



Pitch perfect for Potters Bar school

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Young, and not so young, sports players in Potters Bar are among the first to benefit from an infrastructure fund, which will eventually see more than £800,000 pumped into Hertsmere community projects.

School leaders and youngsters gathered to watch as a newly refurbished astroturf pitch was officially unveiled at [Dame Alice Owen's School](#) in Dugdale Hill Lane on Monday 7 October. The new surface, which was installed over the summer, was part-financed by a £50,000 grant from our [Community Infrastructure Fund \(CIF\)](#). The facility is used by school and local junior football clubs, such as Potters Bar United, Crusaders and Town, and hosts matches and training sessions for the Potters Bar Hockey Club and Potters Bar Cricket Club. Practice sessions for a local marching band are also held there.

The new improved surface will not only help increase participation for current users, but will also enable more activities for older people, such as walking football, to be run at the site.



Councillor Dr Harvey Cohen, Portfolio Holder for Planning, presented a plaque at the unveiling. The plaque recognised the project has been completed in partnership with us.

Cllr Cohen said: "Schools are at the heart of their community and Dame Alice Owen's School is a prime example of that. These pitches provide sporting opportunities for a range of groups and clubs, which cater for men and women, young and old, from beginner to higher level.

"The previous surface was in a poor state of repair, and it was vital that they were reconditioned as soon as possible to ensure all the teams and community groups dependent on these facilities could continue to play and practice here.

"I'm delighted that Hertsmere Borough Council through our Infrastructure Fund was able to provide some of the funding needed for this project – and that the refurbishment could be completed in time for this term's sporting events."

The school's facilities manager, Ian Breeze, said: "Dame Alice Owen's School is so grateful to the Hertsmere Community Infrastructure Fund for enabling the completion of this sports project. This grant will enable the school to continue to develop community links through access to our facilities."

The CIF is a pool of funding the council has collected from a levy on certain types of new development that can be used for improving local facilities and services.

It was announced at the beginning of the year that 16 organisations had been successful in bidding for funding. Two groups received larger amounts of money, totalling more than £600,000, including Elstree University and Technical College and Communities 1st (formerly Community Hertsmere).

Funding for a further 14 groups, including schools and sports clubs, was agreed by our Executive committee in December last year, with the money set to help improve community buildings, outdoor spaces and sports facilities.

Other recipients include the Noah's Ark Hospice, which was given £29,467 to facilitate the construction of its children hospice in High Barnet. The hospice, which supports children with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions in the borough, opened last month.

All the applicants had to fulfil specific funding criteria.

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