

Bere Regis Parish Council – Volunteer of the Year 2017

Andy Kent

Andy Kent was nominated as Volunteer of the Year at the Purbeck District Council Awards Ceremony on 2nd March 2017.

Andy Kent's association with Bere Regis began nearly 20 years ago, in 1997 when he started playing cricket for the village cricket team. Two years later, Andy and his Paula, decided to move to the village, to live in North Street. Their two children Becky and Ed were born shortly after.

Andy, who is by profession a sports teacher, continued playing cricket, captaining the Bere Regis 1st and 2nd XIs and being a prime mover in the development of youth cricket within the village.

In 2006 he was asked to become Secretary of Bere Regis Sports Club, quickly being thrust into action with the task of liaising with DCC Highways over the repair and improvement of the recreation ground's perimeter fence. In 2011 he became a Trustee of Bere Regis Sports Club and a year later he took on the role of Chairman, which he continues to this date.

During his tenure on the committee, Andy has overseen and been the driving force behind numerous developments and fundraising efforts, all with the aim of improving the previous minimal pavilion and club facilities and improving access to sport for everyone who lives in the village.

With the other members of the Sports Club committee, Andy's most notable achievement has been the creation of a 5 year development plan for the Sports Club, with the ambitious aim of developing the building which had previously been leased to the Royal British Legion, to provide much improved social facilities, and to turn the run down old building into a revenue-generating function room for hire to numerous clubs and groups. Simultaneously, the club planned the building of new and upgraded changing rooms, to meet the exacting standards required by Sport England. This naturally involved putting together funding applications to raise the needed money. In all over £250,000 was raised.

The end results are superb facilities that are available to children and adults alike from home and away teams which are a credit to our small rural community and which help to promote fitness and wellbeing.

This all came about because of Andy's own love of sport, which is demonstrated not only through his own continuing participation, but also with his organisation of the Sport Relief runs every year for the past 4 years, and also by helping to develop the current youth football organisation, which now sees a range of teams across a variety of age groups all playing for Bere Regis.

Throughout this period, with his committee Andy has dedicated an enormous amount of time and energy. Quite simply, the progress achieved by Bere Regis Sports Club in the past few years under his leadership dwarfs just about everything else achieved in its previous 100 year history. Andy Kent's achievements as a Sports Club volunteer are immense.

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