

Badminton star praises council facilities

One of the world's top badminton players has praised local leisure facilities for helping his fitness as he toured the world collecting a haul of medals.

Anthony Clark is one of England's most capped badminton players of all time having represented his nation 103 times.

He competed at the 2004 and 2008 Olympics and has won seven Commonwealth, nine European championship and two world championship medals in a career spanning more than 15 years.

Anthony, 33, of Ellistown, was honoured at a recent full council meeting for his silver medal-winning display at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi and said facilities at Hermitage and Hood Park Leisure Centres helped him on his way.

Anthony told Vision: "I have been very fortunate to be able to use those facilities. They've been a massive help to me over the years because you have to work hard on your

fitness and they certainly suit my needs.

"It's great that the council recognised my achievements. It lets you know that all your efforts have been worth it. You don't get massive press coverage in my sport so when someone comes along and praises your achievements it really is an amazing feeling."

Anthony said he wants to bow out of the badminton world after the Olympics in London next summer.

He said: "I'm planning to retire after 2012 so it would be a nice way to go out with an Olympic medal. It is the pinnacle of any British athlete to compete in the Olympics in your own country.

"It won't be easy to qualify - but it would be the highlight of my career I think."

And to other aspiring athletes in North West Leicestershire, Anthony had this advice: "You have to follow your dream - but to do that you must work harder than anyone else."

Leisure Centre ranked among country's best

Hermitage Leisure Centre is one of the nation's top 30 facilities, according to new rankings released by Sport England.

The Whitwick facility was ranked as "Excellent" by Quest, Sport England's UK quality scheme for sport and leisure centres. It is officially now one of the best in Leicestershire.

The leisure centre was praised by Sport England inspectors for a revamp of disabled changing facilities, engaging with the community to improve services, cleanliness, systems and standards, reception service, people management and programme development.