

Estate's double soccer triumph

The community on a deprived inner city estate has been given new lease of life thanks to the double success of its football team.

Canterbury United FC, which was set up two years ago to give people on the estate an alterna-

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tive to crime and drugs, was an instant success when it won the Yorkshire Christian League in its first season.

But now the team has gone one better by both retaining its league title and winning the Yorkshire Christian League Cup in only its second season.

Team player-manager Kevin Metcalfe, 34, said the club had played an important part in helping to regenerate the estate and improving its image.

He said: "It's had a brilliant effect on the community. There had already been some physical regeneration on the estate but there was still nothing for people to do here.

"They still had the same problems with unemployment. The team gave them something to divert them away from the problems of crime and drugs and boredom. We have lads who come along now who say their

quality of life has improved since they started playing for the team.

"I think we are now showing people that although we come from an inner city estate we have other attributes apart from the usual stereotypes.

"We can now show that we can behave ourselves, we can make friends anywhere we go, and that we can play football.

The 25-strong team was started by Canterbury estate residents and the Christian charity Impact after a survey revealed that football was a popular pastime for residents.

Nigel Delaney of Impact said: "Canterbury United has made a major impact on the Yorkshire Christian League.

"They have earned a tremendous amount of respect from other teams throughout West Yorkshire who have commented on Canterbury United's hard work, commitment and fair play on and off the pitch. We hope to go from strength to strength."

The Yorkshire Christian League has added to the team's trophy cabinet by awarding it the title of 'Premiership Team of the Season'. Individual players were also recognised for their hard work and excellence, including Everton Hendy who was voted 'Player's Player of the Year' and David Gill for 'Best Goal Keeper'.