

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

Everyone More Active More Often

Working In Partnership  
& Demonstrating Impact



## Contents

Chair's Introduction	03
Director's Introduction	04
What We Do	05
Our Services	06
Open Data   Case Study	08
Support for Cannock Chase   Case Study	10
School Games	12
This Girl Can School Games Festival Case Study	14
Primary PE and Sport Premium Active Learning	16
Active Lives Children and Young People Survey	19
Satellite Clubs	20
The Move to Independence	22
Governance and Finance	23





# Chair's Introduction

**As I come to the end of my third year as Chair of the Board at SASSOT I cannot help but conclude that 2019/20 has been the year that has been packed with change, challenge and a whole new way of managing our role in a world dominated by the pandemic of Coronavirus.**

The year started calmly enough, with the team progressing well with our work plan which was to explore the transition from a hosted Active Partnership to becoming an independent charity, and to meet all of our main targets. I knew that the year was going to be a challenge but, by Mid-March, it was clear that the transition seemed like mission impossible during lockdown. Fortunately, Stafford Borough Council were happy to continue the hosting agreement until the new normal world emerged, and the Board is very grateful to them for their continuing support.

As I type there is still a long way to go way in the world of physical activity. Gyms and swimming pools remained closed until late July, mostly children didn't return to school before the summer holidays, many folks are working from home and the economy has been disrupted with as yet unknown but huge consequences. It is also clear that the most deprived areas of society suffer the most under these circumstances, so what was already a challenge for us will be very high priority in the coming year. To meet this need, the Board will be working with the team to develop a post Covid-19 strategy which will be consistent with the new plans set out by Sport England. The good news is that our funding for the next year has already been agreed by Sport England so we know what we are working with as a Board when we set out our line of sight on the next three years.

At a more local level the planned transition into the new Board of Trustees with staff being employed by Together Active has been a huge work stream. I am grateful to the Board Members, staff and the Host representative who sits on the Independence

Working Group, which has kept an expert eye on the process following the delegated authority approved by the Board, once the decision to change had been made.

**We are all set now for Together Active to be launched in September; this is a huge achievement by all and I cannot let this occasion pass without thanking the staff for their valued input.**

Several staff members have moved on to pastures new and I want to wish them well as their careers progress. We have also managed to recruit two new Board members and I want to welcome them to the new Board of Trustees with all that brings. We are now recruiting new staff and have made three appointments already with more to come in the very near future.

Finally, it has been my privilege to Chair the Board, subcommittees and PALS (Physical Activity Leadership in Staffordshire) and PAPF (Physical Activity Partners Forum) to meet and work with many colleagues across the county and the City. Thank you for receiving me so courteously and kindly, long may it continue!

**Malcolm Armstrong, Chair**

# Director's Introduction

Welcome to the 2019-20 edition of the SASSOT (Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent) Annual Report. I look back on the last 12 months with enormous pride in the volume and quality of work produced by such a small team.

System change remained a strategic priority for us, and we focused efforts on the health sector. In 2019 we established a line of governance to the Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board<sup>1</sup> and delivered a programme of activity within the prevention strand of the Sustainable Transformation Plan; we continued to support public health colleagues and sit on monthly management team meetings.

We continue to challenge ourselves to be more digitally innovative and took our first steps into the world of open data, one of very few Active Partnerships to have done so. Active My Way, launching in 2020, uses open data to enable people to connect with the most accurate and appropriate information about their local physical activity opportunities.

Through our children and young people programmes, we continued to invest in organisations and projects which bring about real change in the lives of some of our young people. We focused this investment in the areas of greatest need and worked to ensure our most vulnerable young people could enjoy the physical, social and mental benefits of being physically active.

During the last two weeks of this report, the pandemic hit, and our world was turned upside down. Within a few days the whole team were home working, we had reviewed our delivery plan and were working toward a Covid-19 response. It's too early to understand what the impact of Covid-19 will be on the sector, but we know that our partners in Stoke-On-Trent and Staffordshire have incredible strength and resilience, and the entire SASSOT team is committed to supporting you through this every step of the way.

Stay Safe

Jude Taylor, Director



# What We Do

Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (SASSOT) is a network of local agencies committed to working together to increase the number of people taking part in physical activity and sport.

We are part of an England-wide network of 43 Active Partnerships (formerly County Sports Partnerships) and are currently funded by Sport England, along with some of our Local Authorities and our two Universities. Our Strategy, which runs from 2018-2021, identifies four strategic priorities, under four key themes:



Throughout 2019-20 we have continued to deliver a range of services to support local partners and other organisations. These are outlined on the next pages.

# Our Values



# Our Services

Through our experience and expertise we have developed a range of services to support local organisations to get everyone more active, more often.



## Developing the Workforce

- › Physical activity advocacy training for health professionals
- › Introductory training on the principles of behaviour change
- › Sports Leaders UK training courses
- › CPD and training for schools to support the improvement of their school sport and PE offer
- › Bespoke advice from a PE and school sport specialist for individual primary schools to produce a whole-school action plan
- › Training on the use and application of key insight resources
- › Guidance and training on how to monitor and evaluate services and interventions
- › Basic safeguarding awareness and policy development training
- › Club Matters workshops
- › Recruiting, training and deploying volunteers to support School Games



## Developing Activity Provision

- › Advice and guidance on funding opportunities
- › Bespoke support to providers to develop funding applications
- › Co-ordinating larger multi-agency applications
- › Brokering relationships to improve the strategic fit of applications
- › Managing delivery of nationally-funded programmes
- › Delivering the School Games County Festival and co-ordinating the annual calendar of School Games events
- › Raising awareness of funding opportunities through newsletters, funding fairs, workshops and our website



## Developing Insight and Shaping Policy

- Using insight to inform service delivery and policy development
- Community consultation and data analysis
- Sharing research and insight resources from local and national sources
- Designing tender specifications to procure external expertise
- Providing objective consultative advice and guidance to review and evaluate strategic plans and policies
- Helping Sport England recruit schools for the Children & Young People's Active Lives survey
- Facilitation & management of networking opportunities to support knowledge transfer and strategic collaboration
- Providing strategic leadership for the sport and physical activity agenda through lobbying and influencing key networks/ organisations.



## Developing Marketing and Communications

- Helping partners develop and deliver new social marketing campaigns
- Guidance on developing marketing plans and strategies
- Profiling organisational impact
- Advice and guidance on landing national sport, physical activity and health campaigns locally
- Promoting the potential of open data for the sector, and developing an Activity Finder using this technology



# Open Data

Over the past twelve months SASSOT has come a long way on our journey with open data, with it being firmly on our list of priorities. SASSOT are one the few Active Partnerships at the forefront of this, and we hope to lead others to become involved also.

In 2019 SASSOT partnered with Played and Imin to deliver a local activity finder powered through the use of open data, called Active My Way. The activity finder is very nearly complete and will be launching with a campaign in the following months.

Kicking off our journey with open data, in September 2019 we held a stakeholder workshop led by industry experts from Sport England, Imin and Played, all of whom are members of 'Open Active'. Funded by Sport England, 'Open Active' is a community-led initiative, stewarded by the Open Data Institute (ODI) with the ambition to help people in England get active using open data. A key part of their work is to develop data standards and help organisations to better understand how they can go about opening their data.

The workshop saw over 30 attendees and introduced stakeholders to work that's being done nationally to support larger activity providers to open their data, in particular focusing on large leisure management system providers.

SASSOT supported stakeholders to understand the practicalities of opening their data and how they could go about supporting smaller activity providers who may not have a website or booking system. Time was also spent exploring some of the 'myths' associated with open data.

January 2020 saw us host another workshop where a number of organisations came together to begin the journey of opening their activity information. There was a real enthusiasm for the opportunities that open data can provide, and attendees have proactively gone away and started meaningful conversations.

Active My Way also features a host of other useful information and resources on its website. This includes the benefits of being active, advice on how active you should be, top tips for getting active, and more. There is also a section for healthcare professionals, to support them to discuss physical activity with their patients.

In addition the project has attracted investment of £5,000 from Staffordshire County Council to support the roll-out of open data training.

Our ambition is to work with as many activity providers as possible to support them to open their activity data, allowing the information to appear in our activity finder. This will increase providers' reach to new audiences, as well as improving the experience of the customer.

To find out more about open data, please visit the Open Active website: [www.openactive.io](http://www.openactive.io) and keep an eye out on our channels in the coming months for the launch of Active My Way.



# Support for Cannock Chase

Working on behalf of Cannock Chase Council (CCDC) and Inspiring health Lifestyles (IHL), the local leisure Trust, SASSOT undertook an objective assessment of the impact on CCDC's investment into leisure and physical activity on the participation levels and the well-being of residents.

This work will be used as a basis for developing clear long-term strategic priorities for the district.

The work had two phases:

## 1 | UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES

We summarized long-term trend data and the current position in relation to physical activity participation, and analysed the key drivers of inactivity.

## 2 | ARTICULATING THE IMPACT

We examined usage data from the District's leisure provider and overlaid this with previous findings. We illustrated impact at district, community and individual level using a combination of case studies and evaluation tools such as the Sport England 'Moves' toolkit.

This enabled us to highlight strengths in terms of current provision and identify potential areas for future development.

## What's next?

This report has provided the foundations for the Council to undertake a long-term review of their leisure investment and this was key to CCDC unlocking Sport England funding support for this activity.





# School Games

SASSOT oversees the delivery of the School Games County Finals and co-ordinates the annual calendar of events.



The City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College has worked in partnership with SASSOT for several years. This partnership has had a huge effect on developing our students' confidence and knowledge within sports coaching and development. This has been achieved by students taking part in a number of qualifications and volunteering on large scale events that SASSOT organises and delivers including School Games.

During the previous academic year we have had four students qualify as Young Netball Officials, 24 students do the Sportshall Athletics Activators qualification and 12 students do the Sports Leaders UK Level 2 Qualification in Sports Leadership. These qualifications also help students develop a number of life skills such as leadership, teamwork and communication and help with their progression on to employment or university. These students then gain practical experience by volunteering at the County School Games sports events. Staff at SASSOT always deliver a highly professional experience for our students both in the training courses and the sports events. SASSOT staff are always helpful, supportive and as a College we are always happy to encourage our students to take part in activities organised by them.'

David Hardwick, Health, Wellbeing and Sport coordinator  
The City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College

# This Girl Can Festival

Across the School Games calendar, a key challenge for SASSOT is to help ensure all young people can access competitions and events regardless of their ability. As a way of addressing this, SASSOT, alongside School Games Organisers in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, worked with 7 schools and targeted a number of Year 9 girls who were classed as less active to pilot the Sport England powered 'This Girl Can' festival as a means to engage.

SASSOT aims to run the festival again in future with a new group of Year 9 girls, helping to ensure more young people gain confidence in taking part in physical activity, regardless of their ability.

**70**  
Year 7 girls took part

**7**  
Schools

**50%**  
Increase in confidence

We consulted with the participants and sought their opinions on the marketing of the festival, what activities they would prefer and what the atmosphere should feel like, using the 'Women in Sport' core value system to find out what was important to them. Results showed that fun, and nurturing family and friends were the most valued aspects. The four sports which were highlighted as most popular for the festival were Football, Boxing, Dance and Tennis, with the main aim of each activity to create fun and inclusive opportunities that allowed girls to take part with their friends. Around 70 girls took part on the day.

## Impact

The feedback from the event showed that the majority of the girls who took part both enjoyed the event and felt more confident participating with a 50% increase in the amount of girls who agreed they felt confident to take part in physical activity following their involvement in the This Girl Can Festival.

*(It was) different to everyday P.E. I feel more comfortable knowing it doesn't matter what people think.'*

Biddulph High School  
Year 9 pupil

*I feel like I won't be as self-conscious. Thank you very much for the wonderful time.*

The Kidsgrove Secondary School Year 9 pupil

*'It was a fantastic day! We all really enjoyed it!'*

The Kidsgrove Secondary School - Teacher comment via email



THIS  
GIRL  
CAN



# Primary PE and Sport Premium

All Primary Schools receive Primary PE and Sport Premium funding from the Government to support the improvement of their PE and sport provision. The national network of Active Partnerships is contracted by Sport England to work with schools to help them make effective use of this funding.

SASSOT works closely with Accelerate Learning on this programme across the sub-region, and also works with Stoke City Football Club and Trentham High School within Stoke.

During the 2019-20 academic year, one-to-one in depth support has been provided to 24 Primary Schools. This includes working with the school to develop a long-term vision for PE, sport, health and whole school improvement.

A detailed action plan is then put together, unique to the area the school is hoping to improve, and a bespoke package of CPD is arranged to meet these needs.

Alongside this, a wider offer of support, open to all primary schools, is available. This year over 60 schools have accessed PE Network Meetings and Headteacher briefings, 191 schools have downloaded free resources and support materials and all schools in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent access a monthly PE newsletter.

**24**  
primary schools

received  
one-to-one  
support.

**60+**  
schools

accessed PE Network  
Meetings and  
headteachers briefings.

**191**  
schools

downloaded free  
resources and support  
materials.



# School Spotlight

One of the schools we have supported is St. Mary and St. Chad CE (VC) First School in Brewood.

One of their main areas for development this year has been improving pupils' health and wellbeing. They have developed an area in their school and have been working with pupils on 'healthy body, healthy mind and healthy eating'.

In the area there is a fitness equipment section for pupils to develop their physical fitness, a section containing music, visual images, scented plants and a water tower to stimulate the senses and improve pupils' mental health and a gardening area where pupils can learn about growing their own food and healthy eating.

The support we have given has included:

- › Working 1-1 with the PE Lead to develop ideas for an action plan
- › Developing resources and ideas to support learning in the area
- › An 'Improving Health and Wellbeing' course
- › Network meetings
- › Additional course support for staff professional development



## Impact

The area St. Mary and St. Chad CE (VC) First School have created is now complete and will be fully operational for pupils from September.

The school also put together online learning resources and activities to encourage pupils at home during lockdown to start developing 'healthy body, healthy mind and healthy eating' and these activities have also been offered to the pupils still attending the school.

The PE Lead has drawn up an action plan for 2020/21 that looks at further staff training and a timetable for them to maximise learning opportunities for all pupils in the area, which will improve both their physical and emotional health as well as developing key life skills and the knowledge of how and why it is important to stay healthy and look after ourselves.



## Sustainability

The area will be available for pupils to use in future years and the activities and resources built up and embedded into the curriculum will mean that all pupils attending the school will benefit from the experiences and learning on offer.



*“The children at St Edward’s CE Academy Cheddleton have truly benefited from the Active 15 in many ways. As a teacher there was a noticeable change in children’s stamina and attitude to learning, they were more engaged and produced higher quality work than before the initiative.*

*There was also a quick improvement in fitness and concentration levels that were attributed to the Active 15 across the school. Just as importantly, the children often commented that they prefer active learning to staying still.”*

## Primary PE and Sport Premium - Active Learning

Active Learning has been a key focus of our work with our partners Accelerate Learning to support the effective use of the Primary PE and School Sport Premium across the sub-region.

Embedding physical activity across the school day, not just in PE, can have a profound effect on pupils' physical and mental wellbeing, and on behaviour and concentration levels. St. Edward's CE Academy, Cheddleton have embraced this approach to great effect.

PE Lead Jason Carter attended an 'Active Learning Across the Curriculum' course delivered by Accelerate Learning, then cascaded the training to all school staff. There are now embedded routines and procedures throughout the school for active times tables, active adjectives and five-minute activity Brain Breaks. Pupils have routines for lining up and all teachers across the school use active videos for pupils to follow during transition periods e.g. as books are being handed out, or when some children are tidying away etc. The school has a policy that pupils should sit still for no longer than 15 minutes without having some sort of movement. During formal lesson observations there is now a requirement to check whether active teaching and learning has been evident.

### Impact

- Pupils have reported increased enjoyment in lessons. They say that the activities have helped with their memory and recall of certain facts and they find learning fun
- Teachers and senior leaders have noticed increased concentration and engagement back on task following Brain Breaks
- Behaviour has improved across the school as pupils are always engaged in purposeful activities

# Children and Young People Active Lives Survey

SASSOT worked alongside primary, middle and secondary schools in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to facilitate Sport England's Active Lives Children and Young People Survey, gaining responses from 3,155 children.

The report summarises activity levels of children and young people from 5-16 years of age. It gives an idea of overall activity levels both in and out of the school setting, types of activity undertaken, and the impact physical activity has on mental wellbeing, amongst other topics.

SASSOT analysed the information produced from the Active Lives Survey for the county, and worked with Local Authorities to pinpoint areas of low activity in their wards, enabling them to take action in the most affected areas.

SASSOT also worked alongside schools through the Covid-19 lockdown period to engage children and parents to complete the report from home, which will provide invaluable information in future on how lockdown has impacted children and young people's physical activity levels.



# Satellite Clubs

SASSOT has supported 26 new satellite clubs and sustained 19 further clubs with nearly £85,000 investment committed. 8 other clubs from the previous year are now self-sustaining and no longer require funding from us to continue to operate.

The clubs cover a multitude of sports including

Archery | Basketball | Boxing | Dance  
Dodgeball | Football | Girls Rugby  
Hockey | Horse Riding | Multisports  
Running | Table Tennis | Tennis

Each club focuses on engaging young people from one of the following priority audiences: those with a disability (7% of participants had a disability); female participants (60% of our participants this year were female); participants from a BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) background (14% of participants), those living in deprivation, and finally young people with low levels of activity. Almost half of our clubs are situated and serving communities within the top 20% most deprived wards and a fifth in the 10% most deprived wards. 78% of our participants who attended Satellite Clubs were sited in the top 40% most deprived ward areas. New partnerships brokered through the County 'Sport & Youth Justice' steering group include working with Stoke Youth Offending Team and Burton Pupil Referral Unit, and have brought to fruition several new clubs.

Lichfield District Council Sports Development Team worked with Lichfield Community Safety Team, Staffordshire Police, and various other partners from around the district to introduce clubs which address areas with high levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB): by introducing a satellite club at Oakenfield's MUGA (multi-use games area), we engaged with young people who were causing anti-social behaviour in and around the area. After a year and a half the reported anti-social behaviour in this area significantly dropped, and the District worked in partnership with the local housing association to ensure key utilities remained on during the winter months, to allow consistent delivery.

Four young people attending the sessions have since transitioned into additional Getin2it sessions locally, increasing their physical activity levels.



26

new satellite clubs



£85,000  
investment



8

self sustaining clubs



19

sustained satellite clubs

## CASE STUDY



### SATELLITE CLUBS CASE STUDY

#### Queensberry Amateur Boxing Club

Queensberry Amateur Boxing Club started running very popular girls/women's boxing sessions with satellite club funding. The classes are in high demand and the club have now increased the amount of sessions on offer.

*"Every single young lady we have had through the door is a success in itself and they have gained lots out of the sessions, including confidence, friendship, fitness and it has made them happier people."*

Matt Crowe, Queensberry Amateur Boxing Club.

## Safer Together Through Sport

SASSOT has been part of the County Sport and Youth Justice Steering Group and has played a key role in bringing together Youth Offending Team Officers and Community Sport providers, to test a referral pathway for young offenders to try out sport and physical activity opportunities.

This year we organised another two StreetGames training days in the run up to the Summer Holidays to cater for 70 staff delivering activities on the Summer SPACE scheme, for Satellite Club deliverers, and colleagues working in the Youth Justice and Community Safety.

The training was well received with the session delivering 'Mental Health 1st Aid', 'Managing Challenging Behaviour' and the 10 principles of good practice in delivery as well as facilitating a great networking session between colleagues in Youth Justice and Community sport.



# The Move to Independence

2019 saw the SASSOT Board undertake a fundamental review of our governance arrangements.

Following careful deliberation the decision was taken that SASSOT would transition to an independent body by 2020.

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Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent

This decision gives us a more secure financial future and will allow us to become a more responsive and agile organisation. Subsequently we have established a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), and with the help of a public vote we agreed to name ourselves 'Together Active' and we are excited to introduce the brand!

Our go live date is the 1st September; you'll continue to find all the familiar faces as we TUPE the team over but also some new ones, as we have recently undergone a round of recruitment.

**We will continue to deliver many of our SASSOT products and services. However, during the autumn we plan to begin our strategy consultation and we can't wait to get your views and opinions to help shape our direction of travel.**

The Board would like to take this opportunity to publically thank Stafford Borough Council for nearly 20 years of outstanding support; we cannot overstate the part they have played in SASSOT's success.

# Governance & Finance

The majority of the current SASSOT Board members have agreed to become Trustees of Together Active, and skills-based recruitment took place to fill the remaining vacancies.

We are also well underway with ensuring the new charity will meet the requirements of Tier Three of 'A Code for Sports Governance' (a Sport England requirement) shortly after becoming operational.

## Financial Information

1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020

ANNUAL	BUDGET (£)	ACTUAL (£)
Carry Forward from 18-19	469,603	469,596
Income	640,390	699,877
Expenditure	737,633	615,973
Net Carry Forward to 20-21	372,360	553,500
Of which Restricted Funds	56,950	161,843
Of which Unrestricted Designated Funds	179,090	135,031
Of which Unrestricted Free Funds	136,320	256,626

The Restricted Funds Carry Forward includes the receipt of grants during 2019-20 where partial delivery will take place during 2020-21. The Unrestricted Designated Funds Carry Forward is the amount needed to cover our liabilities as of 31.03.20.

SASSOT's full, audited accounts and Governance Statement for 2019-20 will be available on [our website](#) once completed.





We are now operating as

# TOGETHER ACTIVE

Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent

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