



*Monday 8 April 2019*

## **Collaboration at forefront of Sussex Disability Sports Network**

Working in collaboration to drive disability and inclusion sport and physical activity across the county was the main focus at the Sussex Disability Sports Network 2019.

The sixth Sussex Disability Sports Network, also featured a special question time hosted by Paul Brackley, Albion in the Community's Disability Manager, and featured two Albion in the Community participants - Tom Ovenden and Sam Brooker.

The motivating event, attended by 50 enthusiastic delegates, opened with Active Sussex updates, delivered by Ross Joannides, Strategic Relationship Manager and Disability Deputy, Active Sussex, at the Sussex County Cricket Club, on Wednesday April 3, 2019.



## Sports Collaboration within Sussex

Paul, followed on with the first presentation - 'Sports collaboration within Sussex,' where he showcased best practice examples and the benefits of working in partnership from Albion in the Community's award-winning disability programme. Over 30 different regular football sessions for people with a disability are currently running, attended by more than 250 people.

"For us working in collaboration is a really important piece and it's really interesting about how we can help other sports providers to improve the possibilities for young people and adults with disability in Sussex," said Paul.

"It's important to make sure we are all working towards the same agenda in the best possible way... Today gives us the opportunity to come together, talk, discuss and build ideas and an action going forward."

## Best Practice Examples & Future Collaboration

Round table examples and discussions of best practice examples of engaging priority audiences, covering six areas, followed:

- Adult learning disabilities sport provision - led by Liz Bartlett, Sports Development Project Manager, The Grace Eyre Foundation.
- Complex needs sport provision - led by Al Carter, School Sports Development Officer, Chailey Heritage School.
- CYP learning disabilities sport provision - Pippa Hodge, Brighton Table Tennis Club Co-ordinator T21 Sessions, Brighton Table Tennis Club.
- Mental health sport provision - Anna McDevitt, Service Manager - Mind in Brighton & Hove.
- Wheelchair sport provision - Ricky Perrin, Manager, Sussex Bears Wheelchair Basketball Team.
- Women and girls sport provision - Jade Harker, Disability Football Development Officer, Sussex FA.

Pippa, Co-ordinator T21 Sessions, Brighton Table Tennis Club, said: "We want to make sure that as a network we can encourage children, young people and adults to play a real variety of sport and also that collectively as champions for disability sport we can make sure we are as accessible as possible and properly understanding the background for our players and families.

"Getting out there into the world and accessing activities and sport which is everyone's fundamental right and taking part has a multitude of benefits.

"It's been brilliant today to find out what other organisations have been doing and we've already started to collaborate and come up with some ideas together and we'll start to share those ideas and start to visit each others activities. That keeps us fresh as champions and we know that the more engaged we are as champions the better the facilities and sessions we lay on for our sporting audiences."

## Collaboration with the Wider System

Ricky Perrin, Manager, Sussex Bears wheelchair Basketball Team then inspired delegates with his difficult journey following an accident resulting in a broken back and being paralysed from the waist down.

Creating more opportunities for people with disabilities to do sport was Ricky's key message and he spoke passionately about the potential benefits for individuals, including giving people a better quality of life and more independence; but also financial - potentially saving the country thousands of pounds which would otherwise be spent on care and medical costs.

Ricky also discussed the joint initiative run between the Sussex Bears wheelchair basketball team and the Brighton and Hove Albion FC charity 'Albion in the that showcased wheelchair sports in action at the University of Brighton campus, Falmer.

And the moving video - 'Playing for Freedom - The Sussex Bears Wheelchair Basketball Team ,' featuring Ricky, rounded off his presentation, which resonated with the Sussex Disability Sports Network audience. (See video below).

## Impact of Collaborative Working

In the final section of the event a special question time was hosted by Paul, Albion in the Community's Disability Manager, and featured two Albion in the Community participants Tom and Sam.

The aspiring duo advised and motivated the event's delegates with their own personal stories about becoming involved in sport despite facing many challenges.

Both Tom and Sam highlighted the vital impact sport has played in their lives and both having coaching and mentoring aspirations for the future, with the desire to give back to the community.

Also featured at the stimulating event was insight, collaboration opportunities and discussions around the Sussex Disability Sports Network moving forward.



## Champion roles

Within the network we have **Champion roles** - individuals who help to lead the direction and delivery of network events.

If you are interested in becoming a Champion, and/or want to contribute to the Sussex Disability Sports Network in the future, please contact: *Ross Joannides, Strategic Relationship Manager, Active Sussex*: E: [rjoannides@activearchive.co.uk](mailto:rjoannides@activearchive.co.uk) / T: 01273644154.

## More information

- [See photos from the event](#)
- [Make sure you are signed up to receive the latest Sussex Disability Sports Network updates](#)