

**Partner Scrutiny Report
Rossendale Leisure Trust**

Year	2014	Period	May 2014 – Feb 2015
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Key Achievements' this period

Throughout 2013 / 2014 Rossendale Leisure Trust facilities continued to strive towards continuous improvement of core service delivery with facility programmes being continually reviewed and actively marketed to ensure greater opportunity for income generation and attendance generation. Overlaying the facilities' development the lifestyles team had its busiest summer in 2013 since the Trust inception in 2004.

.The objects of Rossendale Leisure Trust remain consistent and are identified as the following;

- To provide affordable and quality leisure services for Rossendale including those who by reason of their age, infirmity or disability, poverty or social economic circumstance may have need of special facilities and services.
- To seek continuous improvement in both efficiency and quality / range of service provision.
- To secure and increase community participation and elite sport in Rossendale with a view to enhancing community engagement, social inclusion, tourism, family entertainment and regeneration.
- To support the Leisure Trust in continuing to develop as a sustainable social enterprise working in strong partnership with the Council.
- To support the Borough Council in developing and delivering responsive and value for money local services which promote a healthy and successful Rossendale.
- To build revenue per facility and work towards generating profit which could be reinvested in the facilities / leisure portfolio each financial year.

- To promote the preservation of good health through community participation in healthy recreation.

Rossendale Leisure Trust also subscribes to the following objectives and activities;

- **Service Specification**

To provide sports and leisure activities on behalf of Rossendale Borough Council and is commissioned by a number of third party funders including Sport England, the Health Commissioners, Lancashire Sport and Lancashire County Council.

To deliver on specific aims and objectives under three separate but linked priorities.

- **Widening opportunities**

Widening opportunities is the level of participation in sport and physical activity that is experienced by the majority. It happens at the grass roots where people take part in physical activity simply for fun and enjoyment or to improve their health.

- **Delivering potential**

Developing potential is a process that creates opportunities and pathways which allows individuals to take up and fulfil their potential in sport. It is not just concerned with elite athletes but recognises the opportunities to progress are important in sustaining the interest and enjoyment that will encourage people of all ages and abilities to maintain a long term involvement with sport.

- **Resources for sport**

Committed to the on-going development of sport and active recreation through the provision of good quality, adequately resourced facilities and services that meet the needs and aspirations of both residents and visitors to Rossendale. It is evident that any progress in developing sport and physical activity in Rossendale will be dependent on the physical, human and financial resources which are made available by a number of public, private and voluntary sector agencies, but most importantly by the Borough Council and Rossendale Leisure Trust.

Key Achievements / Challenges

Looking after the Leisure offer in Rossendale, whilst responding to the financial challenges that we all face, is a serious business. Being a non-statutory service has added pressures year on year but we only need to look Country Wide to see how the leisure landscape is changing radically in today's climate. In Rossendale and through 2014, the Trust has seen change and faced some

difficult tasks but the Board of Trustees and Staff have worked hard with their dedicated partners, customers and commissioners to ensure that we keep quality standards and value for money for the residents of the Valley. We may be commissioned to 'just' run the facilities on behalf of the Borough but the *Social Return on Investment* runs much deeper and through this report I hope to highlight the added value that the Trust brings to the Borough.

Marl Pits Leisure Centre is a very busy and vibrant Centre and to walk through the building on a daily basis is a pleasure; yes we may have operational issues and we still face challenges but to say that we continue to service every primary school in the valley and to continue to offer varied sessions for multiple user groups is a testament to good planning and people's hard work. We still work with the Valley swimming clubs to try and encourage a closer working relationship as everyone is still aware. We still manage to host Bacup swimming club, Rawtenstall swimming club, The Rays swimming club and the Triathlon club within the pool at Marl Pits and we cannot shoe – horn any more water time to another club; It has to be achieved in another way. It is not the Trust's position to work within 'club walls' but we are trying to facilitate that closer working relationship. We have great sporting clubs in Rossendale and the Trust continues to work closely with as many as possible to ensure that they have a chance to continue to sustain and grow. The Trust has entered into a partnership with the Amateur Swimming Association, with a view to all aspects of swimming, and, in particular, club development, the Trust has just completed the first year of a three year partnership.

The membership base for the gym at Marl Pits continues to grow steadily but there are challenges within the membership mix, we have attracted lots of younger members which is great for the health of the Borough, but it does detract from the yield of income so there is a balance to be met. Three times in the last six months the gym has hit maximum capacity, and not at peak times, and it is great to report that both the gym and secondary spend operates in the top quartile of national benchmarking. The swimming pool has hit maximum bathing loads on each Saturday from the new year and we continue to evaluate the possible return to wrist band operation to ensure that numbers are managed and customers have an equal opportunity to swim.

For information, new activities at Marl Pits include children's Ballet and Tap, street dance, a teen bootcamp, 1 to 1 swim lessons (when water time allows), intensive swimming lessons through the holidays, a healthy lifestyles 'skillz active club'.

Football at Marl Pits has continued to grow slower than hoped; The new entrants in the district having a direct impact on the offer. When Marl Pits was in planning stages we had just two competing non turf pitches within the district, now we see all schools operating non turf pitches and looking for an income return and we are aware new entrants into the market planned for the future. Evening times are running at 85% occupancy until 9pm but the challenge remains that the weekday and weekends remain underutilised. The Trust has been doing some joint work with Blackburn Rovers, the Lancashire Football Association and SurrIDGE Sports in an attempt to lift the profile of the venue and some unique events are planned for the summer months. The Trust

continues to be inventive with its offer and marketing but the challenge will continue, we have seen new initiatives such as walking football, the 'mash up' and skills and drills.

On wider Marl Pits issues, the Trust continues to work with users on improvements within the site. Work on Marl Pits pavilion was completed in the summer months of 2014 and all users are reaping the benefits of the major refurbishments, new toilet blocks, showers and a major new heating and a full redecoration of all dressing rooms and downstairs space. Externally all wooden fascia boards were replaced (or repaired) and painted, external windows were replaced and the whole of the external walls given a facelift, the lighting was improved also. We continue to work both with the Borough and the users to ensure Marl Pits is a well operated site, welcoming to visitors and a place of pride for our Clubs and members. We still have much to do but a statement of intent was laid down with the improvements of the pavilion.

Marl Pits triathlon took place in May of 2014 and, the 2015 event is close to closing its entry as people flock to join the event. 250 competitors and 30 volunteers ensure that this remains one of Rossendale's signature events with people coming to compete from all over the country. The triathlon now has its own club operating out of Marl Pits and has generated its own bespoke website found at <http://www.rossendaletriathlon.com>

Haslingden Sports Centre has continued to battle with its identity following the decision not to build the new pool. Lots of work for potential additional uses within the centre has continued and we have seen a number of inexpensive interventions whilst the major plans for the centre are developed. Membership was directly affected by the closure of Haslingden Swimming Pool and the staff battled to keep the memberships stable with new entrants coming into the market, a new budget gym just 'over the hill' and competition now entering our price point are all having an effect. Haslingden Sports Centre is a big building and it intended that whatever proposals come forward will be to the benefit of all its users and help the building to become sustainable and **'a place of fun'**. The Trust works extremely hard to control its expenditure but strongly understands the need for constant and sustained revenue. Leisure is a dynamic and ever changing environment, and there is need to always be one step ahead and to have the ability to react quickly to changes or opportunities is critical. The Trust Board and Senior Management are working hard to create those operating conditions.

In September of 2014 the Trust upgraded the gym at Haslingden, new gym equipment, floor and redecorating throughout the building made a striking impact, we installed the Andre Aggasi BILT C.O.D. machine (the first in the NW) <http://www.biltbyagassiandreyes.com/equipment/c-o-d/> a signature piece of gym equipment making aimed at making a statement that the gym at Haslingden is leading the way on functionality and inventiveness. Haslingden is one of the few facilities that now operates a ladies only running in parallel with a 72 station gym a bespoke functional training area with Pavigym floor

<http://www.pavigym.com/> and studio classes. The facility is also operating laser tag, a very successful squash club thriving on competition and junior coaching. The indoor bowls is operating very close to maximum and it is such a thriving environment running from September to March. The facility operates a crèche facility during the week and of course is home to health coordinators, traditional sports such as five a side football, badminton, short tennis, trampolining, basketball and roller skating. It is a busy Building!

I mention all the above because it is very important to acknowledge the amount of community sport and recreation the facility is home to, in these tough financial times the Trust is charged with ensuring value for money, to maximise income lines and to find new income lines that will help the Borough Council achieve its efficiency goals; to do this the Trust has to find new and exciting 'things to play on' new concepts that won't displace what we already have but protect it and to hopefully allow things to grow. The new attraction for 2015 will hopefully be Vertical Playground™.

The Vertical Playground™ concept is due before Full Council on the 25th February 2015 where the Trust is asking for support from the Borough Council in the form of a loan.

Vertical Playground™ is the next generation of indoor adventure structures, a fun and imaginative introduction to adventure play and climbing. With its bright colours and striking themes Vertical Playground™ attracts the attention of children and adults alike. Vertical Playground™ is designed to be multi-generational and inclusive, to create an adventure for all. The unique elements present an exciting set of climbing based challenge that can be enjoyed by everyone. The Climbs provide both a physical and mental challenge and provide a healthy full body work out. Vertical Playground™ is principally aimed at 5 to 16 year olds but can be used regularly by anyone from 4 – 94.

As part of the Vertical Playground™ The Trust will be working very hard with the other attractions of Rossendale in the attempt to create that destination attraction. For example, if you are to visit the Vertical Playground™ what else can we sell you? A train ticket for the East Lancashire Railway? And vice versa.

If the project receives support on the 25th February we will be looking at a late spring / early summer install.

The Annual football tournament at Haslingden Sports Centre witnessed over 100 competing teams from all over the North West and again as a signature event utilises a voluntary base, and a base of junior referees, giving them experience and exposure to competition.

The Sports Centre also hosted the Rossendale Sports Awards in October, receiving 200 people on the Awards Evening. It is hoped that 2015 sees the biggest Sports Awards ever as volunteer coordinators help to ensure that we reach deep down into community club life and we will double up this year by utilising the event to celebrate the Up & Active project that is running through 2015.

The Up & Active project has been live since Christmas 2014 and the project is just starting to roll out through the wards of Worsley and Irwell. The Borough Council and the Trust have been commissioned alongside Pendle Borough Council and Pendle Leisure Trust to deliver a targeted physical activity project primarily in four wards (two in each Borough) with the outcome to encourage more people into physical activity. The activities will run throughout the year and early signs are very encouraging.

The Trust continues to run the out of hours' delivery at both Alder Grange and Whitworth Sports Centres operating a varied programme of activity to the communities which the schools serve. We have seen growth in the delivery of climbing at Whitworth, and badminton and rugby at Alder Grange. There is such a nice local atmosphere at both centres and centre staff who take pride in their connection with that local community.

A large part of the work of the Trust centres upon the Lifestyles team. This team is responsible for the Trust's social conscience and the working ethos that the Trust delivers outside of the walls of the Leisure Centres. The school coaching and competition calendar is as strong as it has ever been, in terms of the number of hours of delivery, and we encourage all children of the valley to partake in the fantastic holiday clubs that run over every holiday period. Under the schools sport delivery programme we committed to 795 hours over the year, and have so far carried out/have booked in 584 hours (73%), which equates to the highest percentage for all sports plans across Lancashire up to the end of this term.

That's a staggering number when it's delivered as added value to the Borough's residents. We promote a healthy lifestyle through the work of the Trust and this is another mechanism where we reach out right across the Valley. From these programmes we feed youngsters directly into our centres and sporting clubs in an attempt to enable the young people to stay within the sport or continue that physical activity, we continue to operate rates that young people can afford to allow them to succeed. Many years ago I penned the phrase that I hope the Trust gives the opportunity for people both young and old to '**start, stay and succeed in sport and physical activity**'; I believe that the Trust still offers that opportunity under difficult and challenging operating conditions.

The health co-ordinators continue to deliver strongly against the agreed commission. GP referral and weight management numbers stand at circa 600 and the number that are engaging the cardiac rehabilitation has risen since I aired my concerns at the last overview and Scrutiny Meeting, and I thank all Members who raised those concerns on my behalf. These activities are delivered

right across the Valley and the Trust continues to skill up its staff, both wet and dry, in the principles that underpin this service delivery arm. They try to promote the virtues of healthy lifestyles in all our activities to both young and old. For information also, our Passport to Active Living Scheme still has over 1400 members allowing people to access some form of discounted leisure.

Sales and marketing are corporate responsibilities of all staff and we do many things on outreach, use of the active network to support the leisure offer right across Pennine Lancashire, outreach sessions at school fairs, community events, retail locations, valley centre events etc. and generally delivered by core staff on top of their day to day work. The Board of Trustees, all of who are local people, act as advisors and critical friends and play their part fully within this area often asking where we are with things. I hope that people feel that our website continues to improve, I quite like the look and feel as it has matured and developed but as always would encourage feedback. Within the Trust we are not very good at telling the story of just what activities the Trust is involved in and how we connect with the local community, we are all busy doing! An action for me personally over the next few months is to devise a better way of showcasing our work.

The Company has received extensive media coverage including radio and press which was a direct result of the revitalised internal marketing meetings. The Company undertook to produce a programme of good news stories. Over onehundred media releases were published covering strategic topics, sport and leisure centre initiatives and performance related programmes.

Rossendale Leisure Trust continued on the development and delivery of high quality, affordable and accessible programmes strengthening our relationships with health practitioners, sports clubs and the wider local community. Some key achievements include:

- ✓ Rossendale Sports Awards achieved the most nominations every and over 200 people attended the Awards Ceremony at Haslingden Sports Centre.
- ✓ Over 600 people accessed the GP referral, cardiac rehabilitation or weight management programme delivered at all the Trust sites and Whitworth Pool
- ✓ The Trust achieved (for the third year running) the prestigious Social Enterprise Mark in May of 2014.
- ✓ The Trust continues to facilitate four sports specific development forums.

- ✓ The Haslingden Football Tournament in August attracted over 100 junior football teams.
- ✓ The Trust has been instrumental in creating the Active Network, where the five East Lancashire Boroughs work together to promote each other's Leisure offer and membership drives.
- ✓ The Trust refurbished Haslingden Sports Centre gym in September 2014 and opened a ladies only gym in January 2015.
- ✓ Marl Pits Pavilion renovation in March 2014
- ✓ All Rossendale Schools offered swimming lessons at Marl Pits.
- ✓ Supporting the fundraising efforts of a number of community groups.
- ✓ The Trust in conjunction with the School Sports Coordinator operate the NUMBER ONE school sports plan in Lancashire.

The Trust sees its partnership working as critical in achieving success for the organisation and the community of Rossendale, the following are just a few of the partnership that we engage to achieve that success;

- ✓ The Trust's Board of Trustees are all Rossendale residents offering their expertise and time voluntarily for the benefit of all the community. Skill sets on the Board include (but not exclusively): legal both Civil and Company HR, Finance, Public Servant, Company Directors, Governance and Project Management.
- ✓ A successful partnership continues between the Trust Lifestyles Team and the School Games Coordinator which has seen an increase in support funding for summer activity and in-school coaching offer.
- ✓ The Trust continues to work closely with health commissioners with respect to GP Referral, Cardiac Rehabilitation and Weight Management Programmes. The Trust supports the Borough actively at a regional level looking for funding support for health activities
- ✓ The Trust continues to work closely with many community sports clubs either individually or via the sports forums.
- ✓ The Trust works closely with the Borough Council's Community Team at the Neighbourhood Forums and on individual projects such as the UP & ACTIVE project.

- ✓ The Trust continues to launch outreach projects such as the summer football programme, sports awards, summer sporting programmes in conjunction with voluntary and community groups.
- ✓ The Trust plays a full part in the activities of Lancashire County Sports Partnership, the Lancashire Chief Leisure Officers Group and SPORTA, the Sport and Receptions Trust Association.
- ✓ The Trust has continued to support the work of regeneration and tourism within Rossendale and particularly around the work of the Adrenaline Gateway and promoting Rossendale.
- ✓ The Trust supported the work of the Borough Council surrounding the Football Pitch Survey work / Strategy
- ✓ The Trust continues to work closely with the National Governing Bodies of sport in an attempt to ease the way for revenue and capital resource.
- ✓ The Trust continues to support the work of the user groups at Marl Pits Sports Complex.
- ✓ The Trust continues to give employment to local people - 72% of our workforce are our own community. Rossendalians.

Risks or issues

We continue to work 'hand in hand' with the Borough Council to realise efficiencies. We have unified the RBC / RLT IT systems and payroll to achieve savings and the Trust is committed to devising creative ways of the best utilisation of back room services. With all the change management this needs handling with thought and empathy.

Balancing the mix of yield – service versus commercialism.

Haslingden to achieve stable income through gym membership and increase the offer by investing new income lines and widening the leisure mix.

Continued financial challenges through this period of settlement for the Trust and facilities.

We are still witnessing a time of unstable financial conditions for supporting funding agencies.

To ensure the investment into facilities against the existing condition surveys.

Threat of new entrants into the health and fitness market.