

Logistique supports New Brighton with funding applications

Logistique has been commissioned by New Brighton Cricket Club to support the preparation of a Cricket Development Plan to support principally funding applications to the ECB and WREN.

The project will involve the redevelopment of the clubs existing site and will lead to the provision of improved ancillary facilities.

The Development Plan is a key document showing how partners will work together to enhance participation in cricket across specific target groups.

For further details please contact:

Phil Heap
Principal Consultant
m +44 07920 096455
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

Logistique complete funding package for new sports village in Heywood

Logistique have completed a funding package for a new £10.3m Sports, Culture and Leisure Village in Heywood following recent news of grant approval of a £1m by the Football Foundation and £500,000 by Sport England.

The remainder of the costs are to be met by New Heart for Heywood, which has approved £4m towards the costs, and Rochdale Council whose cabinet recently approved £4.8m towards the project.

The new development will include a sports hall, a six-lane, twenty five metre swimming pool, a dance studio, a new 90 station fitness suite, community and training rooms, and outdoor and indoor changing areas. One of the most important developments will be dedicated space for young people, including a youth gym. The main partners in the development are Rochdale Council, Link 4 Life and New Heart for Heywood

The new village in Heywood will be built on the site of the existing facilities, and is designed to offer not only sport, activity and fitness facilities but access to health, skills and learning, as part of New Heart for Heywood's wider agenda to regenerate Heywood.

Building of the new centre is due to begin in spring 2009 with completion in summer 2010. The new development will be run by Link 4 Life which operates cultural services in the Borough of Rochdale.

Logistique Managing Director Jon Dutton said:

"The Heywood Sports Village was the first ever project that Logistique were commissioned to work on over 3 years ago. It has been a long haul and we have encountered several difficulties along the way but at long last the partner's collective vision will become a reality".

"It is a testament to those involved that despite the problems faced a way forward has been found that has not compromised the original plans".

"Everyone at Logistique is incredibly proud to have helped deliver such a large and diverse project in an area of significant deprivation".

For further details please contact:

Jon Dutton
Managing Director
m +44 07920 096455
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

De La Salle a winner with the Football Foundation

Winning over £685,140 in grant funding has taken De La Salle nearer to the goal of creating a long awaited new community facility.

The UK's largest sports charity the Football Foundation has just announced the success of a bid for funding for a project to create pitches and changing facilities at De La Salle's home on Lancaster road set to encourage enjoyment of the sport by people of all ages.

The foundation's award of £685,140 to the project, combined with approximately £187,000 already secured, will see the transformation of the current site on Lancaster Road.

Securing the funding could mean the culmination of years of hard work by De La Salle. The project was lead by Sports Management Consultants Logistique in partnership with the technical team from Club Design.

The proposals include a pavilion with changing rooms for four teams and officials, and a room for meetings, training courses and social activities, along with car and coach parking with the drainage and reconfiguration of 3 mini soccer, 1 junior and 1 adult football pitch, along with the retention of a senior rugby pitch.

A comprehensive football development plan has been prepared in consultation with De La Sale Football Club, schools and community organisations to ensure the facilities will be used to encourage participation by girls and boys of all abilities and for league, school and community club tournaments.

Stephen Brown Managing Director said: "This is a desperately needed football facility in the heart of inner City Salford. The envisaged programme of club, school and community football will benefit a wide range of residents and be well supported by the local community. Furthermore the club recently were awarded FA Charter Standard Development Club and hopefully this project can be a further catalyst in inspiring them to become a Community club the pinnacle award in football".

For further details please contact:

Stephen Brown
Managing Director
m +44 07920 096454
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

Council and football clubs to give town sporting chance

LEISURE chiefs have joined forces with Leek's top football clubs to develop bold blueprints for a sports village in the town.

Forged by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council with Leek Town and Leek CSOB Football Clubs, the plans envisage a major overhaul for Birchall Playing Fields and the Harrison Park ground which is home to the two clubs.

The draft package proposes the realignment of all the football pitches at Birchall plus the introduction of a third-generation full-size synthetic pitch and multi-use games area.

Also lined up is the replacement of the 40-year-old cinder running track, demolition of the pavilion and provision of a replacement closer to the pitches, together with more parking and an improved access off Cheadle Road. And it is intended to tackle the drainage problems that have long plagued the pitches towards the rear of Birchall.

The pitch and stadium at Harrison Park are also earmarked for an upgrade.

The aim of the exciting package is to revitalise sports facilities in Leek, with particular emphasis on offering new opportunities for men's, boys', girls' and women's football.

The embryonic scheme is now being worked up in detail with the Football Association to enable a funding bid to be developed this year and submitted to the Football Foundation early next year. A planning application will be needed while public consultation will also take place.

The council and football clubs are being advised by sports development consultancy Logistique, which helped shape plans for a Cheadle sports village on which work is scheduled to start this summer following an overwhelming thumbs up from public consultation.

Said Cllr Mark Deaville, portfolio holder for leisure, sport and culture: "There's a long way to go but it's most encouraging that the football clubs are right behind the scheme and that we're benefiting from the expertise of the FA and Logistique.

"It's also significant that the plans are following similar lines to the Cheadle scheme, which has just had a ringing endorsement from townfolk and is to get underway later this year", he added.

Plans for a Biddulph sports village will be developed once funding has been secured for the Leek scheme.

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For further details please contact:

Jon Dutton
Managing Director
m +44 07920 096455
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

Logistique go back to school

Corfe Hills High School in Dorset has recently appointed specialist sport and leisure consultants Logistique to undertake a series of funding applications.

The school currently has a range of sports facilities that current include 2 football pitches, 2 rugby pitches and 1 redgra all weather pitch. It will be the existing redgra pitch that will be replaced by a 3rd Generation turf pitch. The project will be developed in conjunction with Dorset FA and Broadstone Boys Football Club along with other schools and community sports clubs.

The next step will be to carry out an investigation into the proposed facilities and continue discussions with the local football family and key stakeholders.

Phil Heap said: "We are delighted to be working with Corfe Hills School in this exciting project".

"We are working with the school to develop a sustainable capital project on the site which will offer first class curriculum provision and out of school club and community use with a focus on accessibility and affordability."

"The Corfe project is one of a number of new capital developments that we will be working on throughout 2009 as part of our expanding portfolio of work".

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For further details please contact:

Phil Heap
Principal Consultant
m +44 07920 096459
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

Logistique reach the milestone of £20m investment into projects

Earlier this week Logistique were pleased to celebrate the significant milestone of securing £20m worth of capital investment into sports related projects.

Since its inception in 2005 Logistique has made significant progress and now has a diverse range of clients from all different sectors including sport, regeneration, arts and culture, health and the private sector.

In the last four years Logistique have had some major achievements with probably the most significant of those being the project lead for the largest ever single capital investment made by the Football Foundation - Leicester City Council Football Investment Strategy.

During this Logistique have worked with sixteen clients (capital projects) from the smallest award of £90,000 for Horwich RMI to the largest combined award for the Heywood Sports Culture and Leisure Village at £5.5m, which most crucially was Logistique's first ever project.

The last twelve have seen Logistique continue to undertake a comprehensive number of diverse projects now spreading across the length and breadth of the country involving local authorities, clubs and schools. Further information on all projects undertaken to date can be obtained in the portfolio section of the website.

Finally, we would like to thank our clients for their continued support and we look forward to strengthening these relationships and building new ones in the forthcoming years.

For further details please contact:

Stephen Brown
Managing Director
m +44 07920 096454
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

March 4th 2009

Strategy consultation day for Wiltshire County FA

Logistique have been commissioned to coordinate Wiltshire County FA's exciting plans to allow the local football community to influence the areas in which Wiltshire County FA will concentrate its work over the next 12 months.

The Football Association launched its new National Game Strategy in June 2008 which sets out the key priorities and targets for the National Game up to 2012. In July 2008 Wiltshire County FA launched its very own 4 year County strategy. The Strategy covers the entire football family and involved widespread consultation with local people involved in the game to tackle the key issues.

The Wiltshire football community helped shape the strategy and 9 months on Wiltshire County FA are keen to update everyone on the progress they have made and to gather feedback as the second year of the strategy approaches.

Logistique have been commissioned to deliver a county wide consultation event to give all local stakeholders an opportunity to feedback and challenge the County FA's performance so far, and to raise any current issues or challenges that grass roots football faces. The event has been split into an afternoon and evening sessions to ensure that the professional and voluntary sectors can attend.

Project Manager, Phil Heap said:

"Having worked with Wiltshire County FA last year on their county strategy we were delighted to be reappointed. We are hoping to assist them with monitoring and evaluating their progress over the past 12 months and looking ahead to the next stage of development. Despite challenging circumstances for all involved in grass roots football there are exciting opportunities that lie ahead across Wiltshire".

For further details contact Phil Heap

For further details please contact:

Phil Heap
Principal Consultant
m +44 07920 096459
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

Logistique complete feasibility for Kendal Sport Village

Logistique has recently completed work on the Kendal Sports Village Feasibility Study on behalf of the Kendal Sports Village steering group partners. The steering group includes South Lakeland District Council, Kendal College, Cumbria Vision and Cumbria Sports Partnership. The objective of the study is to assess the feasibility of creating a multi-sport hub facility in the town.

The study has identified a suitable site for the proposed development and has engaged in consultation process with a wide variety of stakeholders to help determine the facility mix. The sports village will contribute to the ongoing regeneration of the town and will be a modern facility which is a focal point for community inclusion and sporting excellence, and will incorporate a range of outdoor and indoor facilities to meet local need.

Logistique has a strong track record of delivering sports village projects having previously completed similar projects in Salford and most recently Heywood.

Jon Dutton said "We have been delighted to have worked with the partners on this assignment. From the outset we were keen to get them involved and have been thrilled by undertake a new part of our portfolio of work. We have now completed the initial feasibility stage and are excited by the findings and what these may mean for future sporting provision in the town."

For further information please contact:

Jon Dutton
Managing Director
m +44 07920 096455
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

Leicester scores with biggest ever Football Foundation grant

Logistique's largest ever Football Foundation capital project has now received more than £11 million and is set to transform grassroots football in Leicester and encourage more people to get fit and active, it was announced today (10th).

The investment in the city's sporting infrastructure includes the biggest single grant ever made by the Football Foundation – £5.5 million. With further contributions from Leicester City Council, NHS Leicester City, Sport England, local partner clubs and the UEFA Jubilee Fund, the £11.2 million boost will allow the council and its partners to upgrade facilities for football across the city, as well as delivering a range of initiatives to improve the population's health.

Launching the city's football investment strategy, Cllr Andy Connelly, cabinet member for culture and leisure at Leicester City Council, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity to upgrade our sports facilities in a way that will benefit entire communities. "Whether people want to hone their football skills or simply adopt a more active lifestyle, there's something for everyone in this initiative. "Thanks to the new investment, we can begin to make a real difference to the way that football is played and promoted in Leicester – and we'll also continue to work closely with the network of local clubs that do so much to develop football at grassroots level."

The successful implementation of Leicester's football strategy will result in 11 upgraded sites, more than 280 new teams, around 3,000 new regular players and coaching for more than 5,000 youngsters.

"The Leicester investment model is the first of its kind, and a clear example of what can be achieved through partnership working and strategic planning," said Paul Thorogood, chief executive of the Football Foundation. "We warmly congratulate Leicester City Council and its partners for the hard work they put in to secure this award. "This exemplar portfolio of projects is a worthy recipient of Football Foundation funding, fully meeting our objectives of improving local facilities in deprived areas, increasing participation by the under 11s, supporting the development of grassroots football, and specifically targeting clubs from BME backgrounds, women's teams, junior teams and disabled players to ensure there is an equal access to development opportunities across all communities. "I am therefore delighted that Football Foundation investment will be helping to open up access to our national sport for a whole new generation of potential talent."

A recent survey by Sport England showed that Leicester had a lower level of participation in sport and activity than the national average – and NHS Leicester City puts the cost of treating ill health related to physical inactivity at around £6m a year.

Following extensive consultation, seven grass sites in Leicester were identified as key priorities for football development: Aylestone playing fields; Aylestone recreation ground; Beaumont Park; Hamilton Park; Mary Linwood playing fields; New College playing fields; and Rushey Fields recreation ground.

Four ball courts in the inner city – at Cossington Street, Overton Road, St Andrew's and Victoria Park – will also be upgraded as part of the strategy. All the sites will benefit from improved playing surfaces or better changing facilities, offering new resources and new opportunities for the wider community to get involved in sport. Each site will have its own development plan, with challenging targets for participation, playing standards and coaching. Each of the sites will also have a partner club. Eight local clubs – each affiliated with one of the sites earmarked for improvement – will play a vital role as partners in the project.

Jon Dutton from Logistique said: "The Leicester Football Investment (FIS) strategy is the largest project we have experienced to date. Working with 8 clubs across 11 sites along with a host of partners such as Leicestershire & Rutland County FA, the Primary Care Trust, The FA, the Football Foundation and Sport England has made the project challenging".

"As a City Leicester is diverse with a large BME population and this has been reflected in the FIS strategy".

"The £5.5m award made by the Football Foundation is the single largest award ever made and we are absolutely delighted to have been an integral part of managing and coordinating the project over the past 2 years".

Aylestone Park, GNG Sports, Leicester City Women, Allexton and New Parks FC, Beaumont Town FC, Nirvana FC, St Andrews and Leicester Bharat FC are the eight partner clubs. The partners in Leicester's football investment strategy plan to start work on transforming the 11 sites in June 2009, with all works completed by August 2010.

For further details please contact:

Jon Dutton

Managing Director

m +44 07920 096455

t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

FA mixed football experimental paper Logistique appointed to assist in FA mixed football assessment

Following their work with the FA on the Amputee Risk Assessment paper, Logistique have been recently commissioned to undertake a risk assessment on mixed football.

At present FA Rule C4 states: "Save for matches in a playing season in the age ranges Under 7, Under 8, Under 9, Under 10 and Under 11 players in a match must be of the same gender".

This rule has the effect of prohibiting boys and girls aged 12 or over from participating in the same match and the rule has been reviewed twice before in the last 6 years. In 2001, the result of one of those reviews was that The FA extended the age range from under 10s to under 11s.

Following the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee Women's Football Report, The FA conducted extensive research on the issue. Young players and the general public were consulted through TheFA.com, the 'Your Game Your Say' questionnaire (10,000 responses), the FA Youth Survey (5,000 responses), and independent research at FA Girls Centres of Excellence.

The FA has also sought advice from other sports including rugby and hockey and consulted international football governing bodies such as UEFA and FIFA and the Football Associations of Italy, USA, Norway, Sweden, Spain, Holland, France, Germany, Wales and Scotland.

Existing leagues already involved in the 2008-09 experiment and brand new leagues who wish to be involved have been asked if they wish to participate. However the report will focus on the following areas: North East, Merseyside, Cheshire, Cornwall, Essex, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Surrey, Sussex, Oxfordshire and Worcestershire.

Leagues and their member clubs will not be encouraged to actively recruit girls for this as The FA Women's Committee still wish to see the majority of girls remain in the female player pathway.

Particular areas that will need to be discussed are the social, technical, psychological and physical aspects as well as demand, injuries, facilities and welfare matters.

It is hoped that a fully consulted proposal can then be reached based on facts and evidence and can be brought to The FA Council for their recommendations
For further details please contact:

Phil Heap
Principal Consultant
m +44 07920 096459
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515
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Logistique to help inspire Paralympians of the future

Logistique have been successfully awarded event delivery of the Playground to Podium County Athlete Assessment & Development Centres (CAADCs) for Cornwall in the South West by the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS).

Playground to Podium provides a framework for identifying and supporting disabled players and athletes who demonstrate potential in particular sports. Jointly developed with Youth Sport Trust, UK Sport, and Paralympics GB, the initiative plays an important part in Sport England's wider goal of investing in community sport to create a world leading community sports system.

Young disabled people who are confirmed as having higher abilities at the Identifying Ability Days will be signposted to the County Assessment Centres for a more formal assessment and high quality coaching in specific sports. School to club links should also be developed at the multi skill and multi-sport clubs to ensure that all young disabled people have further opportunities to participate and perform in community-based sports clubs.

Logistique will now begin in earnest the planning and delivery process of working in partnership with EFDS the County Sports Partnership, National Governing Bodies of Sport and the School Sports Partnerships in Cornwall.

Phil Heap, Principal Consultant at Logistique will lead the work said

"We are really pleased to have been give an opportunity to assist EFDS and its partners in the talent identification of disabled athletes in Cornwall and this events adds to our ever growing sports disability portfolio"

For further details please contact:

Phil Heap
Principal Consultant
m +44 07920 096459
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

North West Disability Football Officer

The Football Association and Football League Trust has recently appointed specialist sport and leisure consultants Logistique to undertake a series of funding applications for the appointment of Disability specific football development officers to work in the geographical areas of the North West.

The project partners have identified the need for disability specific football development officers to work within their organisations to provide both opportunities and pathways to players, coaches, referees and disabled spectators within their work areas.

Logistique will work on behalf of The Football League Trust, Oldham Athletic FC, Burnley FC, Tranmere FC, Manchester FA, Lancashire FA, Cheshire FA and Liverpool FA to develop a strategic partnership to allow the appointment and delivery of disability specific opportunities. The project partners will liaise with football clubs, local people, groups, organisations and sports clubs to ascertain their views on the proposals and their aspirations for development in the future.

Funding applications will be submitted to Littlewoods Pools and the recently re-launched SportsMatch for a three year period to a project value of £600,000.

Phil Heap, Principal Consultant at Logistique will lead the work. He brings a thorough knowledge of football development with a particular emphasis on disability football and extensive background delivering detailed, funding applications specifically on football led projects for a range of different agencies.

Our portfolio of related projects covers the length and breadth of the country; from Sheffield, and Manchester in the North, Staffordshire in the Midlands and Dorset in the South.

For further details please contact:

Phil Heap
Principal Consultant
m +44 07920 096459
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

Logistique win World Championship event

Logistique have been commissioned by The FA to undertake the event management of the 2010 World Blind Championship.

The event which will be staged at the Royal National College for the Blind in Hereford in August of next year will see the World's top 10 Blind teams compete to be crowned as World Champions.

The championship will act as a qualifier for the 2012 Paralympics in London and Logistique have already started planning for both the event and for a comprehensive legacy programme.

Logistique's appointment follows on from their involvement in the 2003 European Blind Championship, 2004 Partially Sighted World Championship and 2008 Learning Disabilities European Championship.

Logistique Managing Director, Jon Dutton said:

"We are incredibly pleased to have once again been selected to event manage a major international disability event",

"The commitment that The FA has made to elite disability football is second to none throughout the world and we are proud to be an integral part of the logistics, operational and football planning that will be required to stage a great event".

"Given the level of the athlete's impairment the event will present us with our biggest ever challenge but it is one that we are relishing".

Jon Dutton
Managing Director
m +44 07920 096454
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

Logistique's starts its summer on the road

Logistique are preparing for a busy summer of events with the team managing, 3 National Competitions amongst them they will help to stage the largest event of its kind in the Country – The FA UMBRO Fives.

Everything kicks off in May with the delivery of 7 regional finals of The Fives with the team visiting Leeds, Bury, London, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Birmingham and Peterborough.

Logistique have been re appointed in a role as Tournament Directors following the success of the last 2 year's events. The main prize for the men's and women's teams is to qualify to play at Wembley later in the year, again an event that will be managed by Logistique.

In June Logistique will be also helping The FA, deliver its National Youth Futsal Festival building on the success of last years event. It will be the 2nd year Logistique have been involved in the organisation and delivery of the event which will see 80 boys and girls teams from all over England compete in Sheffield.

Also in June will see Logistique expand its portfolio of events outside of football with the organisation and delivery of EFDS Playground to Podium multi sport assessment days to be held in Redruth, Cornwall. The day will see National Governing Body coaches from football, wheelchair basketball; table tennis and athletics cast their eye over Cornwall's most talented disabled youngsters in the hope of identifying future paralympians.

In July Logistique will be event managing the National Futsal Finals at EIS in Sheffield. This is the second time that Logistique have been asked by The FA to help with the prestigious event.

Logistique Managing Director, Jon Dutton said

"It promises to be a busy summer for the team but one that we are wholeheartedly looking forward to".

"To have been selected to event manage The FA events again is fantastic as is our appointment by EFDS to help them with their Playground to Podium initiative"

"As we continue to expand our event portfolio we aim to offer our clients a dedicated and professional service with attention to detail the primary aim".

Jon Dutton
Managing Director
m +44 07920 096455
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

Logistique complete a brief feasibility report for King George Playing Fields in Guisborough

Logistique has recently completed work on behalf of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council for a brief feasibility report for the King George Playing fields and Guisborough Town Football Club. The objective of the report is to assess the feasibility of the football club applying to the football foundation for funding for a capital project on their existing site at the playing fields.

The report has reviewed the club's proposed development, identified potential for funding opportunities, assessed the club governance structure, investigated other projects within the town and their potential for partnership working and made recommendations on a way forward.

Logistique has a strong track record of delivering sports village projects having previously completed similar projects in Heywood and most recently Kendal Sports Village.

Stephen Brown said "We have been delighted to have worked with the Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and Guisborough Town on this assignment. From the outset we were keen to get them involved and have been thrilled by undertake a new part of our portfolio of work. We have now completed the initial feasibility stage."

For further information please contact:

Stephen
Managing Director
m +44 07920 096454
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

Community Football Centre for Shirebrook Academy

Derbyshire County Council has recently appointed specialist sport and leisure consultants Logistique to undertake a series of funding applications and governance modeling.

The County Council and project partners have identified a site and aspire to a new dual use changing room football and community facility, car parking, a 3rd Generation AGP and natural grass pitches to be located at the proposed Shirebrook Academy.

Logistique and Derbyshire County Council will liaise with football clubs, local people, groups, organisations and sports clubs to ascertain their views on the proposals and their aspirations for development in the future.

Stephen Brown, Managing Director at Logistique will lead the work. He brings thorough knowledge of outdoor sports facilities and extensive background delivering detailed, funding applications specifically on football led projects for a range of different agencies.

Our portfolio of related projects covers the length and breadth of the country; from Sheffield, Manchester in the North Staffordshire and Dorset in the South.

For further details please contact:

Stephen Brown
Managing Director
m +44 07920 096454
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

New proposed nursery for Nafferton

Nafferton Feoffees Trust has recently appointed specialist sport and leisure consultants Logistique to undertake a series of funding applications and governance modeling on behalf of Nafferton Under Fives nursery.

Nafferton Under Fives was first opened in 1972 as a parent run playgroup open three sessions a week. They are a committee led Ofsted regulated Early Years Childcare Provider. They provide Pre-school Education to Children between the ages of 2 years to statutory School age. They currently employ nine staff.

Nafferton Feoffees Trust and Nafferton Under Fives along with project partners have identified a site and aspire to a new purpose use nursery to be located on the site of Nafferton Primary School.

Logistique and the project partners will liaise with Nafferton Primary School, East Riding Council, local people, groups and organisations to ascertain their views on the proposals and their aspirations for development in the future.

Stephen Brown, Managing Director at Logistique will lead the work. He brings thorough knowledge of outdoor sports facilities and extensive background delivering detailed, funding applications specifically on football led projects for a range of different agencies.

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Stephen Brown
Managing Director
m +44 07920 096454
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

First ever equine project for Logistique

Logistique has recently been commissioned by Herefordshire College of Technology to help them submit a funding application to Sport England's Rural Communities theme. The College aspire to enhancing their current Equestrian facilities to include an indoor riding centre, a ménage and stables.

The Equestrian Centre at Holme Lacy is a BHS Approved Riding School which offers both excellent riding facilities and high quality education. The estate comprises a mixed organic farm, which has its own pedigree herd of Hereford cattle, commercial woodlands, ancient woodlands, traditional parkland, ponds and streams.

Logistique has a strong track record of delivering Sport England funding projects having previously completed similar projects in Heywood, Gosforth Fields Sports Association, East Lindsey District Council and most recently South Manchester Sports Club.

Jon Dutton said "We are delighted to be working with the college and helping them deliver their ambitious plans for the future. Clearly this area of work is breaking new ground for us, but is something we are a keen to undertake and hopefully match our other successes in sport, health and regeneration funding."

For further information please contact:

Jon Dutton
Managing Director
m +44 07920 096455
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

2009 EVENT 'THE BEST YET'

The 2009 FA UMBRO Fives have been declared the most successful yet in the tournament's three-year history.

Logistique once again played a huge part in the day having been appointed as Tournament Director's for the 3rd consecutive year. Logistique's role was to manage all of the football related activities on the hallowed turf including team and referees liaison and managing the live sourcing system.

Ballers.com from Hayes came through to take the honours at Wembley in the men's competition – beating MDU 2-1 on penalties after the two sides were level 2-2 after extra time.

Captain and manager Ryan Wharton was delighted with their success. "It has been one of the best days of my life. I can't believe we've won the tournament. We've had an amazing experience at Wembley and to seal victory over a quality side like MDU in the final has capped a truly memorable day.

"It's every kid's dream to lift a trophy at Wembley and I have now done that in front of my family and friends at probably the most famous stadium in the world. We are a confident set of lads who try to play the game the right way – and we are already looking forward to defending our title next year."

Sharing the success were Watford Ladies, who regained the women's crown they first won in 2007 and Daily Stars who won the Lucky 8 title.

Dermot Collins, The FA's Respect Programme Manager, said that the whole day went well. "I believe it was our best final yet and the praise has been gushing in from all quarters."

Logistique Managing Director Jon Dutton said "I believe that this year was the best ever. Not just at Wembley but also throughout the seven regional finals".

"Some of the work we have done around behaviour and match officials has raised the bar in terms of quality and the football overall has been markedly improved".

"From Logistique's perspective we have some excellent people working for us and with us and overall they contributed to a great event".

For further information please contact:

Jon Dutton
Managing Director
m +44 07920 096455
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

Fun for all at Futsal Festival

Saturday and Sunday saw The FA National Youth Futsal Festival in Sheffield.

Logistique were busy in Sheffield this weekend co-ordinating nearly 80 junior Futsal teams at The FA National Youth Futsal Festival, which was a resounding success with some excellent Futsal being played in the full spirit of the game.

Teams from all over the country were at the English Institute Of Sport on both Saturday and Sunday for the Festival, with competitions for both boys and girls in the U10s, U12s, U14s and U16s age groups.

Established to provide an event that could inspire young people to take-up and play Futsal on a regular-basis, the aims and intentions of the Festival are to not just provide a one-off Futsal event that young people enjoy and then forget, but to provide a goal to encourage schools, clubs and young people to play Futsal throughout the year with the climax being the opportunity to attend the National Futsal Festival.

Saturday saw the U10s and U12s in action, with the group fixtures starting just after 10.30am. With ten teams in each competition, the sides were separated into two groups of five with the top two from each group then meeting in a semi-final.

As can be expected, it was close in many cases, with penalties required in two of Saturday's eight semi-final games, but the first winners at this year's Festival were Westella & Willerby JFC who lifted the boys' U10 title with a 2-0 victory over KC Barsa, whilst Barnsley Ladies took the girls' U10 honours with a 4-1 win against Llanmynech Lemurs.

They were followed closely afterwards by Priory Sports College who beat Greenacre School by a single goal in the U12 boys Final before the U12 girls showpiece rounded off Saturday's action with a win for Crosspool Juniors against South Cave JFC.

On Sunday, it was the turn of the U14 and U16 teams to do battle and these groups proved just as competitive with both the U14s girls and U16s boys Finals being settled by penalties. A thrilling encounter in the U14 boys Final saw Canon Palmer Catholic School beat Benjamin Britten High School by 3-2.

There wasn't quite as much goal action in the U14 girls Final though, where it finished 0-0 between Conyers School and Ashmole School, but it was Conyers who emerged victorious thanks to a 3-2 win on penalties.

At U16 level, Brentford FC Community Sports Trust and Oakengates shared a 1-1 draw in the boys final, with Oakengates running out 4-3 winners after kicks from the penalty spot in that one. In the U16 girls Final, it was Lea Valley who were winners courtesy of a single goal victory over AFC Preston to round off the competition.

Whilst there could only be eight winners of each group, all 75 teams who attended contributed to an excellent two days of Futsal.

Later this week, the same venue will be hosting some of the best Futsal teams in the country, as the Finals of The FA Futsal Cup take place at the Institute.

Phil Heap said "Our role was to coordinate the football side of the day and as ever we had the usual challenges that any complex event brings. Both days ran to time and the feedback has been prodigious.

Whilst in reality there could only be eight winners of their respective categories, the 900 players all walked away from Sheffield each with a participant's medal and memories of a great event."

For further information please contact:

Phil Heap
Principal Consultant
m +44 07920 096459
t +44 (0) 161 743 3515

