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Press release

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Thumbs up for Active Ageing (Bristol)

The launch of Active Ageing (Bristol) - Greater Bristol partnership's new sport and physical activity initiative for the over 55s - received a resounding 'thumbs up' from an enthusiastic crowd at Ashton Gate on Sunday, 22 October.

The crowd, along with sport partners and local organisations, welcomed the launch of Active Ageing (Bristol) at the Bristol Rugby's British and Irish Cup clash with Doncaster Knights in front of over 7,000 supporters.

The launch was marked by a series of mini walking sport demonstrations prior to kick-off, in a bid to highlight the many sporting activities available in the city, specifically for the over 55s.

Activities such as walking football, dementia friendly swimming and Walking for Health, are all on offer thanks to the partnership.

Active Ageing (Bristol) - in partnership with Bristol Sport Foundation, The Anchor Society and St Monica Trust, and with support from LinkAge Bristol - have spearheaded one of the UK's first sport and physical activity programmes for older people.

The specially-targeted programme will aim to get more people – from the local area and over the age of 55 - involved – more regularly, in physical activity, coaching and volunteering.

Better co-ordination of sports provision, creative means for improved participation and more accessible opportunities are just three of the key areas the new programme will explore and look to implement over the next three years.

Karen Lloyd of Active Ageing (Bristol), said: "The planned programme will be fully inclusive. It will build on the wealth of existing provision in the area and over time, will look to develop new opportunities to encourage older people to become and stay active."

Kris Tavender of Bristol Sport Foundation, said: “Active Ageing (Bristol) is an opportunity for genuinely passionate and driven groups in Bristol to come together under one banner to really make a difference to older people across the city. What we are really looking to do is build pathways to friendship, and put an end to inactivity.”

Richard Pendlebury, CEO of The Anchor Society, said: “We know many older people can suffer from feelings of isolation, loneliness and vulnerability. The Anchor Society has an excellent network of support across the region and firmly believes that participation in sports and physical activities can bring many benefits to overall health and well-being. We are thrilled to be part of this partnership – and look forward to seeing more older people getting involved with the programme.”

Sara Naylor-Wild, Director of Development and Research at St Monica Trust, said: “St Monica Trust is proud to support this new initiative and be a key player in its development and implementation. We know that nearly 308,000 adults in the Greater Bristol area are aged 55 or over - of these, some 36 percent take little or no part in sport or physical activity. A small change, such as a 30 minute daily walk can make a huge difference.”

The successful implementation of Greater Bristol’s new sport and physical activity programme for the over 55s will see improved health and mental well-being across the region’s older population.

Being physically active as we get older can reduce the risk of us developing depression, heart disease and dementia. It also increases our social networks, helping to reduce the risk of us becoming lonely or isolated.

If you would like to find out more about Active Ageing (Bristol), please visit the website at www.activeageingbristol.co.uk

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For further information, please contact:

Karen Lloyd
Manager, Active Ageing (Bristol)
Telephone: 0117 949 4000
Mobile: 07734 335 878
Email: Karen.Lloyd@stmonicatrust.org.uk

Notes to Editors:

1. Two photographs attached. Suggested caption for JMP_Bristol_Rugby_v_Doncaster_Knights_PKn0007: Walking Badminton demonstration before kick-off. Suggested caption for JMP_Bristol_Rugby_v_Doncaster_Knights_PKn0046 (1): Walking sport players at Ashton Gate Stadium. Please credit all photographs to: JMP UK.