

QUEEN ELIZABETH OLYMPIC PARK: PUTTING COMMUNITY AT THE HEART OF DIGITAL STRATEGY



A legacy torch does not come with a heavier weight than for the team running East London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, the home of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The 560-acre site contains landmark sporting venues and a vibrant events programme, but it is also a promise to the people of East London to deliver 6,800 new homes and a commercial district creating 40,000 jobs over the next ten years.

For the team handed this torch, ensuring the people who live, work, visit and study in the communities in and around Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park are the focus and at the heart of the decision-making process.

This was particularly applicable when it came to providing free public WiFi, an ambition realised in March 2015. Central to making this a success was teaming up with WiFi specialist, WiFi SPARK.

The result was gigabit WiFi connectivity throughout the Park and seamless roaming across the entire area. There were other concerns too, including how to ensure families, schools and visitors would know "adult content" was being filtered out of the WiFi from the get-go.

It was at this stage in 2015 that WiFi SPARK introduced Friendly WiFi, the government initiated, safe certification standard for public WiFi.

Venues and organisations displaying the Friendly WiFi symbol have been cleared as meeting the minimum filtering standards which deny access to pornography and webpages known by the Internet Watch Foundation to host indecent images of children and advertisements or links to such content.

Since the WiFi went live there have been 300,000 sessions with around 15% - circa 45,000 sessions – from Park visitors under the age of 18.

Ben Edmonds, IT Programme and Change Manager at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park said: "We have a core set of strategic aims that govern our vision – and community is at the heart of it all.

"So, when it came to looking at free, public WiFi, we knew we needed to make it inclusive, easy to access and effective, so all of our Park visitors can use it.

"We also needed to let people know it was safe. We have all ages to consider, from toddlers to our older visitors. So, the question was, 'how could we create an embedded solution that was universally recognised yet carried an independent endorsement?"

"That's when WiFi SPARK introduced us to Friendly WiFi and, as soon as we were certified, using the symbol became an important part of our communication to all sections of our community.

"Everyone can be safe in the knowledge that our public WiFi meets these standards and get on with enjoying the Park – whether that's online or off."

Matt O'Donovan, CEO of WiFi SPARK, said: **"We worked collaboratively with Ben and his team every step of the way on this project and it was wonderful to be able to introduce him to Friendly WiFi. As an approved Friendly WiFi vendor we are proud to be able to offer our customers a WiFi service that is certified as safe and suitable to be used by all members of the public."**

Bev Smith from Friendly WiFi said: **"Providing WiFi to so many people in a space of such scale and complexity needs to be driven by a real desire to get things right for the people it is helping connect.**

"We are proud to be involved with the team at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park through our certification of their safe public WiFi. Through their diligence and community spirit they ensure this wonderful space looks after the needs of the different generations thriving here today and of generations to come.

"They show they are proud advocates of Friendly WiFi by their fantastic signage throughout Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park."

Watch and find out more about the Park here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=bO4LNdv0VIY&feature=youtu.be
www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk