



LEEK TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB



CHARTER STANDARD
COMMUNITY CLUB

FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Background

Leek Town Football Club Limited ("LTFC") is both a Community Status and Charter Standard club. The first team play in the BetVictor Northern Premier League Division One East. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic the 2019/20 season was curtailed with 8 games to play, at which point we were top of the league with games in hand. We also topped the fair play league.

We have a Ladies Team which is currently playing in the West Midlands Regional League Premier Division were undefeated in the league at the time of curtailment. Our Ladies Team have progressed every year since its formation in 2012 with regular promotions. They are supported by a reserve team and the girl's section of Leek Town Juniors, who play in different age group teams.

We run an Academy, sponsored by the Northern Premier League, which provides an education in Sports Management up to NVQ level for school leavers between the ages of 16 and 18. The course includes football training, physiotherapy and sports management alongside general education, provided by tutors at Newcastle College. It's a two-year course which provides the student with entry qualifications for a number of sports related university programs. We expect to have 20 participants on this course next year.

We also run two Ability Counts teams providing football for adults and youngsters with learning difficulties.

We have a vibrant junior section Leek Town Juniors ("LTJ"), which is a registered charity (registered charity number 1153767). LTJ has 20 teams providing football for approximately 400 children between the ages of 6 to 18, including 5 girls teams.

LTJ provides a weekly evening program (Junior Blues) open to younger children to provide them with an introduction to football and coaching for those attending. We have a team of qualified coaches, some connected to football league clubs, who give their time for free to help develop the individual skills of the children attending. We regularly have approximately 40 children attending these weekly sessions.

We have introduced "Wildcats" football coaching for girls, sponsored by the FA, under which girls of all ages and abilities are invited to attend weekly. The coaching is undertaken by qualified members of our Ladies team and LTJ coaches.

We run a mentoring scheme for the managers of our junior teams, run in conjunction with the Staffordshire FA providing a highly qualified coach who mentors managers on a one to one basis with the intention of improving their coaching abilities.

We have a part time Community Officer whose role is to deliver football coaching into schools in the Staffordshire Moorlands area by way of after school clubs, holiday coaching courses, etc.



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The stadium at Harrison Park is owned by LTFC and the pitch is currently used by our First Team, Ladies Team, Academy Team and Stoke City Under 23s. We also host schools football days, NPL Academy finals, Lads & Dads finals and other ad hoc games. The present pitch is a grass surface which has stood up well to the usage of circa 65 games a year but we are unable to develop our football offering any further as the grass surface would suffer under extra usage.

Club Vision

The Club will provide the community of Staffordshire Moorlands with the opportunity to participate in football at all levels, irrespective of ability, appropriate to their age, sex and physical fitness, in a safe and enjoyable environment. Our coaching approach will enable all members to develop their skills, experience and qualifications in football and to play at an appropriate level for their ability and will encourage their continued participation in the sport throughout their life.

LTFC's see the facility as an opportunity to bring the whole club together under one roof. We presently have teams training and playing at various different places around Staffordshire Moorlands and the 3G Pitch will allow us to centre more of these football activities at our home venue. It will also ensure that the teams will have fewer games cancelled through bad weather and provide a quality playing surface for the teams who will use it for league games. Our objective is to provide a football hub for Leek Town and the whole Staffordshire Moorlands Community.

Club Development/Aims

- To provide facilities for other senior football teams in the area.
- To maintain and increase number of junior teams at the current level.
- To increase the club's activities in Walking Football and Inclusive Football.
- To develop and crystallise a pathway to the first team.
- To maintain and increase number of girls teams each year.
- To provide facilities for Walking Football, Inclusive Football, Mental Health initiatives, targeted physical Health programmes (Man v Fat).
- To develop and deliver community programmes through the year.
- To develop relationships with local schools to provide facilities to increase physical activities programmes

Our proposal will create a community football hub at Harrison Park, the change of surface would increase the available hours substantially, with the Club being operational 10 – 12 hours per day. This could provide access to the wider community for physical exercise, coaching, education and further use of the refreshment facilities.



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The installation of a 3G playing surface would allow us to utilise the facility 7 days a week, providing an opportunity for our junior teams to play and train on it. It would be available for use by schools and would be open to the general public for football activities. We would also propose to open our club room for snacks and drinks for spectators and players.

The teams using the proposed facility for league games are Leek Town FC, Leek Town Ladies, Leek Town Academy, Leek Town Ladies Reserves, Leek Town Under 18s, Leek Town under 7 & 8 boys and Leek Town under 7 & 8 girls.

Objectives for participation

	Objective	Target	Timescale	Cost	Comments
1	Maintain participation levels for boys	20 teams	2023	Self Funding	Increase levels limited by training and playing facilities. Provide Club sessions to improve age group structure and motivate managers and players.
2	Increase level of female teams	10 teams	2023	Self funding	Run female specific sessions within schools and local community. Build female coaching team. Encourage female parents to manage, and referee teams.
3	Provide local schools with training facilities	6 schools	2022	Self Funding	Invite schools to use the facility for weekly sports lessons.
4	Maintain Participation for Disability Groups	2 Teams	2022	Self Funding	Work with managers of disability groups to integrate them into the club
5	Run CPD sessions for parent managers	2 Sessions	2020/21	£0	
6	Ensure all managers have FA Level 1 qualification	30 Managers	2020/21	£0	Run in-house Level 1 course. Encourage membership of FA Coaches Association.
7	Encourage booking of club rooms by community groups	30 Meetings	2021/22	£0	Increase awareness of availability
8	Develop Walking Football	10 teams	2021/22	£0	Introduce Walking Football sessions. Attract participation from the older age groups.
9	Provide a pathway to First Team Football.	2 Players per	2021/22	£0	Integrate under 18 team into the club by use of facilities.



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		season			Integrate Academy and Under 18 into training with first team.
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Work required

We have held discussions with surveyors and pitch contractors, and are advised that the pitch infrastructure will need improvement, the work involved will be to slightly increase the area of the present playing surface, remove the existing surface and install the new 3G woven surface. Planning permission for the development has recently been granted.

The actual work required will involve the removal of the existing grass pitch and parts of the pitch substructure, re-alignment of some of the existing perimeter fencing, installation of new substructure for 3g, including levelling where necessary, and the laying of a level 3G carpet. There will also be netting installed along the Grace Street side of the ground to protect residential homes from footballs being kicked out of the ground.

Benefits

- This project will help the Local Authority to meet its requirement for a 3G facility in the Moorlands.
- The improved facility will provide access to children of all ages and abilities for them to partake in football activities at Harrison Park. The pitch will be used for coaching the children during the week, thereby saving the costs associated with hiring facilities elsewhere.
- The benefits of **Physical Wellbeing** are well known. The site will encourage the local community to take part in formal and informal recreational activities.
- Research shows that being active contributes to people have good **Mental Health**. The facility would naturally encourage this and specific programmes could be targeted regarding mental health and the issue of depression in men under 40.
- The facility would create jobs and further employment opportunities. We estimate the equivalent of three full time jobs could be created initially.
- It will develop community cohesion by allowing parents and children to use the club, both before and after training/matches, providing a focal point for parents and children becoming involved in sport and enable youngsters to inter-react with each other and with older community members.



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We believe that up to 150 people per week could be involved over 3 sessions in each week.

- The clubhouse would be available for meetings, educational courses, etc. for all groups in the community.
- Our target is to host a least 3 community days per annum, in addition to an annual five a side competition for schools. We will also host up to 5 charity games per annum.
- We will develop our community involvement by forming partnerships with schools to provide sports coaching in the schools and at Harrison Park.
- We will host up to 3 football coaching courses per annum for children during the school holidays. Our expectation is that this could involve between 60 and 90 children over the year.
- We could host the educational program for the Academy, presently undertaken in Stoke on Trent, saving travelling for the students.
- The 3G pitch would also be used for prestigious regional cup finals, including the junior teams, which presently go elsewhere. Improving the prestige of the Staffordshire Moorlands Area, with associated economic benefits.
- The focus for young people will help reduce potential problems such as vandalism by providing an outlet which keeps them off the streets.

Costs

We have held meetings with representatives of Staffs FA and The Football Foundation ("FF") and have commissioned a feasibility study using their approved contractors. The indicative cost of installing a 3G pitch to the required criteria is in the region of £650,000.

We understand that we meet all the basic criteria for grant funding from FF, who are able to provide up to a maximum of £500,000. We will therefore need to raise circa £150,000 from other sources.

Sustainability

The project will be supported by a Steering Group to support effective delivery. We have already formed good relationships with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, The Football Foundation and The Staffordshire FA and it is intended that the Steering Group will comprise of a representative from each of those bodies plus one from Leek Town FC. The roles of the representatives of SMDC, FF and Staffs FA will be primarily advisory.



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We have a draft business plan for the 3G facility based on our projected usage. We have targeted local junior clubs (boys and girls), schools, disability groups, Staffs FA, Older age groups (Walking Football) and

also looking to build relationships with all other disenfranchised groups in the Staffordshire Moorlands. The marketing will be implemented and monitored by our current board of directors, assisted by the facility management team when appointed. The lead manager will also have the roll of Community Officer as he will lead the initiatives to develop relationships referred to above.

The projections show that the facility will be operational from 9.00 am to 10.00 pm from Monday to Friday and 9.00 am to 7.00 pm on Saturday and Sunday. We will also have the clubhouse open to provide refreshments to participants and spectators throughout the opening hours.

The staff employed will be properly trained in the ongoing maintenance requirements of the facility and a sinking fund will be created to ensue that the funds are in place to replace the carpet when necessary (thought to be 8 to 10 years dependent on usage).

Summary

- The proposed scheme will assist the local authority in its Physical Activity and Sports Strategy; to provide sporting opportunities for groups in our community such as Women and Girls, People with a limiting illness or disability, People aged 55 years and over, People in lower social grades and Children and young people aged 5 to 18.
- We will create a “Football Hub” for the Staffordshire Moorlands providing access to youngsters of all ages, gender and ability.
- Our input to the community will help SMDC to address issues with the provision of facilities for children, people with disabilities and women’s teams.
- We will develop working relationships with schools which will provide them with access to qualified coaches and to the football facilities at Harrison Park.
- We will ensure that the project is sustainable by constant monitoring both the usage of the facility on a regular basis and taking appropriate marketing action to correct any shortfalls.
- The running of the facility will be self-financing with all running and maintenance costs being covered by hire fees.
- The club has made significant progress over the last few years in the growth of its Junior Section, Disability Teams, Ladies Teams and Academy Teams. The new facilities will enable us to sustain that progress for the foreseeable future.