

Gareth remembers his involvement in starting up Sele Farm Youth Club and, in spite of an injury that prevented him playing at the time, Sele Farm Football Team

On Sele Farm, the teenagers met on a regular basis by the shops in the evening. One evening it was decided we would like a youth club on the estate. When we started talking about a youth club, there was a girl, Carol Norris, she was a year or so older than the rest of us, and we got her to actually put together a letter to the Community Association about it. The grown-ups weren't doing anything, you know, really, about youth clubs or anything like that so we approached the Community Association direct with a letter and they thought it was quite a good idea and it started straightaway.

They supplied three grown-ups to run the club and presented us with a small amount of finance to get the club started. The club became very popular; it was based in Hawthorn Close in a Community hut. After a while a table tennis session was introduced and was supervised by grown-up Tommy Coleman, a very good table tennis player.

Eventually the membership became quite large and I think restrictions had to be imposed really because it was only a small hut, the Community Hut, but it was really, really good and we used to have exchange evenings with other youth clubs in Hertford. We'd go there, they'd come to us. So, it was a way of meeting and getting a larger, sort of, thing.

From that we decided to approach the Association to form a football team. So an advert was placed in the newsagent shop advertising for footballers who wanted to join a football team on Sele Farm estate. From this a friendly game was arranged against Bengeo Trinity Reserves at Crouchfield. We lost the game 16-0 so we had to weed out some of the players and attract new players. Eventually we did improve.

We had all sorts say "Yeah, we're footballers and we'll have a game." Some were in their forties, some were in their thirties, some never played football, and that was the team that went out against. I can play. I played football in Cardiff before I came to Hertford, as a young boy, but that month in the County Hospital, So, yeah, I couldn't play at that time so I used to help the bloke run it. The bloke that used to run it didn't know much about football but he was a bit of a, you know, organiser. So I used to get the fellers to play, you know, 'cos I knew different footballers in the town. My job, I was 15, was to get people to come and play and kick out one or two that weren't up to scratch like, really.

You couldn't play, every week 16-0. That's not a football score really – that's a rugby score! But yeah, I used to keep in touch with football because of the injury and then after 2 years I could start playing again. I played for Hoddesdon after that, when I was older and I played at Hitchin, you know, so I was quite a good footballer when I was younger.