

2024/25 Chairman's End of Season Report



Welcome

I hope everyone has had a great season and achieved their anticipated goals be it in performance, participation, player development, fun, or just pure enjoyment and now looking forward to some rest, recuperation, and a short summer break.

The club continues to go from strength to strength with player numbers, both boys and girls, and our overall quality of delivery, financial sustainability and work continuing all aspects of club development. I am immensely proud of the ongoing effort, commitment and achievements of all volunteers at committee and team level as always. After 17 years in this role, it never ceases to amaze me the amount of time and effort committee members, team managers, coaches and other volunteers contribute in order to make this club the success it has been and currently is. Thank you.

Club Development

My main involvement over the past couple of years for various reasons has been mainly limited to our ongoing club development with the new artificial turf pitch provision (ATP) at Guiseley School. As a Management Team we have been working with a range of partners to try and secure this new training and match venue, a facility that we would call as 'home' and something that would help consolidate our training and match day provision. We reported last year that planning was approved and were awaiting the business plan approval, funding agreement and Football Foundation Board approval. As you will no doubt be aware this was initially successful on 18 July last year and construction is currently well underway – (a couple of pictures at the end of this report taken about 3 weeks ago.)

There was a delay in the final approval as we were asked to be considered for one of the Lionesses Future Fund Project pilots and this was finally approved in October last year. This project is an accredited scheme that tries to ensure growth in Women's and Girls football is prioritised on an annual basis and will be a key performance indicator for us in the continuation of scheme funding. This is quite a prestigious accreditation as there will be only 30 schemes recognised across the country (England).

Project Update and Completion

For those new to the club or not aware the project has been developed as a partnership with Guiseley School (Part of the Aireborough Learning partnership - 10 school membership) and whilst there are other partners involved including the Football Foundation, WRCFA, Wharfedale Grassroots Academy (WGA)/Ilkley Town, Leeds Utd Community Foundation and Aireborough Rugby Union Football Club - the school, and ourselves are the prime partners and the partners providing the capital investment which will be supported by the grant approved from the Football Foundation. The pitch development will cater for 11v11, 9v9, 7v7 and 5v5 and will also incorporate additional markings for rugby as the pitch will be fitted with a shock pad to cater for rugby training and games. Access will be provided from the school grounds to enable the use of car parking and the new changing provision. As a club with our contribution to the capital development and to secure our access/usage of the facility we have signed up to a formal 'collaboration agreement' with Guiseley School.

The construction project is on track with the pitch due to be ready for next season. In addition to the project status on the pictures attached the tarmac paths around the pitch development have now been completed, the floodlights should be connected this week, and the 'carpet' should start to be laid next week – so will soon be looking like a state-of-the-art ATP.

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Programme of Use

One of the main benefits of this development was to create additional pitch provision for training and matches in the community which catered for our growth in the club's numbers, provided opportunity for those on the waiting list, enhanced our developmental opportunities, and supported targeted community recreation participation. Unfortunately, with the advent of the major capital development and rebuilding of St Marys School their ATP there will be out of commission for around 2 years at some point at the end of this calendar year but is however scheduled to be rebuilt as part of the new school provision. As a result, whilst hoping for additional provision we have had to consolidate and create a new usage programme to cater for our existing provision at St Marys and support Menston Juniors in being able to help deliver part of their programme. We have sought formal approval from the Football Foundation for this new programme of use as it now doesn't cater for the wider targeted community and sporting targets, and we have approval to move forward. Not as we planned but hopefully, we all can work together to make it a success in the short term.

We will continue to progress this project as it will in the long term, following the reinstatement of St Mary's facility, provide a significant opportunity to improve our training and match day provision in terms of quality, space and availability and enables us to grow, excel and sustain ongoing future development.

We will keep you up to date with next steps on this fabulous facility – keep enjoying your football.

Best regards,

Chris Spargo
Club Chairman

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