

## Development Director

When, as the President of the Youth Development Commission, I first become involved with the Association it was based in a residential building in Nottingham, had two staff with a development remit - Julie Smith (Youth Development Officer) and Mike McKeever (Technical Officer). It is hard to imagine that in such a short time we have moved so far, and not just in location!

The last 12 months have seen the aspirations of the Whole Sport Plan (WSP) start to take shape. The first step was to recruit a team of professional staff to drive the plan forward and support the Volleyball workforce, the volunteers, at National, regional, county and club levels. This WSP team is made up of officers from a variety of sporting and professional backgrounds.

Craig Handford (WSP Development Manger) is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the WSP and the operation of the Volleyball England development team. He is assisted by Will Roberts (Partnership Officer) who provides the national lead in our "Let's Play Volleyball" programme, aimed at developing young players, coaches, leaders and referees, and works closely with the PESSCL programme.

Steve Jones is the Coach Education and Development Officer. His principal responsibilities are the coach accreditation scheme, services to registered coaches and coach development. His involvement extends as the lead on the Community Coaches Scheme and UKCC developments. Laura Brown (National Club Development Officer) has responsibility for developing and implementing the Volley 123 club accreditation scheme and supporting clubs in the process. The newly appointed Workforce Development Officer is Joanne Richards, with a remit for the development of the volleyball workforce, emphasising recruitment, retention and rewarding of our volunteers. Other aspects include developing training needs, volunteer award programmes and the Step into Sport programme.

Though not directly in the development team Gemma Nunnerly (Competitions and Events Officer) makes a contribution through the organisation, promotion and administration of events, including domestic competition (National League) and international competitions.

The central vision of the WSP '**putting volleyball @ the heart of your community**' is all about getting more people playing volleyball at a local level, and making a **START** in the game. The list is extensive and includes schools, clubs, youth centres, holiday schemes, and prisons. The WSP team role is to provide the support and resources to enable us, the volleyball community, and others to to deliver a quality experience so that players of all ages and abilities will continue to **STAY** in the sport. The third element of the WSP plan is to ensure that England teams have a level of **SUCCESS** on the international stage. The **SUCCEED** element has changed over the last year for two reasons, the most important being the choice of London to host the 2012 Olympics, the other being the transfer of performance sport from Sport England to UK Sport. The effect on the WSP, which is funded by Sport England, was to reinforce that Volleyball England's main function is to ensure development of GRASS ROOTS Volleyball.

Below are the 6 main objectives of the WSP, and some of the programmes and schemes being developed to help Volleyball England achieve them.

1. To increase participation.

### **How is Volleyball England doing this?**

The Community Sports Coach Scheme (CSCS) is an example of a programme to increase the number of people playing volleyball. Unlike many larger sports, which have CSCs in every county, volleyball was aware that it could only place coaches in selected areas. Funding is from a number of different sources, including schools, county associations, clubs, district councils and is matched by DCMS funding through the County Sports Partnerships. There are just a few Volleyball CSCs across the country but their impact is significant. For example one coach delivered the 'Lets play Volleyball' programme to over 3,500 young people last year.

The association is working with the Youth Sport Trust, the National Council for School Sports and Sport England to produce a competition structure that will enable players to move seamlessly from one level to another. A player pathway that takes players from Volleysport, the 1 v 1 and 2 v 2 games for beginners, to the full indoor and beach games has been developed.

Other developments to make volleyball more accessible to a wider group of people include a new website, with on-line registration and payment, and linked to a Communications strategy.

2. To build upon and develop a network of strong sustainable clubs.

**How is Volleyball England doing this?**

To ensure that young people have exit routes into suitable clubs Volleyball England is developing a network of clubs with Volley 1 accreditation. These clubs work through an assessment pack to ensure they have a safe, effective, child friendly environment in which to deliver volleyball. These clubs are then linked to local schools through the PE and School Club Links (PESSCL) programme so young people can make an easy, smooth transition from schools to club volleyball. This year a package of incentives has been developed to support and reward clubs working through and achieving accreditation.

3. To identify and work with key agencies that will assist us to develop and deliver grass roots volleyball.

**How is Volleyball England doing this?**

Partnership working is at the heart of our and other NGB WSPs. Volleyball England is developing links with key partners, primarily the newly formed County and School Sports Partnerships. Both have similar objectives of increasing participation and developing links from schools to community clubs. Both CSPs and SSPs are at early stages of development but will be supporting Volleyball through County based clubs, volunteer and coach development programmes. If you haven't yet made contact with your local partnerships, drop them a line or give them a ring to find out how you can work together to develop volleyball in your local area.

4. To ensure we are flexible enough to respond to new ideas and initiatives.

**How is Volleyball England doing this?**

Perhaps the most visible recent sporting initiative was the successful London bid. This has put extra pressure on the home nations including England, especially to ensure that the BVF is up to speed within a 100 day window. Furthermore the BVF will need our support to prepare our teams in time for 2012.

Volleyball has driven forward a pioneering collaborative initiative for a full time Child Protection Officer shared between seven NGBs. The post is hosted by the Central Council for Physical Recreation, supported by the Child Protection in Sport Unit, and being used as a model of good practice by Sport England, a funding partner.

5. To develop a robust data collection and IT system that will allow us to collect, collate and analyse and share up to date information.

**How is Volleyball England doing this?**

The new database driven website allows for the capture of key data, its analysis and display. This ability is vital for us to provide our major funder Sport England with information in support of our WSP Key Performance Indicators and maintain their continued support. It is imperative that members use the site to provide us with information to support our submissions, for instance the Equality Standards with data on gender, ethnicity and disability. Regional Secretaries will already have benefited from information about their local areas through regular club, coach and referee updates. The intention is for regional and county associations to support their planning processes with this information. The website also allows registered members to carry out a search of the information stored on the data base.

6. To expand the staffing structure in the National Office.

**How is Volleyball England doing this?**

The staff complement is now virtually in place. The Association struggled to fill the WSP Development Manager post and Craig Handford stepped into the breach very successfully to

ensure continuity on a temporary basis. The post is currently out to advert as National Development Manager.

These are just some of the ways that Volleyball England is addressing its WSP objectives. We are still at the early stages of development, still building the foundation for Volleyball for the future. There are those who may feel that Volleyball England has not yet had an impact on them at local level. It is hoped that over time through sharing good practice and support from the National Officers everyone will see the impact of the development of grass roots volleyball. The real priority is the development of VE's most valuable resource, the volunteer workforce. Kelly Knowles developed and produced an excellent extensive resource package for volunteers. The mantle of driving our volunteer and workforce strategy forward is now with Joanne Richards.

**What's to come?**

Looking forward, I hope you will engage with our new National Officer team. Their remit is to support the work that you do out in your communities. They will work with us to

- Raise the profile of our sport.
- Draw up plans to develop volleyball at all levels, linking these to the main objectives of the WSP.
- Develop working relationships with other partners and widen access
- Explore funding opportunities to ensure that grass roots Volleyball continues to develop.

We have come far in a short period of time; we have been given more resources than ever before to develop our sport; others are waiting to engage with us. The staff team can only do so much; the rest is up to us. The hard work is about to begin. Are you ready for the challenge?

***Janet Inman***  
***Development Director***