



Derbyshire's Village Games

North East Derbyshire

In the last of her series looking at the work of Derbyshire's Village Games team, Lissa Cook talks to former police community support officer Hayley Bramley about plans to welcome the Olympic Torch Relay to North East Derbyshire...

North East Derbyshire's Village Games Officer Hayley Bramley has lived her whole life in the village of Morton, so when we met up the week it was revealed the torch would travel from Glapwell to Chesterfield before heading over to the Derbyshire Dales and Buxton on its way to Derby, it was no surprise that she was bubbling with enthusiasm. I grew up in Calow between Bolsover and Chesterfield so can well imagine the impact and excitement the Olympic procession passing through such a small community will generate.

Hayley is already busy coordinating a variety of mini-Olympics events as well as a shooting competition with Calow's Junior Netball Club. And if you want to run a gala, fête, Olympic-nic or family decathlon day to celebrate then Hayley and her colleagues across Derbyshire can help. Village Games officers can deal with the hassle of red tape, like risk assessments, as well as

suggesting ideas for games and activities and providing scorecards and winners' certificates.

Yet, as I've discovered over the past six months, the core work of Derbyshire Village Games goes on week in, week out, helping local people set up activities that people can take part in right on their own doorstep. If the Olympics organisers and government ministers really want a 2012 Games' legacy then it's this sort of hands-on approach to making sport accessible, affordable and enjoyable that will have a lasting impact.

Hayley says the key is to reduce the barriers that small rural villages face such as poor public transport, lower incomes, lack of facilities, venues, equipment and coaches. She says: 'We work with local people, up-skilling them with coaching qualifications, CRB checks and first aid certificates to help them earn an income or to volunteer their time to gain experience.'



Village Games officer
Hayley Bramley

Her background makes her ideally suited to this mix of sports development and on-the-ground community support. Before joining the Village Games team, she worked for England Netball for two years at county level and before that was a police community sports officer in Somercotes for four years.

Hayley says: 'I really enjoyed my time with the police. A lot of community events were focused around sport – for example using activities like netball, street dance and football to tackle anti-social behaviour. Though I loved the job, it made me realise I wanted to work full-time in sport.'

DERBYSHIRE VILLAGE GAMES



North Wingfield Walking Group



Calow Junior Netball Club



Terminus bowling club



Barlow Kingston Rovers



Dry stone walling course at Askover



Stonebroom Tai Chi Club

She says: 'There are lots of similarities between my police work and my job as a Village Games Officer. The nitty gritty of getting stuck in with clubs and helping them set up and of being involved in helping them to grow is what I really like.'

'Coming from England Netball makes it feel like a natural transition. I've just helped to start up a street dance project for 5 to 11 year olds in Moreton which helps them learn new routines and choreograph their own moves for only £3 an hour. Parents can stop and watch and sometimes even get involved to break the ice.'

Forming partnerships with local organisations is essential to her success. The new school sports hall in Renishaw was only being used for PE classes so now Hayley uses it for Boxercise, Zumba and T'ai Chi. When talking to local mothers in Renishaw about setting up classes Hayley realised their problem was having someone to look after their children if they wanted to come to a session. She found a local instructor, Louise Orrill, who runs an hour of energetic Boxercise whilst Eckington Sure Start provides a free crèche – all for £2.50 an hour.

It's not all high-octane, energy pumping classes. She also runs gentler multi-games sessions for older people in

sheltered housing in Clay Cross. 'For the elderly it's not about running around – it's about keeping their minds active. I use skittles, bowls and hoops to play games that require teams to be picked and scores kept. They've loved it so much that they want to run their own sessions now and buy their own equipment!'

Hayley thrives on this interactivity: 'The great thing is how quickly you get a response from people. As soon as I'd set up the street dance classes I had another five phone calls from people saying they were interested in using the same instructor. We also have a Tai Chi class in Stonebroom that is run by Dave who has over 20 years' experience of this art form and so makes the session very informative and friendly. T'ai Chi is very good for arthritis, muscle and joint problems and relaxation, and on average a dozen ladies attend every week.'

'It's really nice to have activities on your doorstep. People don't realise that if you live somewhere like my home village of Morton it's a

lot to expect someone to be able to get to a leisure centre. If it takes you 20 minutes to get to an hour long class it can mean two hours out of your evening but if the class is at the end of your road it's so much more accessible.'

'The older generation used to know everyone who lived on their street. Nowadays lots of people don't know all their neighbours so trying a new activity or sport has social benefits. You might meet someone whose daughter goes to the school your children go to. It's not just about getting fit – it's also about making friends.' ■

If you live in a village in Derbyshire and would like help to set up a class or run an Olympic themed event then visit www.villagegames.org.uk.