

**COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER  
REVIEW OF REPRESENTATIONS**

Transfer of Land at Forest Park,  
Stonehaven to Mackie Rugby Football  
Club

This document is intended to respond to representations made on the Community asset Transfer of Land at Forest Park, Stonehaven.

## **Contents**

Introduction	3
Definitions terms used within the document	3
Thanks	3
Background	3
Representations Summary – High Level	4
Representations	4
Details of Clubs – Proposed Public Consultation	19
Appendix	20

## **Introduction**

This document has been prepared by Mackie Rugby Football Club, forthwith referred to as 'the Club' with the assistance of its appointed agent, Inspired design & Development Ltd, as a requirement of the Community Asset Transfer process, as noted within The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

## **Definitions terms used within the document**

CAT – Community Asset Transfer

Club – Mackie Rugby Football Club

Act – Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

## **Acknowledgements**

The Club would like to thank everyone who submitted a representation in regard to our request for an asset transfer of land on Forest Drive, and all those who turned up to the two Community Open Days and the informal discussion at the Scout Hall.

Would like to thank both the Stonehaven Community Council for allowing the club to present our requirements in April and November 2021, and the Newtonhill and Muchalls Community Council for allowing the club to present its plans within its catchment area.

We would like to confirm a leaflet drop to all properties within Forest Park to promote a Community Open Day at the local Academy. This was also noted on social media on several open pages within Stonehaven.

## **Background**

### **The background is set out in the CAT application but is summarised as undernoted.**

The club has enjoyed leased land up at Redcloak for many years, however land where one of the pitches was located was sold a couple of years ago, and the other pitch landowner has advised that our current lease will not be renewed as his business has alternative plans for the site. The Club wish the estate well and thank them for the years the Club have been able to call it home. The situation as it currently stands is the Club have nowhere to go, with nearly 400 local children benefiting from our efforts.

The Club have not taken this request lightly, with over 15 years of searching for a new home – so far, despite great effort and many discussions we have been unsuccessful in this endeavor to date. If there are any alternative and deliverable sites we would be delighted to hear from local landowners.

Discussions over the years with various parties have in the end either been unsuitable for various reasons such as cost, length of lease available, location or because it is based on a developer getting planning permission for housing. The Club have also suffered from the

topography of the Stonehaven area, the location of any forthcoming supermarket or development, the oil & gas pipelines and AWPR, generally meant that landowners were unwilling to sell an area of land suitable for the club to secure their future.

The club put a bid in for land when a sale of land at Farrochie, Nether Cheyne and Redcloak during a sale in September 2019. Sadly, after due diligence on certain plots and following an over estimated value bid on another, we were ultimately unsuccessful. The Local Development Plan also created a situation where housing or development would take place at Chapelton rather than Stonehaven, thus reducing the chances of a development to virtually nil.

The Club now find themselves in a position – and a timeline where we need to find an alternative site before our lease runs out to allow us to continue the years of effort and good work that has gone before. The rugby club started its youth section during 1986 and have seen thousands of children over 35 years benefit from the opportunity to learn about teamwork, respect and inclusion as well as the opportunity to get onto a path of a healthy, sporting lifestyle.

The club have a long history using the site at Mill O' Forest – since the mid 1980's. In recent years this has been curtailed mainly due to drainage issues and the amount of dog poo that is left on the park, which is not compatible with children's field sports particularly rugby, potentially causing serious health issues.

The club are community minded, offering rugby modules to almost all of the primary schools in the Kincardine and Mearns area during school time, along with Mackie, Mearns and Portlethen academies. They have also created health and wellbeing workshops and a youth club system for our kids whilst working proactively in support of Live Life Aberdeenshire, having recently produced videos that are being used to promote healthy activities whilst children were at home during lock down; these videos have been forwarded to some 1300 children and 130 parents by Aberdeenshire Council. The Club have also helped filling sandbags during flooding, involved in fee'in market, harbour festivals, occasional BBQs at primary schools during school fundraising days, donations to foodbanks amongst others. These generally take place quietly and unnoticed.

### **Representations Summary – High Level**

As part of the CAT process, following the asset transfer request made by the Club to Aberdeenshire Council, the request had to be validated by Aberdeenshire Council, upon validation they were required to advertise the proposal, offering the opportunity for any representations to be made. The representation deadline was set for 12 November 2021.

Post 12 November 2021, a requirement of the process is to allow the applicant, in this case the Club, a minimum ,20 working day period to prepare a response relative to the representations. The Club are then required to submit this to Aberdeenshire Council.

### **Representations**

In total there were **370** representations made, this comprised of **165** against the proposed transfer and **205** for the proposed transfer.

Therefore 44.6% of those who made a representation were against the proposal and 55.4% of those were in favor of the proposed transfer.

A summary of the various representation has been prepared later in this report, along with responses to the concerns raised.

### **Petition**

Also included with the representations was a petition submitted on behalf of the save our park group. The petition contained 1165 signatures. The presence of the petition is noted however we understand that petitions lodged as part of a representation, cannot be relied upon, as to be a valid representation in terms of the Act it must be lodged in the appropriate manner, which in this case was in writing or by e mail to Aberdeenshire council directly and not via a proxy, in this case Peter Webster. The Club note that Peter Webster has already lodged a formal representation under the appropriate method of recording. The petition will not be reported on further within this report and is not considered as forming part of the representations.

### **The Parent Counsel of Mill O Forest Primary School**

A covering letter was provided to go with the representation as made by the above organisation which related to 25 responses of which 21 were against and 4 in support, as per the petition the above has been treated as a single representation and is contained within the representation statistics above.

For note – the rugby club has agreed with Aberdeenshire Council that if the transfer is successful, the school will have access to the grounds to continue with outdoor activities.

## Representations (Objections)

The following statements are compiled based on review of the representation made they have been combined where appropriate or where overlap in content occurred.

- 1. Concern over loss of green space within Stonehaven Town Boundary, and specifically loss of popular local green space, with emphasis that it is easily accessible to the locals and is suitable for those who have mobility difficulties, it was also noted and referred to as a safe place for children (138). These comments included supplementary information such as the specific use of the land being for dog walking (39), leisure activities, walking, running, playing and flying Kites (35).**

*Where reference is made to a number this is the number of times the same reference was noted within the representations, therefore (35) refers to 35 times this was noted within the 165 representations.*

## Response

Whilst the Club understands the concern that open freely useable greenspace may be lost to the community, we can confirm that this will not be loss of green space, the intention and a requirement of the transfer will be that the site can only be used for sport and recreation purposes. Therefore, if the Club fails to maintain an effective Club then the facilities can revert to a similar use by other custodians which is in accordance with the Act.

It is well documented in the council's own appraisal, that of all the Aberdeenshire towns, Stonehaven has an abundance of green space. Coming second only to Banff for foremost available green space.

There is also an intention to maintain and provide a full loop unrestricted path around the site of use by the general public, this is proposed to comprise of a consolidated rolled hardcore path, and the pavement along Forest Drive.

The site is proposed to be fenced, a requirement of this type of grass sports field to prevent where possible contamination by animal droppings. The proposed fencing will be covered in greater detail in the comment under fencing. Although the sports fields will be restricted access there is an intention to accommodate a similar feature as employed at the 3G pitch in Mineral Well. This is to provide a small, unlocked pass gate for use by those wishing to play on the pitch when not in use for scheduled training and match play.

- 2. Concerns over potential Increased traffic movement, pollution from vehicle movements, and road safety, including some concerns regarding school occupation and decant times (49). In addition to this there was concern over the potential increase in parking demand (56). There was also some concern that the existing car park would be denied from use (7). Concerns were also raised over access and use of the pre-existing Hamish Park (8)**

## **Response**

There is no intention to have a gate or locked method of prevention to the car park or to Hamish play park, the drawings as submitted make no such reference, we can only assume this has been assumed by those making representation who have perhaps not reviewed fully the documentation that is publicly available including draft drawings.

In relation to potential increased traffic movements, particularly at School times, the facility will typically be used in evenings and weekends and will therefore not impact on school population and depopulation times.

With reference to likely increased traffic movements, this will be dealt with at the Planning Application stage, it is anticipated that a traffic management plan will be required to demonstrate the safe use of the facility at peak times. In addition, we anticipate detailed discussions with the roads service in relation to anticipated vehicle movements and appropriate planning for anticipated average number of parking space requirements, in addition to this the site allows for a standard bus to turn safely within the site therefore, removing the need for stopping of busses in close proximity to the existing entrance to the site.

Pollution as a direct result of traffic is not anticipated to be a significant factor, the road is a well-used road and the additional traffic anticipated will predominantly be in the early evenings and weekends, when the road is less busy.

### **3. Concerns over potential Noise Pollution (48). In addition, there has been some Concerns over public disorder, and potential anti-social behavior (10)**

## **Response**

The Club understand that there will be some concern that particularly on a Saturday when tournaments and match play occur that there will be increased noise emanating from the site. The noise generated from game play with relatively small numbers of spectators is unlikely to have any potential to cause issues to neighboring residents and would be a continuation of the previous use of the pitches for matches. The site is located adjacent to a busy railway line and well used road, both of which generate significant noise.

The references made to public disorder are actually found to be offensive, the Club is well regarded and well behaved, there have been no recorded incidents of public disorder linked to the Club in its 45-year history. In addition, the majority of the Clubs members are young children being coached. The implication that there would be civil disobedience is completely unfounded in this case.

#### **4. Concerns over proposed fencing of the site (44)**

##### **Response**

Fencing of the grassed pitches is a necessary step given that the pitches and pitch preparation will take some 3 years to be at a point suitable for match play, protection of the surface especially early in its life is essential.

Several comments were made inferring that the fencing of the site would make them feel like they were in a prison. The fencing proposed is standard sports fencing utilised throughout the country, it is not and in no way resembles a prison. The fencing proposed is an exact match for the fencing used at the 3G facility, the Club have heard no references to this being a prison camp since its installation in excess of 5 years ago.

The fencing requirement will be dealt with under the Planning application, where the club will require to evidence its need, and justify the type, nature and height of such fences.

Also, the most significant reason for fencing the site is the welfare of the payers and those conducting training. Issues as a result of dog waste is a significant health factor. There would be a large investment in preparing the ground, creating a new drainage system and creating a better playing surface. The fence will help to protect this investment.

We note that virtually all the new Councils community and education sports facilities in new facilities are fenced off even where there is no adjacent housing e.g. Mearns, Alford Academy.

The purpose of the fence predominately is to protect the rugby pitches, the health and safety of those using it, and the club's significant investment in making it fit for sports usage. The height of the fencing was purely to prevent a rugby ball from reaching the road or private gardens. There may be areas this height can be reduced. we note that a similar protective approach has been adopted by the Council when delivering its own new sporting facilities e.g. Mearns Academy, Alford Academy even where there is no adjacent housing so would question why community clubs have to adopt a lesser safety approach.

##### **The dangers to people from dog faeces on playing fields**

Dog faeces is smelly and highly unpleasant stuff but, sadly, that is the least of the problems when it comes to playing fields. Particularly for a contact sport like Rugby where there is the risk of open wounds coming into contact with the dreaded stuff.

The risks are not theoretical. There have been many examples of rugby players suffering serious infected wounds. Worse still is the very real risk associated with Toxocariasis, a debilitating disease caused by the eggs of parasitic Roundworms.



Some key facts:

- Dog faeces contains very high levels of a wide range of pathogenic [disease forming] micro-organisms; bacteria such as Salmonella, Campylobacter and MRSA, and parasitic organisms such as Cryptosporidium.
- One gram of faeces can contain up to 23 million such organisms, more than enough to cause disease and infection.
- All of these organisms can survive for long periods (over a year) in soil.
- Equally significant, dog faeces are the primary source of Toxocariasis in humans – particularly when in close contact with soil. Children are especially vulnerable.
- This is a dangerous, unpleasant and potentially blinding disease caused by the eggs of Toxocara Canis – colloquially known as Roundworm. These are passed in large numbers the faeces of infected dogs and can live in soil for many years long after the faeces itself has been washed away. As with the bacterial infection, a very small quantity of faeces can contain many eggs.
- Note, whilst foxes also carry this parasite, they never defaecate in the open and are not implicated in transmission to humans on playing fields.
- Scooping up dog faeces from grass does **NOT** act as an adequate safety precaution (any more than would scraping it up from a carpet and then letting a baby play on it...). As noted above, small quantities of faeces can carry very high levels of pathogens that survive for lengthy periods.
- The only way adequately to fulfil our duty of care to junior and senior players is to ban dogs from playing fields. The only exception can be for Assistance / Guide dogs on leads and under close supervision. Many rugby clubs have already implemented such a ban and the Club place themselves at risk of litigation in the event of any player – whether from our or a visiting club – becoming infected or injured as a result of failing to apply similar rules.

Notes:

1. A recent Google Search immediately found many such cases in recent years including a man who lost his leg as a result.
2. Similarly, a Google search on 'Rugby Union Policy on Dogs' produces a very large number of clubs which have already introduced total bans.

The author of the above information was obtained from the Internet, from a UK based Rugby Club, the author being Nigel Parsons (BSc Combined Hons, Food Science and Microbiology).

The Club have had 2 of cases and injuries over the years that have, to the best of the Clubs knowledge, most likely been an effect from playing rugby & dog faeces.

The Club have had a child with impetigo and a local player with an infection through a scratch which became very severe. See the following photos.



**5. Concerns over potential Light Pollution due to proposed floodlighting at the facility (43)**

**Response**

The proposal includes for floodlighting to ensure year-round use of the proposed facility. The Club fully understands the concerns of those in close proximity who may be concerned with the potential for light pollution.

This matter will be dealt with in detail by a planning application if the Club is successful in obtaining the CAT. The proposed lighting will be designed in accordance with current best practice by a competent lighting designer, who will provide relevant light spillage information as part of the planning process.

It is important to note that the pitch on the site was and still has floodlight infrastructure in place. These facilities were in use since 1985 and the club still pays the standing charge for the supply to the lights to this day.

**6. Loss of space could impact on mental Health, including reference to the pandemic (30)**

**Response**

The Club acknowledges the comments made relative to the positive impact that outdoor green space can provide. This is not disputed and indeed a major aspect of the Club requiring a facility like this, is that Young people have been found to be particularly affected by the impact of the Pandemic, with a general rising trend in referrals for assistance to the young. Being part of a structured encouraged team sport has huge health benefits both physically and mentally, providing a sense of place, purpose and lifelong meaningful friendship groups. Something that cannot be obtained from an online chat room or forum.

The Club understands that there is concern due to the requested transfer of the asset that it may not be inclusive to all. The Club very much wishes to invest in the area and the community and offer up the facilities for the wider benefit of the community.

**7. Facility should be located at Mackie Academy, or alternate outskirts of Stonehaven site (22)**

**Response**

There were several comments made stating that the site should be located on the Mackie Academy Site. This is not an option available to the club. This site would have been ideal for not only the proposed Rugby Pitches but also for the 3G Pitch that was formed in Mineralwell. Aberdeenshire has committed to using this asset for the proposed replacement Dunnottar Primary School, and potentially, a new Carronhill School. Therefore, this has not been considered further.

With regard to other suitable sites out-with Stonehaven, the Club has spent over 15 years looking for a permanent site with various bids made in conjunction with developers over the years within the various Local Plans affecting the Stonehaven Area. None have been successful. The background section of this report gives some further information relative to the Clubs journey in trying to find a suitable pitch location.

**8. Loss of trees on the site, and adverse environmental impact and ecology (26)**

**Response**

The trees within the site are all fairly young and recently planted, as landscaping, whilst no one takes any pleasure in removing trees, it is a requirement of the development to enable a site suitable for development. None of the trees are protected. Measures could be put in place for a Carbon reduction on the development on the site or perhaps a replacement tree planting scheme if ground were made available to allow this.

**9. Concern over potential house price values and concerns over amenity (Due to the presence of a club house) (9)**

**Response**

There is no evidence to suggest that a greenspace being used as sports pitches with associated club house will detract in the value of adjacent property. In many cases this is seen as a benefit as it guarantees the future care of the site. Indeed, many areas with pitches or sports facilities adjacent actually become more desirable, one example would be properties adjacent to the Mannofield Cricket Ground, and properties adjacent to the Grammar Pitches in Aberdeen.

## **10. Concerns over the implied sale cost of the land (8)**

### **Response**

The Club has no influence in the cost of any proposed sale of an asset, the legislation in force, The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out the requirements for Local Authorities on how to correctly deal with such matters. The next stage of the process is to obtain a valuation the cost of which is shared equally between the Local Authority and the Applicant in this case the Club. The valuation is by an independent valuation body appointed by the Local Authority.

## **11. Net zero concerns/carbon footprint of development, the pitch is insinuated as a 3G facility (7)**

### **Response**

There was a comment making direct reference to a synthetic pitch, there is no intention to have a synthetic surface and there has never been such an intimation made by the Club.

Regarding the likely Carbon Footprint of the development, there will be a Carbon impact in the delivery of the infrastructure, this cannot be avoided, however the club is looking at using, as far as is reasonably practicable to do so, extensive use of Low to Zero Carbon Technologies within the proposed development. Some of the measures proposed although not exhaustive are as follows.

- Ground Source Loop with Heat Pump – Laid within the pitches
- Photovoltaic Cells and Power Wall Technology – Installed on roof areas and storing electric for use by the Club infrastructure
- Highly insulated Thermal Envelope of the Structures – Therefore requiring a reduced heating demand
- Grey Water recycling – Harvesting the rainwater on the site for re use for the toilets and pitch watering
- Use of low voltage light fittings
- Photocell automated lighting to ensure no lighting left on in buildings
- Reduced Flush WCs

## **12. Potential loss of bottle bank (6)**

### **Response**

The Club can make no comment on Aberdeenshire Council intent or otherwise to retain a glass recycling facility on or adjacent to the site, if there is a will to retain it by Aberdeenshire Council then the Club will actively work with Aberdeenshire Council to ensure a satisfactory location within the carpark.

**13. References made implying the Clubs statement re future of existing ground is incorrect. (6)**

**Response**

There has been mention that the Club has not been accurate on its timeline for having to leave its current site. The reports and statements made by the Club to Aberdeenshire Council remain accurate. The Club has a reduced capacity due to the loss of a Pitch and has been advised that the current landowner wishes the site back.

Since the CAT went live for consultation the Clubs landlord received some backlash from the community, as a direct result the landowner offered in writing with conditions some potential to extend the existing lease, however it was worded in such a way that it could not be relied upon for anything more than the short term. The Club wishes for the record to advise that it fully understands the landowner's position and no way feels that ending the lease should reflect badly in any way to them. The Club has very much enjoyed having its facility at Redcloak.

**14. Concerns over potential increased litter (5)**

**Response**

There is no evidence to suggest that there will be an increased litter situation as a result of these proposals, the Club operates tidiness rules which are maintained and enforced by the Coaches of each relevant peer group.

**15. Facility precluding the wider community (3)**

**Response**

There was some reference to the facilities being used only for the Rugby Club and as such huge elements of the community would be excluded, whilst this is the case for match days and fixed training. This is not the long-term intent, the club where possible would welcome interaction with other like-minded community groups to ensure a safe and suitable place is available to serve a wider element of the community.

**16. Costing Evidence required, on how the club with be able to afford develop and manage the grounds (3)**

**Response**

At the material time of the application a basic budget cost exercise was carried out, a budget cost plan was obtained from a competent contractor experienced in these types of works, as part of the validation process; the cost information as submitted was accepted by Aberdeenshire Council. The Clubs current financials and intended funding streams were also reviewed at this time.

### **17. Lack of engagement prior to announcement (3)**

#### **Response**

Regrettably the process that the Club underwent did not make provision for community engagement at the early stages, the Club were under the impression that this should not be carried out until such time as the application had been validated. There was therefore little point making any direct contact regarding the facility if the basic premise of the proposed transaction, could not be validated. This was in no way intended to make locals feel that the Club were being underhand in any way. The Club apologies if it has been perceived any differently.

### **18. Denied use of Tug of War (3)**

#### **Response**

The statements made raising concern over the potential use of part of the area for Tug O War are noted. The Club wish to advise that if the transfer is successful that they would be more than willing to discuss with the Tug O War Club to come to some arrangement over access and use of a portion of the ground which could be made suitable for such activities.

### **19. Concerns over damage and injury due to flying balls, including damage to cars (3)**

#### **Response**

Fences are planned to be used to limit balls leaving the confines of the site, even with fences there is the potential for occasional balls leaving the site. This is anticipated to be no more common than currently occurs from the unfenced space that currently exists on site. Whilst every effort will be made to mitigate such instances, the Club carries all appropriate insurances for such eventualities.

### **20. Reference to voice your choice (2)**

#### **Response**

A comment was made regarding the Sports Hub, and an upcoming initiative 'Voice your choice' as a project from Live Life Aberdeenshire – Stonehaven Participatory Budget for Sports & Leisure. While the Club are an active member in the Sports Hub, this project has nothing to do with the asset transfer. The Participatory Budget is to be voted on by members of the public following representations made by clubs relating to sports and leisure.

## Representations (Support)

Of the representation made they focused on the positives of the sport and need for the Club to have a permanent home. The following text is taken from previously submitted documents and supplemented to give a broader overview of the positive reasons for the proposed transfer.

The majority of the returns made are of the opinion that the park is not well utilised, and generally only by mainly dog walkers and the occasional jogger. The park would be better utilised and improved if transferred to the rugby club. It is extremely rare to see people actually playing there.

This is partially evidenced by a short study carried out by the Clubs appointed development officer, this was carried out during the period 3 May 2021 to 21 May 2021, covering morning and or afternoon slots of either 4 hour or 5 hours on the following dates. The table notes the type and number of users at the material time of the audit.

Date:	Time slot:	Dog walkers:	Joggers:	Cyclists:	Walkers:	Playing:
01/03/2021	8am-12pm	13	2	0	4	0
03/03/2021	12pm-4pm	2	2	0	1	0
05/03/2021	4pm-8pm	1	0	0	0	0
09/03/2021	8am-1pm	11	2	0	2	0
11/03/2021	1pm-5pm	9	2	0	1	0
13/05/2021	12pm-5pm	1	2	0	0	0
15/05/2021	10am-4pm	6	3	3	0	0
16/05/2021	9am-1pm	2	0	0	0	0

The above data was collected during mainly good weather with the exception of 16 May 2021 which was noted as heavy rain. It was also noted that several dog walkers arrived on site by vehicle.

Mackie Rugby Club has been providing the sport of rugby to the children and adults of Stonehaven and surrounding communities for over 45 years and has grown from small roots into a club offering First XV and Second XV rugby along with Senior, Youth, Junior and Ladies teams, including Walking Rugby and Touch Rugby

The Junior section is the largest junior section in the North East of Scotland.

The Club hold weekly training sessions for children as young as 3 years old (Nursery) through to Seniors – the oldest being 73 years young.

The Junior section host regular rugby festivals prior to the COVID pandemic, through-out the season for both local and travelling clubs. The annual Mackie Mini's Tournament is famed for

being the largest in the North East of Scotland welcoming over 700 children from 12 clubs. Previous years have seen clubs travel from Ireland to compete in the event.

The Junior section also has an awards scheme for all players who join the Micros and work through the age groups into the Minis section. The Mini Monitor scheme was one of a kind when it was developed over 20 years ago and has been shared and adopted by other clubs throughout the SRU. This monitor system sees the boys and girls work through various activities and key stages of their rugby development, where they earn points throughout the season and sees them receive badges and monitor point awards. The scoring system is flexible and allows for the players to develop at their own speed and ensures that they all can proudly wear their mini monitor badges at training and when out and about.

Our 38 coaches and additional volunteers give up their time to provide training sessions and take the teams to games all over Scotland. All coaches have the SRU minimum certification which is 'Rugby Ready'. Most of the coaches also have certification in UKCC level 1, 2 and above and refereeing. The club also assists many of the Youth players to gain certification so that they can also help coach the micro and mini level junior squads and some use this to support their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Our aim is to help every coach or assistant coach /helper to develop in delivering rugby training within a safe and professional environment.

Our Youth section continues to grow and compete strongly in the highest level of age-related rugby in the country and has over the seasons produced players for the Pathway and Hurricane programmes and currently has four of our former players playing for Scotland at Under 17s, 18s and 19 level.

The Youth Section have for the past 4 years taken part in an official nationwide league that has seen our 4 youth teams compete very positively at each age group and has seen them win the Mitsubishi sponsored league in 3 out of the last 4 years and gain promotion to the National Lancer league where they currently hold their own against the biggest and best clubs in the country. The current senior squad boasts membership of over 50 players. The 1st XV play in the SRU Caledonian Division 2 and after finishing 3rd this year after a progressive year, will be pushing for promotion to Caledonian Division 1 in the 2021/2022 season.

Along with the senior squads the Club have a veterans team called the Mammoths – "Middle Aged Men Mainly Over The Hill". This team of coaches and ex-players regularly compete in festivals and bring a new dimension to the club and caters for those die hards who never want to give up playing our glorious sport. Last year saw one of our Mammoths play and be capped for Team GB Touch Rugby Team (over 50's) and travel to Kuala Lumpur and play in the World Touch Rugby tournament.

The Club also has a 'girls and women's' section with our ladies' team the Vixens boasting some 25 players and our younger girls holding number of approximately 15. This section is in its infancy but continues to grow with players traveling from all over the North East.



## **Number of members**

There are currently 1320 club members with over 400 playing members.

## **Training and Diversity**

The objective of the Club is to carry on the success of the rugby club, and in so doing, to promote by all proper means the sport of rugby in and around Stonehaven, and to encourage social interaction amongst members.

The Club aim to develop each person to be the best they can be and work with the players in an exciting and learning environment making players comfortable and willing to learn.

The Club work on all aspects of rugby-skills work, speed agility, strength conditioning and touch on lifestyle.

Amongst the key attributes the Club looks for and to develop – as well as playing rugby are:

- Work Ethic
- Operating model
- Effort
- Energy
- Time Keeping
- Passion
- Coachability
- Being Prepared
- Doing Extra
- Attitude

The Club is open to all age groups, male, female, disadvantaged, disabled & multi-cultural.

- Our Philosophy is: Rugby – develops the person, not just the player.
- Our Values are: FUN-DEVELOPMENT-RESPECT-COMMUNITY- CHALLENGE-INCLUSIVE
- Tots to Pensioners – inclusive – female / male / disabled / vulnerable people
- 375 players - information held in SRU management system (micro tots not currently registered in the system).
- Each player from the tots to the mammoths bring their family/carers into the club's vision and support.
- Full time Funded development officer - funded by club with partial support from SRU.
- Contract of delivery with SRU – Participation agreement for primary and secondary schools –
- Current delivery programme – weekdays – weekends – league games – tours
- Delivery at regional, national and elite level - Caley, Hurricanes and Pathways - tying into national SRU strategy.
- Social Awareness and Wellbeing programmes – Walk and Talk, Youth Club, for improved social and mental wellbeing

- Local community assistance where required – Provide help and support for: Harbour Flood Clean up, Sandbag filling at Spurryhillock during flood , school and community BBQs when requested– Stall assembly and take down for – Fee ‘in Market, Harbour Festival, Open Air in the Square, Summer Beer Happening. Supporting the athletics club during the dark winter nights allowing the use of our floodlit pitch for the safety of younger members.
- Involved with twinning détente with Acheres, France – to promote town and Aberdeenshire.

### **Community benefit of rugby**

This will allow the club to continue to deliver and continue to grow its vision and which is already evidence by the impact which the club has within the community

The proposal and club already support and deliver the vision but in addition it meets the Councils following objectives as:

- It will help enhance the sporting facilities of the town and bring additional visitors and promotional opportunities to the area. Providing support for this proposal would also meet key priorities in the Aberdeenshire Council Plan 2017 – 2022 as well as the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Aberdeenshire Council 2018-2028, These priorities include:
  - Support a strong, sustainable, diverse, and successful economy.
  - The Club will support people to reach their potential by providing opportunities for wider achievement.
  - Work with parents and carers to support children through every stage of their development.
  - The Club will help the people of Aberdeenshire to live longer, healthier lives with a focus on reducing obesity and improving mental health and wellbeing.
  - Have the right people, in the right place, doing the right thing, at the right time.
  - The Club will use Sport and Physical Activity to build stronger communities

In addition, in meeting the clubs and the Council objectives, it meets the equivalent national priorities as set down by Sports Scotland, the SRU and Scottish Government.

The Club provides a minimum of 76,876 playing hours and 16,316 hours of volunteer time every season to ensure delivery of the club’s vision and which it also delivers the Council and national priorities for sports development and wellbeing. The club also works proactively and supports Live Life Aberdeenshire and has recently produced videos that are being used to promote healthy activities whilst children are at home during lock down. These videos have been forwarded to some 1300 children and 130 parents by Aberdeenshire Council.

## **Notes captured from all Community Consultation**

A cross section of question raised is below – with many of the questions already answered in the representation responses above:

- A number of questions were asked about the carpark and access into the children's playpark.
  - It was explained that the carpark would still remain open and that the playpark would still belong to the council.
- Mill o Forest school – was discussed at length with many happy that the club are willing to enter into an open use agreement with them.
- Fencing was another topic for many of the questions – with one lady asking if successful – could we work with her to raise the height of her existing fence to give her more seclusion and safety.
- Community access to the facilities and grass areas were questioned, in the main with access for children after school – 'rabbit run access' was explained.
- Community group access and sharing of the facility was discussed – with note that facility would be managed and open for use by other community groups.
- Parking and congestion were raised – and it was explained that parking would be a planning discussion.
- Car park use by residents – the club are happy for those residents with gated access into the carpark to carry on using the carpark – this will be discussed at the planning stage.
- Light pollution was also noted – with answer that it would not be a 24-hour facility, and lighting will be part of the planning process.
- Dog walking path – many thought it too narrow and when explained that the Councils Landscape would not look after the path – and that upkeep would be facilitated by 3<sup>rd</sup> party agreement.
- Two residents that noted they would be willing to work with the club if we would consider only fencing in the main pitch and then having a communal pitch that they would ensure was kept dog free and ask the council to fence in a pitch at the academy for sole use of the club.
- Two people did challenge ownership of the land – noting that they have spoken to the Scottish land Commission (Inverness) and that Aberdeenshire Council do not have title to the land and cannot grant transfer!

On the whole we feel the consultation days went well with some of the objectors, having heard the noted below would now be in favour:

- the Car Park is not being closed and still open for use by adjacent houses
- the children's playpark will still be open,
- that the school will have open access to the facility and fields,
- that children can access via rabbit runs,
- upon becoming a member of the club, the community can use the facility for gatherings, clubs, parties and the fitness suite,

- The title to the land is being reviewed by the Council as part of the Cat process and who have not indicated any issues with it.

**With regards to 5 entries that were missed during the 'representation phase' 3 were against and 2 were for. No additional reasons of objection were identified.**

### **Appendix**

Submitted CAT documents are available to review online.