

# Pawel puts football focus on lifeskills

Story by **INNES ENSLIN**

Football training with a psychology twist is coming to Aylsham and Norwich.

Pav's Funball Academy is a new football and education scheme that is to be run in our area from February by forward-thinking coach Pawel Guziejko.

The academy, which was founded last year by 38-year-old Pawel, sees children focus on football as a fun way to improve their motor skills and get healthy, both physically and mentally.

He decided to set up the scheme as a response to getting children back outside.

"Not enough children are having fun outside anymore. Through football I want to change that as sport can improve you physically and the confidence it builds in a child can make them a better person," he said.

Funball is aimed to make children feel like they are in charge and valued, which Pawel feels can improve mental health.

Pawel moved to the UK in 2009 from Poland and began working with Norwich City FC and later the FA (who he still works for at times) in order to help improve his coaching skills and better understand child psychology.

He recounts these years fondly and explained how they helped forge Funball's ethos.

"I get a great sense of pride from being able to say I work for one the leading football organisations in the world. It was at this time I learned that children need to be communicated with to improve social skills. This is why football is such a good way to build self-esteem and make friends," he said.

This is the driving force behind him, simplifying the way to talk to the children and educate them in a child-friendly way.

The training sessions are for children aged five-16 and as well as the football side of things Pawel and his team are aiming to teach life skills from this year, including workshops on CV writing to help young



people find work.

When asked why he does this he said: "Schools often don't do enough real work learning and I feel as a coach I should be able to offer advice to the kids that will help them in and out of football."

The team also aims to start providing sessions for free to help underprivileged children in Norfolk.

They love seeing happy children and the improvements in their wellbeing through playing sport and this new scheme to help improve your children's lives will be launching in Aylsham in late February.

**Details for signing up can be found on their website at [www.pavfunballacademy.co.uk](http://www.pavfunballacademy.co.uk).**

## Grants for Broadland's rising sports stars

Rising athletic stars in Broadland can now apply for a Sports Community Grant to help with the cost of training or competing.

The grants are available to those living in the district, who are currently competing at a regional level or higher to help with outgoings such as coaching costs, competition entry fees, equipment or physiotherapy.

Grants of up to £125 are available per athlete, with a closing date of January 29. Funds are limited and are subject to availability.

To be eligible, athletes must live in Broadland, be competing at a minimum

of regional level and must participate in a sport recognised by Sport England.

Last year, grants were awarded to sportspeople including athlete Serena Grace, of Horsford, and baton twirler, Tiegan Poynter, of Sprowston.

Previous recipients include former paralympian Jonathan Drane and tennis star Alfie Hewett.

Broadland District Council's member champion for sport Claudette Bannock said: "We are keen to support rising sports stars in the district and hope these awards can help with some of the costs that come with competing at a higher level.

"Broadland District Council recognises the importance of health and wellbeing for all its residents and runs a number of initiatives to help."

All applications must be made on official forms and submitted by post or email.

A supporting statement is required from a coach and this can be emailed to [sport@broadland.gov.uk](mailto:sport@broadland.gov.uk) or posted to the economic development team at Broadland District Council.

**For more information, or to request an application form, call Maria Hutson on 01603 430570 or email [sport@broadland.gov.uk](mailto:sport@broadland.gov.uk)**