



# AFC HENLEY

## Report for Annual Town Meeting 2019

- *AFC Henley (formerly Henley Boys & Girls Football Club), is now in its 45th year.*
- *The club has around 400 members aged from U4 to U18 plus 60+ adult volunteers.*
- *We are a 'not-for-profit' community club operating as an Unincorporated Association.*
- *Except for our groundsmen and a small number of paid external coaches, we are, from the chairman downwards, unpaid volunteers.*
- *Part of our community policy is to offer our facilities to local charities and schools.*
- *Club Chairman Trevor Howell was awarded Oxfordshire Football Association's Volunteer of the Year in September 2018.*

### Teams and league football

This season we have 21 teams from U9 to U18 in the East Berks Football Alliance league. We are already one of the top dozen clubs in the league out of over 100 by number of teams registered. Our youngest league-affiliated teams are reporting increasing numbers – we now have three U9 and four U10 teams in the EBFA.

### Other footballing activities

Our Saturday Mini-Soccer Centre continues to provide skills training to boys and girls from age 4 – 8, provided by paid external coaches. Well over 100 are registered. We are currently experiencing a surge in numbers, especially at U5 and U6, and are regularly exceeding 80 attendees over all four age groups, including a record 97 a few weeks ago. We also offer a Junior Soccer Centre on Monday evenings and Midweek Mini Soccer on Wednesday evenings. On the remaining days we run invitation-only Player Development Centres (PDCs), including one for goalkeepers. In addition, we run after-school clubs, lunch clubs, breakfast clubs and Tiny Tots clubs in several state and private schools, football camps during school holidays and football parties on request. Further plans include an FA Wildcats Centre for girls-only football and 'Mums' football. There are many other activities we could get involved in, but space and resource limitations preclude further initiatives until such time as we have the facilities available.

Thanks to our close links with Reading Football Club, we are extremely fortunate to have the services of Reading FC Community Trust coaches to help our specialist coaching activities, both on Saturday mornings and midweek. Promising young players are referred to Reading FC Academy.

### Football Partnerships

We work closely with Henley Town Football Club and Henley YMCA, enabling the three organisations together to offer football for all ages and abilities, from pre-school to adults, including those with learning difficulties. Henley Town FC and AFC Henley in particular are working more closely than ever before, with AFCH is now operating as a feeder club for HTFC. This season, for example, AFCH members who finished at U18 last summer moved to HTFC, where they have been formed into a Development squad to help their transition to adult football.

### Facilities

We lease five pitches at Jubilee Park from Henley Town Council and the full-sized pitch in Harpsden from the John Hodges Trust for Harpsden Hall. We also use Henley YMCA and Henley Town FC's ground. Mid-week training takes place on the all-weather pitches at Jubilee Park and Henley Rugby Club.



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## **Planned new facilities**

AFC Henley and Henley Hockey Club are working with Henley Town Council and developer T. A. Fisher on the design of two new clubhouses, changing rooms and parking on Jubilee Park to replace the existing clubhouses on the Council's site adjacent to Tesco (353-357 Reading Road), which will be developed for housing and retail. Plans are progressing, although we are still at the pre-planning application design stage. A full-sized artificial grass 3G pitch has been incorporated into the project. The new facilities will be funded primarily from the proceeds of the sale of the 353-357 Reading Road site, while grants towards the 3G pitch will be sought from SODC and the Football Foundation.

## **Twinning links with Leichlingen continue**

Our annual football exchange programme with Sport Club Leichlingen is still active. The first football exchange took place in 1978, since when we have continued to keep the tradition alive. An U13 squad from SC Leichlingen visits Henley every October and our own U13s pay a return visit to Leichlingen place the following spring, when we play in their annual Easter Tournament. For this year's tournament some 14 players plus coaches and parents are flying out on 18<sup>th</sup> April.

## **Child safeguarding**

We take safeguarding extremely seriously. All our managers, coaches and coaching assistants have in-date CRCs, as required by the Football Association. Most of our team managers are also qualified FA L1 coaches. Some are L2s and one has the UEFA 'A' Licence. External paid coaches range from L1 to L3. Our supervision policy is to have two adults at all coaching sessions and matches (see our safeguarding policies on [www.afchenley.com](http://www.afchenley.com)).

## **Health & Safety**

Henley Round Table generously paid for a defibrillator in 2018, which we keep close to the pitches at Jubilee Park for easy access. We are grateful to Sarah Roberts and her Millie's Dream charity for the supply of a suitable device, which around 20 adult club members have now been trained to use.

## **Financial Support**

We are indebted to Henley Town Council for their commitment to improving our facilities at Jubilee. We also thank Invesco Perpetual, Stuart Turner and Ashford Developments for their generous financial donations and SODC District Councillors and the Oxfordshire FA for contributing to the purchase of roll-on-roll-off goals and grass reinforcement mesh for our Harpsden ground.

**Trevor Howell**  
Chairman, AFC Henley  
March 2019