

SOCIAL AFFAIRS SELECT COMMITTEE
21 June 2012 at 7.00 pm

At the above stated meeting the attached documents were tabled for the following items:

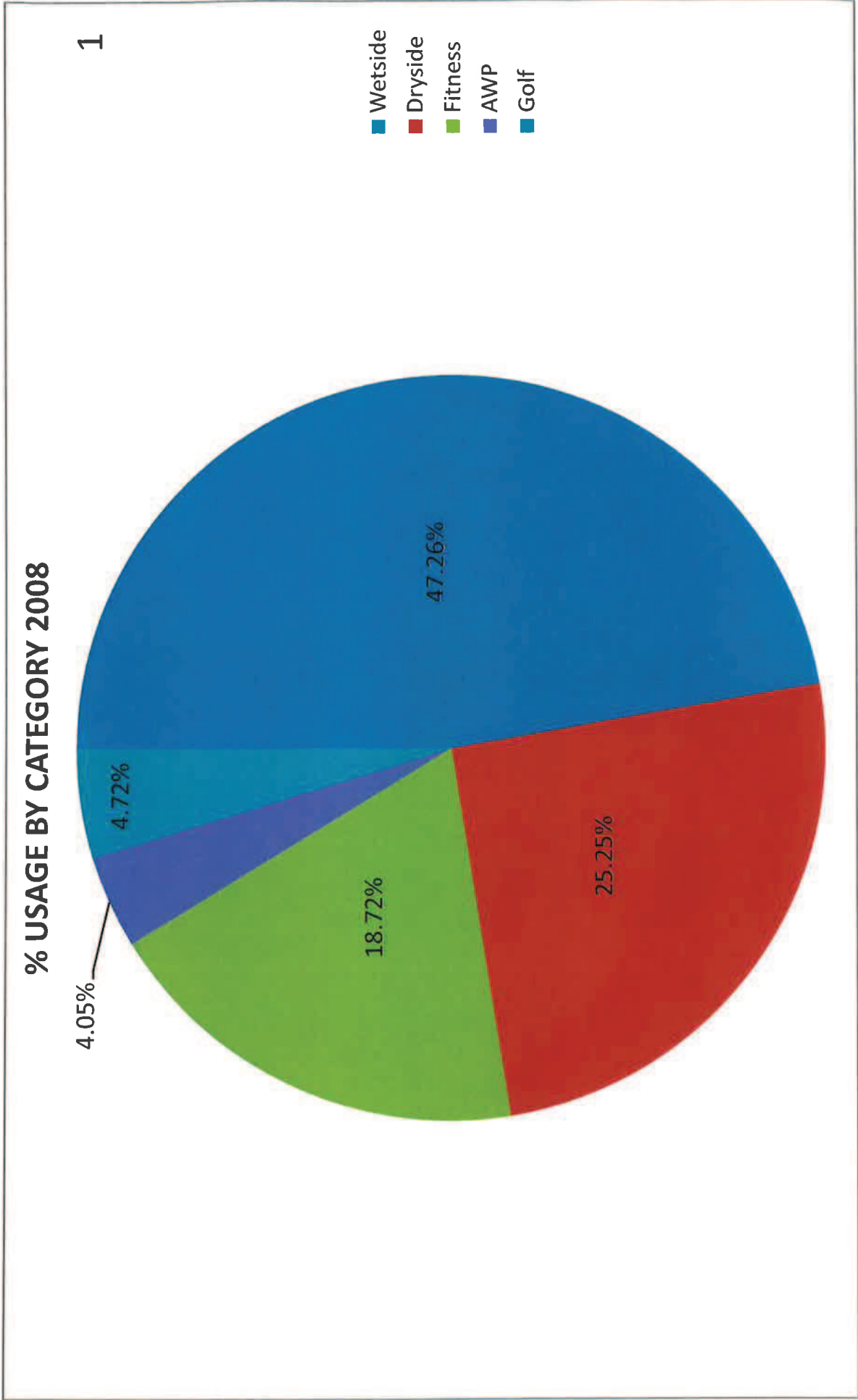
6. Strong and Active Communities

(Pages 1 - 10)

Presentation by STAG Chief Executive

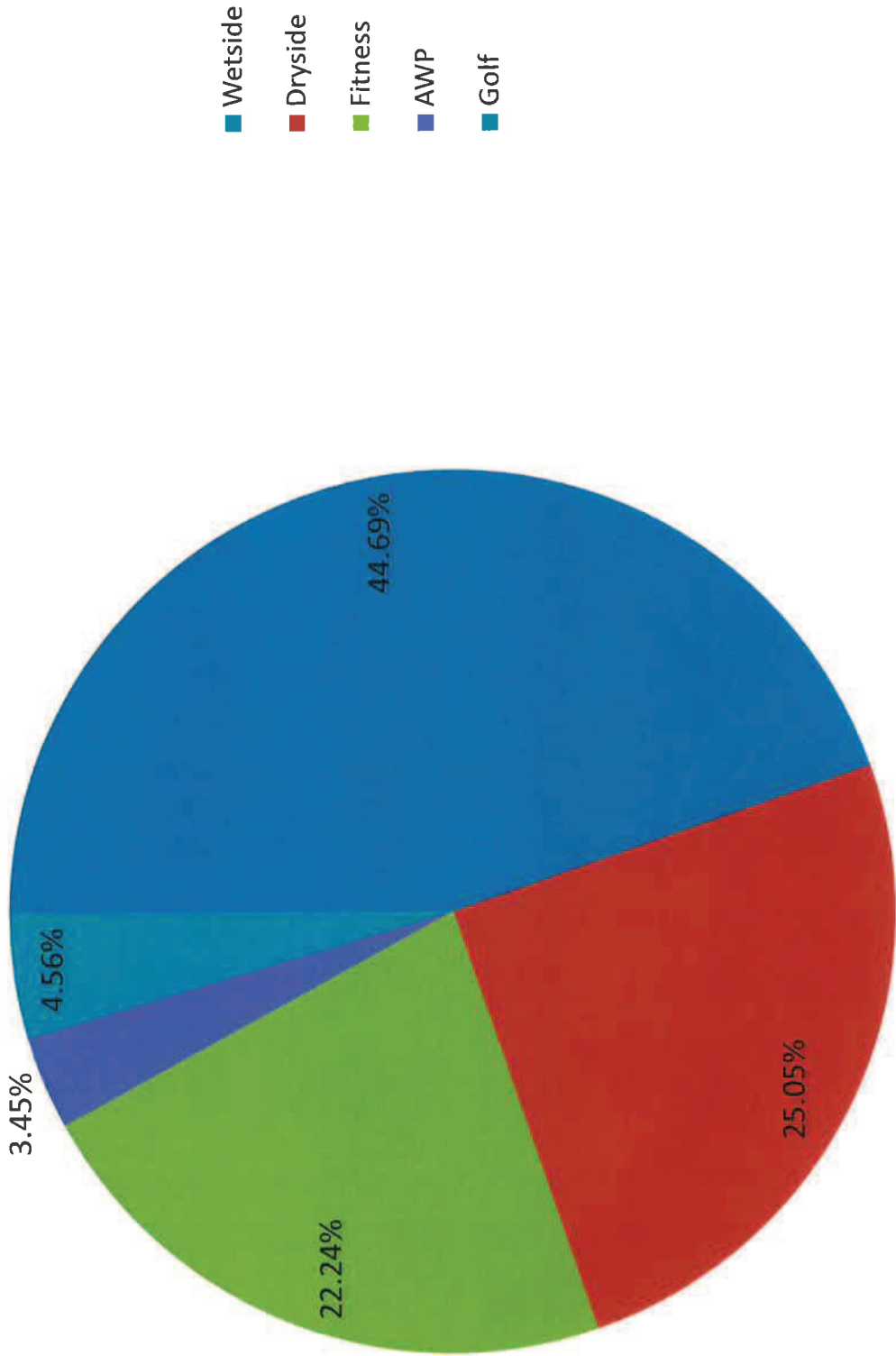
Presentation by Sencio Chief Executive

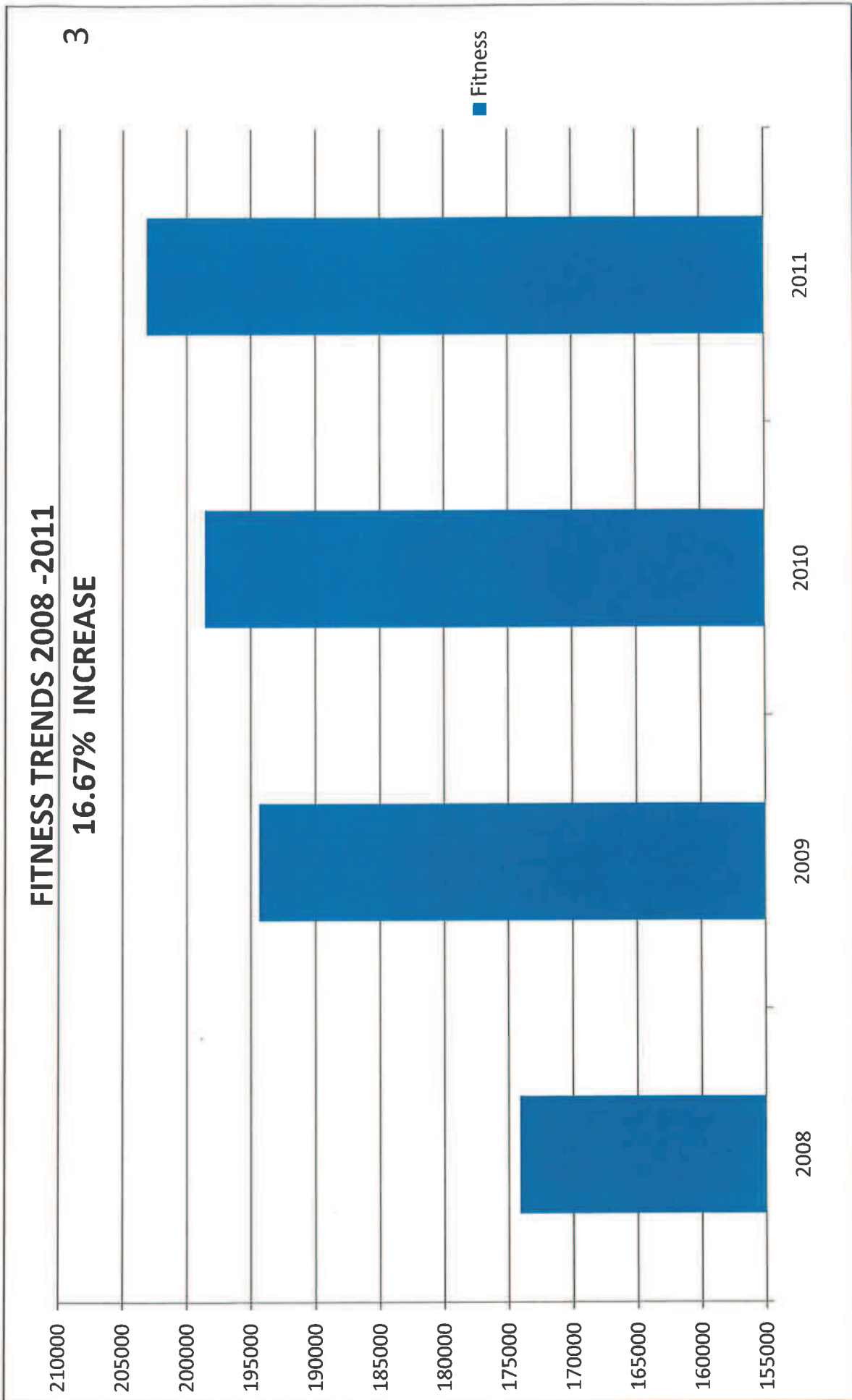
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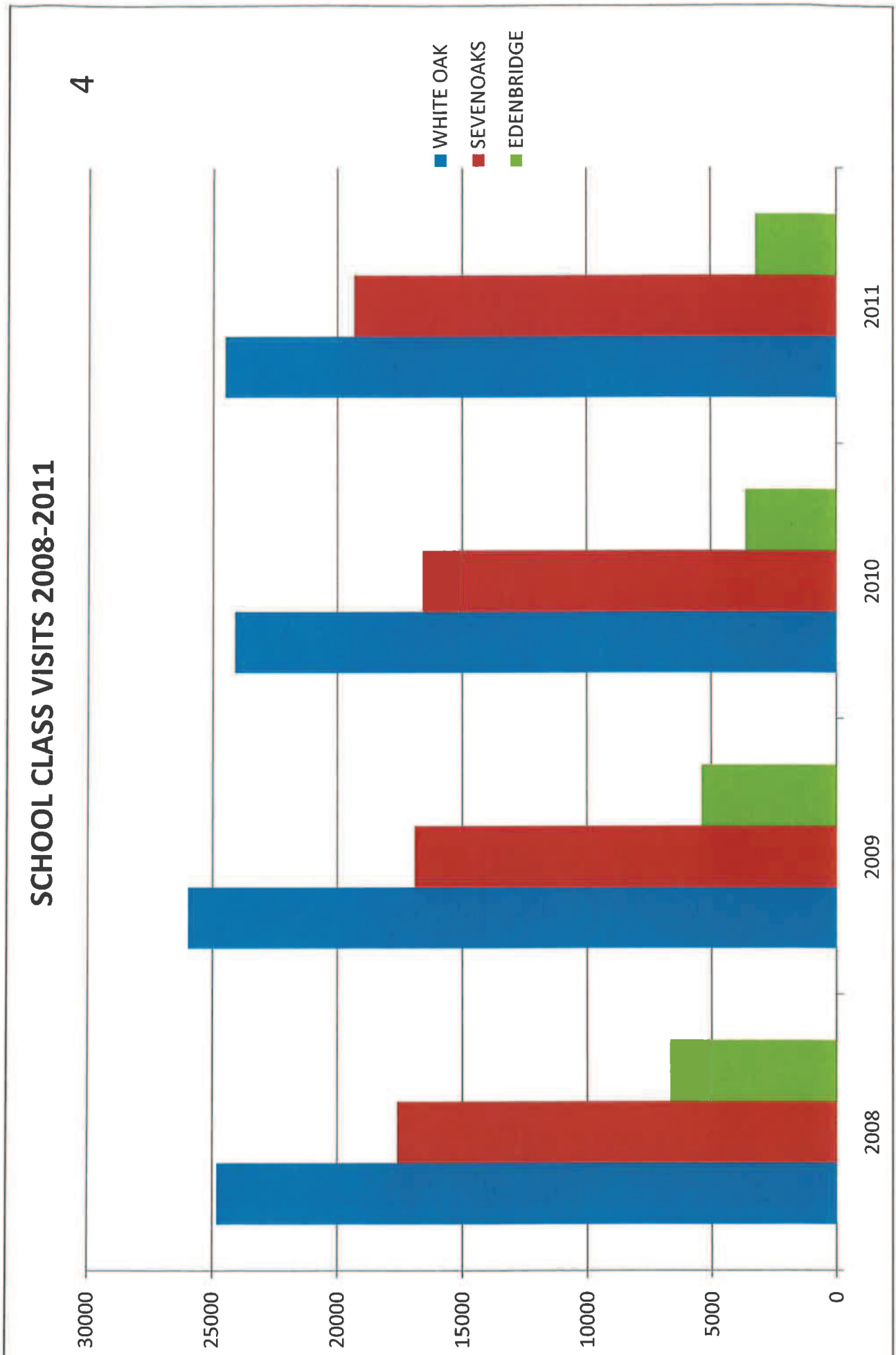


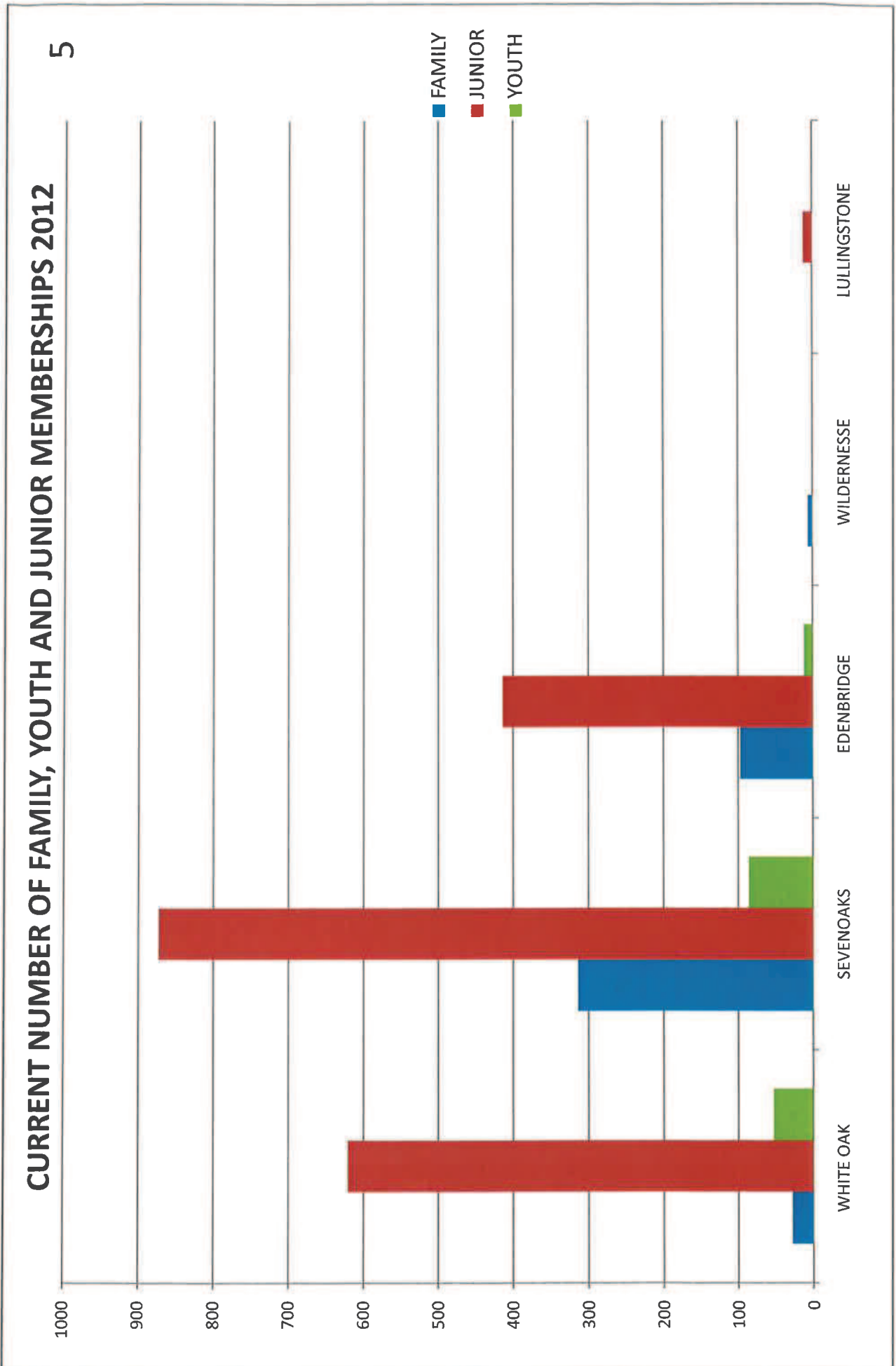
2

% USAGE BY CATEGORY 2011



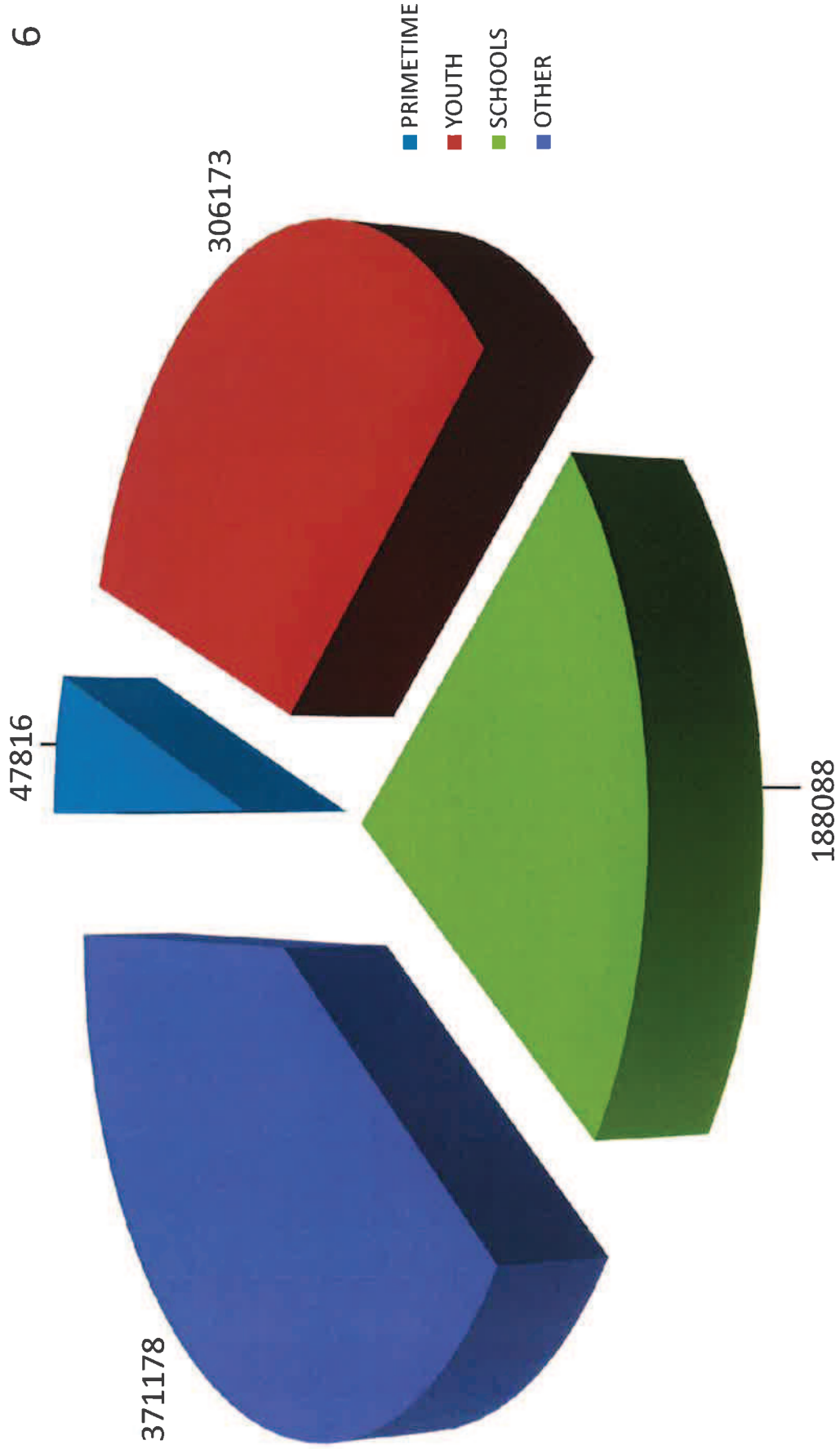






TOTAL USAGE BY COMMUNITY CATEGORY 2011

6



TOTAL USAGE 913255

Case Study 1

Edenbridge Leisure Centre: 2011-12 - Vickie's Story

If proof were needed that faddy diets don't work, take one look at Vickie Martin. The 40-year-old, who works in Edenbridge, is both a model of determination and an inspiration to anyone who has seen the road to weight loss and better health as one littered only with obstacles.

Crucially, she is someone who has achieved a formidable transformation in her weight and fitness by adhering to the two undisputed basics of healthy living – regular exercise and a good, balanced intake of the right foods.

The sales executive, who attends Edenbridge Leisure Centre, lost five stone over six months in 2010 and has subsequently shed a further six, taking her from 21 to 13 stone. That is a weight she hasn't been since her early teens.

"I had tried every food plan and possible solution out there, from blood group diets to hypnotherapy," says Vickie. "And I wasn't just carrying all that extra weight, I had a slipped disc, gout, hip rotation and no energy. I was in pain every day and was so close to going for the gastric band option. Then one day, with 40 looming on the horizon, I had a sort of epiphany and decided it was up to me to take control."

It started with a total reduction in the amount of carbohydrates (potatoes, bread and pasta) combined with an exercise regime that saw Vickie work closely with Ben Whitman, the then fitness manager at Edenbridge Leisure Centre, and his team.

"The guys at Edenbridge Leisure Centre have been absolutely brilliant; so supportive and encouraging. It's a daunting prospect to even think about exercise when you are so overweight but they have been fantastic and so generous with their time. I can now run 40 minutes on the treadmill easily and quite happily. They have also helped me to really tone-up which is obviously crucial when you have lost so much weight," says Vickie.

"And there have been many other benefits as well, from far fewer aches and pains, better quality of sleep and an unbelievable increase in energy levels," she adds

So, what's next? "I am going to do a marathon. A couple of years ago there was, quite frankly, more chance of me going to the moon than running 26 miles! Now, I know I can do it," she says with understated determination. And who would doubt her.

If you would like advice on losing weight and finding the right exercise programme to suit your goals, ask the Wellness team at your local Sencio Community Leisure gym.

Case Study 2

White Oak Leisure Centre: 2010-12 – Debbie’s Story

For Debbie Hoath attending a special one-hour weekly session at White Oak Leisure Centre has literally been life changing.

The 13-year-old from Swanley has been a regular at the centre’s Disability Fun Club for the past year – a year in which the youngster, who has severe social, communication and interaction difficulties, has blossomed, grown in confidence and, crucially, found a fixed point within her week for care-free play in a supportive and nurturing environment.

Debbie is one of a small group of youngsters who participate in a programme based around activities that include trampolining, bouncy castle and soft play as well as informal sessions in sports such as football, table tennis and badminton.

“When it comes to things like imaginative play, Debbie has a mental age of four or five. She has very low self esteem and behavioural issues,” says her grandmother Chris Hoath.

“The Disability Fun Club was recommended as a place Debbie might enjoy and from which she could really benefit and happily that has proved to be the case. Her confidence has grown, she has a place in which she can be herself and in which she is safe, supervised and encouraged.

“The transformation in Debbie has been significant. She looks forward to a Tuesday afternoon as somewhere she can laugh, giggle, be active and play with others,” adds Chris. “It allows Debbie to have that special time to herself and it enables me to go for a coffee and a little break as a full-time guardian.”

Chris is also quick to praise the staff who take charge of the weekly club and who invest great energy and empathy in their work with children affected by a range of physical, learning and behavioural difficulties.

“I cannot praise Becky Bowen, Cat McVicar and the band of wonderful volunteers who run this club highly enough,” says Chris. “It may only be an hour a week but that hour has made an enormous difference to Debbie’s quality of life. She has established a strong bond with the team and you can see tangible examples of how these sessions are helping her.”

Becky Bowen, Sencio Community Leisure’s sports development officer, says: “When Debbie came to us she was incredibly reserved and tended to just play on her own. But there is no stopping her now and she arrives with us every week ready and raring to go, mixing easily with others, taking an active role in all our activities and being a popular member of the club with our staff and our fantastic volunteers from the Orchard Academy and local volunteer centre.”

For further information on the Disability Fun Club, which takes place at White Oak Leisure Centre in Swanley on Tuesdays between 4.00 and 5.00 pm, contact Becky Bowen on 01732 746010.

Off to a tee

David Leck looks at local opportunities for young golfers

Headlines these days often focus on concerns about the activity levels of our young people. Look around the South East though, and there is no shortage of evidence to suggest we have our fair share of youngsters taking up new sports or excelling at an existing one.

the development of the next Rory McIlroy.

Nationally, The Golf Foundation – a charitable organisation – is charged with introducing one million young people to golf each year, while at local level, the County Academy Programme for Kent currently has 180 youngsters aged between nine and 15 on its scheme. It runs an open

accepted onto the scheme will typically take part in six half-day sessions a year alongside events and coaching offered through a local 'host' club."

The route into golf is increasingly one through work undertaken in schools, clubs and communities. Run at grass-roots level by county development officers like Fiona, it is based around a six-week programme in which young people are taught not just the basics of the game but personal development skills integral to success in any sport and, indeed, in life.

actively promoted what we offer and, crucially, made the whole experience one that is accessible and not full of barriers.

"Numbers fluctuate, but we have had as many as 80 juniors on our programme, aged between nine and 17. A few have won prestigious club competitions, some have progressed to being coached at county level and, during summer months, they frequently travel around taking part in junior opens at other clubs."

LPGC is preparing to host a junior nine-hole competition in June as part

Young players have to be viewed as being integral to a club's survival

But what are local golf courses themselves doing to widen the sports appeal among young people? Mark Watt, head professional at Lullingstone Park Golf Course (LPGC), is certain of one thing – the encouragement and development of young players has to be viewed as integral to a club's long-term survival.

"Golf has traditionally never been that great at embracing young people, but things have changed. We have come on leaps and bounds here at Lullingstone. Five years ago we had 10 juniors at all but have

of the Trailblazers Junior Tour (www.trailblazerstour.com) – a scheme administered by PGA professional Scott Stevens.

And recognising the pressures on family finances, it has always made its annual junior membership affordable – now £120 with virtually unlimited play on the nine and 18-hole courses, together with tuition from a Lullingstone professional.

The importance of an inclusive policy is one also endorsed across at Hever Castle Golf Course, as resident professional Peter Parks explains. "We are firmly



PGA professional Tiffany Woodyer with a young player. Photo: Adrian Millage

But when it comes to golf, barriers such as cost, perceived elitism and the policies of certain clubs, that can hardly be described as 'inclusive' when it comes to junior players, have often combined to thwart the flow of young people into the game and, who knows, maybe

recruitment process that is not restricted to those who are already members of a golf club.

"This is designed to be a long-term programme," says Fiona Brown, the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) regional coaching development officer (South East). "Those

Off to a tee

focused on the 'family friendly' message – we have to be if we are to flourish and secure the next generation of players," says Parks. "Golf requires a time commitment, so it can be a big ask for people to give up a chunk of their weekend when family time is limited.

"We now offer every new adult member two free under-18 memberships, which they can use to entice children into the game and make it a real family experience. And we have also placed great emphasis on developing the social side of things so, for instance, we had an event here recently with players from 10 years old to those in their early 80s.

Charged with encouraging and developing players as young as four, Parks and Watt are both agreed there is more to their roles than teaching a youngster a sport, a view echoed by Brown. "It is often the social and interpersonal skills a junior player acquires that can be as beneficial to them as the fun and challenge of mastering the game. These are basic core skills

invaluable for later life, whether it is patience, discipline and honesty or politeness, respect and basic arithmetic.

"Golf is a great sport for young people and, with more opportunities now available to them, we hope many more will get out there and give it a go."

For information on local golf coaching and development opportunities for young people, visit

www.lullingstonegolf

course.co.uk,

www.hever.co.uk or call

Dewlands Manor Golf,

Rotherfield, on 01892

852266. For details of

the County Academy

Programme's assessment

day for young people,

visit www.kentgolffpartnership.org.uk

