

## Matt raises the flag for Poole, towards London 2012.

As the spectacle of the Beijing Games came to a close, the London 2012 Handover Flag, heralding the countdown to the London Olympics was raised at Sandbanks beach in Poole, Dorset, on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> August in a celebration to mirror events taking place in Beijing.

In a symbolic gesture to mark the Olympic handover, Chinese dragon dancers were seen handing the flag to the Mayor of Poole, celebrating many events taking place in London and in towns all over the UK.

Sandbanks has been named as a potential training ground for athletes preparing for the beach volleyball events in 2012, and the flag was raised by Mathew Ware, aged 17, and Luke Gray, 16, who have both been identified as Olympic hopefuls for 2012. Parkstone based Mathew is currently fourth in the junior boy's table tennis rankings and Luke is a cyclo cross champion currently ranked second in the country.

Events began at 3pm with a display on Sandbanks promenade by Poole based "Dragon of the South" and a beach volleyball display followed prior to the official flag handover at 3.30pm.

The Mayor of Poole, Cllr Joyce Lavender announced the countdown to London 2012, after the flag was raised. She then went on to say "With Olympic fever gripping the nation and basking in medal glory we are all eagerly awaiting the time when Poole will play a key role in the next Olympics. We all wish our young hopefuls well for their chances to bring back more honour to Poole in 2012".