sports halls but recognises this is most likely going to be a sprung timber floor and not so good a surface for indoor cricket.
- Strong area for cricket clubs and growth of the sport.
- Bigger issue is in Hastings with lack of venues which provide for indoor cricket.

### **NGB Pro-forma**

- 1.4 The survey is designed to capture NGB views on swimming pools, indoor hall sports and squash courts in Rother District. The headings follow the guidance set out in the Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) and is designed to capture NGB information on facility supply, facility demand and key priorities for the NGB in the Rother area.

#### **1. Relevant plans and strategies (Context)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>1.1 What are your Whole Sport Plan priorities? (List high level outcomes etc.)</b>   |  |
| <b>1.2 Is Rother a priority area for your sport?</b>  |  |
| <b>1.3 Does your sport have a facilities strategy (please provide link)</b>   |  |
| <b>1.4 What strategic facility statements does your WSP or strategy include (list)</b>  |  |
| <b>1.5 Is Rother identified in this? If so please summarise here and insert web link if possible.</b>                             |  |
| <b>1.6 Is there a more specific NGB local facility plan or strategy? Please list these and attach weblink or electronic copy;</b> |  |

## 1. Relevant plans and strategies (Context)

1.7 Please list any specific local priorities in these plans

1.8 Does your plan have any capital or revenue investment earmarked for this area? Please list.

1.9 Any other comments?

## 2. Facility supply

2.1 Do you have sufficient QUANTITY of facilities for your sport in Rother? Are there any specific requirements such as competition venues? Please list the key venues used.

2.2 Are the facilities well located and ACCESSIBLE to meet the needs of your sport? If there are any areas with access issues or geographical gaps in provision please list.

2.3. In your assessment what is the QUALITY of the existing facilities? Are they 'fit for purpose'? Please summarise here.

2.5 AVAILABILITY: does your sport own or control facilities? Do you rely on school facilities? Council facilities? HE/FE facilities?

Please describe which applies

2.5.1 How available are the facilities that you use when you need them?

2.5.2 How easy is it to access school/HE and

## 2. Facility supply

FE facilities?

2.5.3 Any other issues e.g. pricing, quality, general availability?

2.9 Are any of the facilities your sport uses at risk? Are you aware of any planned developments which will change the SUPPLY? For example, threatened with closure; change of surface; change of operator/ownership? Please list.

2.10 Any other comments?

## 3. Demand issues

3.1 Please provide an overview of your sport in Rother e.g. club membership. How important is your sport in Rother?

3.2 Please provide any insight you have on latent and future demand in Rother. Are any interventions planned that will increase demand for facilities?

3.3 Any other comments?

## 4. Summary/conclusions

4.1 What are the key challenges and

#### 4. Summary/conclusions

opportunities for your sport in Rother?

4.2 What are the facility priorities for your sport in Rother using the Sport England planning criteria?

PROTECT

PROVIDE

ENHANCE

4.3 Is there any NGB funding potentially available to support the delivery of your facility priorities in Rother?

4.4 Any other comments?

4.5 Please provide contact details e mail and phone for any follow up