

## 2012 Athletics Facts

### ABAC Fact File 13.

#### Lottery Funding – The Inspired Facilities Round 1 Grants.

**Introduction.** In Fact File 12 we reviewed the distribution of Lottery funds by Sport England from April 2007 to end Dec 2011. We noted that athletic clubs had received very little direct support from Lottery funding. Since FF12 was published Sport England has released details of the Lottery awards for their latest “Inspired Facilities” scheme. In this Fact File we again look at the distribution of grants and in particular the amount grass roots athletics has received.

**The Inspired Facilities Fund.** Inspired Facilities is focused on making it easier for local community and volunteer groups to improve and refurbish sports clubs or transform non-sporting venues into modern grassroots sport facilities. This fund is part of Sport England’s long term **Places People Play** programme to deliver a London 2012 legacy of increased participation in sport. It aims to invest £50 million of National Lottery funding in up to 1000 community sports projects between 2012 and 2014. The declared limit of grant is £50,000 per project and each applicant is also required to contribute funds to their project.

The funds are to be released in three stages. Stage one was completed at the end of 2011 and awards totaling £10 million were announced in March 2012. Stage 2 bids for a further £20 million were closed in April 2012 and a final bidding round for the remaining £20 million will take place in 2013.

**Stage One Awards.** Funds have been awarded to **290 projects** in stage one. The majority of successful projects have been to upgrade multi-sport facilities. Only **four athletic** centred projects were successful. These were all for track development and are detailed below:-

- Grant 4412\*. £140,000 to Woodford High School. New track in Coulsdon to be part funded and used by South London Harriers.
- Grant 4481. £50,000 to Paddock Wood Athletics Club for a training track.
- Grant 4555. £100,000 to Gloucester City Council for Blackbridge Athletic track development.
- Grant 4572 £60,000 to London Borough of Hounslow for Osterley Park track floodlights.

*We note that Grant 4412 is listed as for multi sport use but we include it as an athletics centred project as it will create a new track facility in Surrey.*

*We also note that three of these schemes are for sums greater than the supposed limit of £50,000.*

With grants totaling £350,000 the **legacy support for athletics represents just 3.5% of distributed lottery funds from stage one of the Inspired Facilities scheme.**

We noted in FF12 that, contrary to the position athletics finds itself in, a number of sports have received very large financial support for clubs. Again we have quantified the monies released to other sports under the Inspired Facilities fund. The results show:-

- |                          |              |               |             |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| • Association Football . | 15 projects. | Total funding | £ 699,491   |
| • Tennis                 | 31 projects  | Total funding | £1,372,388  |
| • Cricket                | 36 projects. | Total funding | £1,485,908. |

**Other awards to athletics since FF12.** In the first 3 months of 2012 Sport England awarded a total of £49,334,930 of lottery monies to sport which includes the £10million stage one

awards for Inspired Facilities. Again we have searched for any funding of athletics and identified the following awards from other grant schemes.

- Grant 4704. £ 1,720 Kingston AC and Polytechnic Harriers. For free weights.
- Grant 4728 £ 8,534 Reading AC for Specialist Group training development
- **Grant 4738 £48,244 England Athletics. Run England data collection 2011-2012**
- Grant 4870 £ 9728 Everydays Tomorrow - for its "Spike it up" project
- Grant 4872 £11,292 Birmingham City Council for re-configuring the Birmingham High Performance Centre

**These awards for athletics total £79,518 which represents 0.2% of Sport England grants made in the first quarter of 2012 (Inspired facilities monies excluded from this).**

**Conclusions.** Funding via Sport England is like a fully laden ship. It is difficult to slow it down or change its course. Early in 2012 the Coalition Government abandoned targets for increasing participation in sport. It is perhaps too soon to see this new approach reflected in a change in emphasis when awarding lottery grants.

But it obvious that whichever way it is viewed athletics is the poor relation when it comes to Sport England. As arguably the number one Olympic sport, deserving of prime support from Olympic legacy funding programmes, athletics at club level has been hung out to dry.

Following an FOI Act request Sport England has published details of all the unsuccessful projects from the Stage one Inspired Facilities scheme. We note that very few athletics clubs requested support for projects. So we may deduce that the sport is in such a fragmented and demoralized state that it has lost the will to survive.

Athletics at club level is in a downward spiral with diminishing numbers of coaches, officials and athletes. After years of neglect it now cannot compete with other sports for resources. It needs some very special attention directed from the DCMS down if it is to have any kind of legacy. The London Olympics will provide one last glorious hurrah for a sport which is in terminal decline.

**Footnote.** Future Fact Files will look at Exchequer grant aid to sport. We note that in the months Jan – March 2012 substantial grants were made under the banner of the "Inspired Facilities" scheme. We will be looking at the distribution of tax payers monies to this and other legacy schemes with particular emphasis on athletics share of the cake.

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