

Press Release

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Football Club's refurbished grounds are a winner for all



Offenders supervised by Thames Valley Probation have been working hard to spruce up Sandhurst Town Football Club. More than 1,400 hours of Unpaid Work have been 'paid back' to the community by a group of between 6-12 offenders since the project began in March 2008.

Kathy Ellsmore, Vice Chairman of Sandhurst Town Football Club, contacted Probation's Community Payback department, after seeing the fantastic work carried out by offenders they supervised at Reading Town Football Club. She said: "Any maintenance work at Sandhurst Town is carried out each year by the club's directors, committee and volunteers and is a lot of hard work. We do this work to try to improve and maintain the club's facilities and grounds but it's an uphill battle to apply enough effort, due to everyone's personal time constraints."

The club has always had a reputation for the quality of its facilities in the league and the quality of the collaboration with the Probation Service contributes in a major way to maintaining this. The club which is entirely self funded has been able to make improvements it would otherwise have not be able to afford and also allows the directors, committee and volunteers to focus more on the club's future development and fund raising as it approaches its centenary celebrations in 2010/11.

There was a huge amount of work to be completed at the club which included re-painting the team changing rooms, club bar, benches, hallways and posts surrounding the pitch, sanding down tables and chairs for re-staining plus clearing out and re-decorating the tea room. The group also laid a new floor in the club and patios outside the bar area for the drier weather.

Since the offenders started working on the project there has been nothing but praise from everyone connected with and visiting the club. Everyone has been impressed by the rate they work and at the standard.

“We are pleased with the work the group are doing. They all work extremely hard and have a sense of pride in what they’ve achieved. They enjoyed showing us what they had done so far and received deserved praise from our club secretary Mike Ellsmore and other officials of the club for the work they have completed.” Said Kathy.

Work will continue at the club well into 2009.

ENDS

Notes for Editors

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Community Payback in Thames Valley explained

In the Thames Valley, around 2,000 of the 8,000 offenders we supervise in an average year are carrying out Unpaid Work in the community and complete almost 300,000 hours annually. That’s about £1.5m of free labour. The work is now known as Community Payback.

The work benefits local schools, faith groups, charities, community organisations and partnerships. The range of work can include: Graffiti removal, ground clearance, building maintenance and landscaping, improvement to parks and community facilities, general gardening projects, painting and decorating in community centres and meeting places.

Unpaid Work is the name of one of the 12 Requirements that comes under the generic community sentence called a Community Order. Offenders on an Unpaid Work Requirement can be ordered by the courts to do between 40 and 300 unpaid work hours.

Thames Valley Probation works with adult offenders, supervising them through their Community Orders and assisting with rehabilitation. We also supervise offenders released from prison on licence and work with victims of serious crime. The main aim of the service is to increase public protection and reduce the re-offending rate. Community Payback is the name and logo used for the Unpaid Work that offenders carry out. It has been designed to highlight the work of offenders to put something back into communities in which they’ve offended.

See our website: www.thamesvalleyprobation.gov.uk for further details.

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