

# **Sport England: Sport and the Church of England Research**

## **Final Report**

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## Executive Summary

The Diocese of London is an ecclesiastical administrative area of the Church of England covering 177 square miles and 17 London boroughs north of River Thames and west of the River Lea. The Diocese covers approximately 4 million people with 398 Parishes, 489 Church Buildings, around 550 worshipping communities with a growing membership base of over 70,000 people. It also runs 153 schools educating 54,000 children from all faiths and backgrounds.

Through its structure of boards and councils, The Diocese is responsible for different aspects of the Church's work including Ministry, Mission, Education, and Social Responsibility and has recently launched its strategic intent: Capital Vision 2020. This strategy underlines the Church in London's commitment to expanding the already significant reach and depth of its work to meet the needs of Londoners from addressing poverty and disadvantage to improving community health, wellbeing and community integration.

One of the 10 priorities is to engage more deeply with sport and the creative arts to reach new people and places by opening up church buildings, strengthening the links between schools and their local community and getting more young people involved in the local Christian community. This research represents a starting point for this priority.

The objectives of the project were three fold:

- To conduct an audit of the current stock of places and opportunities for sport provided by churches within London
- To review the reach of churches within their local communities to identify which audiences they are engaged with
- To assess the potential for delivering more sport through DoL premises and activity

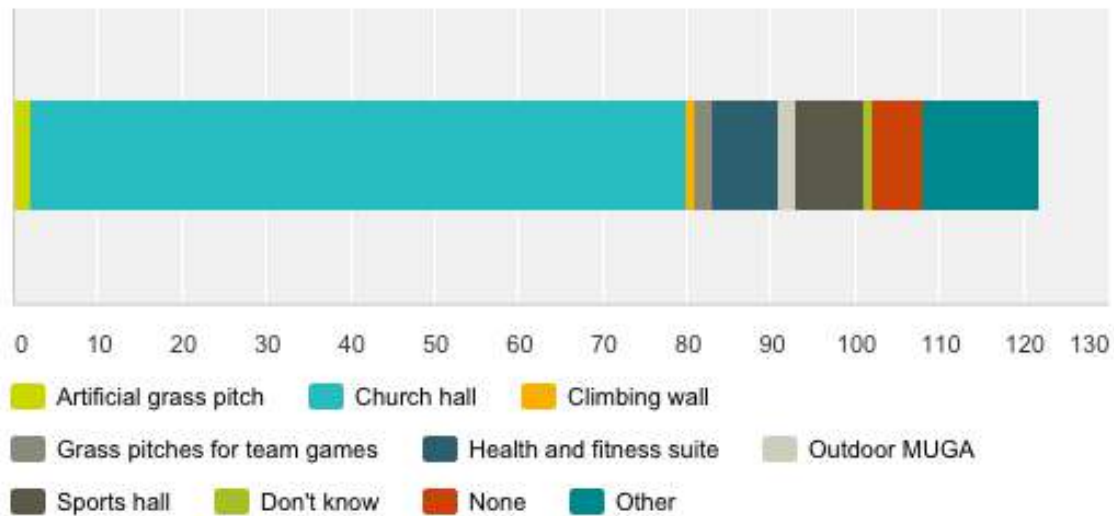
The audit utilised a 'full-sample' survey of all known contacts responsible for church facilities and sport provision and all church schools across the Diocese. The church survey generated a 54% response rate and the school survey a 29% response rate.

The review of the reach of churches' sporting offer was based on responses to dedicated questions in the survey as well as field visits and interviews at a sample of 10 locations. These were selected on a stratified sample basis aligned to distribution of the location and type of facility identified following the initial parish survey analysis.

In headline terms our audit enabled us to estimate that there are:

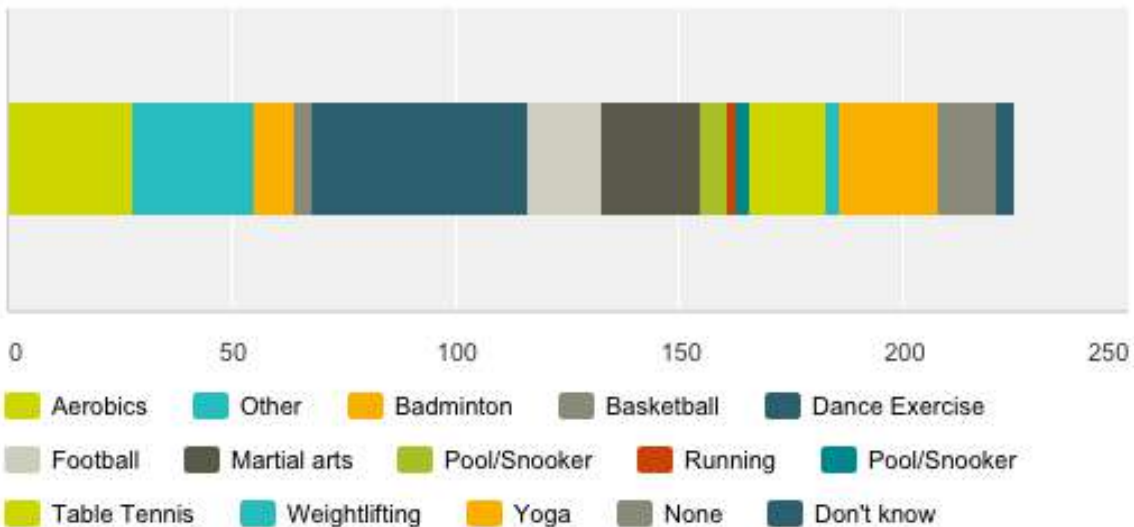
- 365 church based facilities currently being used for sport and physical activity within the Diocese
- 371 church school based facilities currently being used for sport and physical activity within the Diocese

### Parish facility types



- 885 church hosted or led sport and physical activity sessions currently taking place within the Diocese
- 507 school based 'out of school' organised sport and physical activity sessions currently taking place across the Diocese

### Current parish activities



Looking beyond the headline figures what is most interesting about these findings was perhaps the disjuncture that existed between the church and the school based facilities and provision. We found that:

- Church provision appears to consist largely of indoor, hard floor spaces suitable for a limited range of hall and gym based activities

- School sites are characterised by a greater range of facilities suitable for a far wider variety of sports.
- There is significant spare capacity at both church and school which suggests the potential for future expansion of both the volume and timetable of provision as well as shared usage of facilities

Our review of community usage enabled us to estimate:

- Average attendance at church or church school hosted or led activity sessions of 45,805 across the Diocese each week.
- Above average engagement by girls and women
- Involvement of people from age groups across the life spectrum, including older people

Given that these groups are currently under-represented in terms of their sport participation it may be that church based provision has characteristics such as localness, size, suitability for non contact/competitive sports and a non threatening environment that make them more attractive to these market segments.

Beyond the spare capacity revealed by our research we also found:

- Considerable potential and enthusiasm for expansion of the Diocese of London's sporting offer and a new community based Sports Ministry
- A wide range of community engagement strategies, which are attracting diverse and non-traditional groups
- The benefits of outreach approaches, partnership working and involvement of church volunteers in growing participation

## Key Findings

We estimate that there are:

- 365 church based facilities being utilised for sport within the Diocese with a preponderance of indoor, hard floor spaces suitable for hall and gym based activities as well as table sports and gentle exercise.
- 299 churches and church buildings with the potential for use for sport and physical activity within the Diocese.
- 371 church school based facilities being utilised for sport within the Diocese.
- 640 distinct regular church based organised sport and physical activity sessions taking place within the Diocese.
- 245 distinct regular out of church organised sport and physical activity sessions taking place within the Diocese.
- 507 distinct regular school-based 'out of school' organised sport and physical activity sessions taking place within the Diocese.
- Average weekly attendance at sport and physical activity sessions across the Diocese of between 40,000 and 50,000.

We also found:

- A positive correlation between churches that provide non-sport community activities and those that provide sport based community activities.
- Above average engagement in church based activities by girls and women
- Engagement by age groups across the life spectrum and above average engagement by older people
- A perception of lower than average engagement of black and minority ethnic groups in sport activities
- Widespread engagement of non-congregational and multi faith groups at church facilities
- Less than 6% of identified church based or organised sports activities incorporating specific Christian messages
- Limited evidence of widespread community use of school facilities.
- Considerable enthusiasm for the benefits of Sports Ministries to support further engagement

# 1.0 Introduction

The Diocese of London is an ecclesiastical administrative area of the Church of England covering 177 square miles and 17 London boroughs north of River Thames and west of the River Lea. The Diocese covers approximately 4 million people with 398 Parishes, 489 Church Buildings, around 550 worshipping communities with a growing membership base of over 70,000 people. It also runs 153 schools educating 54,000 children from all faiths and backgrounds.

Through its structure of boards and councils, The Diocese is responsible for different aspects of the Church's work including Ministry, Mission, Education, and Social Responsibility and has recently launched its strategic intent: Capital Vision 2020. This strategy underlines the Church in London's commitment to expanding the already significant reach and depth of its work to meet the needs of Londoners from addressing poverty and disadvantage to improving community health, wellbeing and community integration.

One of the 10 priorities is to engage more deeply with sport and the creative arts to reach new people and places by opening up church buildings, strengthening the links between schools and their local community and getting more young people involved in the local Christian community.

As a first step in supporting this ambition we understand that Sport England is at the early stages of working with the Church of England and has a desire to better understand the places and opportunities available for sport that are owned or run by the Diocese of London and the audience reach of the church in different communities.

Substance was therefore commissioned by Sport England to investigate the assets the Diocese of London holds that could be used to support sport participation in terms of places and associated opportunities to participate and also which communities are currently or could potentially engage with these opportunities

More specifically the objectives of the project were two fold:

- To conduct an audit of the current stock of places and opportunities for sport provided by churches within London
- To review the reach of churches within their local communities to identify which audiences they are engaged with

Furthermore Sport England was keen to ensure that the approach developed for this audit could be replicated when considering opportunities for the development of sport in other Diocese and other partner organisations.

This research was conducted over a three and a half month period from the 13<sup>th</sup> August to the end of November 2014 and this report will present our findings in the following fashion.

We will begin by outlining the approach and method we adopted before presenting our findings with regard to the:

- Extent, range and nature of facilities

- Type of activities being delivered

This will be followed by the presentation of findings in relation to the:

- Profile of use
- Community engagement and perceptions of provision

This element of the findings will be brought 'to life' through the presentation of a series of case studies that illustrate the nature of church based, or church led, provision.

Finally we will consider the potential for further development of the Diocese' sporting offer in terms of the availability of facilities, clergy 'appetite' and the barriers and enablers that might help or hinder increased provision.



## 2.0 Research Methods

### 2.1 Sampling, Distribution and Response Rates

The Diocese of London is a large ecclesiastical administrative area covering 17 London boroughs and over 400 churches. As such, and given the time and budget constraints of the research, it was not feasible to conduct a comprehensive assessment of both research objectives across the entire Diocese. However, we recognised the need to gain as full an understanding as possible of the facilities and provision available in different locations and therefore adopted a dual approach aligned to the core research objectives.

To audit the current stock of places and opportunities for participation in sport we conducted a 'full-sample' survey of all known contacts responsible for church facilities and sport provision across the Diocese.

To assess the reach of churches' sporting offer within their communities we included questions in the survey as well as conducting field visits and interviews at a sample of locations. These were selected on a stratified sample basis aligned to the location and type of facility identified following the initial parish survey analysis.

#### **2.1.1 Objective 1: To conduct an audit of the current stock of places and opportunities for sport provided by churches within the Diocese of London.**

The principal method used to address this objective was to prepare a parish survey for distribution to those contacts responsible for ALL churches, church facilities and providers identified as having the potential to offer opportunities for sport across the Diocese of London. A separate survey was also prepared for distribution to schools with an association with the Diocese.

The questionnaires sought to identify:

- The name and location of churches, facilities and associated organisations
- Whether churches/facilities and associated organisations offer or might be able to offer sport opportunities
- The nature or potential for provision in terms of different categories of sport
- The size/capacity and category of facility that provides or might provide sporting opportunities
- The accessibility of the facilities in terms of use by different types of users
- Accessibility in terms of opening hours, cost etc
- Attitudes towards future expanded sports provision

The surveys were prepared in consultation with both Sport England and Diocese of London personnel to ensure that they would:

- Capture the critical information required of the research
- Capture information in a format that is compatible with existing Sport England datasets including active places power
- Be relevant and comprehensible to respondents

The surveys were prepared in an online format to enable remote completion at all times of the day and were piloted with clergy and school personnel before being re-drafted to address issues of design and comprehension.

In order to establish a distribution list for the parish survey, we worked with a list of 971 church buildings and 379 principal ministers across the Diocese of London. We then categorised the buildings and eliminated those that were inappropriate to the study (e.g. church ruins, walls, tombs etc). We then matched our list of ministers to the remaining 599 buildings and identified 327 that had a named contact and email address to which the parish survey could be sent. Twenty seven of these had invalid email addresses or bounced back leaving us with a distribution list of 300. The remaining 47 principal ministers not matched to a building were also sent the survey on the basis that whilst they might not have a known direct responsibility for any church buildings they may still have an interest in church provision of sport.

The school survey was distributed to the 147 Head Teachers for whom the Diocese of London has contact details. Eleven of these emails bounced. One invalid survey response was received and 37 valid survey responses whilst two schools had also responded to the parish survey.

<b>Table 1: Survey distribution and response rate</b>		
	<b>Parish Survey</b>	<b>School Survey</b>
Survey open	1/10/14 – 31/10/14	9/10/14 – 17/11/14
Building sample	599	147
Survey recipients	347	136
Individual responses	190	40
Buildings reported	218	40
Recipient response rate	54.76%	29.41%
Margin of error	4.61%	13.07%
'Building' response rate	36.39%	27.21%
Margin of error	5.30%	13.26%

Based on these response rates we can be confident that 95% of respondents to the parish survey provided a valid response, with a margin of error of 4.61% if applied only to those individuals who received the survey and 5.88% if applied to all 599 buildings.

For the school survey we can be confident that 95% of respondents provided a valid response, with a margin of error of 13.07% if applied only to those who received the survey and 13.26% if applied to all 147 schools.

### **2.1.2 Objective 2: To review the reach of churches within their local communities to identify which audiences they are engaged with**

This requirement was addressed in three main ways.

Firstly, a series of questions were included in the parish and school surveys discussed above, which are focused on the demographic profile of participants in different activities.

Secondly, having identified the breadth of engagement in church facilities by different groups we sought to evaluate the depth of community engagement using a stratified sample approach.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October we drew down the responses to the parish survey we had received by that date and analysed it to establish a sample frame based on a matrix of London borough and facility types. At the point of analysis we established the following percentage distribution<sup>1</sup>:

	Artificial grass pitch	Church hall	Climbing wall	Grass pitches	Health & fitness suite	MUGA	Sports hall	Total
Barnet	0	6	0	0	0	0	1	7
Brent	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	5
Camden	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
City of London	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
City of Westminster	0	8	1	0	0	0	0	8
Ealing	0	9	0	0	1	0	1	11
Enfield	0	3	0	0	1	1	3	8
Hackney	0	9	1	0	1	0	0	11
Hammersmith & Fulham	0	5	0	1	1	0	0	7
Haringey	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Harrow	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Hillingdon	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Hounslow	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Kensington & Chelsea	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
Islington	0	5	0	0	1	0	0	6
Richmond upon Thames	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Tower Hamlets	1	5	0	1	1	0	0	8
Total	2	77	2	2	8	1	6	

As the number of site visits to church facilities was limited, we were conscious of the need to capture a range of facility types and activities whilst adhering to the balance and distribution of provision indicated by our sample frame. As such we selected a provisional list of thirteen churches or examples of church led provision, which included 9 sites with church halls. However, in several instances we were able to select sites with more than one facility ensuring coverage of all facility types and a focus on boroughs with the largest concentrations of activity. We also selected four schools using a purposeful sampling approach where we felt confident there would be community use of

<sup>1</sup> Numbers do not add to 100 due to rounding

the facilities based on survey responses. However the schools were reluctant to accommodate site visits within the timeframe of the research.

**Table 3: Site visits**

Site	Type of facility	Date of visit	Activity
St Paul's, NW7 1QU	Church Hall	Did not visit as Church reluctant to arrange contact with provider	All activity provided by third party on long term basis
All Soul's, W1B 3DA	Various	Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> November	Basketball, frisbee, touch rugby, tennis
St Mary's, W7 3QP	Church Hall	Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> November	Zumba class
St Matthias, N16 8DD	Church Hall	Did not visit as Church reluctant to arrange contact with provider	All activity provided by Moving East on long term basis who do provide martial arts/dance activity
St Mark's Church, N4 3LD	Church Hall	Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> November	Youth session incl. futsal, pool and table tennis
St. Barnabas Church, E3 5QZ	Church	Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> November	Smash the Fat fitness session
All Saints Church, W5 3JH	Playing Fields (and Church Hall)	Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup> November	Church football team (but also martial arts, fitness, swordfighting and dance classes in Church Hall)
All Saints Church, SW6 3LG	Church Hall	Did not visit as could not make contact	N/A
St. Andrew's Church, SW10 0AU	Gym (in Church)	Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> November	Young men's free weights session
St Paul's, E1W 3DH	Public Park	Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> November	Shadwell Dads football session
Holy Trinity, SW7 1JA	Public Park	Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup> November	Football training
Engine Room, N17 9FE		Did not visit	No sports activities currently provided
Inspire church	Estate based football cage	Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November	Children's football
The Grey Coat Hospital School, SW1P 2DY	School	Did not visit	No activities currently provided for non pupils
Greig City Academy, N8 7NU	School	Did not visit as could not make contact	N/A
St Andrew's CofE Primary	School	Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> November	Multi-sports
Raine's Foundation, E2 9LY	School	Did not visit as could not arrange in time to fit with research	N/A

At the sites we visited we conducted observations and interviews with delivery agents, staff, volunteers, participants and local residents and reviewed promotional materials in order to gauge:

- The types of sport being delivered
- The profile of community engagement in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, faith and other demographic factors
- Criteria for or restrictions on the availability of the service or facility
- Booking and hiring arrangements
- Communications and publicity activity to support the provision
- Potential gaps in provision/usage
- Perceived barriers to access by different market segments

Thirdly and finally at our selected sites we also publicised a brief online community survey focused on participants in sport at church facilities which was focused on gathering information relating to community perceptions of engagement in sport at these facilities and consideration of:

- The demographic profile of participants
- Their engagement with sport
- Their engagement with sport at the church facility
- Their engagement with sport beyond the church facility
- The factors that encourage or discourage their engagement
- Their sporting plans for the future

A total of 73 surveys were returned from people associated with ten of the facilities or activities we observed.

### 2.1.3 Sports ministry

In order to ensure the best possible legacy from the project the Church of England was keen to establish not only what activities are currently provided and what *could* be provided but also what might *facilitate* an increase in provision by the Church and its partners. This need was addressed through an exploration of survey respondent's interest in the Diocese of London developing a Sports Ministry as part of its Capital Vision. A sports ministry is the name given to religious sponsored organization that uses sport to promote links between the religion and the broader population. As such the final section of the parish survey explored respondents experiences of and interest in using sport to extend their reach into local communities as well as the barriers and enablers to such an approach.

## 2.2 Ensuring Replicability to Other Areas of the Market

To ensure the research conducted for this project can be applied to other areas of the sports participation market and other providers, we worked closely with Sport England to create clear and transferrable approaches for defining sport, audiences and participation levels that fit with the organisation's business objectives and wider research base.

More specifically in the preparation of our survey instruments, interview schedules and observation pro-formas, we sought to create transferrable standard definitions of:

- Venue types
- Venue standards/capacities
- Sport categories
- Age bands
- Ethnic groups
- Gender categories
- Faith groups
- Disability groups
- Participation patterns

We are confident that the broad approach adopted has been successful in meeting the research objectives and that it could be applied to address similar questions in different Diocese of the Church of England across the country but also in other sectors where there is potential for capturing and building sport delivery and capacity. However, a number of issues were encountered which might inform adjustments to the methodology in other contexts.

## 2.2.1 Methodological limitations and learning

### 2.2.1.1 Timetable

Whilst the timeline for this project was sufficient to enable the various tasks to be completed it was tight given the number of dependencies between different stages. In particular the survey had to go through a number of iterations to address the needs of Sport England, the Diocese of London and pilot respondents. The delay in releasing the survey and gathering of responses then had a knock-on effect in terms of our ability to design a sample frame for the site visits. This was mitigated through the use of a partial data set prior to closure of the survey but it would be better to provide enough time to stagger these stages. Completion of the site visits would also benefit from greater lead-time to enable visits to be scheduled at all sites.

### 2.2.1.2 Survey Design and sign off

As there were multiple stakeholders with an interest in the research this had an impact on the survey design with some of Sport England's more technical definitions of sport and facility types not being compatible with the description of facilities used by clergy members. If the same approach is used in another sector and there is a need for further moderation this may raise some data comparability issues.

### 2.2.1.3 Survey sample size

The response rate to our parish survey was high by comparison with similar surveys of this type. However the response rate to our school survey was relatively low by comparison. This may have been a result of the closer relationship between the Diocese and clergy members and greater appreciation of the drivers of the research. Given that the school survey was sent to Head Teachers it may also have been targeted at the wrong group. We might have mitigated this through the provision of stronger guidance on who to delegate to and this should be considered in future exercises. However, given the existing knowledge base around school facilities it might also have been appropriate

to focus exclusively on church buildings and church provision for the purposes of this exercise.

#### 2.2.1.4 Site sampling

The sampling approach used worked with a matrix of location and facility type. As the overwhelming majority of facilities revealed by the research were of a single type – i.e. church halls – a strict application of this framework would have limited the variability of what could be observed. As such we introduced the range of activity provision at each location to ensure sites were selected that reflected a broad range of activity. It may be sensible to include activity within the matrix from the start in future exercises.

#### 2.2.1.5 Data availability

It needs to be recognised that there is no statutory or even conventional guidance on the recording of data about activities and participants at church facilities. As such, data availability is inevitably of a variable standard, detail and quality, particularly in relation to the profile of participants.

#### 2.2.1.7 Site visits

Site visits were organised around the provision of defined activity sessions. Inevitably this meant we were only able to gain a snapshot based on the participants in the activities being delivered at that time. To obtain a fuller appreciation of activity across the week and the perception of wider community members would require a longer presence at a smaller number of sites.

## 3.0 Research Findings

### 3.1 Facilities and Activities

#### 3.1.1 Survey respondents

Respondents to the parish survey (171) and those who chose not to complete the survey due to its perceived lack of relevance to their activities were overwhelmingly drawn from the clergy with 73% being incumbents and 10% other clergy members. Only 5% were facilities/operations managers whether paid or volunteer and 11% were drawn from a range of other categories including administrators, youth works and members of the parish.

Of these 68% indicated that they were responsible for or make use of any church buildings or facilities that are currently or could potentially be used for sport and physical activities.

Respondents to the School survey (38) were more mixed with 37% being completed by the original recipients who were head teachers, 15% by other senior teachers, 22% by P.E teachers, 10% by non P.E. teachers, 5% by administrators and 10% by another category of staff.

#### 3.1.2 Parish Facilities

The overwhelming majority (89%) of the facilities described were church owned with only one owned by an Educational Trust and 10% rented for church use or owned by another entity such as a charity, PCC trust, the local authority or, in two cases, a private company.

Given the ownership pattern, perhaps unsurprisingly, the vast majority of the buildings (84%) are managed by a Parochial Church Council and 5% by the Diocese of London or other Church of England body.

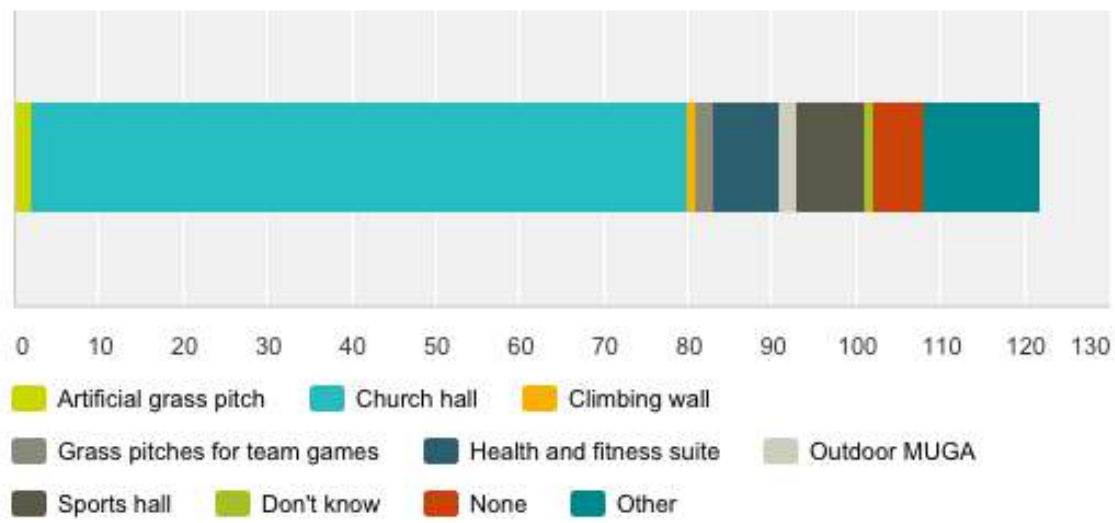
In terms of facility types available for sport and physical activity it is clear that the principal assets are church halls although we did identify a number of churches with access to artificial pitches (4) health and fitness suites (10) and sports halls (10).

Respondents also highlighted a number of other facility types although most of these referred to various types and sizes of indoor hall that did not fit our precise definitions.

The range of parish facility types is illustrated in the bar graph presented in Table 1 on the following page.



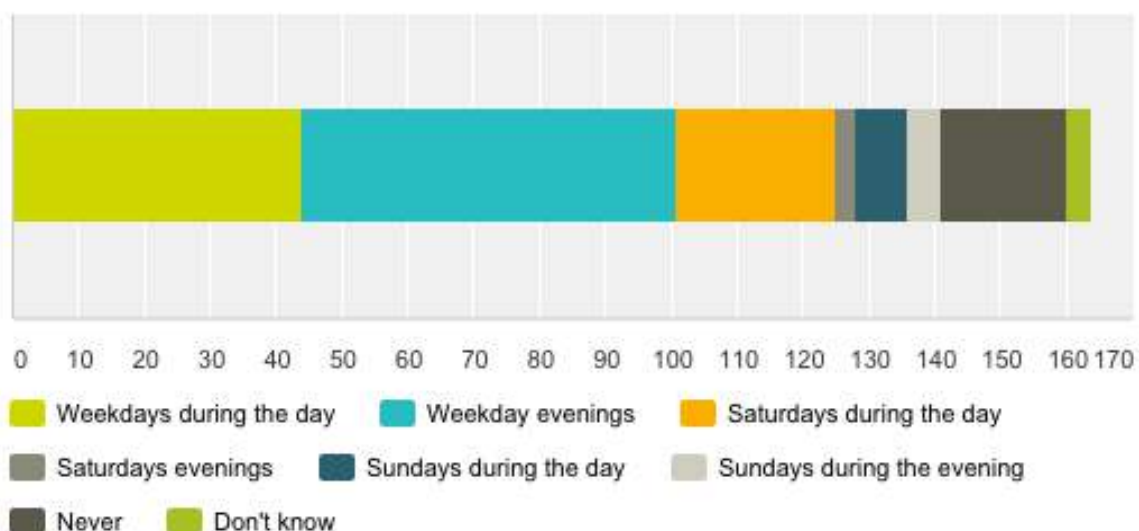
**Table 4: Parish facility types**



These facilities are distributed across the Diocese of London as represented in the map that can be found at Appendix 1 and which depicts the distribution of the different facility types.

In terms of the usage of these facilities for sport and physical activity it is clear that the heaviest use is during the week rather than at the weekend with the greatest usage on weekday evenings (58%) and the greatest usage at the weekend being on Saturday daytimes (24%).

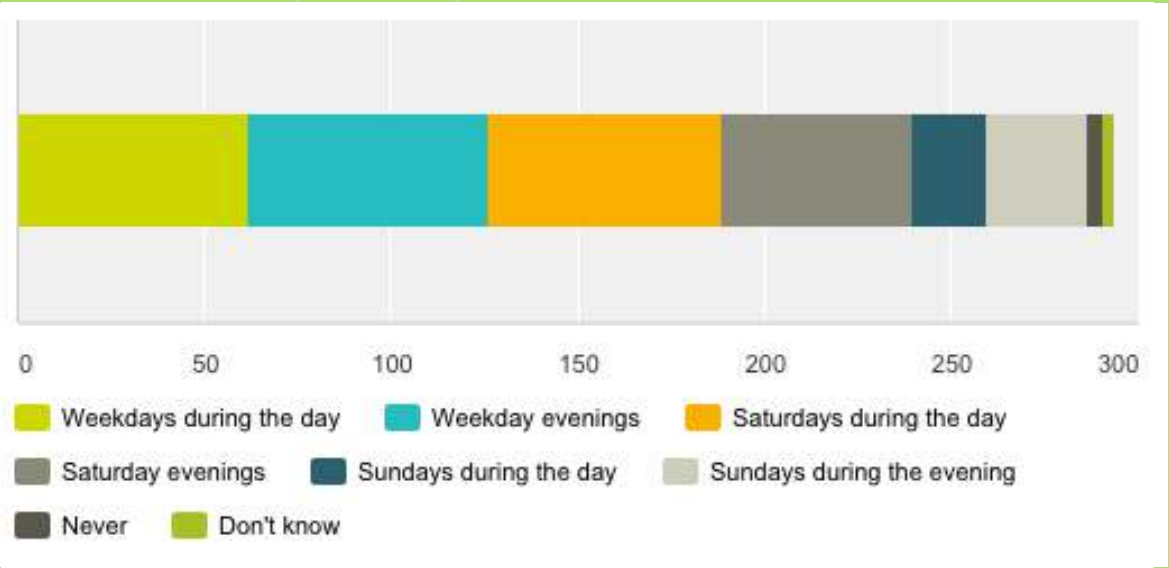
**Table 5: Parish facility usage**



Interestingly in terms of availability for sport and physical activities there is a much more even distribution during the week and on Saturdays with an understandable reduction in

availability on Sundays. This suggests that patterns of use are more strongly related to provider and participant preferences rather than the availability of facilities per se.

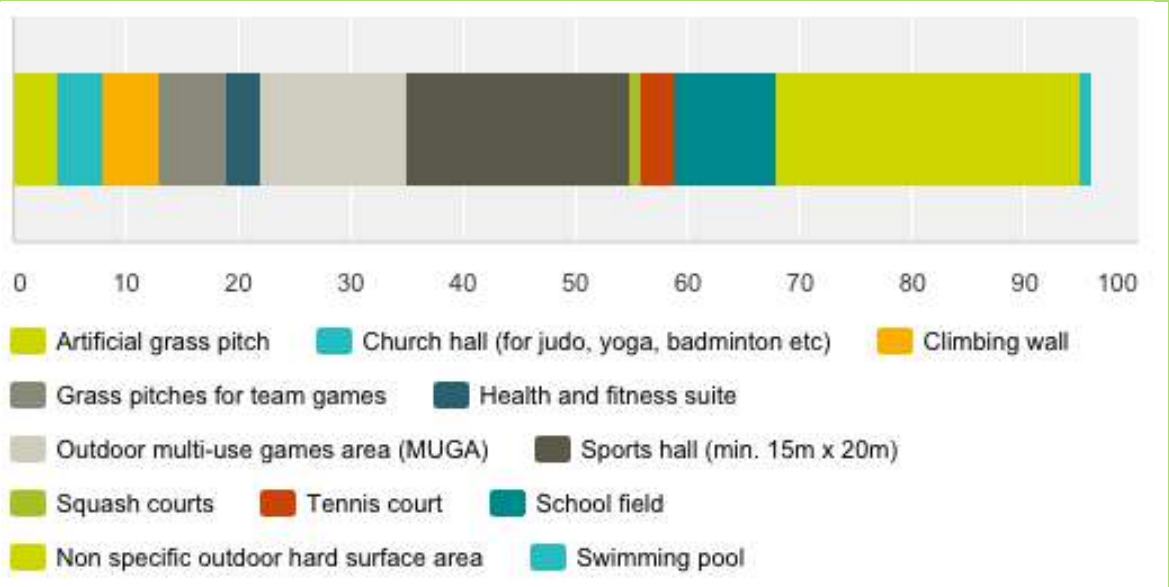
**Table 6: Parish facility availability**



### 3.1.3 School Facilities

The schools that responded to the survey were overwhelmingly owned by the Church, with 58% of respondents indicating this was the case, one indicating it was owned by trustees and the remainder not knowing who owned the school. In this context it was interesting that 76% of respondents indicated that school facilities were not used by an Anglican congregation or other religious group despite the fact that the schools are far better equipped and have a much wider range of sport facilities.

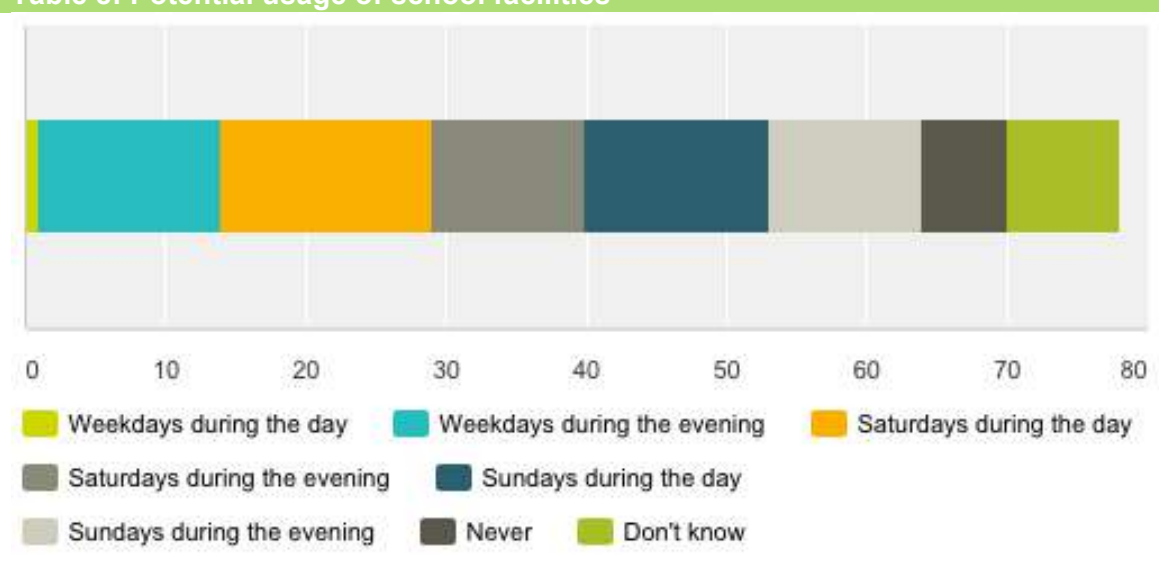
**Table 7: School facility types**



In particular schools appear to have far wider access to conventional sports halls (54%), outdoor multi-use games areas (35%) and non-specific outdoor hard surface areas (73%). In addition to their own facilities 92% of school respondents also indicated that they made use of additional facilities and open spaces for sport and physical activities away from the school site.

In terms of the usage of these facilities for sport and physical activity, given the demands of the school curriculum, it is not surprising that the heaviest use is on Saturdays during the day (31%) and weekdays during the evening (22%). Interestingly, although 56% indicated that their facilities were *never* used for additional community sport and physical activity, when asked when the facilities *could* be used in this fashion the proportion saying 'never' dropped to 18%. Of course this doesn't mean they *will* open up facilities for such use but does demonstrate some potential.

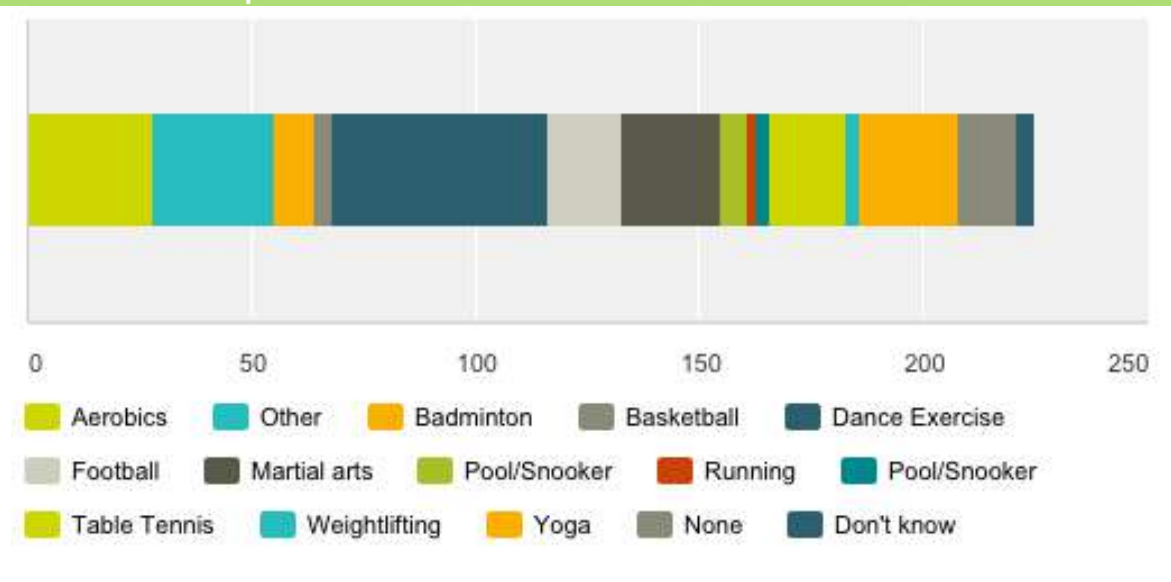
**Table 8: Potential usage of school facilities**



### 3.1.4 Parish Activities

Given the nature of the facilities that are available and the preponderance of indoor spaces and halls with a hard floor it is not surprising that the sports and physical activities most commonly identified by respondents are Dance Exercise (49%), Aerobics (29%), Martial Arts (22%) and Yoga (22%). Other commonly provided activities that can be delivered in this environment include Table Tennis (17%) and Badminton (9%). Given the general popularity of football and relative ease of access to playing facilities, the sport is still provided by 17% of respondents. However, it is perhaps a little surprising that other activities that can be easily delivered (whether indoors or out) such as Pool/Snooker (6%), Weightlifting (3%), Running (2%) and Rugby (0%) are less common.

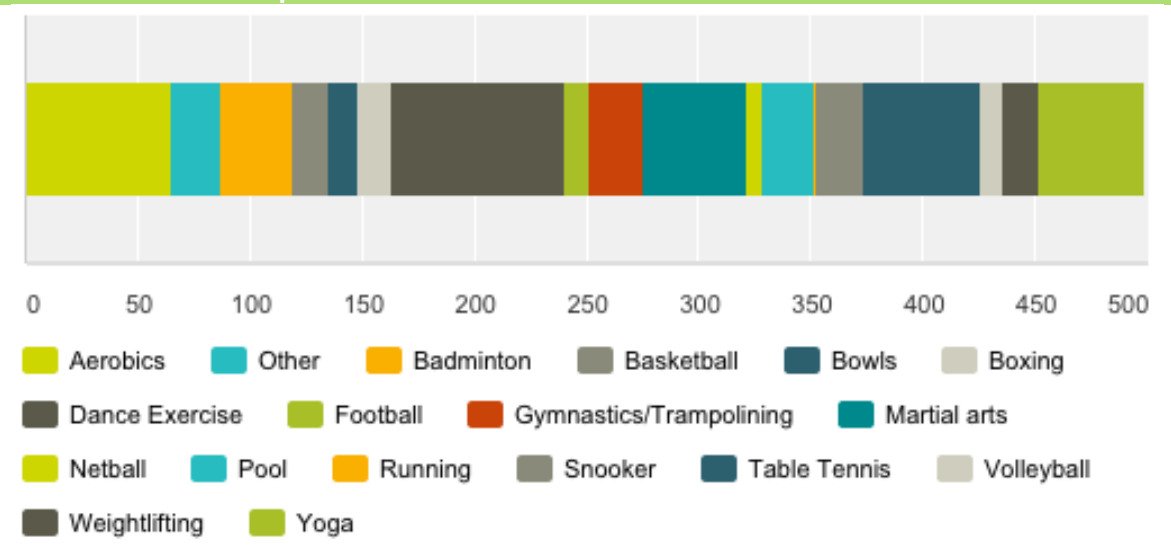
**Table 9: Current parish activities**



This becomes clearer when we consider the activities those respondents feel *could* be played at their facilities as illustrated in Table 8 below. In this context whilst Dance Exercise (80%), Aerobics (68%), Table Tennis (54%), Yoga (49%) and Martial Arts (48%) remain the most prominent other activities become much more visible. Pool/Snooker is cited by 46%, Badminton by 33%, Gymnastics by 25%, Weightlifting by 17%, Basketball by 17%, Boxing by 16%, Bowls by 14% and Volleyball by 10%. Of course the actual provision of such activities would itself require the introduction of additional equipment and expertise that may not be available and the number of respondents highlighting football (12%), running (1%) and other field sports actually falls in these circumstances.

These activities are distributed across the Diocese of London as represented in the map that can be found at Appendix 2.

**Table 10: Potential parish activities**



A different picture emerged when asked about whether the church organises or manages any sports or physical activities that take place outside of the church's facilities. A total of 28 different sports were identified with football being by far the most prevalent and cited by 74% of those that indicated they did organise sports that take place outside of the church's facilities, with running (14%) and cycling (12%) being the next most cited. Interestingly we found no correlation between those respondents indicating they provided access to church based activities and those providing access to non church based activities which may suggest provision is being driven by different groups.

When asked whether any of the sports activities have a specific Christian input/activity such as gospel message, thought for the day, prayer etc. whilst 49% of respondents skipped the question 85% of those who did respond said they did not, whilst 11% said they did and 4% said they did not know.

In terms of non-sport community activities held at the facilities, whilst 45% of respondents skipped the question despite 68% having identified their responsibility for a building that could host such activities, a wide diversity of provision was uncovered with many facilities indicating a range of activity at their venues.

**Table 11: Parish non-sport activities**

Community meetings	79%
Sunday school	77%
Children's parties	67%
Youth groups	61%
Coffee mornings	46%
Older people's meetings	41%
Arts and craft workshops	35%
Uniformed groups	35%
Drama	35%
Concerts	33%
Polling station	32%
Night shelters	23%
Art exhibitions	22%
Counselling sessions	20%
Other	17%
Foodbanks	15%
Discos	12%
Credit Unions	2%
Don't know	2%
None	1%

This is significant as we also identified a correlation in the data between those churches that provided non-sport community activities and those that provided sport based community activity. Using a simple Pearson's r test we found a correlation coefficient of 0.37 indicating a moderate to strong correlation.

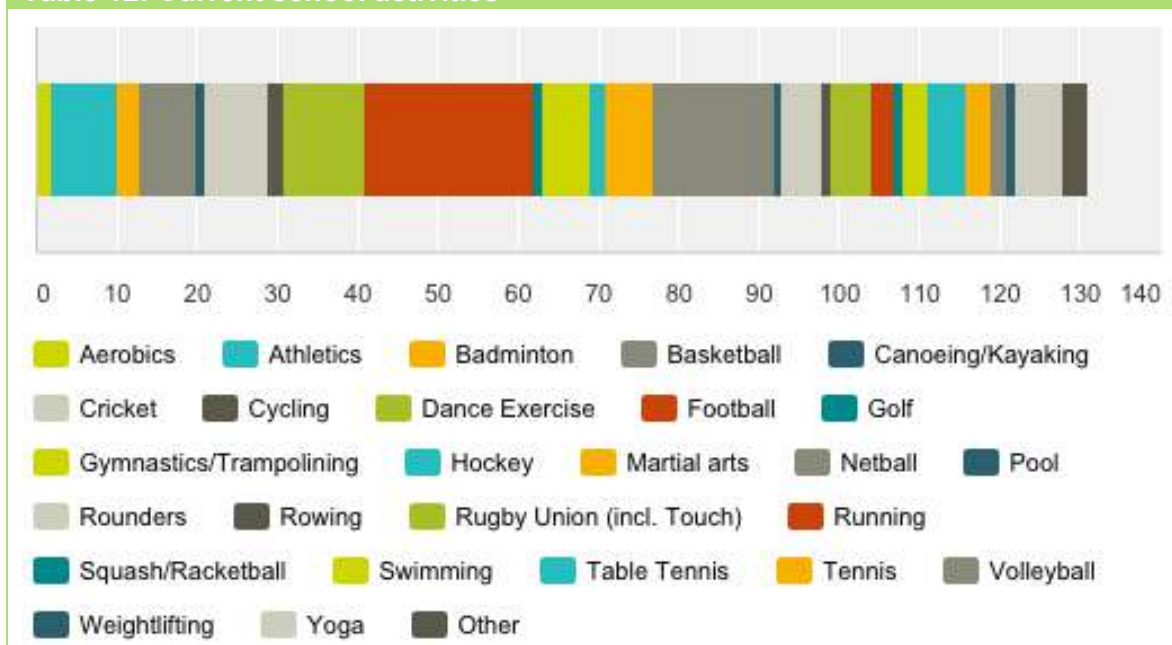
More qualitatively we might interpret the key variables here as the general level of activism or resources within different organisations and the physical availability of space to host multiple activities.

### 3.1.5 School Activities

Perhaps unlike churches schools are well versed in the provision of sport given that there is a requirement to provide sport and physical activity as part of the curriculum. Of the 36 respondents who provided details 22 (61%) indicated that individual pupils took part in 1-2 hours of sport and PE as part of the curriculum, 13 (36%) that they took part in 2-3 hours and 1 that they took part in 3-4 hours. All the schools also provided additional extra curricular school sport and physical activity with most indicating this was between 3-5 hours (31%) or 5-7 hours (22%).

Unsurprisingly, given the range of facilities available, a diverse range of non school sports and physical activities are also currently provided. The most common are Football (72%), Netball (52%), Dance Exercise (34%), Athletics (28%) and Cricket (28%).

Table 12: Current school activities



These activities are generally not organised or run by the schools but 37% of respondents indicated that some were whilst 31% of respondents indicated that *all* out of school activities were run by external organisations. For those that do run their own activities these ranged from after school clubs targeted at pupils, holiday sports camps and football and basketball teams. The range of external organisations using the school facilities was fairly diverse and includes afterschool clubs, professional football clubs delivering community programmes, local and satellite sports clubs, commercial fitness, martial arts and self defence groups and voluntary teacher run. However, only one respondent indicated that any of the activities had a specific Christian input/activity such as a gospel message, thought for the day, prayer etc.

### 3.1.6 Publicity and Access

Whilst the largest proportion of parish survey respondents (38%) indicated that they do not promote use of their facilities for sport and physical activity at all, those that do are using a wide range of methods including website (37%), contact with local community groups (36%), on site flyers and posters (20%), newsletters (15%) and social media (13%). Smaller numbers are using off site flyers and posters (6%), reaching out to local sports clubs (5%) or placing local newspaper adverts (2%).

Schools were even less likely to promote community usage of their facilities (50%) whilst for the 40% that are aware that they do, the most common methods are via contact with local community groups (20%), newsletters (20%) and, in contrast to the churches, contact with local sports clubs (17%) who might be more likely to use their facilities.

Most parish survey respondents indicated that they had pre-set charges for use of their facilities although there is a variable pattern depending on the nature of the users. Whilst a majority of respondents (59%) indicated that they charged private individuals and organisations as well as recognised community groups (53%), a minority indicated that access is free to members of the congregation (17%), recognised community groups (9%) and the general public (6%). Where charges are applied the typical cost to hire it to run a one off (hour long) sport or physical activity session is in the range £10-25 ((31%) and £25-50 (34%). We would put these price brackets at the lower end of typical facility hire costs in the London area. Whilst 20% of respondents indicated that they did not know the cost or that it could depend on other factors such as ability to pay, relationships to the church or regularity of use this figure rose to 65% when asked about the typical cost for an individual taking part in a single session. For those that did indicate a typical cost for individual participation most (10%) said £3-5 followed by £1-3 (8%), free (6%) and more than £10 (6%).

The lack of knowledge of individual prices suggests that provision and associated charging policies are generally managed by third parties and this was confirmed by the survey responses with over 50% of respondents indicating that 80% or more of activities are organised by external clubs.

Similar to the churches, schools make some provision for free provision for their core constituency, with 17% indicating that facility hire is free for school staff/pupils but only 10% for recognised community groups. However 40% were unaware of the charging policy. For those that do charge the most common cost to hire a facility to run a one off (hour long) sport and physical activity session was again in the range £25-50 (23%) and the most common individual participation cost was again £3-5 (14%).

## 3.2 Community Engagement

### 3.2.1 Who participates?

Amongst respondents to the parish survey only 43 indicated that they were in a position to provide information about the people who participate in the sports and physical activities at their own facilities. This may be a factor of the lack of record keeping although this was reasonable amongst those who did respond with 8 (20%) indicating they kept paper records of overall attendance, 6 (15%) that they kept electronic records



of overall attendance, 5 (12%) that they kept records of individual attendees and 1 that they kept electronic records of individual attendees. Similarly, and perhaps more of a concern, only 12 respondents to the school survey were able to provide details of participants with 6 of those keeping paper records of attendance, 2 electronic records of overall attendance and 3 records of individual attendees.

Amongst those that did respond to the parish survey there was a fairly wide range in terms of numbers of people using the facilities for sport per week with most respondents to the parish survey (12) indicating between 26-50, followed by those suggesting between 51-100 (11). Smaller numbers reported between 1-10 (7), 11-25 (4), 101-200 (3) and 201-500 (3). From this we can calculate an average weekly attendance of 72 people where sport activities are being provided.

More respondents (78) provided details about the people taking part in activities away from the church albeit with 27% of them indicating no one did. 12 (15%) indicated between 1-10, 17 between 11-25, 9 between 26-50, 4 between 51-100, 4 between 101-200, 3 between 201-500 and 8 didn't know. From this we can calculate an average weekly attendance at out of church activities of 36 people where those activities are provided.

Amongst the limited number of respondents (12) to the school survey who provided details about participants four schools indicated the most common range in any one week as 51-100 (33%) and two others 101-200 (17%), with one indicating 26-50, two 11-25 and one 1-10. From this we can calculate an average weekly attendance of 62 people where these activities are provided.

We can extrapolate these figures for the full sample using responses to the surveys to provide an assessment of the proportion of sites that are currently providing sport and physical activity opportunities. We then multiply by the average reported weekly attendance by the proportion of sites hosting activities to generate an estimate of the total average weekly attendance across the Diocese as represented in Table 13. It should be noted that this is an estimate of the total number of attendances rather than the total number of people attending as individuals may well attend more than one session during the period.

**Table 13: Estimated weekly attendance at church related sport activities**

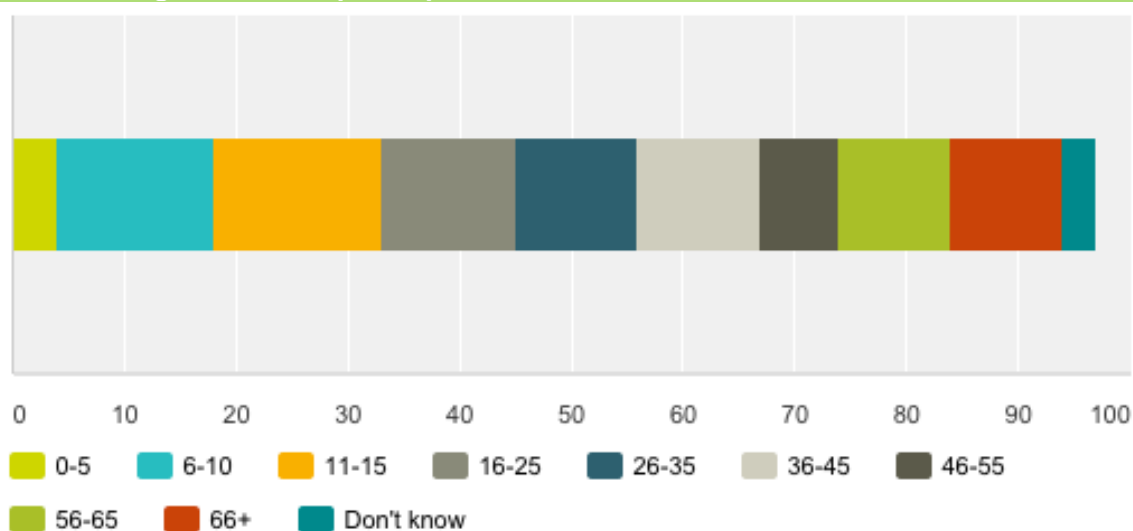
	Average reported weekly attendance	Total site population	Total unadjusted attendance estimate	Estimated proportion of sites with activities	Adjusted average weekly attendance estimate
Church activities	72	599	43,128	109/218 = 0.5	21,564
Off site activities	62	599	37,138	132/218 = 0.6	22,283
School	36	147	5,292	14/38 = 0.37	1,958
Total					45,805

Looking at the demographic profile of those using the facilities there was a relatively even spread across the age bands when respondents were asked to list the three age

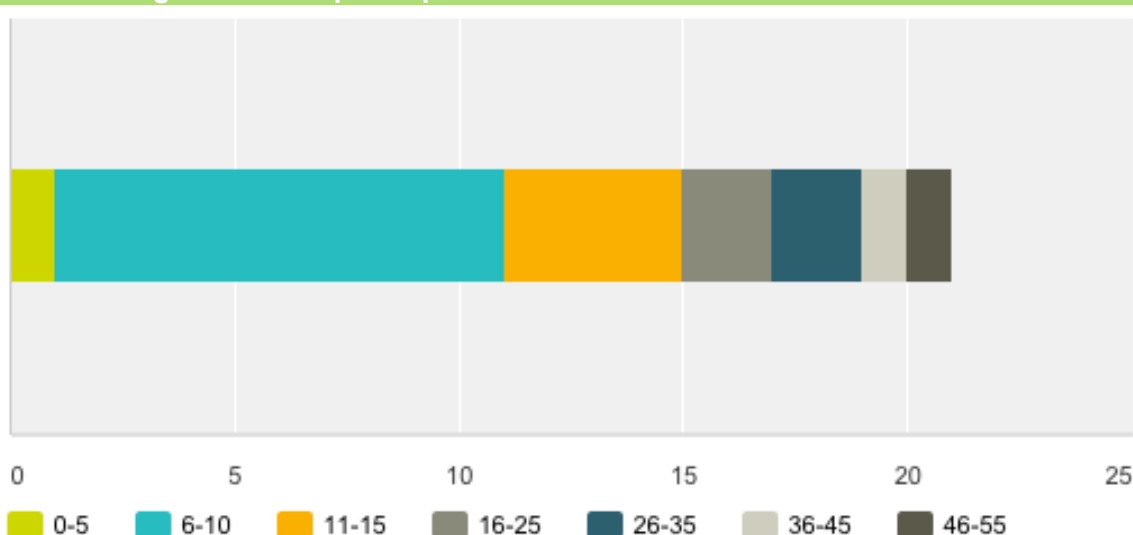


groups using the facilities most often. Respondents also indicated that a majority of those using their facilities were female with 33% suggesting that 51-75% of participants were female and 16% indicating that more than 75% were whilst 19% suggested between 25-50% were female, 7% that between 11-25% were and 2% indicating that none of them were. In terms of ethnicity only 21% suggested that more than 50% of participants were from black and minority ethnic groups whilst 28% suggested that 26-50% of participants were, 16% that between 11-25% were and 14% that between 1-10% were. Only 2% of respondents indicated that disabled people or disability groups used the facilities regularly for sport and physical activity, with 21% indicating that they were used in this way occasionally. In terms of the religious affiliations of these users the majority of respondents who had a view (66%) indicated that over 75% of those involved in the sports activities were not currently involved with the church as practicing Christians. Over 77% indicated that more than 50% of those involved in sport were not currently practicing Christians.

**Table 14: Age of church participants**



**Table 15: Age of school participants**



Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the high proportion of primary schools in the sample, most respondents selected the younger age bands when asked to indicate the three groups using the facilities most often. Most respondents indicated a relatively even gender split with 67% putting the number of female participants between 26-50% although the remainder suggested higher proportions of male participants. In terms of ethnicity only 17% of respondents indicated that more than 50% of participants were from black and minority ethnic groups whilst 33% suggested that between 26-50% were, 17% between 11-25% and 25% between 1-10%. Only one respondent indicated that the school facilities were used by any disabled people or disabled groups for out of school sport and physical activity. In terms of the religious affiliations of these users 50% of respondents who had a view indicated that less than 10% were members of the local parish church or Anglican community and 87% that less than 25% were.

The finding that a relatively high proportion of female and older people use church facilities for sport and physical activity is particularly interesting given the low representation of these groups in sports participation patterns nationally. This may be related to the nature of the facilities which lend themselves to dance based and more gentle non contact sports and activities which appeal more to these groups as well as the alternative perhaps less intimidating atmosphere of the church environment.

However, these findings contrast somewhat with our experience when visiting sites to observe activities and the individual survey responses from community members and sport participants. Of those that responded to the survey 72% were male and 67% from black and minority ethnic groups whilst over 50% indicated that they were Christian whether Church of England (32%) or other Christian (19%) with 19% also indicating no religion, 18% Muslim, 3% Sikh and 1% Buddhist. The age distribution was also narrower with a concentration in 25-34 (32%), 16-24 (29%), 25-44 (25%) and 11-15 (11%) age bands. No respondents were older than 54 or younger than 11.

We were also able to enquire about the sporting behaviour of these respondents who appear to fit into the more 'sporty' categories with over 90% participating in sport at least once a week and 17% at least five times a week. Over the previous twelve months 45% of respondents also indicated that they had increased their participation in sport with only 14% suggesting they had participated less. This trend was carried through to projections for the next twelve months with 41% suggesting they will take part in more sport and only 1% suggesting they will do less. This is particularly interesting given that for this group most of their sporting activity takes place at the church facilities in question with 19% suggesting they 'always' did sport there, 31% 'more often than not' and 21% 'around half the time'. This may well be related to the local nature of provision with our case studies revealing this as a key attraction.

The respondents also highlighted a very broad range of sports that they either had or would consider participating in at the facility, which included 40 different named sports. The most commonly cited were football (41%), Dance Exercise (22%), Basketball (17%), Weightlifting (14%), Table Tennis (13%), Tennis (13%), Cycling (10%), Hockey (10%), Aerobics (10%), Badminton (10%) and Pool (10%). In terms of the sports that the respondents currently participate in away from the facilities there was a diverse but narrower range again with football the most popular (50%), followed by Basketball (26%), Cycling (18%), Table Tennis (18%), Weightlifting (16%), Athletics (11%), Swimming (11%) and twenty other sports.

### 3.2.2 What does provision look like?

In order to get a clearer picture of the experience of sport delivered at buildings or by organisations related to the Church of England we visited a number of sites where activities were being delivered in order to consider the physical and organisational context in which activities are delivered; issues of access to the provision and any restrictions; details about participants and their experience of delivery; and the identification of any potential gaps. Given that each site has its own story we have presented our assessment of these examples of practice in a case study format at Appendix 3. However, for ease of interpretation we have drawn out the key learning from these visits below.

It is clear that the Church of England community in London is already offering a diverse range of sport and physical activity from a variety of venue types both within and beyond the church estate.

A key feature of this provision is that it is locally driven and so, for better or worse, somewhat uncoordinated. This gives rise to a real mixture of practice each with its own learning in terms of benefits and pitfalls.

We identified key benefits associated with adopting an outreach approach rather than simply working with an existing congregation or waiting for people to come to the church. When youth work approaches are adopted to engage with young people or links are built with local schools bridges can be built that build people's engagement with what the church has to offer, whether that is simply a sporting opportunity or something more spiritual.

Clearly such approaches require time and effort and the availability of enthusiastic volunteers where clergy do not have the time to commit themselves. As such, the most successful provision appears to have emerged around third party providers, whether they are connected to the church in a religious sense or not. We found good examples, such as that provided by the spiritually motivated 1City FC and Ambassadors Football groups as well as that provided by the more commercially motivated Smash the Fat and Zumba sessions, which work because of the time and commitment that comes from external partners.

Where this commitment and motivation is present and longstanding it can contribute to a self-fulfilling virtuous circle, with a community building up around the provision of the activity or activities as witnessed around All Souls sports activities and the Shadwell Dads football session.

Another key feature of church based provision is the lack of designation of the spaces that are available. This affords the possibility for highly flexible delivery profiles with a whole range of activities taking place in a single space and involving different groups and communities over the course of a week or even day. A particular attraction of this feature is the extent to which it enables engagement and exposure to a wide variety of national, ethnic and faith groups that might not otherwise come into contact with churches and the facilities and activities they offer. At the same time the size of churches and church halls and the storage of a range of equipment to suit different activities can be a limiting factor or barrier to third party usage.

In the best examples we also noticed how this afforded the potential for people to become engaged in new activities and indeed a wider social community through their initial contact with another activity, in many cases facilitated by a non-church related delivery partner.

We also noticed that where provision was more closely related to the church or driven by a missionary objective the sessions we observed were characterised by lower numbers and, on occasion, required the involvement of volunteers as participants or additional recruitment of football players from local schools to make delivery viable.

We also noted limits on the willingness or ability of church schools to open up their facilities to groups beyond the immediate school community, which we recognise is a more generalised issue across the school estate.

## 4.0 Future Potential

### 4.1 Building the Sports Ministry

It is clear from our findings that there is considerable potential for expansion of the Diocese of London's sporting offer. We can consider this both with regard to the range and potential of the facilities that are currently available as well as the opportunities to engage with new communities.

We have seen in the comparison of activities presented in Tables 6 and 7 as well as the times when facilities might be made available that there is clear physical potential for an increased offer. Equally the disparity between the demographic profile of participants revealed by our church and school surveys and the patterns of engagement revealed by our case studies as well as the general lack of affiliation to the church amongst participants suggests that sport provides a genuine pathway to new communities.

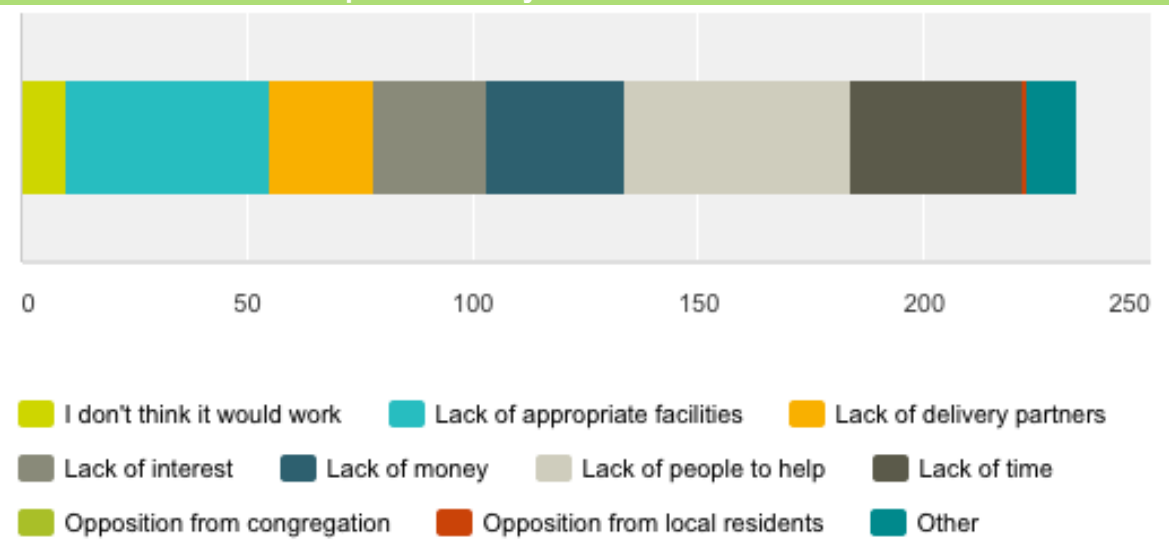
Realisation of this potential will require organisation and so it is useful to reflect upon the interest respondents to the church survey showed in the prospect of a dedicated Sports Ministry. At the time of the survey only 10% of respondents had any direct experience of running a Sports Ministry and only 22% had previously tried to use sport as part of any of their community engagement activities. However, of those that had, 69% indicated it had been successful and only 10% that it was 'not very successful' or a 'waste of time'. Looking to the future 13% indicated they were 'definitely interested' in the idea, 28% that they were 'potentially interested' and 19% that they were 'mildly interested'. Only 25% said they were not interested. Respondents also identified with the range of impacts that a Sport Ministry might have with strong support for the idea that they could 'engage the local community' (75%), 'have a positive impact in the local community' (73%), 'attract young people to church' (66%), 'open up church buildings to the community' (61%), 'attract men to the church' (59%), 'share the gospel' (57%) and 'build the congregational community' (56%). Only 2 respondents said it would bring 'no benefit at all'.

Table 13: Sports Ministry Impacts



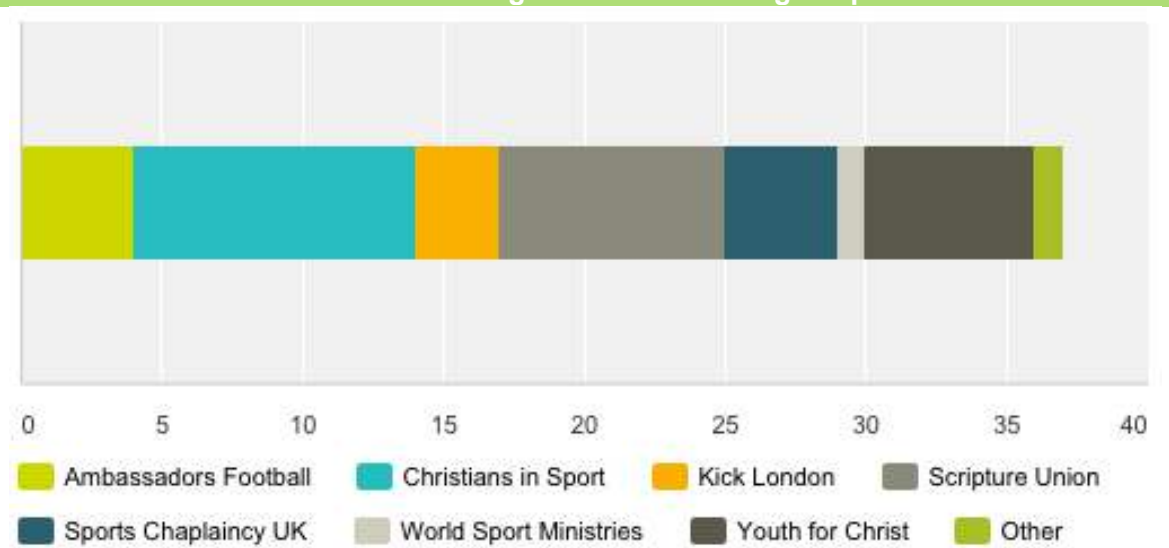
However there is clearly a lack of experience and knowledge in this area and respondents highlighted a number of factors that might prevent them from developing a Sports Ministry.

**Table 14: Barriers to a Sports Ministry**



The emphasis on the lack of facilities, people to help and lack of time that is emphasised in these responses and which was re-emphasised in the responses to the school survey highlights the benefits that might derive from working with specialist partners. However, when asked about their awareness of Christian organisations working in sport only 11 respondents indicated any awareness of the best known potential partners.

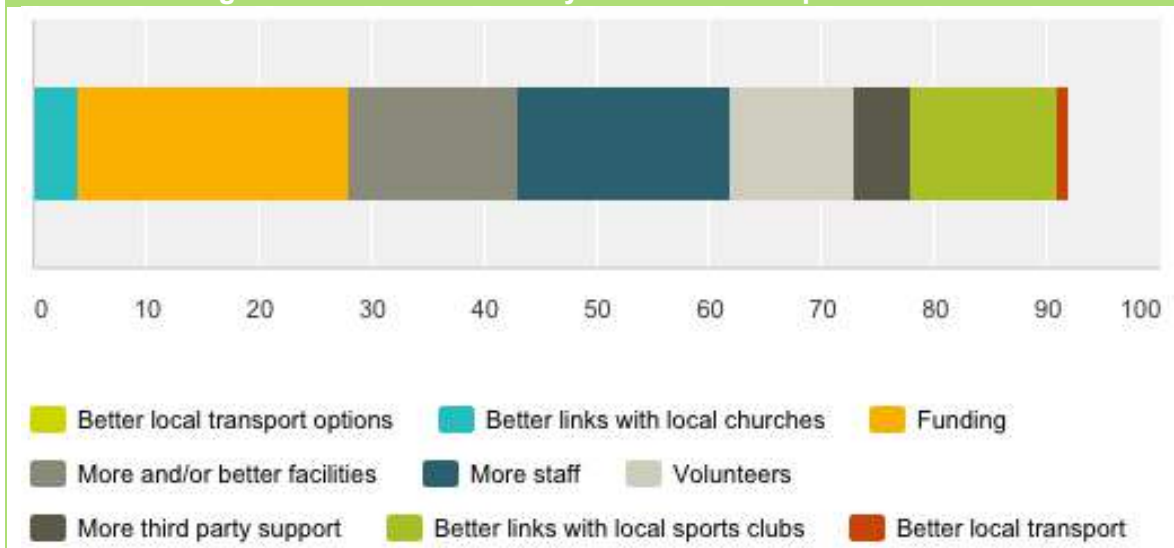
**Table 15: Awareness of Christian organisations working in sport**



More encouragingly in terms of access to facilities most of the school survey respondents indicated that they would be interested in working with a local church or other organisation to put on more community sports activity with 9% indicating they were 'definitely interested', 37% 'potentially interested', 16% 'mildly interested' and only 16%

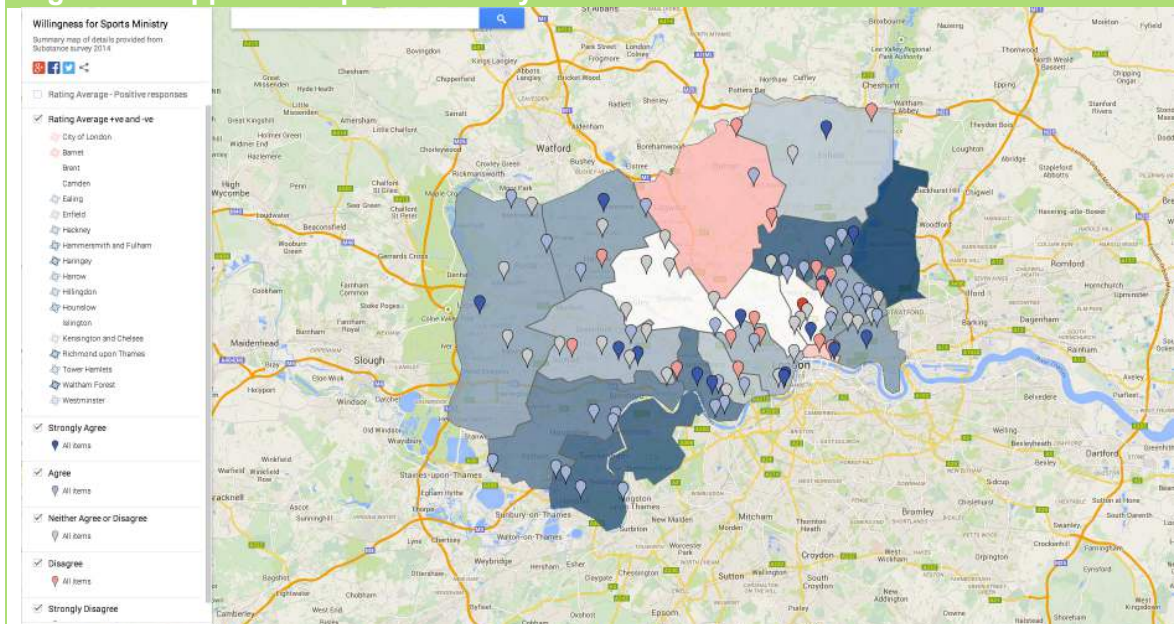
'not interested'. However, when school survey respondents revealed the things that would make them more willing to increase usage of their sports facilities by members of the local community 'better links with local churches' was only highlighted by 11% of respondents. The most commonly cited factors were funding (69%), more staff (54%), more and/or better facilities (43%), better links with local sports clubs (37%) and volunteers (31%).

**Table 16: Things to increase community use of school sports facilities**



There is clearly some work to be done to bring different partners together but there remains enthusiasm for doing so as long as the right support is made available. In response to the statement "With the right support, our Parish would be willing to continue or develop a new community based Sports Ministry" 60% of respondents agreed, with 14% in strong agreement whilst only 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**Figure 1: Support for Sports Ministry**





## 4.2 Targeting Interventions

With access to a growing set of data and a better understanding of what the church does well with regard to engaging different groups with its sporting offer it should be possible to develop a more targeted strategy to aligns delivery to the availability of facilities and the needs of different target groups.

For example it is possible to lay facility and activity data over maps that indicate particular population concentrations such as different age groups or black and minority ethnic groups. In Figures 1 and 2 below we illustrate this potential in relation to older people. Figure 1 illustrates the population density for over 65s in London and then plots the full range of activity provision identified by the research over this data.

**Figure 2: Over 65 Population Density and Activity Provision**

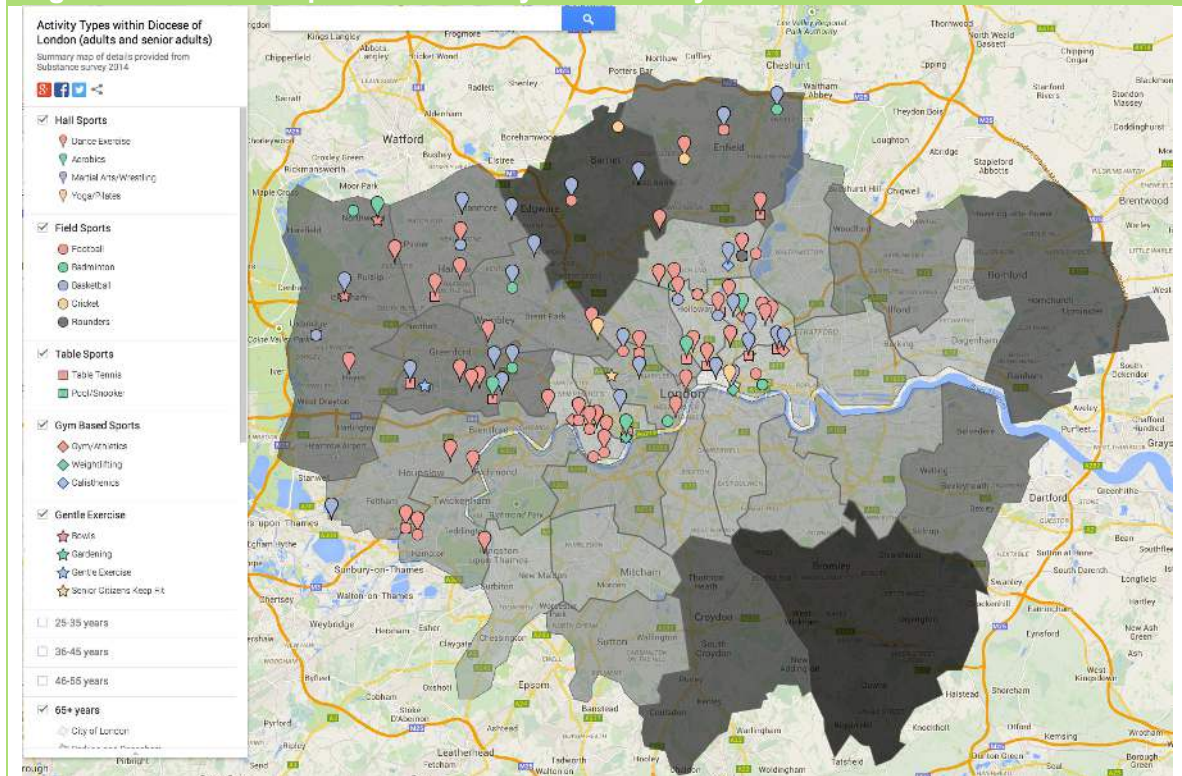


Figure 2 on the next page then considers this data in a more interpretive fashion by isolating those activities that might be considered to be 'age appropriate' for the over 65s, namely those activities that we have defined as 'gentle exercise' for the purposes of this research. We have then also plotted those facilities where such activities might be delivered but currently are not.

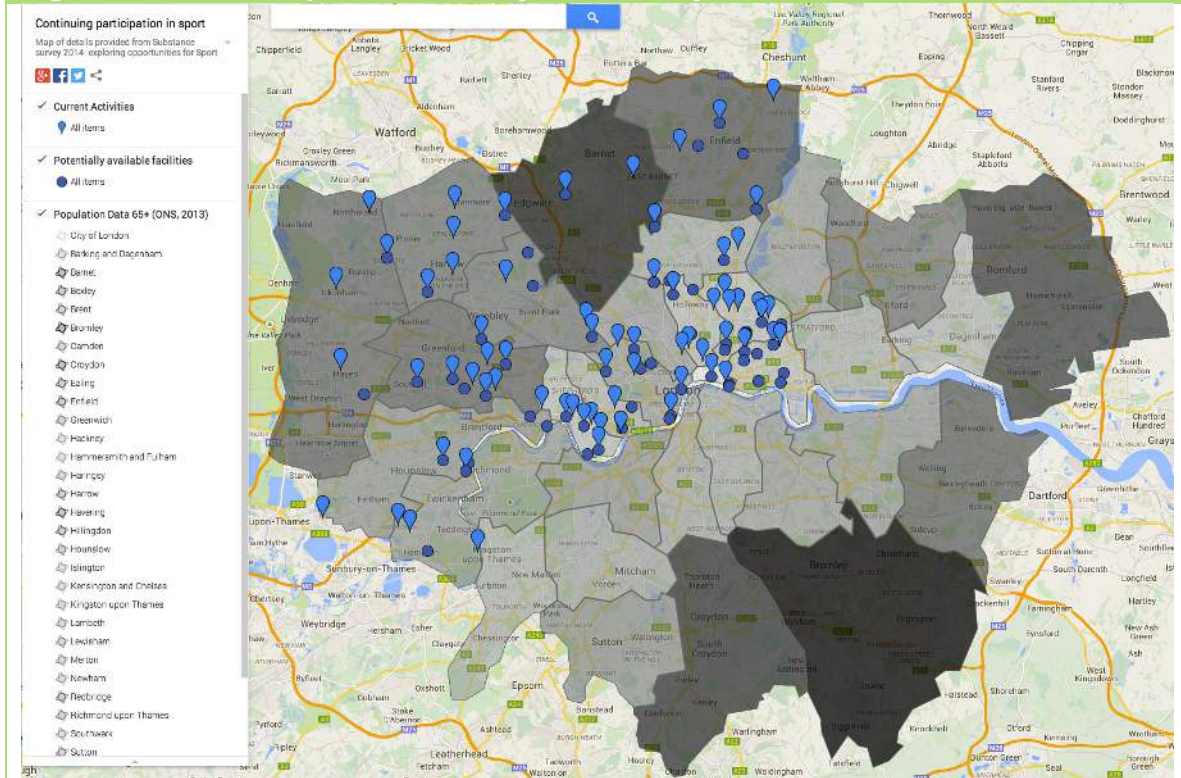
This should help us to plan an intervention strategy for engaging older people in sport at church venues. We would begin by identifying those areas with the highest concentrations of older people. We would then identify those sites where gentle exercises are being delivered and consider whether enough is being done to attract older people to this provision. Finally we would identify those areas where gentle



exercise is not being provided but where it could be provided in order to see whether it could be organised and marketed to local older people.

A similar approach could be used for a full range of demographic segments if the decision is taken to build on and make on-going use of the data.

**Figure 3: Over 65 Population Density and Activity Potential**



## 5.0 Key Findings and Recommendations

Our audit of the current stock of places and opportunities for sport provided by churches within the Diocese London identified:

- 109 churches and church buildings with the potential for use for sport and physical activity, only 2 of which are currently listed in Active Places Power. Including non-respondents to our survey we estimate this figure would grow to 299 within the Diocese as a whole.
- 133 church based facilities that are being utilised for sport with a preponderance of indoor, hard floor spaces suitable for hall and gym based activities as well as table sports and gentle exercise. Including non-respondents to our survey we estimate this figure would grow to 365 within the Diocese as a whole.
- 96 church school based facilities that are currently being utilised for sport. Including non-respondents to our survey we estimate this figure would grow to 371 within the Diocese as a whole.
- 233 distinct regular church based organised sport and physical activity sessions taking place within the Diocese that generally correspond with the type of facility available. Including non-respondents to our survey we estimate this figure would grow to 640 within the Diocese as a whole..
- 89 distinct regular out of church organised sport and physical activity sessions taking place within the Diocese. Including non-respondents to our survey we estimate this figure would grow to 245 within the Diocese as a whole.
- 131 distinct regular school-based 'out of school' organised sport and physical activity sessions taking place within the Diocese. Including non-respondents to our survey we estimate this figure would grow to 507 within the Diocese as a whole.
- Significant spare capacity at churches and schools within the Diocese when considered in terms of current v potential availability and a broad willingness to consider opening up usage for a wider range of activities
- A positive correlation between churches that provide non-sport community activities and those that provide sport based community activities
- Limited evidence of widespread community use of school facilities

Our review of the reach of churches within their local communities identified:

- Estimated average weekly attendance at sport and physical activity sessions across the Diocese of between 40,000 and 50,000.
- Above average engagement in church based activities by girls and women
- Engagement by age groups across the life spectrum and above average engagement by older people
- A perception of lower than average engagement of black and minority ethnic groups in sport activities
- Widespread engagement of non-congregational and multi faith groups

- A diversity of community engagement strategies attracting diverse and non traditional groups that are being practiced at a minority of churches
- The positive benefits of using outreach approaches, partnership working and involvement of church volunteers in attracting a diversity of participants
- Less than 6% of identified church based or organised sports activities incorporating specific Christian messages
- Considerable enthusiasm for the benefits of Sports Ministries to support further engagement

We believe that a future sports strategy would benefit from further investigation of:

- The relationship between the current profile, and associated gaps, in provision and local demographic trends and patterns of social need. This might be used to inform a more strategic approach to the development and targeting of new initiatives and provision to address identified needs and priorities. A first step might involve mapping of the research data against a wider range of social indicators including existing evidence of local physical activity as well as ethnicity, employment, health and crime profiles.
- Further investigation of the attraction of church facilities for currently under represented groups such as women and girls and older people in order to better understand the extent to which the types and scheduling of activity; the nature, location and familiarity of the facilities; the style of delivery and the profile of participants are important to these groups. A first step might be to conduct case study work and more structured interviews with participants in those locations where the research identified high levels of participation amongst such groups.
- How church or Church of England school based facilities and activities might bridge gaps in the existing community sport offer and better target particular user groups or market segments. A first step might be to work with Sport England and London Sport to promote awareness of church facilities and build links between the DoL, parishes and local sports networks.
- How better links can be made between churches and church schools in order to open community access to school facilities and the role that third party Christian and other sports organisations might play. Building on the findings from the school survey a first step might be to interview key church school personnel to better understand the barriers to extending community use and the appetite for support from external agencies in alleviating those barriers.
- Patterns of facility and activity provision in the Diocese of London and other parts of the country and the identification of learning that might be shared. Ideally this would involve the replication of the study across other Diocese using the same methodology to enable comparative analysis.
- How the profile of activity provision might be monitored and promoted on an ongoing basis. A first step might be to further develop, open access to and invite contributions from churches and church schools to the online maps developed as part of this research project.

## 6.0 Appendices

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