

Open Day at the Dome Sunday 19th July

At the club committee meeting in early June, one of the items discussed was National Table Tennis Day, which was set for Thurs 16th July. It didn't seem practical for the club to organise anything for the day because of work and school commitments, but the idea of having an Open Day on the Sunday following was borne. What we wanted to do was:

- attract new members to the club
- explore every method of free publicity we could find
- make an event out of it, for our own benefit and to enhance our reputation with Table Tennis England

Without much time to plan, some simple posters were prepared and printed, members were emailed with flyers they could use at school or work, and the word was out. Every free website we could find was contacted, local newspapers and radio emailed, posters taken to several local schools, shops and sports centres. Suggestions and offers were made from club members, and the Open Day took shape. Professional signage was put on the fence and fingers crossed!

By 2pm on the day, a freshly cleaned Dome was laid out with 6 tables, a table tennis robot, club members and "Greeters" of all ages and playing standards, spare equipment, refreshments and information sheets for visitors to take away. Signs were in place outside and the school car park was open..... And then they came!! On the dot, visitors started to arrive, picked up bats and started to play. Over the next few hours, more than 40 visitors joined the 25 or so members who were on a charm offensive, most of them being youngsters. Apart from general knocking up with members and other visitors, there was a Coaching table, Frying Pan challenge table and the robot, which proved very popular with visitors and members alike. Details were kept for visitors so we can keep in touch, a few photos taken and information sheets taken away. Time flew by and by 5pm, it was definitely job done, and we started to wind it all down.

The day surpassed the expectations of everyone who took part, and it is fair to describe it as a success....so far! There are a few things we need to do to "ice the cake" though:

- keep in touch with those who visited. At time of writing (a week later) at least 3 visitors have already been back to a regular session, and everyone has been emailed by the club from the details taken on the day

- keep offering a welcome to new people whenever they show up, and if they join, helping them integrate
- get a report off to Table Tennis England, to keep our profile with them high

In summary, we were lucky that not only were a lot of club members available to help, but the skills and effort they provided were magnificent. Getting posters displayed all over town, entries on websites, announcements in school assembly, equipment, the robot, eye-catching signage, a clean Dome, refreshments - a very big thank you goes to everyone.

Will we do it again? Hard to see why not. The experience gained will be valuable:

- email addresses of organisations who responded to our publicity
- which places were happy to put posters up
- posters and information sheets that will be easy to update
- notes of what club members helped in what ways
- professional signage that can be updated

Maybe we should have an Open Day once a year...

Martin Tomes
Club Secretary
26/7/15