

# Olympic magic rekindled thanks to army of volunteers

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

- Mum-of-three suffering in crippling pain daily, is determined to ensure legacy lives on in her community
- Games Maker pensioner moved by the power of London 2012 to encourage others to become active
- 13-year-old who fundraised for a BMX track in her area

## **An army of 'Shining Light' volunteers, praised for rekindling the magic of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, are set to receive an official thank you from Lord Coe in a ceremony at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park on 27th July, the anniversary of London 2012.**

The 70 'Shining Lights' have each been nominated for their part in bringing the legacy of the Games to life, through Community Games – a nationwide programme of sport and cultural activities, delivered by the YMCA and County Sports Partnership Network.

The hardworking volunteers represent some 33,500 others across the country who, through Community Games, have helped to bring sporting opportunities to over one million people since London 2012.

Over the last few weeks, the volunteer achievements have been recognised with a 70 day Community Games Relay – which is mirroring the journey of the Olympic Torch, around England. Each day of the Relay a spotlight has shone on an area the Torch visited last year - highlighting the impact of Community Games in each region. (The route can be followed on [www.communitygames.org.uk](http://www.communitygames.org.uk))

The Relay ends on Saturday July 27, timed to coincide with the anniversary of the start of London 2012 - at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London.

The 'Shining Lights' include 13-year-old Jamie-Lee Bamford who is being recognised for raising funds for a permanent BMX track to be erected in her village. The idea came about when Community Games organisers were hosting an event in her village. She asked them to set up a temporary BMX track but it was so popular during the event she later campaigned for a permanent one to be set up.

Jamie-Lee said: "Being celebrated as a Shining Light is an amazing opportunity for me and I am so pleased I have played a role in helping to create Olympic and Paralympic legacy in my home town."

While Tina Ashby, from Luton, is being celebrated as a Shining Light for the selfless role she plays in her community.

Despite being in crippling pain every day due to suffering from chronic regional pain syndrome - which leaves the mum-of-three debilitated and sometimes wheelchair bound - the 38-year-old still finds time to bring her community together.

The former childcare business owner said: "It brings me so much joy to see people united through sport and cultural activities, and Community Games is the perfect platform to do this."

The 70 strong group of Shining Lights will each receive a personal thank you from Lord Coe for helping to realise his dream of a nation united through sport.

Lord Coe said: "It is refreshing and uplifting to see that the Games Makers of London 2012 live on through the Community Games programme as Shining Lights. They encourage people of all ages, abilities and cultures, to enjoy sport and cultural activities. They bring communities together and encourage a sense of belonging and togetherness emulating the national pride that we all experienced during the Olympic and Paralympic Games. I am looking forward to meeting the Shining Lights and personally thanking them for the role they have played."

Lee Mason, Chief Executive of the County Sports Partnership Network said: "The number of Community Games registered so far has already surpassed the number of events run in the Olympic year. This is a clear indication of the legacy created by the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Community spirit lives on, demonstrated by an appetite for communities to come together through the 1,500 events on offer this year, and we hope that many more people follow suit and organise an event in their area."

Denise Hatton, Chief Executive of the YMCA, said: "Community Games has provided many opportunities to young people inspired by the Games to give sports that they saw on the TV a go. We have been encouraged to see so many young people taking it upon themselves to organise Community Games events for the benefit of their community."

Nick Hurd, Minister for Civil Society, said: "We are pleased to be supporting Community Games in helping communities to come together to inspire, motivate and build relationships for the future. This could not have been achieved without the dedication of the Shining Lights."

It is a fitting tribute that the Shining Lights will be applauded for their hard work on the finale of the Community Games Relay and on the one-year anniversary of the Games. I hope others will follow in their footsteps and continue, for many years ahead, to keep the flame alive."

If you would like to find out more about Community Games or to organise a Community Games in your area, log on to

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to editors**

#### **Shining Lights**

In total there are 70 Shining Lights who have been rewarded for helping to deliver Olympic and Paralympic legacy in their communities.

Each day of the Community Games Relay they are celebrated.

On day 70 of the Relay (the one-year-anniversary of the Games) the day 70 Shining Light status and jersey will be presented to Lord Coe.

A special reception for all the Shining Lights is being held at the Copper Box Arena at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park on Saturday July 27, with Lord Coe in attendance.

#### **Jamie-Lee Bamford**

The 13-year-old from Rayne in Essex is the youngest Shining Light. During a Community Games event held last year she set up a temporary BMX track and it was so popular that she campaigned and fundraised for a permanent track to be set up. This has now been erected and is a great success in the community.

#### **Tiny Ashby**

Tina suffers from chronic regional pain syndrome, which means she is constantly in pain.

The mum to Caitlin, aged 7, and twins Eden and Scarlett, aged 5, is proactive within the community and has arranged a number of Community Games events.

The former childcare business owner won a business award for equal rights and opportunities for young children and had the privilege of meeting the Queen at Buckingham Palace in recognition of her hard work.

She wanted to organise Community Games in an area of deprivation so that the children there would be able to enjoy their own Olympic and Paralympic moment.

#### **Community Games:**

- Community Games provides support to enable local communities to come together. Run by volunteers, events can be small neighbourly picnics right through to large-scale events in parks.
- The Community Games programme was launched in the West Midlands in 2009 and was originally funded for three years by Legacy Trust UK, an independent charity set up to help build a lasting cultural and sporting legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Last year 1,714 Community Games took place involving more than one million participants and 33,500 volunteers.
- Community Games is inspired by the Wenlock Olympian Games founded by Dr William Penny Brookes in 1850 and still held annually in Much Wenlock, Shropshire. The Wenlock Olympian Games were the inspiration behind the modern Olympic and Paralympic Games when Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic movement, visited the games in 1890. The Community Games programme pays homage to a community event that inspired a global event, and now uses that global event to inspire a new raft of community events.
- For more information about Community Games log on to [www.communitygames.org.uk](http://www.communitygames.org.uk)

#### **The YMCA:**

- Founded 168 years ago, the YMCA in England is made up of 121 member YMCAs working to ensure that young people have opportunities to thrive and contribute positively to their communities.
- YMCA operates in over 530 different communities in England impacting upon the lives of over 500,000 people every year.
- Every night YMCAs provide over 9,000 beds for young people. The YMCA is the largest voluntary sector provider of safe, supported accommodation for single men and women aged between 16-30 years old.
- The YMCA enables nearly 24,000 people every year to engage in education, skills and training to enable them to improve their opportunities in the job market.
- The YMCA is the largest voluntary sector provider of health and wellbeing services promoting physical activity.
- For further information please visit <http://www.ymca.org.uk>

#### **The County Sports Partnership Network (CSPN):**

- The County Sports Partnership Network brings together 49 County Sports Partnerships from across England, and is responsible for supporting the delivery of national sports policy at a local level by shaping it to the needs of local communities.
- The CSPN contributes to the health of the nation by helping local people lead healthier, active lives.
- The CSPN brings together the knowledge and expertise of a range of local delivery partners – including local authorities, clubs and schools – which enables it to use resources in the most efficient way possible to deliver sport in local communities.

#### **Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park**

- The London Legacy Development Corporation promotes and delivers physical, social, economic and environmental regeneration in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and surrounding area, in particular by maximising the legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park will begin to open from July 2013 and will be fully open from spring 2014, it will be a whole new part of the city to enjoy and will provide jobs and homes for east London.
- For more information about the Legacy Corporation visit: [www.londonlegacy.co.uk/about-us](http://www.londonlegacy.co.uk/about-us)
- For more information about Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park visit: [www.QueenElizabethOlympicPark.co.uk](http://www.QueenElizabethOlympicPark.co.uk)

#### **The Copper Box Arena**

- The Copper Box Arena hosted the Handball and Modern Pentathlon Fencing during the Olympic Games and Goalball during the Paralympic Games. It is now being transformed into a new venue with flexible seating capacity and facilities for a wide range of indoor sports training and competitions as well as cultural and business events.
- It will be one of the first legacy venues to re-open in July 2013 and is located in the west of the Park close to Hackney Wick station and near to the Press and Broadcast Centres.
- The Arena will serve as a venue for a variety of indoor sports. The highly flexible design means it will be used for all levels of sports participation, from events to high performance training to community use. For more information visit [www.better.org.uk/copper\\_box](http://www.better.org.uk/copper_box)

#### **About GLL**

- The Copper Box Arena is operated by GLL a charitable social enterprise, created to manage community services and spaces. GLL oversees the management of over 100 leisure centres and 24 libraries across the UK. GLL is an employee-owned society and works in partnership with fifteen London boroughs, two city councils, four borough councils, six district councils and three associated partners, including the London Legacy Development Corporation on the operation of the Copper Box Arena and London Aquatics Centre in legacy mode. Other charitable partners, Freedom Leisure and Halo Leisure manage further leisure facilities across the South East of England and Bridgend, South Wales on behalf of GLL. [www.gll.org](http://www.gll.org)

#### **Donna Roddy, Citydesk Sport, on behalf of Community Games.**

The Fireworks, 3-6 The Old Fire Station, 68 Albion Street, Birmingham B1 3EA

**direct** 0121 710 4482

**web** [www.citydesksport.com](http://www.citydesksport.com)

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