

DARLASTON TOWN (1874)

FOOTBALL CLUB



FIVE YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN

March 2021

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Darlaston Town (1874) Football Club

DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO AUGUST 2026

Executive Summary

Following the achievement of the first 5-year plan earlier than planned In August 2017 a further 5-year plan was developed covering the period to August 2022. Following continued progress in February 2021 the Committee and Directors have approved a new Development Plan up to the end of the 2025/26 playing season which they believe is realistic and achievable.

Our 5 Year Objectives

- ❖ To play at the highest possible level and strive to play at National League System (NLS) Step 5 by 2023/24 playing season and Step 4 by 2026/27 playing season.
- ❖ To upgrade the ground and facilities firstly to meet NLS Step 5 grading and then meet NLS Step 4 grading by
 - reserve restricted Development funds (including 20% contingency) estimated at £14,040 to meet NLS Step 5 grading by 31 March 2025 (FA time limit) (see para 5.4.6.6)
 - subject to finishing in a promotion spot reserve additional restricted funds of £6,960 to meet NLS Step 4 grading by 31 March 2028 (FA time limit) (see para 5.4.6.7)
 - reserve minimum additional restricted funds of £10,000 to undertake further works to improve existing facilities by August 2026.
- ❖ To maintain and if possible, increase the number (11) of Darlaston Town (1874) FC junior/youth teams (boys and girls) and maintain at least one adult ladies team.
- ❖ To provide coaching and facilities for a Summer Coaching School and research and if appropriate open an Academy
- ❖ Increase participation and volunteering.
- ❖ Create opportunities for anyone to become more active and involved at Bentley Leisure Pavilion and the Paycare Ground
- ❖ Develop new relationships with local schools and colleges.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for skills development in sports coaching, administration and other areas.
- ❖ Provide additional adult volunteering and coaching opportunities
- ❖ Increase the use of BLP as a business hire & community venue.
- ❖ Promote, market and develop the role the club plays in the community.
- ❖ Forge better relationships with the voluntary community.
- ❖ Ensure financial sustainability by increasing total income by 15% and minimise running costs

1. CLUB VISION

To provide good quality football, sports, and social amenities and facilities

2. MISSION STATEMENT

To become a financially sustainable, community focused club, playing football at the highest possible level.

3. AIMS and OBJECTIVES

The aims of our club are:

- To encourage and promote the development of football and sport within Darlaston, Bentley and surrounding area.
- To compete at the highest possible level
- To provide the best possible playing facilities and coaching
- To provide a first-class club house and community facility available for use/hire at an affordable rate to the people, community groups and businesses of Darlaston, Bentley and surrounding area
- To become recognised as an important part of our community, being clear about what we contribute to and support the community
- To create a safe environment for all participants, officials and visitors

We will achieve the above by:

- Raising funds to improve our playing, changing and clubhouse, community rooms, social and parking facilities
- Developing and promoting a policy of equal opportunity where the best possible facilities are made available for all irrespective of race, age or gender.
- Encouraging sportsmanship and fair competition at the highest possible levels
- Supporting the development of football and sport in general throughout the area
- Actively seeking partners and creating relationships with others working in the community and making our knowledge, expertise and facilities available to others
- Creating a range of policies to be complied with by all participants, managers, volunteers and visitors, including but not confined to Anti Bullying, Child Safety, Health and Safety, Social Media, Equal Opportunities, Environmental and Safeguarding
- Requiring compliance by all with our Ground Regulations

We are committed to using our facilities to;

- Improve access to sport.
- Create volunteering opportunities, develop teamwork, support community cohesion and increase pride in the neighbourhood.
- Help people discover purpose and develop vision.
- Encourage respect for others.

- Reach out and include people of all ages, abilities, gender, sex and race.
- Encourage local people to use our facilities and have fun.

4. VALUES

Honesty, Openness and Transparency

We aim to show complete honesty and openness and to show the club, board, management, staff and supporters to be upright, fair, truthful and sincere.

Integrity

The club prides itself on the integrity it shows in all its dealings. It adheres to and expects all those involved to show the very highest moral and ethical principles, and to make decisions which are unimpaired by influence from others.

Teamwork

Our directors, committee, volunteers and players will all strive to work together with the common aims of improving Darlaston Town (1874) FC and Bentley Leisure Pavilion (BLP).

Governance

We will always aim to do the right thing and record our decision making, comply with the law and statutory regulations, satisfy the CIC Regulator, comply with FA and League requirements and pay our bills and taxes on time.

5. DEVELOPMENT PLAN to AUGUST 2026

5.1 Background

5.1.1 Darlaston Town FC was originally formed in 1874 and played home games from The City Ground, Waverley Road, Darlaston from 1899-2013. The club has an outstanding history and boasts 6 FA Cup winners, 2 England internationals, a Wales international and more than 140 players who also played in the Football League. After 139 years the club folded in 2013 when it did not renew its membership of the West Midlands (Regional) League (WMRL).

5.1.2 In July 2013 as a result of two public meetings a group of supporters and volunteers set up a “phoenix” club and following a public vote was renamed Darlaston Town (1874) FC. A new committee was elected and the club registered with Companies House as a Company Limited by Guarantee (No 08698037) and as a Community Interest Company (C.I.C) on 19 September 2013. Subsequently the club was approved by HMRC as a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC).

The club affiliated with Birmingham County Football Association and became members of the West Midlands Regional League (WMRL) Division Two. For the 2014/15 playing season the club hired a ground in Bentley Road South, Darlaston WS10 8LN on a 12-month licence. In the first season, the club was promoted to WMRL Division One for the 2015/16 playing season and after finishing runners up were promoted to the WMRL Premier Division in the 2019/20 season.

5.1.3 On 31 December 2014 the club signed a 6-month licence with Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council to run and manage Bentley Leisure Pavilion (BLP). The licence was extended a further 12 months to allow the club to prepare a feasibility study to demonstrate its capability to manage BLP to Walsall Council. With the help of Compass Community Partnerships Ltd the feasibility study was completed in March 2015 and subsequently approved by Walsall Council leading to the signing of a 25 Year Lease on 7 March 2016.

The club played its first league game at BLP against Kington Town FC on 15 August 2015 the game ended in a 1-1 draw. Following a ground sponsorship agreement, the ground is now known as The Paycare Ground, Bentley Leisure Pavilion, Bentley Road North, Walsall WS2 0EA.

- 5.1.4 The club currently has a committee of 9 including 4 Directors who, in accordance with our Memorandum & Articles of Association are the sole decision makers. A diagram showing the club structure is below.
- 5.1.5 The Club is governed by a General Committee with 4 Directors legally responsible for all decisions. The club is managed through many volunteers contributing in excess of 6500 hours annually. Using the current UK “Real Living Wage” of £9.50 per hour the voluntary time contributed including 20% on costs is equivalent to a minimum £74,100.
- 5.1.6 The youth section and Ladies team are self-sufficient with their own committee, finances and structure.

Committee Structure

Chairman (D)

Neil Chambers

Vice-Chairman

Garry Hale

Treasurer (D)

Bob Jones

Secretary

Simon Cox

General Committee

Gil Preece, Craig Wilkinson, Keith Chambers (D), Rose Burley (D) Anton Allen, George Hancocks. (D) Denotes Director

- 5.1.6 The sustainability of the club is built on.
- Management
 - Facility management
 - Risk management
 - Community engagement
 - External expertise
 - Volunteering
 - Financial management
 - Structure change
 - Community outcomes

5.1.7 Directors Experience and Responsibilities

Neil Chambers (Director and Club Chairman): A retired Senior Principal Inspector of Taxes with experience in running and managing large Government offices, finance and financial planning, business planning and budget management. He also undertakes a range of voluntary governance roles in the community on bodies including a large Housing Group (ceased 2017) and 3 NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups and is Chair of trustees of a local Charity.

Councillor Rose Burley and Keith Chambers (Directors): Both were long standing local councillors (Keith resigned as a Councillor in May 2019) who have a detailed knowledge of community needs and wishes, local government workings, the planning process and community engagement.

Bob Jones (Director and Treasurer): The treasurer is an Accountant by training and currently runs his own small business as an accountant/bookkeeper and has worked as a bookkeeper/accountant in private practices and businesses for 40 years.

The Directors are supported by the committee and a number of other volunteers with expertise in relevant areas including facility management, small business

management as well as significant experience of running and maintaining a football club and social facility.

- 5.1.8 Upon re-forming the club in September 2013 a 5 Year Development Plan was agreed by the Committee and Directors. This plan was prepared following a Feasibility Study and Business Plan produced in March 2015. The progress made by the club and in particular the move to Bentley Leisure Pavilion meant the plan was achieved early and a new plan produced in August 2017. Progress against that plan was sufficient that in February 2021 a new Development Plan was necessary and is represented in this plan detailing our plan and priorities to August 2026.

5.2 Current Position – Football

- 5.2.1 The club is an Adult FA Charter Standard club affiliated to Birmingham County Football Association.
- 5.2.2 The facility at Bentley Leisure Pavilion includes 4 grass football pitches, 3 grassed areas, 6 team dressing rooms, a fully equipped medical room, 3 match officials dressing rooms and 2 club rooms each licensed to accommodate 100+ people. For the 2021/22 season the pitches will be used by Darlaston Town (1874) FC male and female adult teams, Darlaston Town (1874) FC youth teams and Wolverhampton Wanderers Ladies.
- 5.2.3 The club has several sponsors and advertisers as well as several individuals who make monthly financial donations. Paycare Ltd have been tremendously supportive of the club and have been the main sponsor since inception. The club has its own website powered by PITCHERO currently achieving 20,500+ unique visits weekly and is regularly in the top 100 of PITCHERO football sites nationally (out of 12,000+). The club also has its own Facebook and Twitter Feeds with more than 2,700 Facebook followers and more than 1,700 twitter followers.
- 5.2.4 In 2014 the Committee and Directors agreed a medium to long term approach to improve the ground and pitches whilst also improving the club house and club rooms. They believe that this approach was critical to ensure the sustainability of the club whilst making the facilities the best they can be for 40,000+ service users annually. This approach will continue for the entirety of this plan.
- 5.2.5 Since agreeing a 25 Year lease, with the support of some grant funding the club has invested more than £217,000 improving the facilities for the people of Bentley, Darlaston and surrounding area. Specifically, £33,000 has been invested in updating the central heating and hot water supply, £7,000 on club house refurbishments and equipment, £22,000 on a 50-seat grandstand and hardstanding, £14,000 on dressing rooms and post & rails, £55,000 on floodlights, £21,000 on Boundary and Security Fencing, £32,000 on Toilets refurbishment, £9,000 on clubhouse improvements and installation of a players gym as well as £25,000 on pitches improvement.
- 5.2.6 The club currently has one male adult team playing at Step 6 of the NLS and fully complies with the Football Association minimum Ground Grading requirements for that level. We also meet many of the requirements to play at Step 5 and Step 4 of the NLS.
- 5.2.7 Promotion to Step 5 (Midland League Premier Division) and then Step 4 is contingent upon finishing the playing season in a promotion spot and meeting the FAs Ground Grading requirement for the higher level.

5.3. Current Position Community and Social

5.3.1 The Committee and Directors believe that the best way for the club to have a secure and sustainable future is by adopting a business model which is supported by and working in partnership with:

- our volunteers
- supporters and local residents
- youth and junior football teams,
- local businesses and business organisations
- local charities and voluntary organisations
- Walsall MBC
- Local community and health & well-being organisations.
- Birmingham County FA and West Midlands Regional League

5.3.2 The main catchment areas are post codes WS2 and WS10 in particular the wards of Bentley & Darlaston North and Darlaston South. Population of the two wards in the catchment area is 30,600 with approx. 48% under 35 and 33% aged between 10 and 34 years.

¹Bentley & Darlaston North population is 14,300 of which 71% are White British and 29% minority ethnic residents. Approximately 6.5% of the working age population are unemployed and seeking employment.

² Darlaston South population is 16,300.

Sources - 1 Walsall ward profiles January 2020.

5.3.3 The population sizes and other information at 5.3.2 demonstrates that if price points are right, the club can attract sufficient local players & service users to ensure sustainability.

5.3.4 The clubhouse and rooms are used extensively by individuals, community groups, sports presentations, community fundraisers & events (hires and free of charge) as well as business hires. Additionally the club arranges several entertainment evenings annually and puts on at least 2 events annually aimed at the local community viz Christmas Pantomime and Family Halloween party..

5.3.5 The club room is also open every Saturday and Sunday throughout the football season (August – May) serving hot and cold beverages and hot & cold snacks to visitors, spectators, officials and players.

5.3.6 Bentley Leisure Pavilion has its own Facebook page, currently with 604 followers and 3,244 visitors to the page. We will introduce a marketing campaign within the next 2 years.

5.3.7 COVID 19 has severely restricted the playing of football and use and hire of the clubhouse and facilities since February 2020. The committee and directors will review the financial position and future priorities and timescales following return to “normal” post COVID 19 pandemic.

5.4 Future position – Football Development

5.4.1 Junior / Youth Football (Boys & Girls)

- 5.4.1.1 For the 2020/21 season the club fielded 11 junior/youth teams playing under the name of Darlaston Town (1874) FC. The Committee and Directors have agreed that during the timescale of this plan they will continue to support and promote the junior/youth teams playing under the name of Darlaston Town (1874) FC.
- 5.4.1.2 Directors have agreed a set of principles which each team must comply with viz.
- be financially sustainable and administratively self-sufficient.
 - follow FA Respect guidelines for players, officials, management, parents and supporters.
 - have a code of conduct.
 - comply with all club and FA policies.
 - wear club colours (i.e., blue/white stripes) and use the official club badge.
 - always represent the best interests of the club
 - operate under the name of Darlaston Town (1874) FC
 - abide by club values.
 - meet FA Charter Standards
- 5.4.1.3 For our part we will support all teams by wherever reasonable making the full facilities at BLP available and integrate junior and youth teams into the club, providing opportunities for young players to develop their football and life skills. We will provide opportunities for young players to represent the club in the first team.
- 5.4.1.4 Even if all pitches at BLP were available it will not be possible to accommodate the full range of Darlaston Town (1874) teams. Consequently, some teams will have to play at a different venue. Directors have agreed that for 2021/2022 season onwards (other than the main pitch) pitches at BLP will only be let to teams representing Darlaston Town (1874) FC
- 5.4.1.5 The Directors will further consider extended use of coaching facilities during school holidays as well as research and examine the possibility of opening an Academy.

5.4.2 Adult First Team

- 5.4.2.1 Since the club was re-formed in September 2013 the Committee and Directors have as a matter of priority set up a Development Account. The account is reserved for improving the club and facilities. the purposes of improving the facilities at BLP. For this purpose, facilities include clubhouse, dressing rooms, car park, boundaries, playing surfaces and ground/stadium and any other funds deemed reasonable by the Committee and Directors for the betterment of the club.
- 5.4.2.2 On the field we aim to play at the highest possible level, so the Committee and Directors have prioritised the objective of meeting NLS Step 5 and Step 4 Ground Grading requirements

5.4.3 Ladies Adult Team

Since the 2018/19 playing season the club has an adult ladies team playing on Sunday afternoon. At the end of the 2018/19 season, they were promoted to the Birmingham County FA Women's League where when the 2019/20 was cut short by the COVID 19 pandemic they had a 100% playing record.

The Ladies team(s) must also comply with the requirements of para 5.4.1.2.

5.4.4 Ground Grading – Step 5

Paragraphs 1-4 below (in italics) are an extract from the Football Association's (FA) National Ground Grading requirements which would allow entry to Step 5 (i.e., Midland League Premier Division). The words in red are our assessment of where we do not currently meet requirements.

NOTE *Appendices referred to in the text are not included in this plan.

NATIONAL GROUND GRADING CATEGORY F **(Appropriate to NLS Step 5)**

1.GROUND

The ground must give an overall appearance and impression of being a football ground suitable for the National League System. It must be possible for spectators to view the match, either standing or seated, for the full length of at least 3 sides of the playing area but see also para 2.1.

Where any side is designated as spectator-free, measures must be in place to ensure there is no unauthorised access. The location of the ground, in so far as its relation to the conurbation whose name the club bears, or is traditionally associated with, must meet with the approval of both The Football Association and the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the league of which it is in membership. The club must disclose plans and details of any proposed future move to a new stadium or of any significant alteration to the existing ground to both the league of which it is in membership and The Football Association.

1.1 Security of Tenure

*The club must demonstrate security of tenure as required by The Football Association and the league of which it is a member.
(Standardised rule 2.3.2)*

1.2 Ground Share

Ground sharing is permitted in accordance with the provisions of individual league rules and the Regulations for the Establishment and Operation of the National League System.

1.3 Capacity

There is no minimum capacity at this level, but a club should be mindful that the minimum requirement for Grade D is 1300.

1.4 Boundary of Ground

The ground must be enclosed by a permanent boundary. As a general rule, the minimum height, when measured from outside the ground, must be 1.83 metres. It should be noted that at higher grades the boundary fence should be of a construction to prevent viewing from outside the ground. Where any side of the ground is bounded by private

land/property, the fixed boundary of that private land / property may be acceptable as the boundary of the ground.

1.5 Clubhouse

There must be a clubhouse facility either on or adjacent to the ground, which should be open on match days to provide refreshments to spectators.

1.6 Car Parking

There should be adequate car parking facilities on or adjacent to the ground. Car parking within the ground may not be acceptable.

1.7 Pitch Perimeter Barrier

Subject to the provisions detailed below, there must be a permanent fixed barrier ideally 1.1 m high as measured from the spectator side, of sound construction (e.g., concrete and steel) and free from all sharp edges, surrounding the pitch on all sides that may be occupied by spectators. Existing barriers/rails not at 1.1m high may be acceptable, provided they meet the requirements set out in 1.7 of the Appendix. Any barriers installed at new grounds should be purposely designed, with integrated infill panels as required and be made from UPVC or coated metal. The barrier, if other than solid wall type of construction may be infilled. Plastic multi-purpose hi-vis fencing is not considered suitable for infill. There must be a minimum of 1.83 metres, ideally 2 metres, between the touchline, goal line and the pitch perimeter barrier. In the case of new stadium, the minimum must be 3 metres. Immediately in front of an area of seated accommodation the boundary of the playing area may be indicated by means other than a permanent fixed barrier, provided the Club is able to provide assurances that no spectator be allowed to stand in this area to watch the match. Where there is a walkway in front of a standing terrace which is itself fronted by a crush barrier that has itself been subject to an annual risk assessment and, if necessary, tested, an alternative to a fixed barrier (e.g., A-frames) may be used, provided no spectators are allowed to stand in this area to watch the match. The Club must implement a safety management system to ensure this and also to protect the integrity of the playing area. NB where A-frames are utilised instead of a fixed barrier, they must be continuous. (See also Appendix)

1.8 Pitch Standards

The playing surface must be grass, unless otherwise authorised by the Competition's Board of Directors, and must be of the highest possible standard. It must be level and free from surface depressions and excessive undulations. The maximum slope allowable shall not exceed an even gradient of vertical to horizontal 1: 41 in any direction. NB When a new pitch is being developed or significant improvements made to a pitch, the gradient of 1:41 would not be acceptable and the pitch must be constructed with reference to the FA Performance Quality Standard.

The playing surface must be maintained to a standard acceptable to the competition in which the club is playing or seeks to play. 3G football turf 3G football turf may only be used provided conditions (i) to (v) below have been met (the "Performance Standard"):

- (i) The pitch must be surfaced with 3G football turf that has laboratory type approval according to the FIFA Quality Concept for Football Turf (2012 & 2015 editions) – FIFA Recommended One Star/Quality level.*

- (ii) *The 3G football turf pitch must be listed on The Association's register of 3G football turf pitches by no later than 31 May and tested annually at the Club's expense.*
- (iii) *Where a 3G football turf pitch is not yet listed on The Association's register (for example if it is a newly installed pitch), a Club must obtain a Laboratory Performance Test Report and submit it to The Association by no later than 31 July.*
- (iv) *The Association reserves the right to instruct a Club to have its pitch tested at any time in order to ensure that it meets the Performance Standard. All such tests shall be at the Club's expense.*
- (v) *The 3G football turf, including run-offs, shall be one continuous playing surface and shall be green in colour at least one metre from the outer edge of the touchline and goal line. All line markings shall be in accordance with the Laws of Association Football.*

1.9 Playing Area

The playing area to be a minimum of 100 metres x 64 metres and must conform to the requirements of the Laws of the Game. Goalposts and goal net supports must be of professional manufacture and conform to the relevant safety requirements and to the requirements of the Laws of the Game. (See also Appendix)

1.10 Technical Area

Two covered trainers' boxes clearly marked "Home" and "Away or Visitors" must be provided unless adequate provision is made in a seated stand. They must be on the same side of the pitch ideally either side of the halfway line, ideally both equidistant from it and ideally a minimum of 3 metres apart and provide an unobstructed view of the playing area. NB When new boxes are being constructed or installed, they must be on each side of the half way line, equidistant from it and a minimum of 3 metres apart. Each box must accommodate at least 8 persons on fixed seats or benches. Where bench seating is provided, a minimum of 0.5 m must be allowed for each person (i.e., 8 persons require a minimum of 4 metres.). Portable trainers' boxes are permitted but must be securely fixed when in use. A technical area must be marked out, in accordance with the guidance contained in the 'Laws of the Game' booklet.

1.11 Safe Walkway

There must be a safe, unimpeded passage for players and match officials between the dressing rooms and the pitch. The use of protection designed products such as permanent structures or retractable tunnels to separate players and spectators is recommended. The design of the safe walkway will inevitably differ from ground to ground and it will rarely guarantee the safe passage of players and match officials unless supplemented by stewards. A club should implement procedures appropriate to the particular structure and be ready to respond to on the field situations which might affect spectator behaviour.

1.12 Floodlighting

Floodlights must be provided to an average lux reading of at least 120. No single reading can be less than one quarter of the highest reading so as to ensure an even spread of light. NB When installing a new system, clubs are advised to check any planning restrictions for its use. Reading

shall be on a grid of 88 markings (8 across, 11 down) evenly spaced with the outside readings taken 2.5 metres inside from the touchline. The average of all the readings is taken to be the average illumination level in lux of the floodlighting installation. The lux values must be tested every two years in accordance with current guidelines by an approved independent contractor. Floodlights must be retested after any significant alterations. Existing certification will be accepted provided that the test was carried out within the last two years unless work has been carried out at the ground which may have affected previous readings. It is also recommended that at the same time as testing the lights clubs also test the electrical supply within the ground to ensure that the system complies with current electrical standards and request a visual inspection of the columns for signs of corrosion, fatigue and overloading. An example of an “approved” contractor is one which is in possession of the NICEIC (National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) Approved Contractors Award or ISO 9000/BS 5750 (International Standards/British Standards) or is a member of the Electrical Contractors' Association. Alternatively, it can be a contractor deemed acceptable by the league. The contractor must, when detailing the lux values, give confirmation in writing of the date when the illumination test equipment used was last calibrated. When new or improved installations are being planned, the lighting procured must meet BS 12193 Class 2 and have an average lux reading of at least 200.

1.13 Public Address System

A public address system must be provided which is clearly audible in all those areas of the ground which can be occupied by spectators.

1.14 Entrances

There must be at least 1 fully operational turnstile (which must be of the revolving type) or a pay box where a charge for entry to the ground can be taken. In both cases a grille or similar for the payment window and a lock that can be operated from inside must be incorporated. Electronic turnstiles with bar code readers are also acceptable but an emergency procedure must be in place in the event of a power failure. Adequate protection and security must be incorporated for the turnstile operator or, where tickets are sold from a box office, the cashier. It must be possible to gain access to the spectator viewing areas from the turnstiles via a bound surface to a minimum width of 0.9 metre.

1.15 Exits

All exits must be clearly signed, ideally with “running man” signs, and are to be kept clear and free from obstructions. (For further information, reference should be made to the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds.) There must be access via a bound surface to all exits from the nearest spectator viewing areas.

1.16 Lighting (See Appendix)

1.17 Adjoining Pitches

Where deemed that they are likely to interfere with the playing of a match, ball games will not be played on adjoining pitches whilst a match is in progress.

1.18 Emergency Access

Access must be provided for the emergency services and maintained free from obstruction.

2. SPECTATOR FACILITIES

2.1 Spectator Accommodation

Covered accommodation, which should preferably be on 2 sides of the ground, must be of sound construction of timber/steel/brick/concrete or any combination of these materials. Existing timber stands are only acceptable subject to a fire risk assessment conducted by a competent person. *The minimum covered accommodation must be 200, of which at least 100 must be seated. These 100 seats, in not more than 2 stands, may be inclusive of Directors/Committee and press seating. No stand may have less than 50 seats* Whilst individual seats are preferred, bench seating may be permitted provided that it is in good repair and that individual spaces (min 500mm) are clearly marked. These 100 seats must afford a good view of the pitch and be clean, functional and in good condition. There must be a minimum of 16 seats provided for Directors/Committee and guests with a minimum of 8 seats provided for the visiting club. These seats must be clearly marked "Home" and "Away Directors". Additional seating may be provided in other areas of the ground. However, these seats are not to be classed as being "in lieu" of the number shown above. Standing spectators are not allowed in or near a seated spectator stand where they can obstruct views. Areas where spectators are not permitted to stand must be clearly marked with yellow hatched markings. Alternatively, appropriate signage may be acceptable. Hard standing to a minimum width of 0.9 metre, measured from the spectator side of the pitch perimeter barrier, must be provided on 3 sides of the ground. Existing athletics stadia may be exempt from this requirement.). The surface must be tarmac, concrete, concrete paving or other approved materials which create a bound material. Where a club shares its ground with a cricket club which limits the amount of permanent hard standing which can be installed, a maximum of one side or end of temporary flooring made of a polypropylene material or such like may be acceptable. Precise details of the specification must be supplied to the league and The Football Association before its installation. Spectators must not be permitted to access any end/side without hard standing. NB Where the facility is shared with cricket, hard standing on a minimum of two and a half sides may be acceptable.

2.2 Press Seating

There is no requirement for dedicated press seating.

2.3 Terracing

Where terracing is provided, it must comply with the requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds. All terracing must be in a sound condition. Terracing that is crumbling, has grass/weeds growing through it or has broken or loose concrete will not be accepted. Any level surface within the ground should ideally be hard standing, such as tarmac, concrete, concrete paving or other approved materials which create a bound surface. However, flat and well-maintained grassed areas may be accepted. The use of tree bark instead of grass may be acceptable, subject to prior permission being obtained from the league and The Football Association.

2.4 Toilets.

Toilets must be located within the ground and must be accessible both to male and to female spectators. Where it is necessary to exit the ground to gain access to toilets located in an adjacent clubhouse, these may be deemed acceptable, provided no great distance is involved.

The following minimum toilet facilities must be provided:

Male:

2 urinals or equivalent and

1 WC

Female: 2 WC's

wash hand basins, with running water,

warm air hand driers and/or paper towels,

together with a supply of toilet paper, must be provided in each toilet area. Whilst replaceable linen roller towels in a cabinet are acceptable, individual hand towels are not permitted.

The provision of toilet facilities within a clubhouse will be acceptable if these are accessible and available at all times on match days. All toilet areas must be in working order, with a roof and operational lighting, supplied with toilet paper and maintained to a high level of cleanliness. These facilities may be of a temporary or mobile kind but must be connected to the mains supply (i.e., water and power) and main drainage or an acceptable alternative drainage system. They must be fully accessible with permanent access. Individual toilet units often known as 'portaloos' are permissible on a temporary basis but may not be included in the minimum toilet requirements. The location of all toilet facilities must be indicated with appropriate signage.

2.5 Refreshment Facilities

2.5.1 Directors/Committee/Guests

A separate room or reserved area must be made available in which refreshments for Directors/Committee and guests can be served.

2.5.2 Ground Refreshment Facilities

Refreshment facilities must be provided at the ground or in an adjacent clubhouse (See 2.4 Toilets). These facilities may be of a temporary or mobile type.

2.6 Disabled Facilities (See Appendix)

2.7 Segregation

When segregation is in operation, there must be adequate toilet facilities and refreshment facilities in each segregated area in addition to the appropriate means of egress and exit.

3. DRESSING ROOM FACILITIES

3.1 Players

Separate dressing rooms must be provided for both teams within the enclosed area of the ground. The dressing rooms must be of sound construction and be of a permanent nature. Existing dressing room dimensions will be acceptable provided they are a minimum of 12 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. Where clubs are planning to build new dressing rooms these must be a minimum size of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. Each dressing room must have the following: A shower area comprising of at least 4 showerheads At least 1 wash hand basin located outside the shower area (All the above must have hot and cold running water) At least 1 WC in a cubicle

There must be a treatment table which is clean and in good condition in each dressing room.

3.2 Match Officials

The size of the match official's dressing room must be a minimum of 4 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. When new dressing rooms are being constructed the match officials' room should be a minimum of 6 square metres in size, excluding shower and toilet areas. Each match officials' dressing room must have the following:

- At least 1 shower
- At least 1 WC in a cubicle and
- 1 wash hand basin

Provision should be made for separate dressing rooms for both male and female match officials. Where new dressing rooms are being constructed or existing are being re-designed, separate purpose-built facilities for both male and female match officials must be provided. There must be an audible electronic warning device (bell or buzzer) in working order located in the match officials' dressing room, and which is linked to the players' dressing rooms. All dressing room areas must be maintained to a high standard of cleanliness and be heated, well ventilated, free from damp and secure on match days.

4. MEDICAL

A stretcher must be provided for the removal of injured players from the pitch. NB For Grade D a dedicated medical room for the use of players and spectators is required. (See also Appendix)

5.4.5 Ground Grading Works required to meet Step 5 and Step 4

Pending a formal ground grading review by the Midland League and/or FA officials our view is that as a minimum the following work needs to be carried out to meet Step 5 grading -

- 1.13 *Public Address System* - A public address system is required.
- 2.1 *Spectator Accommodation* – Additional *covered accommodation for 100 including a stand seating 50 spectators and meeting the specified requirements is required.
**Planning permission is already in place.*

Additional works needed to meet Step 4 Grading additional works required.

- 1.11 **Safe Walkway** There must be a safe, unimpeded passage for players and officials between their dressing rooms and the pitch.
The use of protection designed products such as permanent structures or retractable tunnels to separate spectators and players/officials is recommended.
- 1.14 **Entrances.**
There must be at least 2 spectator entrances to control the ingress of spectators. These must be controlled by fully operational turnstiles of the revolving type and must be suitably housed and lit. A grille or similar for the payment window and a lock that can be operated from inside must be incorporated.

- 3.1 Players. Separate dressing rooms must be provided for both teams within the enclosed area of the ground. The dressing rooms must be of sound construction and be of a permanent nature.
Existing dressing room dimensions will be acceptable provided they are a minimum of 18 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas.
- 3.2 Match Officials.
The size of the match officials' dressing room must be a minimum of 6 square metres, excluding shower and toilet areas. NB The provisions for an extension until July 31 will apply as in 3.1 above. Each match officials' dressing room must have the following: At least 1 shower and 1 wash hand basin (both with hot and cold running water). At least 1 WC in a cubicle Provision should be made for separate dressing rooms for both male and female match officials.

5.4.6 Ground Grading Costs & Funding

- 5.4.6.1 Whilst we will look elsewhere for funding e.g., fundraising events, grant support, donations and sponsorships the Football Stadia Improvement Fund (FSIF) is the major grant funder for NLS ground improvements. The maximum grant value available to clubs moving to Step 5 is £100,000 over a 5-year period. We have previously received FSIF grants totalling £54,940 leaving the maximum available as £45,060. The FSIF maximum grant percentage is now *70% for the move to Step 5 and also 70% for the move to Step 4.
- The maximum grant value available to clubs moving to Step 4 increases to £150,000 over a 5-year period.
- 5.4.6.2 As can be seen from para 5.4.5 major works and funds are needed to achieve Step 5 grading. The proposed works meet the FSIF eligibility criteria and if approved qualify for grant support. A realistic estimate of costs to achieve Step 5 grading is £21,000. (Covered Accommodation £20,000 plus £1,000 Public Address System).
- 5.4.6.3 Consequently the FSIF maximum grant value to achieve Step 5 grading is estimated at £14,700 (i.e., £21,000 x70%). Consequently, the minimum club contribution required to meet Step 5 grading is estimated at £6,300 (£21,000 - £14,700).
- 5.4.6.4 The maximum available for future spend from the FSIF at Step 5 becomes £30,360 (£45,060 - £14,700). (but see 5.4.6.6 below)
- 5.4.6.5 As explained at para 5.4.6.1 this increase by £50,000 upon any promotion to Step 4.
- 5.4.6.6 Subject to the team finishing in a promotion spot the Committee and Directors have prioritised the upgrading of the ground and facilities to as a minimum meet Step 5 grading and have reserved Development Account funds of a minimum of £6,300.
- Although not required to meet Step 5 the Committee and Directors have also agreed to prioritise installation of new post and rail around the main pitch at an estimated cost of £18,000. FSIF grant funding of 70% will be available of £12,600 leaving the maximum balance of FSIF funding carried forward for Step 5 at £17,760 (£30,360- £12,600) and requiring £5,400 from club funds.

The Committee and Directors have agreed to additionally reserve Development Account funds of £5,400 making total restricted reserved Development Account funding for Step 5 at £11,700.

5.4.6.7 We know that to meet Step 4 Grading additional works as identified at para 5.4.5 has to be undertaken viz.

- Safe Walkway
 - Entrances
 - *Player Dressing Rooms
 - *Match Officials Dressing Rooms
- *Subject to inspection and verification*

5.4.6.8 We have not researched or obtained any estimates for these works, but a reasonable guesstimate is as follows-

- Safe Walkway £2,000
- Entrances £6,000
- *Player Dressing Rooms £6,000.
- *Match Officials Dressing Rooms £5,000.

Total £19,000. This again would be subject to a FSIF grant of 70% viz £13,300 with club matched funding of £5,700. The Committee and Directors have prioritised restricted reserved funding from the Development Account of £5,700

5.4.6.9 Consequently as a result of paras 5.4.6.6 and 5.4.6.8 a total restricted reserved fund from the Development Account of £17,400 plus a 20% contingency making £20,880 (say £21,000) has been agreed by the Committee and Directors to meet Ground Grading requirements.

5.5 Future position – Community and Social

5.5.1 We believe a community football club helps to bring the community together and, through mutually beneficial links with the voluntary sector and local businesses, be an important part of the economic structure of the local area. We believe the community should have pride in the club as a representative of the region, regardless of whether or not they attend the games and they should genuinely wish to see their local club succeed.

5.5.2 The Club will provide additional opportunities for increased sports participation and volunteering for people of all ages and use sport as a way of addressing health problems by increasing involvement and activity with others.

5.5.3 Specifically via Facebook, Twitter, the club website and social media we will better promote and market the clubhouse and club rooms at BLP as a community venue and business hire facility increasing total hires by 20%.

5.5.4 Over the last 3 years the club has developed excellent relationships and associations with several local voluntary sector organisations particularly.

- Old Hall Peoples Partnership (a Bentley based Charity)
- Darlaston All Active (a Darlaston based Charity)
- OneWalsall ("The voice of the voluntary sector in Walsall")

We will further develop and expand these and create new relationships with local groups and voluntary organisations.

5.5.5 The Committee and Directors have **prioritised**.

- increasing participation and volunteering

- creating opportunities for older people to become more active and involved.
- developing new relationships with schools & colleges
- providing opportunities for skills development in sports, administration and other areas
- providing volunteering opportunities across all areas of the club
- increasing by 20% the use of BLP as a business hire & community venue
- promoting, marketing and developing the role the club plays in the wider community.
- forging better relationships with the voluntary community
- reserving restricted Development Account funds of £31,000

6. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- 6.1.1 We have a robust and transparent approach to financial management. Our accountants are West Chartered Accountants 2 Greswolde House, 197A Station Rd, Knowle, Solihull B93 0PU. Our treasurer is an experienced bookkeeper and accountant preparing monthly management accounts for scrutiny by the Committee and Directors.
- 6.1.2 We maintain accurate and reliable financial records, have strong cash flow, pay our bills within 30 days, undertake regular stocktakes and use financial information effectively to monitor costs, plan for the future, and manage risk. For each of the three accounting years to 30 September 2016 our accounts have shown increasing revenue year on year, an operating profit and increased fixed and current assets year on year.
- 6.1.3 As a result of our long-term tenancy and the additional income opportunities offered at Bentley Leisure Pavilion until COVID 19 our income has increased significantly year on year. We believe that with better promotion and marketing of BLP coupled with footballing success our income (excluding grant income) will continue to increase. Dependent on the medium to long term impacts of COVID 19 we aim to increase BLP turnover annually and increase total income revenue by 15% over 5 years.
- 6.1.4 We rigorously monitor running costs and where able take all reasonable opportunities to reduce costs (e.g., reducing gas & electricity costs via block tariffs). We aim to reduce gas costs but anticipate electricity and water costs are likely to rise substantially.
- 6.1.5 We will remain firmly focused on self-generated income as our primary source of core funding. Whilst a range of opportunities exist to attract external investment, we believe a self-reliant approach to core funding ensures flexibility to direct unrestricted income into any area of the Club's core or developmental priorities. We believe Income Diversity is critical and we will seek and maintain diverse and multiple income streams, be entrepreneurial, flexible and innovative, not seeking reliance on one source or type of funding.
- 6.1.6 Income generating activities will continue to include.

- Sponsorship and advertising - we will use our website and social media to better market the club and generate income through sponsorship and advertising.
- Bar and food sales - we will use the BLP Facebook page, our website and social media to better market the club and generate income through increased sales.
- Pitch hires
- Merchandise sales - as the Club's success on the pitch continues, we anticipate increased income from this source.
- Admissions and programmes - as the Club's success on the pitch continues, we anticipate increased income from this source.
- Room and events hire - we will use the BLP Facebook page, our website and social media to market the club and generate income through increased hires.
- Fundraising events

6.1.7 The Club's legal structure, aims and objectives provide significant opportunities to attract external funding. The Club's focus on developing local football, community involvement and having positive impact on local health & wellbeing are all aligned to local and national funding priorities. Funding will be sought from a range of sources to cover revenue costs for distinct projects and capital development of the ground and facilities.

The Club will remain alert, responsive and flexible to emerging funding streams to ensure we capitalise on any opportunity we see as supporting our aims and objectives. In particular we will work closely with the Area Business Development Officer at OneWalsall and with Walsall Council to maximise opportunities and funding.

6.1.8 A review of the revenue & capital grant funding streams available has identified opportunities including Awards for All, WHG Community Chest, Sport England, Football Foundation, Football Stadia Improvement Fund, Veolia and BIFFA environmental trusts.

6.1.9 The Committee and Directors are alert to the main risks which may jeopardise the club's sustainability and have identified these in priority order as.

1. Revocation of lease
2. Revocation of premises (alcohol) licence
3. Catastrophic damage/repairs required to BLP (on full repairing lease)
4. Council/Government changes to rent, business rates, C.I.C and/or CASC rules.
5. Significant reputational damage particularly within the local community
6. Volunteer fatigue
7. Continued expansion leads to significantly increased running costs (e.g., need for employed staff/franchising of bar/food sales)
8. On field progress resulting in significantly higher and unsustainable costs
9. Negative impacts of hires and usage of BLP post COVID 19

6.1.10 However, the Committee and Directors believe the sustainability of the club is secure based on.

- Club management - extensive business and community organisation experience alongside leadership responsibility in both a business and community context
- Volunteering - over 6,500 hours per annum and growing.
- Facility Management – experience and expertise in custodianship of BLP
- Financial Management - experience and expertise in business planning and financial profiling in a business and community context
- Risk Management - mitigating actions identified against the main risks.
- Community Interest Company (CIC) & Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) status enabling increased access to grant funding and reduced costs.
- External expertise – access to additional resources / expertise.

**PROJECTED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR 5 YEARS ENDED 30.06.2025
(BASED ON ACTUAL PREVIOUS ACCOUNTS)**

| | YE 30.06.21 | YE 30.06.22 | YE 30.06.23 | YE 30.06.24 | YE 30.06.25 |
|---|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| BLP Income & Expenditure | | | | | |
| | | TO BE COMPLETED | | | |
| ¹ BLP bar & kitchen takings | | | | | |
| BLP bar & kitchen expenses | | | | | |
| ²GROSS INCOME | | Post COVID | | | |
| ¹ Match Day Receipts | | | | | |
| Sponsorship | | | | | |
| ¹ Gifts, donations & memberships | | | | | |
| Hire of Rooms | | | | | |
| ³ Hire of pitches | | | | | |
| TOTAL INCOME | | | | | |
| ⁴ Rent & Rates | | | | | |
| ⁵ Heat, Light & Water | | | | | |
| Insurance | | | | | |
| ⁴ Telephone | | | | | |
| ⁴ Match Day Expenses | | | | | |
| ⁴ Travelling | | | | | |
| Football Expenses | | | | | |
| ⁴ Laundry | | | | | |
| ⁴ Repairs & renewals | | | | | |
| Sundry Expenses | | | | | |
| Printing, postage & stationery | | | | | |
| Accountancy | | | | | |
| Legal & Professional | | | | | |
| Ground Development & Equipment | | | | | |
| ⁴ Grounds maintenance | | | | | |
| EXPENSES | | | | | |
| SURPLUS (DEFICIT) | | | | | |