

Dalkeith Petanque Club 2024.

The Journey with MVA.

by Sandy Howden.

In 2024 I raised some money from the local councillors Environmental Fund they are allocated. This built a Petanque Piste base enabling a Petanque Piste to be started and able to play proper games. This was the biggest part of the piste and more was needed to complete the piste. I needed to raise more money to finish it. One night I was at a Community Council meeting in Newtongrange and a lady from Midlothian Volunteering Association Kate Goodall was talking to the meeting about funding and funds that are out there for charities. To me it was extremely interesting. Not sure about the others but I thought that I must talk to the lady and get information. I approached Kate at the end of the meeting and asked for one of her leaflets which she duly handed over. I took it home and read it and went online to learn who these people were and what they did. I was not sure if this was for me but I would try anyway.

I needed equipment to start up the Piste as I knew nobody in the Dalkeith area would have boules. I wrote a list of what I needed to equip a piste. All my shopping was with E-bay. It came to £405. This included equipment like string and hooks and measuring tapes and timing clocks ect. And Boules to fill the Piste. 9 sets of 8 boules.

I wrote to MVA and I got a reply from Magda Clark asking what I needed £405 for and I explained my idea. Not knowing at that time how things work I was notified about a month later I think that the £405 grant had been approved. Wow! I thought. I needed a home for the award to sit in as the club and committee had not been formed yet. I had when starting to steer through this project spoken to the Dalkeith Community Council and told them my plans in advance. I wanted everyone's backing before I went ahead. I wrote to Anne Stewart-Kmicha the Chair of DCC and asked her to hold the award money till we were properly constituted.

The DCC readily agreed and the award was transferred to the DCC account till the Petanque Club was constituted. I paid for all the equipment myself till the club was formally constituted and kept the receipts and was repaid at our first committee meeting. That was my first experience of the MVA (MCA now) as it was at that time.

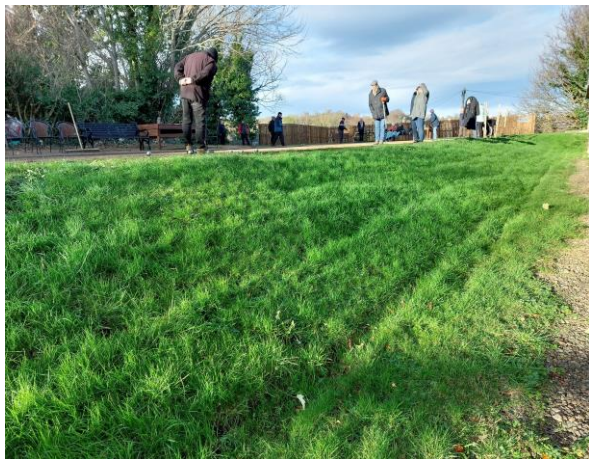


During this period I needed funds for a covering of gravel for the top of the piste. I put out an appeal on the local facebook sites and in 40 minutes I had 5 local individuals donating 5x1ton bags of gravel . 1 each. On the back of that another large local business group approached me asking if there was anything else I need and I told him I needed funds for a table with wheelchair access. I was later invited to McSence Community Awards night and was humbled to be in the company of

lots of local groups each being given an award for their various projects. The £250 award along with a little left over from the MVA award enabled me to buy a magnificent table for 2 wheelchair places and 4 seats.. Once again MVA coming to the rescue. The members built the table on site and at a site meeting the Council Officer said I would need to put the table on a concrete plinth to enable wheelchair users safe access. This was estimated at £1500. I wrote again to the MVA and Magda Clark and explaining my predicament and for info on available funds. Once again the funds were made available but there also had to be 2 or 3 estimates. This was causing problems with the Council with indemnities and insurances which I did not understand. I asked for another site meeting and a cheaper option. I said what about a hard surface like the piste?. They said Ok and that would cost £600. I wrote to Magda Clark again but she was off and Lesley Kelly who is in charge answered and I explained that I would only need £600 of the award for a surface if they could not ask for more estimates. Lesley wrote back saying she understands how the council works and agreed to letting the Council finish the plinth at the reduced rate. The plinth was built and the Council secured the bench into the hardened surface. Job done. Thanks once again to the MVA.



Once more the club went on its merry way growing weekly and games being played between members 3 times a week and the public also playing. One thing that worried me was the sloping edge from the length of the piste. One day after my partner who is 80% blind and a Dalkeith Army Veteran got excited when we won our first tournament game and his heels clipped the edge and he just about stumbled over. After also witnessing 2 very small incidents I decided the piste needed a safety fence. I went into the information given to me by MVA and scrolled through lots of links to funds. I found one in Sports Scotland which fitted the criteria we were in. I filled in the form asking for what estimate was given which was £2200 and sent it away.



A few weeks later I received a phone call from the lottery which was sort of like a phone interview and I was asked all sorts of questions about the club. He said he would get back to me later on while not promising anything. Weeks go by and while playing on the piste I received a phone call informing me they were awarding me £1650 of the £2200 as the fund was over prescribed. He said he had sent confirmation by email. I now had to find the rest and made an appeal to 11 local businesses for £50 each towards the safety fence. We managed to raise £150 and right out of nowhere Magda Clark of MVA phoned to say she had £500 funding. I could not believe it .Wow!. I told her I only need £400 and now we had the funds for the safety fence. I informed the council and the substantial fence was duly built and now everyone was safe from the slope along the length of the pistes. Once again the MVA coming to the rescue. Without the MVA we would be nowhere near where the club is today. The club is extremely grateful and is even now continuing to thrive. Thank you to Lesley Kelly, Magda Clark and Kate Goodall and the rest of the staff in the office.

Before



After

