NEWS RELEASE
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Special Olympics Athletics a big success

Athletes from across Suffolk took part in Suffolk’s first ever Special Olympics Athletics Competition at Northgate Track on Wednesday 17th August. Participation in the event qualifies athletes to take part in events across the country including at national level. Although the main aim is to encourage ongoing participation in club coaching and competition, for some the opportunity will be there to be considered for selection by Special Olympics GB for international competition.

Local athletics club Orwell Panthers played a central and pivotal role in supporting Special Olympics Suffolk’s team of volunteers to organise the event.

A number of personal best performances were set with the highlight being a very closely contested 100m which saw Waveney Valley AC athlete Aiden Hewitt win in an excellent time of 12.6 seconds. The quality of the race was such that second placed Rhys Turnbull-Bester posted an impressive 12.9 seconds with host club athlete Ollie Minns taking the bronze in 13.4 seconds.

Murton Mann, the Suffolk based Chairman of Special Olympics Great Britain and a member of the Special Olympics Suffolk Action Group said:

“It was wonderful to see so many athletes competing and enjoying themselves. I was really impressed by the high standard of competition and it was great to see so many athletes achieving personal bests spurred on by the atmosphere. A fantastic first for Suffolk in this the inaugural Special Olympics Suffolk competition, the first of many and the start of more opportunities for people with an intellectual disability in our county. A very big thanks to everyone involved in providing ongoing training and for organising this competition, also to Ipswich Orwell Rotary Club for providing the initial start-up funding for Special Olympics Suffolk”

The timing of Suffolk’s first event coincides with the staging of the Special Olympics European Summer Games in Antwerp which are currently taking place.  www.so2014.com
Further information about the athletics competition or Special Olympics Suffolk contact either Terry McEntee on terrymcentee474@gmail.com 07775 557784 or Matt Abbott on matt@elatussports.co.uk or 07846 510139.

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EDITORS NOTES: SPECIAL OLYMPICS

The charity Special Olympics Great Britain (SOGB, www.specialolympicsgb.org.uk est. 1978) is the country’s largest provider of year-round sports training and competition for all people with an Intellectual Disability.

It is recognised as the third member of the “Olympic family” and the only other organisation allowed to use the word Olympic.

Unlike the Paralympics or Olympics, Special Olympics is not just an event every four years for elite athletes but training and personal development for all abilities achieved through regular local sports club meetings leading to participation in regional, national and international events and competitions.

Special Olympic Oath: “Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt”

SOGB is community based run by volunteers in the local community. The charity helps to transform the lives of children and adults with learning disabilities through sport.... BUT is more than just sport, it is training for life.

Until now Suffolk has been one of only four counties in the country not to have a Special Olympics club. The setting up of Special Olympics Suffolk, this first competition and ongoing programme has been possible due to funding from Ipswich Orwell Rotary Club and its Germany counterpart Hanau Maintal Rotary Club.
Locally the added drive is that the Chairman of the SOGB Board lives in Ipswich and is determined to bring the opportunity of Special Olympics to Suffolk.

The second event, which will be a gymnastics competition at Waveney Gymnastics Club in Lowestoft, will take place on Sunday November 16th. This will be a regional competition and mark the Official Launch Event of Special Olympics Suffolk.

Next year Special Olympics Suffolk aims to offer other sports with initial discussions and plans for swimming already underway.

In Great Britain there are an estimated 1.2 million people with an intellectual disability. When you consider families, friends and carers, the total footprint of those affected is near up to 12 million people. 200 babies will be born this week with a learning disability.

The global Special Olympics Movement was founded in 1968 when the late Eunice Kennedy Shriver (President John F. Kennedy’s sister) started a day camp for people with learning disabilities at her home in America. Today Special Olympics has a presence in nearly 200 countries with over 3 million athletes.