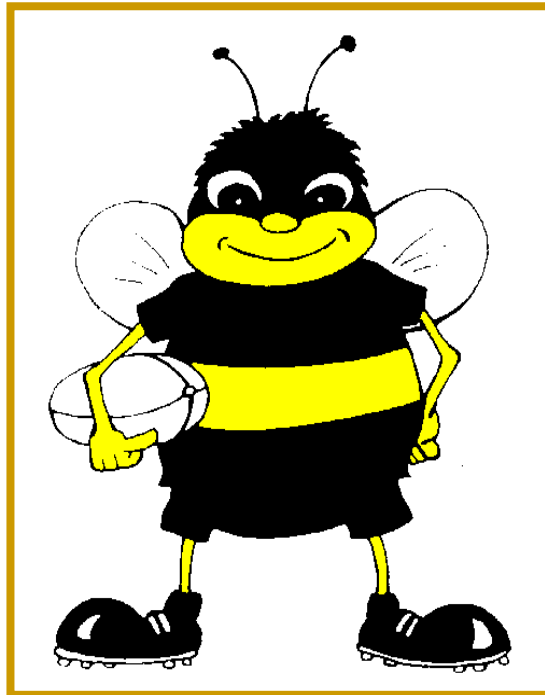


# **Billericay Rugby Football Club**



## **Whole Club Development Plan**

2011-2016

**“Ensuring the sustainable, long term growth of Billericay Rugby Football Club”**

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# 1. Introduction & Vision

## “Ensuring the sustainable, long term growth of Billericay Rugby Club”

The purpose of this document is to set out a development strategy for Billericay Rugby Club between 2011 and 2016. The principal objective is to ensure the sustainable, long term growth of Billericay Rugby Football Club (BRFC) so that future generations within our community can enjoy the sport of rugby and all that comes with it.

This document will evolve over the coming years and in essence, acts as a yardstick against which we can measure our progress and target further development.

### Where are we now?

A year on from the first draft of the BRFC Whole Club Development Plan (2010), there have been no major developments from a playing perspective or as a social organisation. Although we have enjoyed league progression at all levels since the club’s formation, we continue to require a greater level of co-ordination to retain and continue to develop a rugby club that our membership and the local community can be proud of.

There are still many examples of sports clubs across the UK where stagnation has led to falling participation levels, difficulty in putting out more than one or two teams and ultimately withdrawal from league competition. We have begun to experience the first signs of falling participation level and we are well aware that we must take proactive measures to ensure that we move forwards.

Billericay is a large and growing commuter town with a population of over 60,000. There is certainly enough potential to support a successful and thriving rugby club. Our challenge is to create the conditions that will turn this aspiration into reality. However, in order achieve this we recognise that the club will need to address a number of difficult and challenging issues. This plan sets out how we will address these issues and attempt to make any necessary improvements.

The major barrier to development is the capacity within the club to implement an agreed strategy. When things need to be done, there is a tendency to rely upon the ‘usual suspects’. Many of our members want to enjoy their game, have a couple of drinks and then go home. Whilst this is perfectly legitimate, the lack of willing resource as a whole limits our ability to make progress. In summary, there is only so much that a limited number of individuals can take on board and deliver successfully. We see increased volunteer participation as the key to achieving our objectives and so shall continue to target this during the 2011/12 season and beyond.

### Developing our aspirations and strategy

In late 2009, a BRFC Development Committee was formed following a development presentation made by Keith Green (Essex RFU Development Manager) at an Essex RFU mid-Essex cluster meeting. It was decided that there were some key initiatives that required focused attention and the more we learned about the opportunities available to the club, the more evident it was that we needed to begin to take our development more seriously.

From the outset, the club's Development Committee agreed that:

- We would meet regularly to create a Whole Club Development Plan and then at planned/set intervals thereafter to work toward the resulting objectives, re-formulating them as and when appropriate.
- Serving the needs of the majority of club members will be the ultimate objective, outweighing any requirements or pressures from single club members, sponsors or benefactors.
- We would attempt to determine the needs of the entire membership during our initial development planning and each subsequent review thereafter.

Following the Essex RFU development process, we held sessions to consider our collective aspirations and surveyed the club membership to check that the Development Committee's aspirations matched/addressed the views of our members, amending the aspirations where necessary. Finally, we held a Development Workshop to prioritise the club's aspirations and develop a strategy to help us realise them.

The production of a Whole Club Development Plan formed a key part of the effort required to achieve the RFU Seal of Approval, an award that was presented to BRFC at the end of the 2009/2010 season and allows us to advertise ourselves as a club that provides a safe and enjoyable environment for our members (particularly Junior members) to learn and enjoy Rugby.

Another season has now passed and our biggest achievement has been our youth section growing from strength to strength. We hope to offer rugby to juniors aged 6 to 11 throughout the 2011/12 season and the associated challenges in doing this are discussed later in the plan.

We have also made healthy progress off the pitch with improvements to facilities and some extremely successful events from a financial perspective. For the first time in a long time, the club is in healthy profit at the end of the season and the forecast is that our reserves will more than cover our summer expenditure.

During 2010/11 we suffered from a severe lack of senior player availability with our 2<sup>nd</sup> team rarely able to field a side. Increased availability from current members and player recruitment at all levels must be a target.

## 2. Our Club History

Billericay Rugby Football Club (BRFC) was formed in late 1959 by members of the St Johns Cricket Club with whom BRFC still share the Willowbrook Sports Ground. BRFC's first full fixture took place in February 1960 versus a Brentwood XV and since then the club has built steadily, maintaining an enjoyable but highly competitive outlook both on and off the pitch.

The following excerpts are taken from letters written to our current President (Keith Young) to help build his opening speech at our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration which took place in May 2009. The club's origins give the reader a clear indication of the nostalgia and warmth with which each and every BRFC member, past and present, regards a very special club.

### ***An early history of Billericay Rugby Football Club - by A. J. Noquet.***

I moved to Billericay in the autumn of 1960. I was then 40 years old and promised my wife not to play any more rugby having played for Upper Clapton and Old Tottonians for some 14 years. My promise was soon broken as I met Bill Thorne in the Crown Pub one evening and he told me the club had just been formed and that my experience of small clubs was badly needed. Flattery gets you anywhere!

So far as I can recollect, St. John's Cricket Club had sold their ground in the Newlands Road area to a developer and with the proceeds had bought the seven acres at Willowbrook. It was realised that in addition to the cricket square, there was room for one or possibly two rugby pitches and indeed two of the cricketers, Richard Shipton and Stan Ball played for both the cricket and rugby clubs. With the help of a keen local businessman named Bill Greenwood (who had previously played in Yorkshire at a pretty good standard), Billericay Rugby Club was formed. The captain was a Scot from Melrose who also skippered the City of London Police XV. Unfortunately Bill Greenwood died from a heart attack that Christmas but the club battled on. We gradually managed to form a pretty regular fixture list and, as you can imagine, a good social side!

The Club gathered pace in the sixties and we managed to run two sides though the 'A' team wasn't always at full strength. Ian Wilson emigrated to New Zealand and Bill Thorne to Canada but we had some good newcomers, particularly Jack Angell who had moved to Billericay from Corstorphine, Edinburgh. I played until I was 45 and then refereed the A team games until I was 50.

### **A.J. Noquet**

Early BRFC Member

### ***Extracts from a letter from Stan Ball, an early BRFC Club President:***

The person who originally had the idea to set up the club (as a section of the St.John's Sports Association Ltd) was Michael Price, uncle of the one and only Frank Price. I am fairly sure that it all started in 1959 and early records show that our first full fixture was against a Brentwood team on 27th February 1960, followed by a game against Billericay School pupils and staff on 19th March 1960. The team sheet from the Brentwood game includes my good self and I have a fixture list for the 1960/61 season.

One piece of useless information that might be of interest is that at one point Billericay RFC had a Barbarian who played occasionally. One of our regular players, John Cousins, had been at Trinity College Cambridge and had befriended a Cambridge blue by the name of Robin Joliffe. Robin had been picked for the Barbarians on the wing whilst at Cambridge and was persuaded by John to turn out for Billericay on a couple of occasions!

Please extend an invitation to any Billericay members who might be in Jersey to come and enjoy a drink or two with me.

Kind regards,

**Stan Ball**

Ex-President BRFC

## 3. Our Membership

### Senior Playing Membership

BRFC are a rugby club, primarily made up of adult playing members at this point in time. Therefore, we must ensure that we represent the needs of the majority of our membership via this Whole Club Development Plan but we foresee the Junior section of the club taking an equal footing in years to come.

Our 1st team progressed from Essex division 2 to London 3 North East (a rise of 3 divisions) between 1997 and 2009. This progression was due to two waves of players joining our ranks and forming the mainstay of our first team, both periods (1999 & 2007) coinciding with trips to Twickenham in the National Cup competitions. Neither of these teams came together by pure coincidence. The first wave was brought together via concerted player recruitment and the majority of second group graduated from a single Billericay youth team (circa 1994 to 2001) which was our only venture into youth rugby until 2008/9. We were relegated from the London/regional leagues back into Essex I in 2009/10 for reasons explained below. Whilst this was disappointing, it has allowed us to re-group, target player development and recruitment and come back stronger as a whole club.

With the advent of the 'Merit Table' league structure, our 2nd team had also gone from strength to strength, rising from division 6 to division 3 (ahead of many rival clubs) where we were more than holding our own until the 2010/11 season when we were relegated due to not being able to field a team for the majority of our fixtures.

The 3rd Team are also part of the Merit Table structure and have developed a large squad of dedicated players whilst maintaining a level of enjoyment that embodies the Billericay RFC tradition. The 3's lost their merit table plate final in March 2011 but the bond that they have built is a testament to the club and to the team.

It is the desire to protect the camaraderie that we have whilst continuing to provide competitive rugby at the height of our varying capabilities. This must inspire us to address the issue of dwindling playing numbers and standard that has become apparent over the past two seasons.

We lost key players following the successful 2007 season for various reasons including retirement, migration and work commitments leading to re-location. We see this as the major factor in our recent relegation. With other members of our first team now entering the twilight of their careers, player recruitment and retention is our most pressing playing objective. Another issue is one that many clubs now face with members facing growing working and home-life pressures that restrict the time available for club participation.

After surveying the membership, we have determined that we must do more to retain players that join the club for a short period and then leave and motivate older players to turn out for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> teams when they retire to reduce the impact of players 'going up'.

To address the first issue of retaining new players/those interested in joining the club, a 'Welcome Pack' has been suggested. This could be provided in hard copy or soft copy over email and include all the information required to attend training and make yourself available for fixtures. Likewise, we

plan to capture new player contact details in a more coordinated fashion, using the RFU Rugby First website as a central repository.

We have realised that we have no process in place with which to measure the number of player losses, record recruitment requirements for each playing position and address recruitment/succession planning for any voluntary roles that they may occupy. It is only by monitoring this information that we can proactively approach player (and volunteer) recruitment.

It is worth noting that the last Sport England survey (2006) shows Basildon District (of which Billericay forms part) as having a sports participation rate of 17.5%, which is in the bottom quarter of the results collated and well below the national average. Basildon district also has a low volunteer rate (2.1%) compared to the national average (4.8%). These figures mean that as a club we must realise that we are always going to have to work hard to gain members in an area that is historically adverse to club participation. However, it does suggest that we have a potential member audience of approx. 10,000 people (17.5% of Billericay's 60,000 population) and so there is certainly the scope to improve our numbers.

Whilst we need to be shrewder in the recruitment of specific players, one of our biggest issues is the fact that we do not actively recruit players at any level. The club do not advertise within the community and this must change. The following means of advertisement are considered opportunities to increase our membership:

- Advertisements in the local press (Newspapers, Town Council leaflets etc)
- Strategically placed posters in Billericay town centre (paid for by sponsorship)
- Advertisement at external events where BRFC have a presence (Round Table events, School coaching sessions etc)
- Update and maintain our information on the RFU/league website(s) to ensure that prospective members can find their 'local rugby club' and do not revert to nearby alternatives.
- A fully functioning, visually attractive and up to date website that features prominently on the major internet search engines.

It is our intention to produce a Player Recruitment & Retention Plan for the 2011/12 season which will target each of these issues in more detail.

### **Junior Playing Membership**

When looking at the more successful amateur sports clubs in the country, the existence of an established youth section is a common feature. A youth section increases a club's membership, its volunteer pool, its visibility within the community and provides a core of future adult players and an avenue for competitive honours.

During 2009/10 and 2010/11, we made efforts to ensure that we have the infrastructure to offer our potential youth teams a safe and structured environment within which to learn the game. We have the welfare and administrative resources in place (see 'member welfare' section) to give parents/guardians the confidence that we offer a suitable environment for their children and gaining



the RFU Seal of Approval offers them further comfort. We are currently running coaching sessions for Under 6, U7, U8 and U9 age groups and we hope to add teams at U10 and U11 in 2011/12.

Ideally, we would like to have 5 coaches per age group to allow structured sessions to be planned and any incidents to be managed without having to stop the session. Whilst we have the majority in place for the existing age groups, we need to add further coaches to support our growth and this is our key challenge for 2011/12 (see the 'Coaching' section which follows).

Youth rugby equipment has been purchased but more will be required as our youth section grows creating a need for continued investment. During 2010/11 we were extremely grateful to receive funding from a number of sponsorship sources including the Billericay Round Table (a local charitable organisation) and Mayflower Computing. These monies were used to purchase further equipment and subsidise training apparel for the youth members which also helps raise the clubs profile throughout the region.

To a certain extent, the youth system can be seen as self-sustaining with our intention to use annual youth member subscriptions and funds from youth related funding applications exclusively for the benefit of the youth section.

## Coaching

Whilst we have a playing committee where on the field issues (primarily selection) are discussed, we do not have a long term playing/coaching strategy for either the senior or prospective junior sections of the club. If we wish to achieve sustainable growth on the pitch, then we must develop a coaching strategy to ensure that the coaching activity at all age groups and levels consistently contributes toward the progress of the club as a whole.

As part of being awarded the RFU Seal of Approval, we now have a Club Coach Coordinator who manages the coach training across the senior and junior sections. We subscribe to the RFU's belief that continual coach development will increase the skill levels of our players and allow our coaches to bring new ideas to the club to keep training interesting.

We currently have a first team player/coach conducts our training sessions and is responsible for first team tactics/strategy. It is hoped that during 2011/12, he will work with our Club Coach Coordinator and Youth Chairman to produce a whole club coaching strategy that is consistent throughout the club and can be referenced by all of our members.

The availability of junior coaches will be key to the success of the BRFC youth section. To this end we currently have coaches qualified at differing levels which are commensurate to their involvement. Next season we will have 4 coaches at U10 level, 4 at under 9, 3 at under 8 and four coaches working with a mixed group of under 6 and under 7's. It is hoped that we can split the under 7's from the larger group but this is dependent upon the number of coaches available. We have realised that input from parent volunteers/coaching assistants can offer more productive training sessions and support a fully functioning youth section. After recruiting potential coaches, it is the club's intention to meet the costs of all training courses and examinations to allow them to develop to their desired level.

Our long term aspiration for the youth section is to have a stand alone administrative structure inclusive of a Youth Committee and match-day/administrative support. This structure will operate under a mini and midi rugby strategy that fosters development and is aligned to the aspirations of the senior section.

To guarantee the future of the youth section we must add a ‘coach succession plan’ to the coaching strategy. This will aim to identify potential head coaches for each youth age group to replace the current coaches when they choose to stand down or move on to another age group.

### **Referees**

For a Rugby Club to function successfully, it must have access to proficient referees whose expertise match, if not exceed, the playing abilities of the team that they are refereeing. We are lucky to have close links to some senior RFU referee representatives who are able to assist us in providing referees for our fixtures. These links must be maintained and we should also take measures to encourage referees to become members of BRFC. Whilst this requirement is not as pressing as others, referee availability should be monitored going forward and meeting the costs of training courses and offering free membership will need to be considered to encourage referees to become associated with the club.

### **Volunteer Coordination**

Following the RFU guidance, the first stage of Volunteer Co-ordination is to appoint a Volunteer Coordinator who can lead the club’s current Volunteers and Members in identifying what Volunteer roles/structure will allow the club to both operate on a day to day basis and also enable long term development. The next stage is to properly define the requirements of each role in the form of a job description which the incoming applicant is invited to review and suggest amendments.

This has taken place and our designated Volunteer Coordinator has since added the agreed roles as an addendum to the Club Constitution which was ratified at the 2009/10 Annual General Meeting.

We are aware that we must also increase our ability to co-ordinate and prioritise the shared workload to ensure that no efforts go to waste and that our development aspirations are realised in as shorter time as possible.

In order to realise long term and sustainable growth, succession planning must be put in place and fully supported. It is therefore proposed that a session will be held at the end of each season/prior to the AGM (chaired by the Volunteer Coordinator) which will allow the club committee to discuss long term succession planning and agree actions.

### **Volunteer Recruitment**

Like any club, there has been a history of a small number of people performing multiple roles throughout the club and efforts being spread too thinly. In order to function more efficiently, we must begin to attract new volunteers from within the playing and social membership and encourage new members to get involved in the running of their club sooner.

Another key area for development is the retention of retiring players as volunteers. By creating non-committee based roles for outgoing players (youth coaching, special projects, running particular

social events, Press Officer etc), it is hoped that we could give these individuals a further purpose within the club and gain the benefit of their experience. These members would also be the ideal people to take on special development projects.

There could be some merit in developing a reward system to encourage volunteers to get involved. The fact that playing members past and present should wish to contribute to ‘their’ club should not be overlooked but investigating whether a waiver of annual subscription or priority when applying for England International tickets etc could increase the number of volunteers should be considered.

### Female Volunteers/Membership

The majority of our male members have wives, girlfriends, mothers and/or sisters. We have historically been relatively unsuccessful in encouraging them to participate in club activities, either as volunteers or guests.

Feedback from the original (2009) development workshop (at which one of our few active female members was present) was that we do not work hard enough to make the club accessible to ladies. The key views are that our facilities need improvement to create an environment within which ladies feel comfortable and that we do not actively contact/communicate with these potential members/volunteers.

With this in mind, we will target the creation of a Ladies Committee who will meet twice a season with the following aims:

- Collating the points of view of the ladies involved with the club from which development ideas can be voiced at development meetings.
- Organising specific BRFC Ladies Events (formal and/or informal).
- Helping to organise main club events; increasing the appeal to player’s wives, girlfriends and families.
- Encouraging female participation across the club’s activities.
- Welcoming potential female members to the club e.g. wives, girlfriends, mothers of junior players.

The Chairwoman of the Ladies Committee will be invited to attend main club committee meetings to present the views of the Ladies Committee and represent their interests.

Development Actions – Our Membership							
Actions	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Owner	Cost
Introduce process to monitor player numbers and identify player requirements							
Arrange an Annual Playing Membership Review meeting for coaches and captains							
<b>Actively Recruit players of all standards to bolster 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> team availability</b>							

Update BRFC website and RFU website presence to attract potential players							
Increase advertising for adult playing membership recruitment							£500 p.a.
Develop and update whole club coaching strategy							
Develop strategy and infrastructure for youth section							£500
Recruit 6 youth coaches and meet training costs							£200 p.a.
Create plan for outgoing player and general volunteer recruitment							
Set up Ladies Committee							

## 4. Member Services

Billericay RFC has always been renowned for its welcoming and sociable atmosphere, something that we are keen to not lose as we grow/develop the club due to increased playing expectations.

We currently offer our members:

- Competitive and challenging rugby at all levels for playing members.
- A good standard of coaching, with the opportunity to train twice a week. This includes access to a club physiotherapist.
- Access to the club's facilities including bar, changing facilities and equipment.
- Rugby related events including an annual Sevens Tournament and Rugby Tour.
- Club social events

We have aspirations to increase this offering for current and potential members.

In order to ensure participation both on and off the field (enhancing the experience for all involved), we have improved our level of communication but this can always get better. We currently communicate via voice calls, email, text, newsletter, facebook and twitter which gives our members ample opportunity to keep up to date with club affairs.

With regard to on the field services, our biggest challenge is to address the collective quality/ability of our playing membership and the numbers of available players. This will mean that those playing have a more enjoyable experience and that we are not forced to cancel fixtures due to unavailability. This challenge will be addressed via the actions within the prior 'Our Members' section of this plan.

Our 2010 membership survey established that our annual and match-day subscription levels are affordable and perceived as value for money and these have not changed for 2011/12. Any decision to increase these charges to fund club developments will need to be carefully considered, especially in the current economic climate.

During the 2010/11 season, we began to build upon our successful Vice Presidents lunch offering and ensured that we collected subscriptions from each of our VPs. We also made more active contact with each VP prior to lunches to enhance attendances. It is our aim to send an annual letter and fixture card to each current and former VP prior to the 2011/12 season.

Another long-term goal (due to the requirement for segregated facilities) is to attract women's rugby to BRFC. The ladies game is growing at a fast pace within the UK and this represents a large body of potential members for BRFC. Due to the reliance upon other objectives, this remains something for the future but such long term plans must be considered when making any defining decisions such as future-proofing any clubhouse enhancements.

Whilst a social committee was suggested in 2010 to allow the workload associated with organising events to be shared and increase the flow of ideas for new events, we have realised that there needs to be one focal point for any event that is organised. We will seek to identify an 'owner' for each proposed event who can draft in assistance as needed. Our Annual Dinner and Bee Festival weekend

(7s tournament, tour match, evening entertainment and beer festival) are our key events and where we have generated significant revenues. We must build upon these successes and strive to make them ‘bigger’ and ‘better’.

It has been recognised that we do not maximise the potential for bar takings during the immediate post-game period. This has traditionally been when amateur sports clubs have made the majority of their bar revenues and we are no different. With drink driving now rightfully outlawed, we have found that many will leave straight after a game and then re-join any social gatherings later in the evening, often when people have moved on to another venue. We must give our members reason to want to stay for a drink at the clubhouse after a game and either get picked up or take a taxi thereafter. This needs to be our immediate aim, as increased regular income is preferable, from a cash-flow perspective, to unpredictable social event revenues.

The links between our membership and our sponsor network are another area that needs improvement. Sponsorship of BRFC needs to become a less philanthropic gesture and more of a mutually beneficial arrangement that inspires further sponsors to become involved. Better internal management of our sponsorship links would enable the club to involve sponsors in club undertakings (match days, Senior and Youth level Events, RFU schemes etc) as a benefit of sponsorship. We are also hoping to allow sponsors to market their services and special offers to our associated customer base (our membership) and their personal networks (especially via the website and perhaps via Facebook and Twitter if permissible). In future, it is perceived that inter-sponsor arrangements, facilitated by the sponsorship co-ordinator, could prove commercially beneficial for our sponsors e.g. a purveyor of web-designer/IT solutions providing services for a small business at a discounted rate due to mutual sponsorship of BRFC.

A further suggestion has been the use of one of the new flat screen TVs for a rolling advertisement screen on match days where there is no rugby to watch on the TV. The roll could include notice of upcoming fixtures, sponsor adverts, club notices etc.

We have identified the opportunity for the club to leverage the consolidated purchasing power of its membership and create commercial agreements with sports equipment, clothing and product manufacturers/retailers. We currently offer the membership BRFC branded sports clothing and are investigating the a deal for playing shirts and training apparel direct with a manufacturer. It may also be worth investigating whether economic benefits could be created via bulk orders for essential items e.g. playing boots, scrum hats, body armour, kit bags etc.

Development Actions – Member Services							
Actions	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Owner	Cost
Increase social participation during the immediate post-game period.							
Improve sponsorship links/administration for mutual member/sponsor benefit. Club trade list on website for members and affiliates to find services offered by club members							

Production of rolling advert/notices for flat screen TV						AG	
Leverage consolidated member purchasing power for personal equipment purchases.							

## 5. Member Welfare

We are currently in the process of updating the Club Constitution to incorporate our future ambitions. This will form the corner stone of our development objectives going forwards and any changes will need to be voted upon at our Annual General Meeting. The Constitution will need to reflect the following:

- Club Hierarchy & Role Responsibilities
- Process for electing Officials
- Governance Procedure
- Selection Policy
- Youth Policy

We must also re-visit our Code of Conduct to address the behavioural challenge that today’s rugby clubs face, as set out in the RFU Code of Conduct. The code must also reflect our club values which are as follows:

- Enjoyment
- Respect
- Teamwork
- Discipline

In 2010, BRFC were awarded the RFU Seal of Approval (SoA). The SoA recognises the welfare measures that a club has in place for its junior members. From the provision of an environment safe from potentially dangerous individuals to the availability of adequate first aid materials, the SoA ensures that youth development is managed appropriately.

This accreditation is an RFU focus and is particularly relevant as Schools Partnership Managers and Competition Managers have been instructed by the youth sports trust to only work with clubs holding the SoA. In addition the County sports partnerships (SportEssex etc) are following the same guidelines which will affect funding and support opportunities. Therefore, holding this accreditation is now more important than ever when measuring our ability to gain funding for youth development initiatives, facilities and equipment.

We have appointed a Club Welfare Officer (Laura Parker), who is responsible for ensuring that the relevant checks are made and administration carried out with regard to our youth coaches and those who will interact with our younger members.

We have updated our club constitution and policies and will publish these policies within the clubhouse and on our website to make them available to our membership.

We have also made strides toward putting a BRFC safety procedure in place for times of accident and/or emergency (major sporting and personal injuries etc). Part of this has been a full Health and Safety assessment of our facilities which also contributes towards the SoA accreditation.

Development Actions – Member Welfare							
Actions	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Owner	Cost
Maintain RFU Seal of Approval accreditation						SW/CG	
Implement and improve							



## 6. Community Links & Publicity

Whilst Billericay Rugby Club is relatively well recognised amongst the Essex rugby community, we need to do more to increase our profile within our local community.

We firmly believe that Billericay RFC has a key role to play in community development and will endeavour to focus upon the following drivers:

- Sports Participation – improving public health (adult and youth)
- Improving Community Safety – providing diversionary activities and instilling the values of discipline and respect for fellow players, officials and volunteers.
- Promoting equality – of access and participation; irrespective of gender, social background and ethnicity. Our long term aim is to be able to offer opportunities for all backgrounds and those with learning or physical disabilities to become involved in the sport.

We currently do not have active links with either Basildon District Council (Billericay forms part of Basildon District) or Billericay Town Council. We will seek to build these links and align our mutual community development goals. This will offer a common approach to those within the community and also help us to keep up to date with funding opportunities and potential long-term planning permission or development aspirations. With this in mind a long-term aim is to create an external stakeholder management role within the club hierarchy. To begin with, this role could form part of the sponsorship manager's agenda.

Our relationship with the RFU (at national and regional level) also needs to be managed as there is a large amount of assistance available from our governing body that the club have been unaware of until now. Regular attendance at meetings and contact with representatives needs to be the responsibility of a single BRFC member.

With our long-term objective being to establish a robust youth development system, we must look to build our links with local schools. At present we are building links with the following schools:

- Quilters Primary School
- Buttsbury Primary School
- Brightside Primary School
- St Peters Primary School
- Stock Primary School
- Downham Primary School

However, these links are very informal at present and we shall be seeking assistance from our Essex RFU representatives and our SportEssex Partnering Development Manager (PDM) in order to cement and build upon these relationships as well as making further connections to other schools in the area. The addition of an RFU Liaison Officer to the Essex RFU staff offers the club several opportunities to utilise this individual's knowledge and time with which to offer mutually beneficial training schemes to the local schools.

The development and co-ordination of school links must form part of a job role within the club as this is seen as key to the club’s growth. We see this as forming part of the Head Youth Coach’s role, perhaps with each coach fostering one school link each. Once relationships have been established it would be our intention to investigate the possibility of a joint youth development strategy that enhances rugby participation and skill levels at both the school and BRFC via shared goals and resources. Examples include Teacher Tag Rugby training and end of term Inter-School competitions.

As of the 2012/13 season, our oldest age group will be moving on to senior education. We must be mindful of this and begin to build better relationships with Mayflower and Billericay senior schools ahead of our players joining the school. Ensuring that rugby forms part of lesson plans and that the school is advocating new players joining the local rugby club must be our goals.

With our desire to also increase member numbers at an adult level, we must look to use local press coverage opportunities to simultaneously attract the community to come along and support and/or join the club. This involves generating match reports for local newspapers as well as fostering constructive links with editors to ensure that our match and event coverage is both regular and prominent. To meet this objective we need to allocate a press officer role, if only to ensure that coaches/captains produce match reports, collate them and send them to the relevant newspaper representatives. We also need to arrange more social events in and around Billericay town centre where our members/players can wear their club blazers and ties, hopefully sparking further membership enquiries.

We currently operate an annual rugby sevens competition in the final weekend of April. This attracts a reasonable number of followers attached to each team but it must be our objective to advertise the event more widely. This will hopefully encourage those interested in the sport of rugby to visit the club and experience a showcase event, resulting in potential for new members and supporters.

In terms of community exposure, every November the BRFC players collect money for the Children In Need charity. It has been mentioned that we may also want to select a local charity that we support on a more regular basis. Charity collections help to promote the club in a good light and we often get enquiries from potential players whilst collecting.

It is our aspiration that Charity links will form part of a wider Club Outreach Programme. At first this may need to be realised by BRFC joining a programme run by others and lending our members skills and conviction toward community goals through rugby related activity and/or more general tasks. The Billericay Round Table, with whom we already have links, undertakes such community work and we would initially seek to build these links. As the club grows in size/numbers we envisage operating our own Outreach Programme which targets needy elements of the Billericay Community.

Development Actions – Community Links							
Actions	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Owner	Cost
Build links with local councils							
Nominate individual responsible for maintaining links with RFU							
Build productive links with local primary schools for							£500 p.a.

youth development and player recruitment.							
Build productive links with local senior schools for youth development and player recruitment							£200 p.a
Allocate Press Officer role to increase local presence							
Advertise key events (7's Tournament etc) more widely							£100 p.a.
Review charity links							

## 7. Club Management

### Facilities Management

To be able to realise the changes that we wish to make to the clubhouse and grounds, BRFC must secure its position within the Willowbrook framework. BRFC form part of a tri-club committee (with St John's Cricket Club and Stock Tennis Club) who utilise the Willowbrook sports ground under a protected leasing arrangement. The overarching committee have authority to make decisions regarding usage of the ground and clubhouse facilities. Therefore, BRFC must actively work with the other sports club representatives to identify common goals and motivate them to seek and share development opportunities.

A positive factor in our bid to improve our facilities is that neither Willowbrook or BRFC hold any significant outstanding debts. Therefore, any funding that we can generate can be channelled exclusively into our development aspirations.

In 2010, we succeeded in gaining funding for a major development works to our pitches and training facilities. Through the RFU's GroundMatch scheme we have been able to secure the large scale de-compaction, de-weeding, top-soiling and dressing of the entire playing grounds. As such, this has also benefitted St John's Cricket Club as their pitch interlocks our rugby pitches and training area in the summer season. It was hoped that they would contribute to the funding requirement and although this did not materialise, we are confident that the pitch improvements will allow them to realise the potential benefits of joint/inter-sport funding applications.

With regard to our 'blue sky'/longer term facilities development aspirations, we have identified the following opportunities:

*Bar Expansion/relocation* – the expansion or relocation of the bar within the clubhouse could allow us to realise additional revenues at larger social events and parties. More bar space and draught pumps would allow more drinks to be sold when the bar is busy.

*First Floor extension of the Clubhouse* – We may be able to increase the internal capacity of the clubhouse first floor by building a mezzanine floor over the entrance hall. This would increase the capacity and functionality of the facility.

*Re-development of the existing car park* – we would like to have a tarmac car park built to prevent the pot-holes that we currently have to battle with. This would also increase the accessibility to grounds maintenance and commercial vehicles whilst making the club look more professional.

*Extension of changing facilities* – This would offer changing facilities that could be used by our proposed youth and ladies sections whilst the senior male members are using the existing facilities.

*Gym Facilities/Equipment* – To accompany a changing room extension, the club may wish to consider a gym facility for its members. This could be used for rugby specific fitness training (power lifting equipment) and may also result in increased usage of the bar facilities on non-training nights.

*Installation of Green Energy Sources* – e.g. solar panels, wind turbines, water collection for pitch irrigation. With a capital investment, these initiatives will reduce the club's utilities bills over the long term.

*Existing Pitch Works/Maintenance* – see above

*Possible 1<sup>st</sup> team pitch relocation* – A long term desire may be to relocate the pitch to sit in front of the clubhouse and create a larger viewing balcony at first floor level. It should be noted that this would require the St John's cricket pitch to be moved and so needs to be carefully considered.

*New floodlighting to training/playing areas* – Whilst the existing lighting is sufficient, it has been recognised that our floodlights could be improved. The long term opportunity to host evening fixtures has also been discussed.

These development opportunities each need to be appraised and prioritised. Our aim over the 2011/12 season is to produce a Facilities Development Plan for fundraising and action. This plan will need to follow a 1, 3 and 5 year format which will help to prioritise and action our development aspirations.

There are several smaller scale and more realistic facilities improvements that we will seek to address during the 2011/12 season. These are as follows:

*Installation of a new club kitchen* – We are in the process of finalising sponsorship for new kitchen appliances and units to ensure that we are able to provide food for match days, VPs lunches, special events and potential sponsor days.

*Refurbishment of the Gents Toilets* – The Gents toilet requires a major overhaul including a new sink unit as the current one is leaking and causing damage to the fabric of the building.

*Installation of Bar Store insulation* – We all love a nice cold pint and we have been advised that better insulation within the bar store will reduce our air conditioning/chiller costs.

*Bar layout optimisation* – We believe that with some planning and joinery skills, we can make the bar area more efficient which will lead to an easier experience for bar staff and higher revenues.

## **Promotion of Facilities**

Whilst we desire improvements to our facilities we have been keen to identify that we need to make better use of the facilities that we have.

We do not utilise the bar facilities for commercial gain as much as we could and are taking steps to advertise the club as a party venue for general hire. We have considered and have begun to implement the following advertising measures:

- Mass Leaflet mailing to residences across Billericay
- Targeted leaflet distribution – School 6<sup>th</sup> forms, gyms, business etc
- Posters in key locations within Billericay town centre

We hope that this measure will begin to generate some much needed revenue but understand that party bookings can be sporadic. With Willowbrook’s permission, we would also like to investigate the opportunity to hire the clubhouse to others e.g. keep-fit classes, Nintendo Wii fit classes, bridge clubs, Rotary Societies etc. Again, adequate advertising and promotion needs to take place and we shall be undertaking a number of meetings to plan our activities.

It may also be possible to hire the use of our pitch and changing facilities to local schools for their matches and training sessions as part of the school link initiative outlined above. This could be used to generate funds or as a means of developing the relationship and talent scouting, with the school meeting the associated facilities costs and the cost of any coaches that the club may provide. A facilities partnership with a local school could also lead to funding opportunities e.g. funds for floodlights and junior equipment that would benefit both the school and the club.

As a further revenue stream (via fees and bar receipts), the playing facilities could also be hired to other local sports clubs e.g. a football team for mid-week training under the floodlights.

### Financial Management

As the club begins to take a more professional approach towards our future and seeks funding with which to advance, we must be able to report our finances in an appropriate manner.

We propose to maintain an annual Financial Management Plan which will include both a plan for managing our revenue (income) and our capital (investment) requirements.

The Revenue Management section of the plan will include Profit & Loss (P&L) accounts; forecasts and a target summary (written justification of forecast figures) for each of the following areas:

- Subscription Fees
- Match Fees
- Match day/rugby related bar revenue
- Party (external hire) related bar revenue
- Social Function revenue
- Fees for use of facilities

The Capital Funding section will include historic and forecast information regarding:

- Sponsorship – A strategy will be set for all sponsorship activity including shirt sponsorship; pitch side advertising; adverts within the clubhouse; fixture card sponsorship; sponsorship of club promotional posters (‘in association with’ etc).
- Grants – Outline of grants available including RFU; Sports Association; Sport England; Sport Essex etc
- Potential for subsidised/preferential loans based upon historic P&L’s and Forecasts/Budgets

Development Actions – Facilities Management							
Actions	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Owner	Cost
Identify common ‘Willowbrook’ facilities development objectives to share funding requirement							No Cost
Create a Facilities Development Plan for scheme appraisal and							No cost

prioritisation							
Complete short term facilities development (see above)							£2500
Promote Party Venue Hire at Willowbrook							£300 p.a.
Increase the usage of playing facilities by schools/ local clubs							
Create & maintain Financial Management Plan							

## 8. Conclusion

Whilst Billericay Rugby Club continues to face challenges both on and off the pitch, this plan provides us with some focus to ensure that we continue to develop a Rugby Club that our members, potential members and our community want to be associated with.

With the overarching goal of sustainable development via increased participation, the biggest challenge over the coming season is to now deliver our aspirations, particularly player recruitment and availability. This will involve a lot of hard work and so the club must come together and share the burden as we all stand to benefit.

## 9. Club Contacts (for further information)

If you would like further information regarding Billericay Rugby Club's development plan, please contact:

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