

23rd November 2023

'The Show Must Go On,' as Gerflor donate Taraflex® AE sports floor to Penketh Youth Centre.

A Warrington Youth Centre that hosted a live vocal performance forty years ago from Freddie Mercury, who would later go on to be the frontman of rock legends Queen, has been given some much-needed help by international flooring and interiors specialist Gerflor. As part of Gerflor's commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the company played a positive role by donating an Olympic pedigree Taraflex® Sports surface in 'Silver Gray' that would benefit the Community and support Grass Roots for many years to come.

Penketh Youth Centre in Warrington provides activities such as Karate, Football, Netball, Dance and Crafts each day and is run by a hard-working group of Volunteers. A Doctor who volunteers and helps to run the centre outside of her busy schedule, takes up the story. Dr. Leila Dirir said, "The hall was built sometime in the early 1960's and was funded as a youth club for decades but sadly fell into disrepair in the mid -1990's. Around early 2000's my late Father Allin Dirir decided to reinvigorate the club. He fixed almost all the repairs himself and managed this without any funding from anywhere. Within a year and with the help of some incredible local volunteers the youth club was bustling with children again. Before his passing in 2018 he fundraised for new windows which we installed in 2019. As a family we are committed to continue with his legacy."

Dr. Leila further commented, "Back in Jan 2020 I was called by David Carter, Sports National Sales Manager from Gerflor, who had heard we were a small community youth centre that was struggling and were desperate for a new sports floor. The floor we had at the time was a concrete material from the 1960's, which was cracked, looked unsightly and was becoming problematic and unsafe for children to play on. We were looking at quotes for a new sports floor but were finding them just unaffordable." She added, "The fact that Gerflor had contacted us and were willing to help for such a worthy cause in order to benefit the local community, left us all absolutely speechless. It was such an amazing opportunity, that they were offering to donate a brand new Taraflex® Olympic pedigree sports floor. It felt as if all our prayers had been answered. As the pandemic hit, the future of the youth centre was under threat unless we could have addressed the need for an urgent refurbishment of the sports floor which was becoming a real issue for our facility."

On installation of the brand new Gerflor Taraflex® sports floor, Fellow Youth Club Volunteer Chris Whitfield commented, "There were some structural problems that proved challenging. The construction of the floor built in the 1960's, had meant that over time, part of it had risen in places and it had subsequently meant that the surface was uneven. At one point it was difficult to know if the project would still go ahead."

With the input of the amazing support and technical advice of the Gerflor Specification team and also the structural floor specialists, they overcame the problem to provide us with a world class solid floor."

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On the Freddie Mercury connection, Dr. Leila went on to comment, “We were contacted by the Freddie Mercury Association and advised that in May 1969 Freddie Mercury had played at our hall in a band called IBEX, before he joined Queen. Since then, we have had contact from some locals who confirm this was the case. We are currently in the process of doing an ‘exhibition’ with evidence of the visit.”

She also went on to say, “We know that with the new Taraflex® high quality sports floor that was so kindly donated by Gerflor, my father would be absolutely delighted and proud with where the centre is now. This indoor sports surface will help us to expand the activities we can offer to the local community for the coming year, and we are also excited and extremely pleased that we have prolonged the longevity of the youth centre for at least a few more decades.”

Commenting on the project, David Carter, National Sales Manager for Sports at Gerflor said, “Gerflor is committed to supporting Local Communities and Grass Roots. As part of our CSR commitments, the teams are also looking for opportunities to give something back to charitable organisations. On this occasion, it became clear that a relatively small hall of around 120m² has much more importance to the community than many larger halls. The existing flooring surface was in a state of disrepair, it looked troublesome but with contributions from the many Gerflor staff, we came up with the right solution by supplying and donating our high performance Taraflex® AE system.” David Carter continued, “The dedication shown by the team running the hall, ensures that Leila’s father’s legacy is not only maintained but improved upon. It’s something that Gerflor as a company and also myself are really proud to help with. Penketh Youth Centre now have a floor from an Olympic supplier right in the heart of the community.”

In conclusion Dr. Leila said, “It’s still hard to believe we were lucky enough to receive such a generous gift from Gerflor. This floor has absolutely transformed our club and will serve the children of the local area for decades to come. It really is quite unbelievable that we now have an Olympic level sports floor in our local club.

The team at Gerflor have been incredible to work with. Supportive, attentive, highly professional and addressed any concerns we had.”

Technical overview of products installed.

Taraflex® AE systems are area elastic floors consisting of undercarriage construction topped with Taraflex® Surface. With a number of differing build ups, the product can be configured to suit the project. Ranging from a low-profile non-adjustable system with just a 22mm profile, right up to a cradle and batten system suiting voids from 55mm to 180mm and beyond.

Taraflex® Surface is a compact vinyl sheet sports floor covering consisting of a D-Max™ surface - Gerflor’s own complex made up of calendared polyvinyl chloride (PVC) sheets reinforced with a fibre glass grid for high durability and outstanding dimensional stability.

With a complete range of shock absorption ranging from P1 all the way through to C4, Taraflex® sports floorings from Gerflor provide the right solution every time and deliver optimal safety and comfort for users.

The combination of D-Max™/D-Max™+, CXP™HD foam and undercarriages ensure that Taraflex® sports floorings are durable and high-performing. Taraflex® also meets the EN 14904 Standard which is the minimum performance requirements to be met by indoor sports floors. Its objective is to draw attention to the necessity of installing safe, floors that reduce the risk of injuries.

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Taraflex® sports flooring has been fitted at every Olympic Games since 1976.

Approved by many National and International governing bodies as a world class sports surface, it is also widely installed within the education, community, leisure, health, and fitness sectors. Taraflex® is ideal for new build projects and refurbishments and is extremely durable and cost effective to maintain. Over 6 million pupils everyday enjoy the benefits of Taraflex® sports flooring as it delivers a versatile range that can be used for various multi-specialist applications.

Learn more about Gerflor solutions, ask for a free sample or contact us to speak to a specialist today by calling 03332 412901, emailing contractuk@gerflor.com, or visiting gerflor.co.uk for the latest innovations.

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