

Plymouth goes batty at the Ping! national launch

Author: Paul Stimpson

Posted On: June 15, 2015



The Plymouth city centre tables were busy all day

Ping pong balls were flying in all directions over the city centre of Plymouth on Saturday as Ping! launched its sixth annual national street ping pong festival with a spectacular event at the city's Piazza. Now in 19 cities, this was the first time the national launch had taken place outside London.

Hundreds took part, with young and old putting down their shopping bags to pick up a bat and have a go on one of the 18 tables filling the vast space.

Despite the breezy weather which added a certain 'spin' to the play, visitors were eager to take on the Ping! robot firing balls at them and play 'round the table' on the customised circular table with waves as a net and lighthouses as posts.

Local councillors left politics to one side as they took on each other in grudge matches, and in a heavyweight clash of the mascots, Raiders' Foxy beat Plymouth Argyle's Pilgrim Pete in a Ping Pong Ding Dong.



David Wetherill with the two mascots

Plymouth Paralympian superstar David Wetherill exhibited his skills and accepted the challenge from the many enthusiastic visitors wishing to play him. David said: "It was just unbelievable to see so many people having lots of fun playing table tennis in my home city. There really are some fantastic opportunities for table tennis at the moment, it's absolutely booming, and it's growing all the time so hopefully this project will get even more people actively playing and enjoying the sport!"

Louise Kelley, sports development manager at the council, said: "It has been really good. There have been loads of people here. Some were waiting to play when we were setting up the tables at 8am. Some people have been here for hours."

More tables have popped up in remarkable places all over the city, and will remain there for the next eight weeks, all you need to do is pick up a bat and play, and it's completely free!



Using the Ping! tables proved plain sailing for this pair

A record 19 towns and cities are hosting the Ping! festival this year, with 1,000 tables appearing in a variety of remarkable places including railway stations, shopping centres, cathedrals, beaches and even a table at Exeter Castle!

The Ping! cities and areas of Cornwall, Sheffield, Leicester and Bristol have already launched for this summer; Leeds kicked off yesterday with a sky ride event at the University of Leeds. Liverpool, Milton Keynes, Middlesbrough and Exeter all launch this week, with Cambridge launching on Saturday 20th June at the Chesterton festival with the Stilt ladies table tennis players.

The remaining Ping! cities of Croydon, Nottingham, Birmingham, Chelmsford, London, Tower Hamlets, Brighton and Oxford will be launching throughout the next four weeks. Visit www.pingengland.co.uk for more information.

Each city will be putting their own unique spin on the Ping! experience. As well as free play, the tables will feature 'Random Acts of Ping Pong' with organised games and activities; coaching, exhibitions and fun competitions.

The 1,000 tables will remain long after the Ping! festival is over; installed in parks and estates on a permanent basis or donated to organisations for the benefit of the community.

Julie Snowdon

June 15, 2015

Downloaded From:

<https://newsarchive.tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/archived/plymouth-goes-batty-at-the-ping-national-launch/>