

Community Club

Blackpool FC
Community
Trust Column



Rising to the challenge of keeping smiles on faces

By **Ashley Hackett**

www.bfcct.co.uk
@BFC_CTTrust

At Blackpool FC Community Trust we strive to support all corners of the community and over the past few years we have developed our provision to so much more than physical activity.

Examples of this include social groups, Extra Time, Sporting Memories as well as coffee mornings for armed forces veterans.

We have also set up projects focused on helping local residents to lose weight through our project FitFans.

All these programmes are traditionally delivered in our Education and Community Centre at Bloomfield Road to bring people together, combat social isolation and improve health by losing weight, reducing blood pressure and such simple things as making new friends and putting a smile on people's faces.

This has obviously proved a little more complicated in the current climate, so we have

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had to adapt our services and find new ways to keep in touch with our participants to keep their spirits high and keep the engagement going.

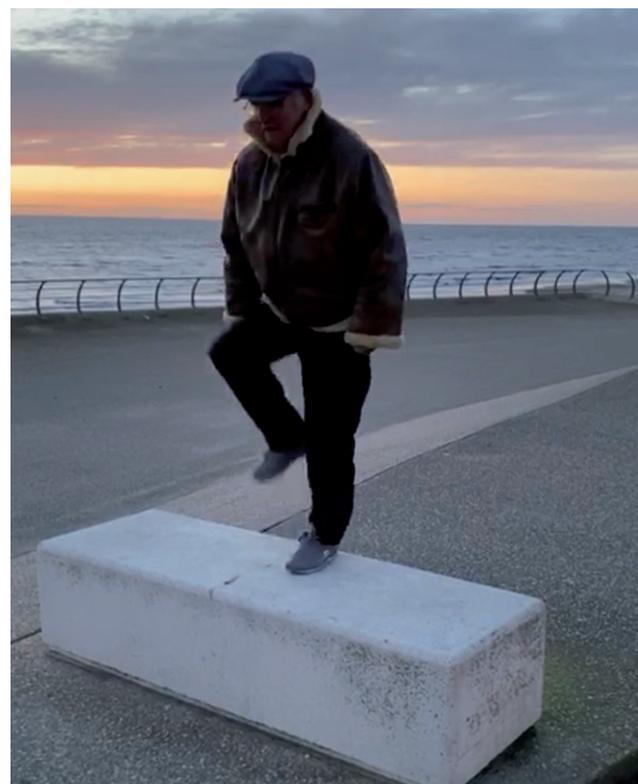
Our Community Trust team have been fantastic in finding ways to do this, including hosting Friday evening sports quiz on Facebook as well as live daily walks to show people some pleasant routes in the area – these have gone out to more than 51,000 people already. We have also been regularly phoning our participants for a chat and to check if they need anything.

We have continued to deliver the FitFans programme to female participants on Tuesdays and to males on Thursdays, while also hosting online educational classes on Zoom.

While this proved a huge change for participants, we still saw 47 of them complete the 12-week programme.

We started in February with 59 people and saw a 79 per cent completion rate in unusual circumstances – the national completion rate in a normal situation is 70 per cent.

We are now working with the EFL Trust and a number of clubs around the country to host weekly FitFans physical activity sessions. These will



An exercise walk during lockdown can become a valuable part of a personal fitness programme

be available on YouTube each Wednesday and Saturday, so please check our website and

social media platforms.

We have also started completing Health and Wellbeing

Checks for Blackpool Council as part of our Community Hub work.

These are for people the council, social and health services are struggling to make contact with and have proved very popular.

When we have knocked on doors, many residents have enjoyed seeing our smiling faces and finding out about some of the activities they will be able to get involved with once we are allowed back out and about.

This is a service we are investigating continuing long term as we believe it brings great benefits to our community.

We have also had to close our mental health sessions for people wanting to use football to help address their needs, so we have launched two telephone helplines, for people to chat with our staff members or gain information on services available.

If you feel the helplines could help you, call between 8.30am and 5.30pm on any weekday at 07939 446367 or 07939 156297.

Fitness programmes are staying active online

By **Lauren Cholmondeley**

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The FitBlackpool programme run by Blackpool FC Community Trust has recently been completed, with some amazing results from both our female and male participants.

During the 13-week weight management programme at Bloomfield Road, participants took part in health and nutrition workshops as well as physical activity sessions, which increased in length and intensity each week.

These circuit sessions have taken place pitchside and in our Education and Community Centre. By the halfway stage, the female participants

had lost a combined weight of 50kg, with the male participants losing 81.9kg.

The females had a total reduction of 111.5cm from around their waist and the males 160.3cm.

At week eight the programme had to be postponed due to Covid-19 but this did not stop the participants continuing to work and achieve their goals. As stated above, the sessions continued to be delivered through live workshops on Zoom.

Participants were also given weekly workout videos and challenges, which included increasing their step counts, setting SMART goals, and completing food and physical activity diaries.

It has been a pleasure to see

how the group have continued to support and encourage each other through our WhatsApp groups, overcoming the setback they faced together.

Kerry Greenwood said: "I just want to say how fantastic the Team from FitFans have been. From starting the course, they have been supportive and took on board people's abilities.

"They soon had the online support up and running, and when we hit the lockdown they stepped up and put together online sessions, posting regular exercise routines step by step for us to follow.

"I would like to say how grateful I am for their continued support and encouragement."

James Priestley said: "The

finishing line was just starting to come into focus, then like a bolt out of the sky we all got affected by the coronavirus situation.

"The Trust came to the rescue. The WhatsApp group became more active, with the guys posting easy-to-follow at home workouts.

"Then they came up with the brilliant idea of holding a truncated version of the usual weekly session via conference calling. These ideas are really helping in maintaining our focus on the end game.

"In addition, they have always made themselves available for help, advice, and motivation.

"Through all these initiatives we know we are not alone and forgotten about. It is and

continues to play a vital role in these troubled times."

The EFL and EFL Trust have now launched an online FitFans campaign, helping fans to get active in the safety of their homes.

Over the next 12 weeks sessions will be released each week on Wednesday at 5pm and Saturday at 11am on the EFL and EFL Trust YouTube channels.

If you would like any further information or would like to register your interest for the next FitFans programme please email Nathan.davies@bfcct.co.uk.

For more information on Blackpool FC Community Trust, visit www.BFCCT.co.uk or check out the BFCCT social media platforms.



BFCCT has been offering home fitness programmes