



Michael with a meal he has produced



Michael enjoying his time in the kitchen



Everyone gets together for a picture. Right, Simon and James

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THE FORMER Salts Sports & Social Club in Saltaire has been transformed into Salts Hub, a community-use building that currently houses several community interest companies and charities which work with groups in the local area. These groups include:

*Skills Kitchen - a daycare service for adults with learning disabilities, autism or neuro diversity, centred around independence and healthy cooking skills.

*Mojojack Music - a new, friendly, people-centred day service providing the opportunity for adults with disabilities to create and perform music.

*Action for Sport - a national charity dedicated to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate in sport.

*Summat Creative - a company which co-produces creative and sports projects with people with learning disabilities. They jointly run a monthly cook and walk project with the Skills Kitchen group, from Salts Hub.

All these groups are working together as part of the Salts sport family to improve inclusive disability use of this local community space.

Here we talk to James Brett and Simon Kennett, directors of Skills Kitchen. Simon and James share a lifelong passion for food, plus extensive catering & hospitality experience.

Q: How did the kitchen come to exist?

A: Skills kitchen started life when lockdown restrictions were relaxed. We took advantage of a socially distant dog walk and the opportunity to talk and inject some humour into the bizarre pace of life. Skills Kitchen was developed during these walks, with a tennis ball a willing retriever and a flask of tea.

It enabled us to think creatively, plan, discuss, agree and disagree on how we can manifest our self-funded Community Interest Company to life, which we did in January 2023.

We set out to deliver quality training that equips our learners to confidently use equipment used in domestic kitchens safely, as part of contributing to home life and independent living into the future.

Q: How did you find premises?

A: James and I visited a varied selection of buildings, but we kept comparing these to the setting of Salts Hub. We had been to social events at the Salts Sports & Social Club bar and lounge and were aware that the building had been closed for more than two years and that there were no plans to open it again due to the increased costs of running it.



Emily rustling up a dish

We began discussions with Salts Football charity (and other users of the site) to see if there was any interest in us converting the old bar into a learners' kitchen and community use room. Fortunately they were very interested and after further discussions and six months of renovation to the former snooker room, new electrics and a kitchen installation, skills kitchen at Salts Hub, was born.

Q: What is the relationship between yourselves and Salts Tennis Club?

A: I (Simon) have been a member of the

tennis club for more than 20 years and a regular visitor to the social club. When a decision was made that the bar function lounge was no longer a potential use for the building, everyone involved wanted to see how it could be re-purposed and re-used. All the sports on site - football, tennis and bowls have worked together and made Skills Kitchen and Salts Hub welcome and now have regular joint social events. We have put on many joint events and want to build joint use of all sections and make it available to everyone - this has



skills to use throughout life



James delivers a lesson in the Skills Kitchen

pushed forward disability sport, with their already being a disability football team using the facilities. We hope that this can be extended to all the sports and communities alike.

Q: How many adults do you take?

A: We have eight adults a day visiting Skills Kitchen, but we also have community groups using the other room at the hub and hope to increase the community links of the building. This has started to build the community group links across

the site and means the sporting, hub, community and disability use of the site can grow.

Q: What sort of comments have you had from those attending?

A: We have had many, many comments from the learners and their family members, carers and social workers. Here are some examples:

'Over Christmas I was slicing a pepper, I left it and when I turned round 'E' had picked up the knife and was continu-

ing with care and confidence to slice it. I could see how much he'd learnt with you. We had a chat about the skills kitchen and what he learnt. It was a lovely moment, I felt very proud.'

'I liked learning how to use a whisk, creating complete meals and eating them.'

'He really enjoys cooking his lunch but also cooking things that he can bring home.'

'It's fantastic. I'm learning new skills

& trying different foods'

Q: How does this link with the Disability Tennis Programme?

Disability Tennis is the next stage of offering the sporting facilities for use to some of our regular visitors, who may not have had the chance to do this before. We are hoping that the more people find out about the project and get to take part in some of our inclusive coaching. Players from the disability football team have expressed an interest to play tennis

as have our learners and other visitors. If we can create regular access to the courts, the pitches and even the bowling greens, with coaching and help, we hope to see a full community program develop in the future which would be inclusive and disability accessible.

Jim Dyer of Salts Tennis Club says:

"In line with Salts Tennis Club policies of affordable, inclusive tennis for all, it is proud to be partnering Salts Hub in bringing Disability and Learning Dis-



Dan and Emily



Frances with some of the tasty dishes that the team has prepared