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31 January 2012 Progress Report

Since purchasing the former Bacup Leisure Hall in October 2010, the building has caused a mixture of upset, delight and surprise. On purchase it was found that the building needed a lot more investment than first thought and required an underestimated investment of £98,600 in repairs.

It was with regret that due to partial closure of the facility we were unable to meet the tupe obligations and therefore made the last key member of staff redundant who to this day still volunteers at the hub.

The building slowly started to take shape internally and we began to put events on for the local people of Bacup from what had been discussed in market research, this included Tributes, Bingo, community days and “something for the kids to do”.

We set about putting on these events, working with a provider, but the majority failed and we had a maximum of 60 people to any event.

We then put on community days including cards, board games and bingo. We ran this via the community group for 6 weeks on a Wednesday. We leafleted over 500 households, put it in the free press and knocked on doors and we had 1 person attend.

The Bacup community association also put on various themed evenings including a night at the races which brought 4 people in. They also held the royal wedding day with the help of council funding for which we had 3 people attend. This caused me financially a loss of £423 just opening the doors before staff and heating.

During the summer 2011 we held a children's open day where we had cub carts, bouncy castles, inflatables and a wii tent and football and we had 16 people attend. This cost over £2,000 to put on.

In summary the issue appears to be no matter what the community event, the public do not engage. During 2012 this is a key area for us to investigate.

During 2010 the hub did research and what came was that the majority of people wanted combat sporting events, WWE, boxing and cage fighting. We took the plunge to do our first one back in Dec 2010 and with great opposition it was nerve wracking. The reality was that there was no trouble, the event had finished by 10.30pm and it had brought well over 200 people from Liverpool, Blackburn and Ireland to the area, who all ate at the Rose and Bowl and shopped at the Co op!

In Oct 2011 we worked with local business people to bring Barry Macguigan to Bacup to raise funds for a local charity. The event raised over £15,000.

In September 2011 the hub took a U turn when we decided to work with what people wanted. Late 2011/ early 2012 We invested over £10,000 on a cinema system to provide cost effective cinema experiences for the people of Rossendale. We invested in a new table tennis table attracting a local table tennis team to start a league, we invested and renewed the squash facilities which means the changing facilities now have hot and cold water. More recently we have invested in a community café specialising in offering cost effective food and information and a warm and modern environment. This will open in March 2012.

I am proud to say that 2012 is looking to be a start of something great with the hub, we are working closely with the Maiden Centre, the Sophie Lancaster Foundation and the Bacup Community Association and Consortium. We are beginning to utilise the community hours which is fantastic but definitely

something we need to continue to push and work with the council and real to promote.

Overall it looks to be a promising venue and I can now say that I am the proud to be part of the hub and what it represents to the community. I would love more community and council involvement but that will come in time. I would also love to share space and resources with the riverside and the sports centres and the trust and hope that we will see the shift for this in 2012.