



case study

equal opportunities



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The Objective One Partnership
for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

STITHIANS LAKE ACTIVITY CENTRE

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the project

This project develops new facilities at the Stithians Lake site to expand current water borne activities for a wider range of people and support vocational training opportunities in the water sports and leisure industry.

The Programme has invested £310,000 from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the project which has a total cost of £883,656.

Stithians Lake is the second largest inland water body in Cornwall and provides a wide range of formal and informal activities including sailing, windsurfing, canoeing, rowing, walking, fishing, camping and bird watching. The site supported all of these activities through the use of facilities housed in a number of temporary buildings which were wholly inadequate. The nature of the previous facilities severely restricted the ability of the lake to capitalise on its huge potential in terms of sports development, recreation and tourism.

This project aims to build upon the lake's existing activity base. The improvement and extension of facilities will support increased use. The plans for a revamped centre will provide facilities that will enable the lake to be used for leisure and recreational purposes on a year round basis promoting healthy living and supporting training opportunities in the water sports and leisure industry.

Facilities

The improved facilities will support the encouragement of increased participation in water sports by all sectors of the local community. Centre staff are taking a proactive approach to encouraging and enabling greater participation on and around the lake for the whole community, including young and socially disadvantaged people and people with disabilities.



Training

The new Centre will provide vocational training opportunities in the water sports and leisure industry. This will be available both for people wishing to take up employment in the industry and to encourage new volunteers and participants to develop their skills and qualifications to support the long term sustainability of the new community activity that is being generated, with the longer term aim of increasing their employability.

Education and interpretation

The new Centre will provide information and educational resources about the lake and its environment, information panels and rangers supporting school visits to explore the lake and its surrounds. Housed in a new Centre, these resources will now support an extension of the season for both tourists and school visits, enabling the site to be open on a year round basis.

measures of equal opportunities adopted

To enable equality of access to opportunities for all women, including to all levels of training and sustainable employment:

The project is working to increase both participation and training in water sports. This has been addressed through the promotion of a women's evening once per



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week. To date there are 20 participants in this group. It is the aim of the Centre to promote participation as the first step in a route to skill development and the potential take up of vocational training in the industry.

The Centre is also working to provide on-site childcare facilities, a particular barrier to both participation and training.

To enable equality of access to opportunities for people with disabilities, including all levels of training and sustainable employment:

Advice was sought from the Disability Officer, Cornwall's Disability Forum and Falmouth Sailability to seek advice and guidance on access issues and the provision of adaptive equipment. The Centre has been designed to support full disabled access, meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. Full access has also been provided to the water via construction of a new pontoon and slipways to facilitate both instruction and launching. In addition, educational and leisure activities have been designed to support disabled access including a new bird hide to accommodate full access.

The project supports the use of these new facilities by disabled people through the provision of a discounted membership for people with disabilities. In addition, specific promotional activity with disabled groups has been undertaken. Two bookings have been taken through the Mounts Bay Sports Partnership who have identified two special schools who would benefit from involvement in activities at Stithians Lake.

To support activities that increase the adoption of equal opportunities strategies and family friendly policies and/or the awareness of benefits of equal opportunities:

One of the key ways in which the Centre is aiming to encourage greater take up of water sports activities is to enable the participation of family groups. This approach is seen as beneficial as maintaining adult interest also maintains participation by children. It is also a way of increasing participation by women who are traditionally under represented. Staff are promoting activities for parents and children in general and also specific sessions for 'Mums and girls' and 'Dads and lads'. This division can aid participation, increase confidence and support the use of role models to encourage the participation of children and young people.

To enable equality of access to opportunities, including all levels of training and sustainable

employment, for people who are disadvantaged in the economy, including by virtue of age, ethnicity, rural isolation etc:

The project aims to support the participation of a range of different groups including women and disabled, young and socially excluded people. Specific sessions have been established for all of these groups to encourage people to attend and to reduce any inhibitions / confidence issues that may form a barrier to involvement.

Of particular note is the work being undertaken with individuals from two neighbourhoods in Camborne, Pool and Redruth (CPR) who are economically and socially excluded within the community. A project has been established to develop a CPR Water Sports Activity Club, starting with five taster sessions. The aim is to increase participation by excluded groups and to remove barriers to their involvement, in particular in relation to cost. It is intended that the Club will become a self supporting, sustainable entity with both members and parent volunteers who will eventually train to become instructors. This will reduce costs for participants and increase access to activities on the lake. The development of this club will provide activities which can be used as a vehicle to enhance young people's self esteem and social skills, with a focus on longer term employability.

The project also focuses upon the development of vocational training opportunities within the water sports and leisure industry; to increase opportunities for adult education, social development training, youth training and training to support employment within the industry.

benefits of equal opportunities

The project has considered and incorporated an extensive range of equal opportunities issues as a basis for both widening participation and increasing usage of the lake through the activities and facilities available. This is considered vital to support the viability and sustainability of the Stithians Lake Activity Centre and to support the economic regeneration of the wider area.

The new Centre will be opening on a year round basis which will increase the level of usage. Increased participation will create a new, additional revenue stream for the Centre, supporting its activities and staff. The new Centre has been open since May 2005 and a marked increase in participation has already been noted. This includes increased participation by women (women's evening), disabled groups (two groups have booked visits for 2005) and the CPR Club.



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An increase in use and an extended season will support an increase in the number of volunteers (to support the participation of traditionally underrepresented groups in water sport activities). It is hoped that volunteers and people involved in helping others undertake water borne activities will develop their skills which in turn could support their progression into vocational training. This will provide greater opportunities for employment of local people in the water sports and leisure industry within Cornwall. At the present time many staff are recruited from outside of Cornwall; the project will develop home grown volunteers accessing training and progressing to become instructors.



lessons learnt

Neil Hutchinson, Outdoor Development Officer said:

"This project is about giving everyone the opportunity to take part, but understanding and realising that this will not just happen, the facilities need to be provided and under represented groups need to be supported to enable them to overcome barriers to involvement. In developing this project we have aimed to provide both the facilities and the process to support this wider participation of under represented groups in both water sports leisure activities and the water sports industry."

Susan Baker, volunteer said:

"The new centre was a curiosity at first, I could see that something was happening, so I ventured in and here I am – a volunteer. The new facilities have enabled me to volunteer, to work towards gaining new skills and training qualifications in water sports. I am able to help others to participate – It's important to support people in different situations and new environments to provide new challenges, new skills and increase confidence levels."

For more information about how you can incorporate equal opportunities into your project please contact the Objective One Partnership Office on 01872 241379 or email objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk.