Mark dons MK Dons hoodie to celebrate young people's achievements

Mark has visited an innovative youth programme, backed by the government and being run in partnership with MK Dons Sport & Education Trust and The Football League Trust. 35 young people have been actively involved in team building and personal challenges as well as planning and delivering projects that make a real difference in their own communities. These projects range from making anti-racism music videos to running community fun days, regenerating underpasses with street art and raising awareness of disability sports. Participants come from all parts of our region and have a range of abilities and skills; for some young people being away from home for the first time on the residential trips to Stowe and Hayling Island had a big impact on their confidence. Participants took part in a 'speed-dating' event with local organisations that were able to share ideas with young people about how they could become 'active citizens'.

National Citizen Service (NCS) supports the Government's vision for building a Big Society. The scheme has been running in Milton Keynes this summer working with a group of really inspiring young people; supporting them to develop the skills and attitudes they need to become more engaged with their communities and become active and responsible citizens. NCS has been making a positive contribution to local communities, working with schools, youth services, businesses and community groups to create a more cohesive, responsible and engaged society.

NCS is a voluntary eight-week summer programme for 16-18 year-olds that promotes:

a more cohesive society by mixing participants of different backgroundsa more responsible society by supporting the transition into adulthood for young peoplea more engaged society by enabling young people to work together to create social action projects in their local communities.

Mark met the group at Stadiummk during one of their regular planning sessions and was able to hear first hand about the good work being carried out and the impact being part of NCS has had on individuals and communities in Milton Keynes. Team Leaders from The Youth Service, Community Action: MK and MK Dons Sport & Education Trust were also there to meet Mark and talk about their very positive experiences of working with the group this year. Young people presented Mark with his very own NCS hoodie which he wore with pride and commented;

"I was so impressed by the young people at the MK Dons National Citizen Service who are using their imagination and hard work to make a real difference in their communities. To take on projects such as renovating underpasses and organising community days shows not only maturity, but a real dedication to the areas in which they live. After everything that has happened this week, I was so heartened to meet those who prove the majority of young people are good people â€“ and proud to wear one of their hoodies!"

The group will join hundreds of other 16-18 year olds in September for a huge celebration event at Wembley Arena to recognise the fantastic contribution the young people have made to their communities as well as the new skills and experiences they have had during their NCS journey.