

This morning in the plenary hall of the Formentera Council, audience members learned about the double sponsorship of local athletes Joan Carles Cardona, Mateo Sanz and Sergi Escandell, three windsurfers for whom the 2016 Olympic games in Rio just might be in the cards.

The Council has earmarked €10,000 for each of the three young men and the hotel chain RIU has pitched in another €6,000 each. The money is intended to ensure that the athletes are able to dedicate as much time as possible to training.

At the event were Formentera Council president Jaume Ferrer, sports councillor Sergio Jiménez, Hotel La Mola director Gina Noguer, social responsibility administrative director for the RIU company Cati Alemany, head of the Formentera's local sailing school Asier Fernández and the three windsurfers, Joan Carles Cardona, Mateo Sanz and Sergi Escandell.

First of the group to speak, Cardona revealed that he and his companions were “excited to keep working hard and eager to show the Council and the RIU company how much we appreciate their efforts”. Sanz and Escandell said their goal was to make it to the Olympics and finished by promising: “We're going to do our best to see that it happens”.

Council president Ferrer spoke about the excitement in the air that at least one of the athletes make the Olympic cut. Ferrer noted that if any of them did, he would have the distinction of being the first Formenterenc to make it that far. The president spoke about the extraordinary effort that each of the boys had made - “it would be impossible to get this far doing it any other way” - and thanked Asier Fernández for a career marked by hard work: “From the beginning Asier has lead the school. He is the reason these athletes were able to reach their level of technical and competitive prowess”.

Ferrer also called to mind the “enormous efforts on the part of past administrations of the Ajuntament de Formentera as well as the current administration of the Council to keep the sailing school going”.

Fernández, director of what is commonly called the *escola de vela* on the island, gave thanks for all “the backing given to the boys and to the escola” and said, “We sure hope we can make this Olympic dream a reality”.

“Youth and sports give added value”

Gina Noguer of RIU congratulated the three young men and thanked the Council for its work. In her words, the current project “is an example of how the tourism industry can get involved in local community projects”. Cati Alemany stated: “Sports and youth contribute added value to Formentera”.