

# **KICK Summer 2024 report**



## **Summary:**

**Dates run: Monday 29<sup>th</sup> July to Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August, with support from Witney Town Council and Thames Valley police.**

**Programme: fifteen 2-hour sessions at the Gordon Way 4G astro turf pitch in Witney.**

**Age range: 11 – 16(+).**

**Session times: 7-9 pm (Mon/Wed), 6-8 pm (Fri).**

**Numbers attending: between 35 and 60 young people during each of the fifteen sessions. Feedback: very positive.**

The KICK summer initiative got underway on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> July and with some fantastic sunny weather to accompany the start. Around 45 players turned up for the first session and we divided the youngsters into 2 age groups (11 to 14 year-olds and 15 to 16+ year-olds). Due to the high numbers, a triangular tournament was set up for the younger age group (3 teams of around 11 with the winning team staying on) and the older lads sorted themselves out into teams of 8 or 9 a-side. This pattern was then to continue over the coming sessions, as we reached 60 participants on a few occasions during the second week and could not have everyone playing at the same time. However, it worked well and gave those taking a brief rest the chance to have a drink and snack if they wanted to.

The team of volunteers were excellent throughout the 5 weeks, with perhaps just a couple of sessions where we were a little light on an adult presence. Some helped with the catering side of things, others fetched balls that had been kicked over the fences (!) and there were a great group of guys that took part in refereeing the different matches going on.

The teenagers themselves were, on the whole, very well behaved and definitely appreciated having the opportunity to play on the pitch for free and have a regular focus during their summer holidays. Many came along for the majority of the 15 sessions and we got to know their names and faces. We had comfortably over 100 different young people attend at least one of the days. There were a few moments of “tension” between some of the over-keen lads, but these were quickly resolved.

We had quite a bit of positive feedback from the parents and a number personally expressed their thanks to us as the summer sessions came to an end. The initiative was a clear success, with a few areas to work on and improve, should something similar run next summer. One clear need would be (if possible) to book the whole of the pitch for all 3 of the weekly sessions, as we could only play on half of the surface on the Monday evening slots, which meant it was quite cramped for space.

Alastair Hobbs,

September 2024.