

Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation



u3a

**PROPOSAL FOR
WALKING CRICKET
FOR THE u3a**

THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE CRICKET FOUNDATION

OUR VISION

WE AIM TO CREATE A FUN AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT WHERE ALL PEOPLE CAN FULFIL THEIR POTENTIAL THROUGH CRICKET.

WHAT WE DO

The Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation aims to improve people's lives through the power of cricket. We create, develop, and deliver fun, safe, inclusive year-round cricket activity for people of all abilities in both urban and rural locations.

Our free softball community programmes, delivered by qualified coaches, provide low-income households access to sporting activity in their community. We deliver cricket sessions in 210 schools across the county, reaching over 18,000 children, as part of the national curriculum and provide training and resources for teachers to continue in school cricket delivery.

The Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation supports almost 200 affiliated cricket clubs across the county in recreational cricket, providing leagues and competitions for play and support to develop clubs to become more sustainable, helping with grounds and facilities, plus a wealth of resources and training which includes safeguarding and first aid for over 2,000 volunteers.

We want people across Gloucestershire to gain the benefits being active in cricket brings, the opportunities the game holds, and make that as easy and accessible as possible.



WALKING CRICKET

WHAT IS WALKING CRICKET?

Walking Cricket is cricket that has been specifically designed for people aged 50 and over. The game has been adapted from various formats of cricket to offer a more gentle game with less impact, which can be played by both women and men, whether they have played cricket before or not.

It can be played as leisurely or as competitively as desired, depending on what each group prefers, and still hold the same challenges a regular game of cricket has, but with less demands. For example, players can bowl the ball underarm instead of overarm should they prefer.

The game is highly inclusive where everyone is involved with batting, bowling and fielding. Batters bat in pairs for an agreed amount of overs or balls and can score by 'walking' between the wickets and hitting the ball in certain areas. Should the batter get out, they lose 5 runs and remain batting instead of being out and not getting to bat for the remainder of the session. This usually means players get more than one chance to bowl and by constantly rotating the field, players field in every position.



HOW DOES WALKING CRICKET WORK?

Walking cricket uses a softball, plastic bats and plastic stumps, resulting in no injuries from missing the ball and bats being less heavy to pick up, eliminating the requirement for protective equipment. Equipment is provided, and people just need to turn up in comfortable clothing, a bottle of water, and play, with sessions usually lasting an hour.

For all year-round activity, the game is best played indoors in a full-sized sports hall, ideally with or near a café for socialising after.

IS THERE A NEED FOR WALKING CRICKET?

Yes. Physical inactivity now kills as many people as smoking with 1 in 6 deaths being caused by it, costing the country an estimated £7.4 billion each year, according to Sport England and the Everybody Active, Every Day governmental report.

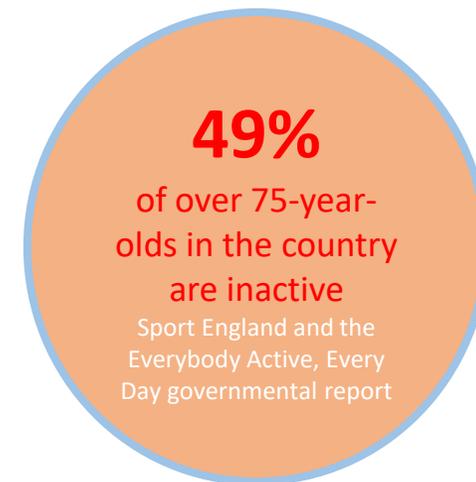
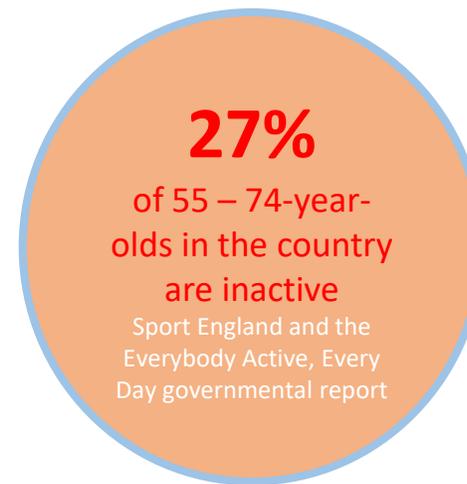
Being physically inactive is one of the top risk factors for developing conditions that lead to preventable disability in later life and improving levels of physical activity in those aged 50-70 can have a significant impact on quality of later life.

The number of people aged 60 or over is expected to pass the 20 million mark, according to the Office for National Statistics. Gloucestershire currently has an aging population above the national average rate. It is projected that the population of those aged 60+ living in Gloucestershire will increase by nearly 20% over the next 15 years.

The 2011 census suggests there will be a 32.5% growth in the 60 – 79 year old age demographic, and a 93.8% increase in over 80 year olds. Cheltenham's population is predicted to increase by 10% over the next 20 years, with the majority of growth being in the over 60s age range.

Reports show that taking part in physical activity provides better sleep, strengthens your heart, improves lung function, reduces stress, builds confidence, develops strong relationships; and these are just a selection. The benefits of physical activity for people over 50 may help to reduce the risk of bone loss and osteoporosis, improve cardiorespiratory fitness, and help keep joints healthy, to name but a few plus, the social interaction makes people feel valued and included.

All the borough councils in the 6 districts of the county of Gloucestershire recognise a growing aging population will create many social challenges if nothing is done to address this, and identify one of the main areas that will help ease any potential strain in the future is physical activity.



*“Exercise is not a luxury. It is the key to healthy ageing.”
Olga Kotelko, world record holding masters athlete, 1919-2014*

PROVEN SUCCESS

BRISTOL WALKING CRICKET

The Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation has been delivering a successful Walking Cricket project in Bristol.

Launched in May 2018 with the Mayor of Bristol Marvin Rees as part of Bristol WalkFest, the project teamed up with Bristol Aging Better and Age UK Bristol to support Bristol City Council's initiative to get people aged 50 and over engaging in physical activity. We also linked up with other groups who offered walking sports in Bristol to work in partnership and inform their networks of the Walking Cricket sessions that were taking place.

To ensure the project had the best opportunity for success, the Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation reached out to other cricket counties already running their own Walking Cricket sessions to understand best practise and anticipate any barriers there might be for people to take part.

There are over 50 unique individuals at the Bristol hub, both male and female, who are registered participants, which has between 10 – 20 regular participants turn up each week with numbers continuing to grow.



PROGRESSION

The Walking Cricket hub in Bristol is now self-sufficient with two or three members of the group leading on the administration of the sessions.

The project is now at a stage where we are speaking with the other cricket counties across England and Wales who also run Walking Cricket to explore opportunities to go to their sessions for a day out and play a friendly Walking Cricket match or tournament, with one planned with the Somerset Cricket Foundation in June 2022.

By September 2022, there will be a second Walking Cricket hub in Bristol with more being planned in other wards of the city, as well as expanding throughout Gloucestershire.

IMPACT



HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

The Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation have been informed by various members of the Walking Cricket hub in Bristol the session is a key part of their weekly diary with some describing it as 'their highlight'.

All the members of the group have said it is a great way to socialise and meet new people with some saying it had really helped with their mental health and staying active.

REDUCED ANXIETY

Wives of some of the participants, who also join in playing, have commented on the relief the sessions have given them, explaining the sessions have helped reduce their anxiety. This was brought on due to the inactivity of their husbands and the negative implications this was having on their husband's health, which in turn was straining their relationship.

Coming to the sessions changed that for the positive, with noticeable changes in their husband's health and weight, as well as their own, plus the sessions provided something to talk about.

IMPACT STATEMENTS

'A GREAT WAY OF PLAYING SPORT IN A FRIENDLY GROUP'

"There isn't much opportunity to be active, but I do play walking football. Walking cricket is a bit of fun and a great way to stay active. When I retired I found there wasn't much to do. I enjoy cricket and when I found out about walking cricket, I wanted to come along. It's a really good way of meeting new people and remain being active. There is a good atmosphere and it's a great way of playing sport in a friendly group. Coming to the sessions has led me to playing golf, well pitch 'n' putt if I'm honest; something I thought I'd never do."

- Participant at Walking Cricket Bristol aged over 65

'A GOOD WAY TO SPEND AN HOUR OF AN AFTERNOON.'

"I used to play cricket when I was young, but now at my age I don't do much physical activity anymore apart from a spot of bowls. I was invited by people I know here at walking cricket to come along, and I've never looked back. The sessions are good as I'm now exercising, and I'm always involved. In the past I had broken my leg and I find coming to the sessions has helped with my movement. Since my wife died, I found socialising difficult. The walking cricket sessions have helped with the social side as the group is very friendly and there is good camaraderie. It's a good way to spend an hour of an afternoon."

- Participant at Walking Cricket Bristol aged 76

'HELPED SUPPORT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES'

"Keeping physically and mentally active in later life is hugely beneficial for our wellbeing. Being physically active as we get older can reduce the risk of us developing depression, heart disease and dementia. It also increases our social networks, helping to reduce the risk of us becoming lonely or isolated."

"Age UK Bristol recognises there is a need to a need to increase the walking sport offer across Bristol and Gloucestershire, Walking Cricket in particular."

"Walking sports are minimal contact games with one main difference to the standard game – no running. It provides older people with the opportunity to play the game they love but reduce the chance of injury. Ideal for the over 50s but open to all ages. Walking sports are a great way to keep active, learn new skills, have fun and make new friends."

"The Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation became involved in Walking Sports in Bristol when the Active Ageing Manager supported them to develop and launch a Walking Cricket session as part of Bristol Walk Fest 2018. The subsequent sessions proved a great success, attracting many participants, including some women as well as men."

"Working in partnership with the Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation has helped support the aims and objectives of Active Ageing's programmes/goals, ie. enabling more older people, to be more active, more often. We very much look forward to working with them going forward to support the marketing and promotion of any future developments".

- Karen Lloyd, Active Aging Programme Manager, Age UK Bristol



PARTNERSHIP WITH u3a CHELTENHAM

SUPPORTING u3a GOALS

By working together in partnership, the u3a Cheltenham and the Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation will be able to support each other's ambitions and goals.

The Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation will be able to supply the necessary equipment for Walking Cricket to take place, such as bats, balls, stumps, cones, bag and scoresheets.

We also have connections with many sports facilities in Cheltenham and throughout Gloucestershire, and can support in accessing sports halls and cricket clubs to host activity.

Having Walking Cricket as part of the u3a Cheltenham activities will enrich the current offer for members, who can enjoy a new past time, learn new skills and for some, re-engage in a sport they once played, while reaping the benefits already mentioned by taking part in Walking Cricket.

The Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation will actively promote the sessions through their networks, current and new community partners, and their social media channels to inform people of the sessions. This could potentially be a new audience for the u3a Cheltenham with possible recruiting prospects.



SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

SUSTAINABILITY

The Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation can provide the necessary equipment to get activity going. We can also provide training to each group on the rules of the game and how games should be officiated. For Walking Cricket hubs in Cheltenham and across the county to be sustainable, ideally an individual will need to be identified to lead the group.

Having spoken to other counties that deliver Walking Cricket, participants are asked to pay each time they play, which is somewhere between £3 - £5, depending on overhead costs of the facility.

DEVELOPMENT

The initial focus of the Walking Cricket hubs will be on social inclusion and the health benefits of taking part in physical activity. To enrich the social side of the activity, the Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation can create friendly cricket festivals inviting Walking Cricket hubs from across the county and Bristol to join together. We will build on this engagement and reach out to the other cricket counties who offer Walking Cricket to widen this experience.

To develop Walking Cricket so there is a broader offer for those who want a more competitive element, the Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation can support the development of an affiliated Walking Cricket league, should there be the desire for such engagement.

By bringing people together through the power of cricket, both these development areas will compliment the aims of the Cotswold u3a Link.

Other cricket counties are also looking to develop Walking Cricket leagues, with some already offering this engagement; so there is the potential for a Walking Cricket national tournament sometime in the near future.



CONCLUSION



AN IMPACTFUL PARTNERSHIP

The Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation is committed to developing people in their communities, aiming to improve people's lives through the power of cricket. We have proven success of delivering community cricket programmes with impact across the county that not only benefit the individuals who take part in the activity, but the community the activity is in.

A partnership between the u3a Cheltenham and the Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation will not only support both of our aims and objectives, it will also enrich activity both institutions offer.

There is a demonstrated need for physical activity for people aged 50 and over in Cheltenham and the wider county. By providing an accessible, safe, and fun offer such as Walking Cricket, together we will be supporting the health and mental wellbeing objectives of initiatives set out by other organisations, such as NHS Trusts and borough councils in Cheltenham and Gloucestershire.

