

Extending Activities at Longridge Outdoor Activity Centre

Longridge is an outdoor activity centre based in Marlow, Buckinghamshire. The centre offers a variety of water and land based activities for people of all ages.

In March 2008 Longridge applied to the Bucks & Milton Keynes Sports Partnership to access Extending Activities funding. Amanda Foister, who manages the centre saw the Extending Activities programme as a “fantastic way to engage with schools and to offer local children the opportunity to take part in their communities at the centre”.

As a part of the Extending Activities application process Longridge identified a need to update their existing Child Protection Policy and Procedures in line with those recommended by the Child Protection in Sport Unit. Longridge worked hard with the Sports Partnership to refresh their procedures and to identify improved training and communication routes with their staff in relation to safeguarding.

One hundred and five youngsters joined the Extending Activities programme at the centre starting in April and running through to the end of the summer term. All the youngsters are completing the British Canoe Union ‘Paddle Power Passport’ (a recognised kayaking certificate) during the 10 week programme and a number of them have already registered to join the club activities that run all year round at the centre.

To help inspire the children to continue to take part in sport, Longridge took advantage of the Sporting Champion Scheme operated by Sport England and arranged for Adam Whitehead (European & Commonwealth Swimming Champion, Olympian) to visit the centre and take part in one of the sessions. In addition to heading out on the river with one of the groups, Adam also shared his experience of taking part in sport and everything he had gained from it. The young people really responded to Adam and he enjoyed the opportunity to interact with them.



“This first phase of activities has been really successful and we are already planning for more next term. By then we will know how many of these young people have gone on to join our clubs and that will be the real test of how successful we have been! We have also had a number of the older children enquire about joining our ‘Crew’, where they can combine taking part in the activities with becoming a volunteer at the centre.”

Amanda (Longridge Manager)

“They are a great bunch and I have really enjoyed teaching them. Most of them aren’t your traditionally sporty kids who are in all the school teams, and a few of them are overweight, but what has been great is watching them grow individually as well as a group. I really feel like a number of them have found a sport they enjoy and feel at home with.”

Barry (Longridge Instructor)

“We absolutely love it, our instructor Barry is really great and at the end of each session we get to swim in the river”

Sophie, 10

“I fell in the water 6 times last week and was worried about coming back this week. I am really pleased that I did though because I had great fun and I didn’t mind getting wet.”

Lucy, 10

Footnote: The Extending Activities Programme and funding is co-ordinated within Buckinghamshire by the Bucks & Milton Keynes Sports Partnership. For further information relating to Extending Activities, Longridge or Sporting Champions please contact 01296 585215.

Sporting Champions is funded by Sport England and consists of a programme of 450 annual visits by world-class athletes to encourage young people to participate in sport. Find out more at www.sportingchampions.org.uk or call 0800 328 4903.