

ADTTA/Aberdeen City Council Sheltered Housing Table Tennis Project, North Aberdeen, 2018.

Report by Development Worker John Dickie.

February : A meeting at Westburn Lounge between City officials and ADTTA staff identified potential locations for introducing table tennis throughout Aberdeen. In North Aberdeen, Lord Hay's Court in Seaton, and Denmore Court in Bridge of Don were chosen.

March : Following the eventual go-ahead for these two locations, I contacted managers Zoe Pirie at Denmore and Laura Moir at Lord Hay's.

April : Subsequently I visited each location, saw the proposed space available, and also met with the Residents' Committee at Denmore.

I then composed leaflets and posters, distributed them with staff help, and began to recruit volunteers from the Aberdeen Sports Village Evergreens' Table tennis group. Eventually, I established a pool of 8 volunteers, with a rota system also devised.

The first session was held on Friday 20th April at Lord Hay's. Eleven tenants attended, with 6 playing and the others spectating, including a partially-sighted resident and a wheelchair user. A large majority of the players were female.

Three folding tables were used, with a stretchy net. The atmosphere was extremely positive, with lots of light-hearted banter, singing (with piano accompaniment) and story-telling.



The following week, the first session took place at Denmore. There were 12 players, with 2 wheelchair users participating, and a number of staff dropping by to see the activity. Very supportive and positive session here too. Four dining-tables were used, again with a stretchy net.



May : After a lengthy delay in the funding being provided by Table Tennis Scotland, tables were finally delivered at the end of May. The hour-long sessions were well established by then, with an average of 11 participants at Denmore (Monday 2.30-3.30pm), and 9 at Lord Hay's (Friday 2 -3pm).



June : At Denmore, where the dining-room provides an ideal laminate-floor location, I discussed further extending the session with participants and staff, and it was decided to hold a further session on Friday afternoons, with Denmore staff setting-up etc. The first Friday session was on 8th June. Additionally, it was agreed that the original session, on Monday afternoons, should be extended to 4pm. These 'extra' times are independent of the Evergreens' volunteers.

The staffing situation at Lord Hay's does not currently permit a staff commitment to set up the equipment, so the participants have opted to leave the table assembled in the lounge playing-area, where it's hoped that its availability will allow extended use.

Both projects are in excellent health, with my weekly attendance in each location now unnecessary.

I will however ensure that the volunteer rota remains operational, with Lord Hay's currently problematic due to volunteers' other commitments.

The benefits to participants' well-being in their increased social interaction and in personal achievement is tangible and therapeutic, with a core of highly-committed enthusiasts in each location. And playing skills are improving too!

John Dickie, 01/07/18

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