



Active Ageing with Bat & Chat

Themes: Bat & Chat, older adults, communities

After the successful launch of Bat & Chat in the south of Cambridge, Active Lifestyles Officer at Cambridge City Council Jenny Hayes has established a second session in the north of the city. The project looks to provide activities and opportunities for over 50s across the city, with table tennis proving to be a big hit with locals who attend the sessions.

The Project

The Bat & Chat project at the Meadows Community Centre in Cambridge began in March 2024, after Cambridge City Council were successful in applying to the Ping in the Community programme at Table Tennis England.

The sessions are facilitated by Fred Laband who has been supporting the councils table tennis projects across the city for 5 years and provides a relaxed and friendly atmosphere for participants to pick up a bat, chat with others and enjoy refreshments.



"The 'bat' and the 'chat' are very much as important as each other. There's some people I know who have recently been bereaved and are potentially quite lonely or isolated, and it's a lifeline for them. It's only a small part but it is part of the community... I wish I'd been doing this all my life, it's fantastic".

Fred Laband, Facilitator



The session now sees 8 regular attendees from the local area, with some attending the sessions in both the north and south of the city. It's hoped that Fred's support in establishing the group will create a sustainable project by allowing them to deliver the session themselves.

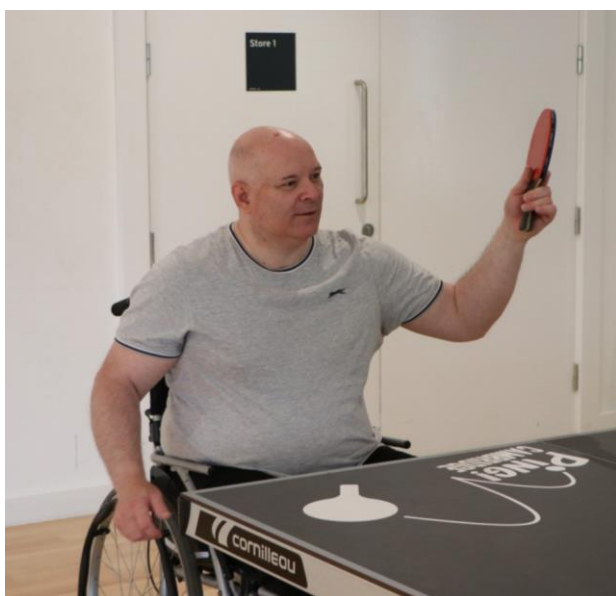
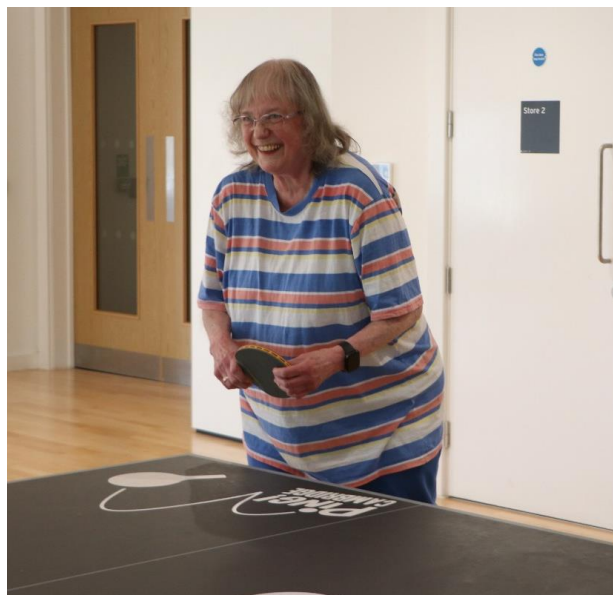


The Impact

"I'd been doing the cardiac rehab at Meadows Community Centre, then I heard about the ping pong and Fred was introduced to me. I hadn't played ping pong since I was 12 years old, I'm 68 now and I love it".

"I like the general atmosphere, nobody takes themselves too seriously – having said that I get very competitive. It's made me a bit healthier, and I lose weight. It's good for me physically, I didn't realise it was until I came along. I look forward to it every week".

Helen, participant



"It's all positive when I chat to the participants, one lady has been coming for 9 weeks now and wouldn't do any other exercise if she didn't come here. It's the social element that makes this so successful".

*Jenny Hayes, Active Lifestyles Officer,
Cambridge City Council*

"I played table tennis on and off for 38 years in the Cambridge area. I caught COVID which has left me in a wheelchair, I shut myself away for 2 years, I was so scared of getting it again."

"I found out about the sessions through a doctor's referral, and I jumped at the chance to come, I think it's fantastic... it's slowly started getting me out again, because my anxiety was so high. This is an absolute god send, it was a start of many things for me – now I'm catching the bus, I'm doing other things. Without this I'd probably still be stuck inside".

"I want to become a qualified coach and coach children to bring young people into the sport".

Tony, participant