

Run by Christians, Open to all

www.sportily.org.uk

Sportily is a vision for transforming the Church's engagement with children, young people and their families with a pioneering network of fresh expressions in reaching the 95% of people currently unconnected with Church through a ministry based on sports and wellbeing.

The Sportily programme has been developed on behalf of the whole diocese. It has grown out of, and is an integral part of the LIFE vision for diocesan transformation and culture change. It depends on close working relationships with existing models of church and has bubbled up from a series of local initiatives and the pioneering work of the LIFE Sports Priority Group. This evidenced the amazing ability of sports ministry to reach unchurched young people and share the Gospel with them.

Across the diocese a network of trained, equipped and highly motivated lay Sports Ministers will work alongside our worshipping communities to lead sports and activity clubs, training and events. Sportily will have a dedicated monitoring and evaluation system to enable it to learn and adapt as it develops.

Covid-19 has shown the hunger in the nation and in our worshipping communities to do things differently. In a time of so much uncertainty, this is a moment for the confidence of our faith to be seen and heard as we seek not to retreat, but to go out – to serve our young people just as others retrench and opportunities close around them. Jesus came that they may have life in all its fullness.

Let us go out with him.

Objectives

The objectives for Sportily are:

- Children and young people's lives, and their communities transformed through sport and physical activity
- People of all ages, especially the young, responding to the compelling Good News of Jesus Christ and being discipled within community
- Contextually relevant new worshipping communities established, primarily focused on younger generations who have had no significant engagement with church, with sport and physical activity at their core
- Leadership gifts and vocational calling identified, nurtured and invested in.

Methodology

Sportily takes its missiological lead from Bishop Rachel's approach to mission with young people. It is only by meeting young people where they are, talking about their hopes and fears that we can authentically and humbly enter into relationship with them and share with them our hopes and fears, our faith and values.

Sportily seeks to embrace sport and physical activity as a basis for ministry for three reasons.

1. It is the highest voluntary group participation activity that children and young people do. Over 55% of children and young people attend out of school sports provision compared to 1% who go to Church.

2. Sport is a widely acknowledged social need, which is a focus of concern for government policy, and yet provision, especially local provision for young people, is fast diminishing. This trend is likely to be accelerated by Covid-19.

3. We have proved through the work of the Sport Priority Group working with PSALMS and SU that it is a service the Church can deliver and at the same time develop strong relational bonds and share the Gospel effectively.

Sportily's starting point is to build relationship through high quality local sports and physical activity provision. Like our provision of education, we cannot undermine trust by poor quality provision. In gaining trust with small things, we may become trusted with greater things.

Working with young people we then seek, with them, to transform their lives and their communities. As this work is shared, we will see the Gospel spoken naturally as the root of this transformation. As this happens, people will be encouraged to co-create new forms of Church more suited to the culture and personalities of those we encounter. Through shared resources, experience and leadership, these communities will knit together to form a wider network community resourcing the whole diocese.

This network will see young people emerge with gifts and skills which we will seek to nurture and develop, in the confident expectation that some of them will go on to thrive in leadership either in Sportily or in other Christian ministry – as teachers, coaches, entrepreneurs, clergy; wherever they are called.