

AINA CASE STUDY

FAIRER, STRONGER AND MORE ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

Laburnum Boat Club: London Borough of Hackney



Young people enjoy the Regent's Canal throughout the year at a community boating and activity centre

The Laburnum Boat Club, a community boating project based in Haggerston by the Regents Canal, was established in the early 1980s by local parents who wanted to see more opportunities for physical recreation for local children. It now runs a programme of activities seven days a week throughout the year and is used by schools, youth, community and welfare organisations. Based in their own premises, the main activities on offer are canoeing, boat trips and overnight stays away, and facilities include two narrowboats, seventy kayaks, a play area and a classroom.

The Club operates as a charitable company limited by guarantee and is funded from varied sources including trusts, regeneration programmes and the local authority. It also delivers service agreements in line with current local authority and UK Government targets. A Management Committee is elected annually at an annual general meeting.

The canal and its environs are a valued recreational asset in an area of special need. The Club's activities enable local people to make best use of their waterway. Services to the community include a youth club with a full programme of boating activities, a youth watersports training project, a Sunday family club, and a canal studies project which enables local schools to learn about the history and habitats of London's primary canal. An inclusion project ensures that children and young people with disabilities make full use of the programme.

During 2009 notable successes included 159 youth club events, sports club openings two days a week, and 31 canal study days. 242 kayaking sessions were delivered to 14 schools as part of their physical education curriculum, and 181 narrowboat trips were made on board their craft *Lady Mildmay* and *Opportun*. Laburnum's adult canoe club ran every Wednesday night providing regular activity courses and a safe and enjoyable night out to over sixty local residents each year.

The Laburnum Boat Club sets an excellent example of social inclusion work in a waterway environment. It gets young people out on the water every day of the week, bringing colour and vitality to the canal, whilst encouraging young people to build their stamina, strength, confidence and social network.