

# SHARKS WATCH

A look back at  
the activities  
delivered  
by Sharks  
Community Trust  
in 2021





# INTRODUCTION

ALISON WARWOOD, CEO, SHARKS COMMUNITY TRUST

It's fair to say that 2021 was a year that was yet again dominated by Covid 19. The impact of the national lockdown and continuing restrictions had a devastating impact on many communities that the Trust works with and also saw a reduction in the activities that Sharks Community Trust was able to deliver.

Many programmes had to cease abruptly at the start of 2021 and many others such as our Advantage programme had to move to a hybrid way of working, delivering both online and in person sessions.

It was only as a result of the flexibility of our staff in managing these changes, as well as the dedication, enthusiasm and passion they have for their roles, that we were able to deliver as much as we did during 2021. So this year, more than ever, I would like to pay tribute to our amazing staff team who have worked tirelessly over the last 12 months supporting our community.

The senior management and staff team have been innovative and creative in developing new programmes such as Girls Tackle Rugby, our heritage programme, Inspiring Generations, Mission Sharks which works with local schools, and education programmes such as New Start and New Futures.

We were also able to support the community with our Easter Eats programme, in conjunction with AJ Bell and Fareshare, which saw us deliver 2,500 food boxes to local schools in



Trafford and Salford. This partnership was also extended towards the end of 2021 to work with Kellogg's to deliver breakfast cereals to schools and families facing food poverty.

The support of the Trust's board of trustees has also been invaluable during this period, helping to strengthen the governance of the organisation and to ensure the new three-year strategy which was developed in October 2020 continues to be brought to life to help positively impact the lives of 35,000 people across the North West.

In June 2021, the board appointed John Greaves as its new chair, following the departure of Jonny Acheson. Jonny was involved with Sharks Community Trust since its formation in November 2010, initially as the Executive Director before becoming a trustee and then the Chair. We would like to place on record our thanks to Jonny as without his longstanding support the Trust would not be as successful as it currently is.

## YEAR IN NUMBERS

Finally, I would also like to thank the rest of the Sharks family for their support over the past 12 months. The players, staff and owners of the club have shown how important the work of the Trust is to the organisation and has placed it at the heart of its new strategy. The club and Trust also worked together with the club's new principle partner, AO, to develop a new schools programme addressing mental wellbeing, Are you AO-K?

Sharks Community Trust has some exciting plans for 2022 and we look forward to seeing these plans come to life and continuing to support our community and changing lives across the North West.

1,000 people took part in a mental wellbeing programme organised by Sharks Community Trust

800 hours of classroom activity delivered in local schools

6,800 played some form of rugby through the work of the Trust

100 young people gained a qualification through the Sharks Advantage Academy





# GIRLS TACKLE RUGBY

The start of 2021 saw the introduction of Sharks Community Trust's new flagship programme dedicating to growing the women's game in the North West. Girls Tackle Rugby was launched at St Thomas Boteler school in Warrington by two Rugby World Cup winners, Jason Robinson OBE and Katy Daley-McClean MBE, with the aim of giving girls across the North West the opportunity to take part in regular rugby union sessions, and then encouraging their transition to local rugby clubs.

Girls Tackle Rugby is based around four strands: developing the game, growing the game, sustaining the game and enjoying the game, all of which are designed to help support links into Sale Sharks Women's team.

Since its launch in February 2021, the programme has delivered sessions to both schools and local rugby clubs across the North West, the majority of which had never had a girls rugby programme.

Delivered by India Perris Redding, the programme was also well supported by other Sale Sharks Women's players such as Jodie Ounsley, Vicky Irwin and Laura Perrin, who all visited sessions to provide role models for girls who want to take up the sport.

Katy Daley-McClean MBE,  
World Cup winner with England and Sale  
Sharks' Women's Performance Lead.

"This kind of programme is absolutely essential if we're going to grow the women's game, both in terms of getting girls interested in the sport, but also providing a pathway to the top level of the game."



## YEAR IN NUMBERS

2000 girls have taken part in the programme

50% of those girls had never previously played rugby

103 girls now playing regularly for their local club

15 schools and rugby clubs involved in the programme.



## CASE STUDY

Ruby took part in her first ever rugby session as part of the Girls Tackle Rugby programme having never previously tried the sport. Ruby had never previously taken part in any out of school activity and she had little confidence, especially to try new things. After the initial school sessions, Ruby went along to every after school rugby session that India ran before eventually being encouraged to attend her local club. Ruby now represents Port Sunlight RUFC at U15 level and her increased confidence in everything has been noted by school.





# WORKING WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS

Working with young people in local schools has always been an integral part of the work of Sharks Community Trust. In 2021, we were able to build on this work through the introduction of new school programmes as well as continuing to work with Premiership Rugby on their Champions programme such as Greggs Tackling Health. Schools also continue to value the impact that the Trust has on their pupils by paying for programmes such as Shark Bite (healthy eating), Sharky's School of Journalism (literacy), Scrumberz (numeracy) and Sharks Values (a programme focusing on citizenship and the core values of rugby).

In 2021, Sharks Community Trust was also delighted to work in partnership with Sale Sharks' principle partner, AO, as part of the 'Are you AO-K?' programme. This life-changing programme is now being delivered in local primary schools around the North West to help educate young people on the importance of mental health and wellbeing.

In addition to working with the club's new partner, the Trust also worked closely with Sale Sharks to develop Mission Sharks, which provides Tag Rugby sessions across a six-week period to schools in the Trafford and Salford area.



## YEAR IN NUMBERS

5,000 young people took part in a school's programme

75 schools worked with

400 teachers

3 new programmes introduced



Our fantastic new programme Inspiring Generations, funded through the Heritage Lottery, was also launched this year. This programme will help celebrate the heritage of Sale Sharks, by using the club's sporting heritage as a catalyst to engage young people during school sessions and empowering older people to reconnect through memory sharing activity.

Finally, we were delighted to be able to extend our partnership with Cargill, who are based in Trafford Park, to bring the healthy eating programme, Eat Well Play Safe, to young people in deprived areas across Salford and Trafford where food poverty can often be an issue.





# WORKING OUTSIDE MAINSTREAM EDUCATION

Sharks Community Trust runs a number of education programmes which offer mentoring, qualifications and employability support to young people, enabling them to achieve their next step into either education or employment.

## SHARKS ADVANTAGE PROGRAMME

Sharks Community Trust's Advantage programme specialises in providing first step employability training for young people who have either left school or may not have gained qualifications and are unsure about what to do next.

Advantage is a unique programme which combines education, employability and sport to help young people break out of a cycle of under achievement and deprivation. The programme enables young people to believe in themselves, gain skills needed for the world of work and to achieve progressions into college, apprenticeships and employment.

Now in an exciting partnership with YMCA, the Advantage programme has established strong community links to support young people across four sites in the North West. As a result of these partnerships, participants can take part in a variety of work placements and workshops to help develop essential life skills.



During 2021, Advantage worked with over

40 learners helping them to improve motivation, self-confidence and engagement, to enable them to move forward along a successful pathway progression into education, employment or training. We are proud that the programme continued to offer a hybrid of face-to-face learning and online sessions during lockdown restrictions which helped play an important role in supporting young people during this difficult time.

## HITZ

Sale Sharks' HITZ programme is Premiership Rugby's award-winning education and employability programme. Targeted at 16-18 year olds, HITZ provides a relaxed environment which helps learners to re-engage with education, gain their first essential employability qualifications, gain qualifications in maths and English and develop valuable life skills.

## YEAR IN NUMBERS

The HITZ programme worked with 15 learners at Sale West Community Centre and in addition to studying an employability qualification as well as English and maths, all learners also completed volunteer placements including some with local food bank, 'The Bread and Butter Thing'.

## CASE STUDY

Jayden Thompson joined the Advantage programme in January 2021. Previous education settings had been unsuccessful for Jayden and he was keen to gain long term employment to support his family. Jayden left school in Year 9, aged 14, and finished school with no GCSEs and no career pathway established. Jayden felt isolated throughout his social circle and spent a lot of time at home, leading to mental health challenges that he disclosed whilst on the programme.

Through taking part in the Advantage programme, Jayden became a leader within the group, completing work experience with 'The Bread and Butter Thing' and working towards his CSCS card with the support of the programme link with Seddons construction. This gave Jayden the confidence he needed to pass his CSCS card and was rewarded with gaining a full apprenticeship with Seddons at the end of the programme.

70 learners engaged in an employability programme

90% of learners achieved a qualification

75%+ learners achieved positive progression into college, training or employment

100% learners reported an increase in resilience, self-confidence and aspiration





# EDUCATION PROJECTS

Sharks Community Trust worked with a variety of funders and partner organisations during 2021 across a number of different programmes all with the aim of improving life chances and aspirations. Partners included The Prince's Trust, Department of Work and Pensions, The WEA, Trafford Housing Trust and Manchester Adult Education Services.



## SHARKS IN ACTION ADULT PROGRAMME

The Sharks in Action programme has provided Job Club, Sports Leaders and Breaking Barriers employability sessions to ex-service veterans to support their work with Sharks Forces.

## NEW START

The New Start programme is a four week engagement programme that has been delivered in Moss Side, Little Hulton, Benchill and Sale West. Designed to help young people affected by Covid to re-engage with education and training, the programme has helped nearly 100 young people onto an employability or college course.



## NEW FUTURES

New Futures is a ten week employability programme that has joined with local employers to provide opportunities for work placements and first step employment roles. It has helped over 40, 16-18 year olds across Greater Manchester to re-engage with training or to find their first employment.



## SHARKS ON TRACK PROGRAMME

The Sharks on Track programme has provided sessions that target aspiration and sports leadership to improve attendance and engagement across a variety of settings. The programme worked with young people in Year 10 at Manchester Communications Academy, 15-19 year olds at Werrington Young Offenders Institute and Year 10 and 11 pupils at Whitebridge College PRU in Tameside.



## GAIN THE ADVANTAGE

The Gain the Advantage programme worked with 24 young people in Sale West, helping them to re-engage with education, gain their first essential employability qualifications, gain qualifications in maths and English and develop valuable life skills.



## ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

In September 2021, Sharks Community Trust commenced a mentoring programme for young people in Trafford primary and secondary schools to support them to cope with the challenges they experience in mainstream education.

The programme now employs three Education Officers who already work with 13 children across Trafford providing sports sessions, in class support, attendance support, mentoring and English and maths tuition. The young people have also attended Sale Sharks games at the AJ Bell Stadium and watched coaching sessions at Sale Sharks' Carrington training ground.





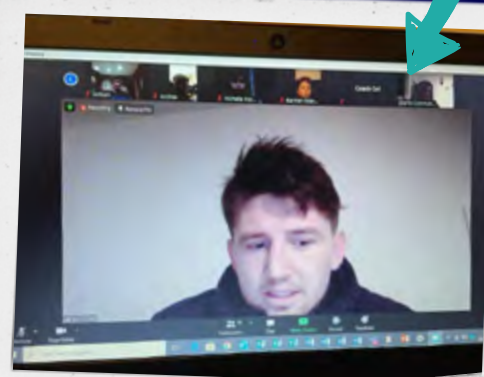
# A YEAR IN PICTURES

Advantage learners help support the local community during lockdown

## JANUARY



Project Rugby moves online with help from Ben Curry



## FEBRUARY

Easter Eats programme launches with AJ Bell

## MARCH



Holiday provision takes place at community settings in Sale West and Moss Side



## JULY

Launch of Girls Tackle Rugby at Sir Thomas Boteler School in Warrington

## APRIL



Girls' and boys' residential camps with largest number of participants

## AUGUST



HITZ learner, Jayden Thompson wins a Premiership Rugby HITZ Hero Award

## MAY



## JUNE

Sharks Forces allotment programme begins in Partington



## OCTOBER

Down Syndrome Rugby sessions renamed as the Crusaders Fin Club in memory of Sean Browne

Remembrance Day celebrated at the match against Northampton saints with Sharks Forces participants



## NOVEMBER

Mission Sharks concludes its successful first term of delivery



## DECEMBER

Launch of new Are you A0-K? schools programme

## SEPTEMBER





# SHARKS FORCES

Sharks Forces has seen significant growth in 2021, with the programme supporting over 150 veterans, current serving personnel and their families. There is now a weekly timetable in place for both Manchester and Merseyside, which include social hubs, welfare walks, an allotment project and opportunities to attend match days.

Working alongside our strategic partner, Walking with the Wounded, has enabled us to make Sharks Forces even more accessible to the wider armed forces community and helped us develop 'Sharks Forces Connectors', a programme where participants volunteer to help promote peer to peer support amongst the group and lead on aspects of project delivery.

Participants who now range between those in their 20s to those in their 60s, have taken part in a range of events across the year including



abseiling in Chester Cathedral, developing a community allotment, volunteering at an animal sanctuary and a sponsored walk from the AJ Bell Stadium in Salford to Walking with the Wounded's office in Manchester.

In November, over 150 veterans were also invited to attend Sale Sharks' Premiership fixture against Northampton Saints as part of the club's Remembrance Day activities.

## CASE STUDY

Adam has been a regular participant in the Sharks Forces project, and he has made huge improvements both physically and personally across the last eighteen months. Through his dedication to the programme, he has attended Walking Rugby sessions, taken advantage of volunteering opportunities alongside our strategic partner, Walking with the Wounded and now supports other veterans to attend the project on a weekly basis. Adam has taken a leading role in supporting others and is now not only part of a new social network, but has the potential to explore more volunteering opportunities to support the armed forces community, as well as the potential for full professional employment.

**'Sharks Forces has really helped me getting out of my house to go to events and making friends with other veterans. This helps my mental stability and it's really good to focus on that.'**

Adam, 27, Veteran

# DEVELOPING OUR MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMMES

In addition to Sharks Forces, Sharks Community Trust has also led on a number of additional mental health programmes during 2021 including Head Start and Head in the Game.

## HEAD START

'Head Start' is a free to access physical activity programme, that aims to promote positive mental health through exercise. The programme is delivered by qualified fitness professionals and enables participants to exercise safely and consistently. In 2021, 62 participants attended the project, mainly in the Trafford area.



## HEAD IN THE GAME: WORK-PLACE MENTAL WELLBEING

'Head in the Game' workshops continue to be delivered to companies in the North West including a number of national organisations. The programme is led by the Trust's specific Mental Wellbeing Officers and is delivered online to help make it accessible for employees. The content is focused on discussing mental wellbeing in the workplace and the important role sport and exercise can play in promoting positive mental health.



"I found out about the project through my counsellor as I was told that it could help with my depression. No pressure is put on anyone, no expectations. Sessions are designed around your individual fitness levels and I have found that the smallest of exercises can make you feel better about yourself and improve your physical health as well. Since getting involved with Head Start, I have started the couch to 5K and enrolled at a gym."

David, Trafford



# DISABILITY AND INCLUSION

In 2021, Sharks Community Trust continued to deliver a range of programmes to children and adults who have additional needs.

One of our flagship programmes, the Down Syndrome rugby sessions, continued to go from strength to strength and grow in numbers every week. Many of the participants who join the sessions bring their siblings along with their parents who are all encouraged to join in the final game of the session all together.

Earlier this year, a key member of our Down Syndrome rugby group, Sean Browne, very sadly passed away. To honour Sean's legacy within the group, the participants decided to rename the programme the 'Crusaders Fin Club', in honour of Sean's favourite rugby team in Hong Kong, where he was born. All participants now wear bibs that have Sean's initials on them.

Sharks Community Trust staff also delivered weekly sessions at a special educational needs school, Rodney House, as well as inclusive sports sessions to mainstream schools. This enables children to work on a level playing field, regardless of physical of ability.



## YEAR IN NUMBERS

500 match tickets have been provided to disability groups through the partnership with Printerland

40 participants regularly attend the Down Syndrome rugby sessions

25 disability awareness sessions delivered in mainstream schools

470 participants take part in Walking Rugby sessions



### WALKING RUGBY:

The Trust's successful Walking Rugby programme continued to grow and develop in 2021, with multiple new sites. As a result of this, we were able to grow the number of participants that played Walking Rugby from **350 to over 470 participants**, across the North West. New sites included Hoylake RFC on the Wirral and Halifax in West Yorkshire.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 put a stop to the majority of Walking Rugby festivals, although many teams chose to continue meeting virtually during lockdown through online quizzes and social get togethers. Trust staff, however, were able to take a Walking Rugby team to Worcester Warriors, where they played against a team from Worcester before watching the Warriors against Sale Sharks fixture at Sixways Stadium later that day.





# COACHING THE NEXT GENERATION

Whilst Covid-19 impacted the start of the year, the Sharks Community Trust coaching programme returned in time for Easter camps thanks to the support from our North West clubs who were determined to get young people back playing rugby.

Throughout the year, the staff team delivered holiday camps in all weather (come rain or even snow), coaching clinics, development camps and residential to players from the U7 age group through to U18s, to both boys and girls. Minis across the North West benefited from our two day Rugby Development Camps, whilst Junior players honed their skills on our Rugby Development Days and skills evenings, such as the Katy Daley-McClean Kicking Camp.

All sessions were specifically designed to develop the Sharks DNA, focusing on being a Creative Attacker, Defensive Warrior, Relentless Athlete and Best Team Mate aligned to the philosophy of the successful Sale Sharks Academy.

## #YourClub

#YourClub helped to bring Sale Sharks to local grassroots clubs to develop young players in a chosen area of the game. Clubs across the North West have used #YourClub in 2021 to develop the Sharks DNA, introduce major new developments such as tackling to or to provide a Sharks coaching experience to their teams.

During 2021, over 20 #YourClub sessions took place involving around 1,200 young rugby players. This includes Anselmians RUFC who used #YourClub to introduce a 'Sunday with the Sharks' programme where Sharks Community Trust staff coach all their young players over the course of the season and which also provides coach education to their Mini and Junior coaches.

Alongside focusing on rugby, Chester RUFC and Port Sunlight have used #YourClub to introduce conversations about mental wellbeing.



## YEAR IN NUMBERS

3000 coaching hours delivered on Rugby Camps during 2021

100 different events took place.

1,600 young people took part on either a Rugby Development Camp, Development Day or residential,

£7,000 of revenue generated given back to host clubs in the North West





# PROJECT RUGBY

## YEAR IN NUMBERS

Project Rugby is a joint initiative with Premiership Rugby, the RFU, Gallagher Insurance and Premiership Rugby clubs which aims to bring rugby to new audiences, particularly those living in the more deprived areas of our region.

During 2021, Sharks Project Rugby coaches worked with North Manchester RUFC, Trafford MV RFCC, Bolton RUFC, Crewe and Nantwich RUFC and Port Sunlight RUFC, to bring rugby union to more people. This was achieved by delivering online sessions, PE lessons, after school clubs and open training sessions, helping to link young people to their local rugby club.

1,000 young people attended a Project Rugby session in our region

45 new players were transitioned into a local rugby club

13 schools took part in the programme



Harry was a pupil who struggled with the demands of school and often found himself getting into trouble due to his lack of self-control and anger management struggles. Project Rugby provided Harry with an outlet to express himself and his emotions in a safe and constructive environment, enabling Harry's confidence to grow immeasurably. Harry enjoyed rugby so much through the introduction of Project Rugby, that he decided to join the local rugby club (North Manchester) where he still regularly plays." **Harry at Coop Academy, Manchester**

# RUGBY IN THE PARK

Rugby in the Park was launched as a pilot programme in 2020 with Cheshire Police to tackle and prevent anti-social behaviour by providing young people with a chance to participate in rugby.

In 2021 the programme expanded to include eight further sites across the North West: Moss Side, Winsford, Leyland, Crewe, Runcorn, Ellesmere Port, Poynton and Crosby. The programme aims to engage with young people in schools and

community venues and then to transition them to local rugby clubs to provide a sustainable solution to try to keep participants off the street.

Most participants that take part in Rugby in the Park have never previously played rugby before this programme.

## YEAR IN NUMBERS

8 Rugby in the Park sites developed

350 coaching hours delivered by the programme

10 police forces now involved with the programme





# MATCH DAYS

After an absence of almost 18 months, match days at the AJ Bell Stadium returned in September 2021. Whilst some restrictions were still in place, Sharks Community Trust were able to deliver pre-match clinics to young people prior to the start of men's matches. This year, for the first time, we were also able to organise pre-match activities prior to the start of the Sale Sharks Women's team matches.

Match days provide a unique opportunity for local grassroots teams and individual players to receive expert coaching across a range of topics prior to enjoying the match day atmosphere at the AJ Bell and CorpAcq Stadium, putting our 'Grassroots to Sharks' boots' philosophy into practice.

From September 2021, we were able to welcome young people from a number of clubs back to the AJ Bell Stadium, including Glossop RUFC, Chester RUFC, Didsbury Toc H RUFC, Heaton Moor RUFC and Macclesfield RUFC.



# DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT

Sharks Community Trust aims to change lives amongst our community through the work we deliver. We see the impact that our work has each day but don't just take our word for it. Here is a selection of some of the emails, letters and social media posts demonstrating the impact of our work over the last 12 months.

**Rugby camp**

Hi Jack

I hope you are well. Just letting you know that Ellis had a great time at the rugby camp on Tuesday. He spoke very positively about it, which was lovely to hear after the tough times we have all faced. Seeing him smile was lovely. He is very pleased rugby is back! He even left the house at 9.30am with a team mate to practice kicking up at normally! Let's never underestimate the power of a rugby ball eh! It can change the world for someone.

Finally, can you please kindly pass on my thanks to the rest of the community team who have worked so hard, and made these sessions happen in a safe and enjoyable way.

Take care and keep safe.

**Thanks you**

Hi all,

My son Alfie Heath age 12, (white group) and daughter Ava Heath age 10 (yellow group) attended your Sale Sharks DNA rugby camp the past two days and I just wanted to thank you for the fantastic experience you gave them!

They both had a blast, enjoyed the variety of games and experiences and positive feedback from coaches. It is much appreciated particularly after an almost non-existent grassroots rugby season this past year. They left feeling very inspired, and also a little tired!

So thank you for making it a positive experience and hope they can attend future camps.

**Tweet**

Jason Robinson OBE  
@Jason15Robinson

Fantastic initiative and I'm proud to play my part! Women's rugby is fundamental to the development of the game and to create a truly inclusive culture around our sport. Great to be working with @katymc10 @SaleSharksWomen @SharksCommunity

Sharks Community Trust - An We recently launched our new, exciting 'Girls Tackle Rugby' programme.

No one better than @Jason15Robinson & @katymc10 to tell you a little more about why this programme is important to us, @SaleSharksRugby and in the future for @SaleSharksWomen

Great work by @IndPR

**Rugby camp**

Hi

I just want to pass on my thanks to the team from Sale Sharks who held the Vale of Lune rugby camp over the last couple of days. My son James Craven has smiled more than he has in a long time and has absolutely loved every minute of the camp.

Thank you for all your hard work and for getting the kids back to what they love.

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH**

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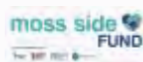
So thank you for making it a positive experience and hope they can attend future camps.



# THANK YOU



Sharks Community Trust would like to thank all the individuals, businesses, organisations and local grassroots clubs that it has worked with during 2021. The wide support the Trust receives enables it to work with an increasing number of people each year.



IF YOU WOULD LIKE FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT WORKING WITH SHARKS COMMUNITY TRUST, PLEASE CONTACT:

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