



BRENTFORD COMMUNITY STADIUM

More than just a football club

Community Benefits Statement

Foreword

One Brentford – a journey

In 2002 the Brentford supporters' trust, (Bees United, a community benefit society) embarked on a journey.

A quest to secure a site in Brentford for a new community stadium to enable Brentford Football Club to survive and succeed by remaining in the community it has served for over a century.

The alternative was a re-location to a non-league stadium in Woking, as proposed by the then owner of the Club, or a steady decline at Griffin Park, reeling under a burden of debt in an obsolete stadium and unable to sustain a competitive position in the Football League.

After years of planning and consultation with the community, the Club is extremely proud to submit this planning application now. It is an application that proposes the development of a viable and sustainable community stadium at the heart of a comprehensive masterplan. A community stadium that will act as the catalyst in the creation of a vibrant and inclusive sports and recreation cluster and secure a legacy of very significant social, economic and environmental benefits in the local area, the Borough, and this part of West London.

Why?

Brentford FC has been at Griffin Park for over 100 years. The presence of the Club at the heart of the town helps maintain the profile of Brentford nationally and gives it the status that many other towns of similar size lack. Despite the rather cramped and old fashioned conditions at the stadium, the Club, particularly over the last 25 years, has sought to be a genuine community asset, not merely preaching but living the doctrine of contributing to the local area.

Our Brentford FC Community Sports Trust, which now encompasses the Learning Zone, formerly financed by central government and the local authority, has won many awards within the football industry, and is seen as a model for other clubs across the country for its work with people of all ages and backgrounds and abilities in the surrounding boroughs. The quantifiable difference it makes to the lives of the thousands of participants in its schemes has helped the Club attain the much sought after CommunityMark status, and it has moved beyond merely supplying sports training to helping with broader social issues, such as the rehabilitation of young offenders and the plight of young carers.

Our ambition for the future of the Club is one that builds on these positive foundations and enables the expansion and development of both the on-field and off-field activities of Brentford FC. We have outgrown Griffin Park and, in the new economic landscape of professional football in the 21st Century, we must move to survive and then flourish. A larger and more modern stadium, designed to meet the demands of the contemporary sports' audience will enable us to put the Club on a more stable financial footing. It will secure our position in Brentford for the long term and will also, within the proposed design of the stadium, allow for the expansion of all the work of the Brentford FC Community Sports Trust. We are hugely proud of our record as an award winning community club and, as in every other field, we want to stay ahead of the competition there too.



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Our Vision

In summary, our vision is for a modern, strikingly designed, sports stadium which will act as a vibrant community hub at the centre of a revitalised part of Brentford.

Our plan is for a stadium that is not just a home for professional sport, but one that will act as a natural meeting place, with cafes, bars and restaurants, for everyone living in the surrounding area, and all of this providing much needed employment for many of those people. We see it as a location in which we can comfortably house all the elements of Brentford FC, bringing the Community Sports Trust and the Learning Zone back into the heart of the Club, enabling them to fulfil some of their own grander schemes and ambitions. The site in Lionel Road South is in an enviable position, lying between the river and the wide open green spaces of Gunnersbury Park. We believe our plans will provide for a natural and attractive corridor between these two currently disconnected public amenities, and, in itself, will contribute substantially to the appeal of the whole area.

The building of the new stadium, depending as it does on the residential development on the surrounding land, will be an inevitable catalyst for the physical regeneration of the whole area. But, of equal importance in our view, is the regeneration of social interaction and local life on the site, of people having the spaces and amenities to allow for the emergence of a genuine new community alongside Lionel Road South. Our designs for the stadium, and in particular for its public areas, inside and out, have been developed with this ambition of community in mind.

The Stadium

Football has attracted new audiences over the last 20 years and the expectations of what it's like to attend live football have been largely formed by the coverage of the Premier League on Sky Sports. All seated stadiums with all mod cons, good visibility from all seats, easy to access ticketing, first class PA systems, hospitality lounges, adequate provision of catering outlets, and toilets to match those at other event venues, are now taken as standard. It is difficult to persuade this new TV audience to attend live games at Griffin Park, or, at least, to come more than once, when try as it may, those comforts just can't be offered. The potential at the new stadium to attract them, however, is massive, with all of the above criteria met and exceeded, and a quality of experience to match even the most demanding customer. We cannot promise success on the pitch but we can promise that fans can be miserable over a defeat in much more comfort than now! And that is no more than they deserve in 2016 where every other entertainment with which we compete for their money is providing a high quality of service and amenity.

On non-matchdays, the hospitality lounges and corporate areas will be available for hire for conferences, seminars, and other business meetings. We believe that the flexibility of these spaces, the catering facilities, and the stadium location will make them very attractive to local companies of all sizes, and, with the excellent transport links, to companies across the wider West London area. The stadium will also be available for social functions like weddings, birthdays, anniversaries and other family occasions. And, of course, children from local schools will be using the Learning Zone on weekdays, together with the wider range of participants we already attract to the facility at Griffin Park.

The Community Sports Trust outgrew its limited space at Griffin Park 7 years ago. The staff and volunteers at the charity are very excited at the prospect of moving to the new stadium, into a custom built area where they can provide their range of activities that promote sport, health, education, employment and training, social enterprise and social inclusion to even greater effect and to even more people.



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Our Commitment to the Locality

Our commitment to the community sets apart Brentford FC as uniquely ideal investors in the regeneration of Brentford. The nature of the opportunity sets the Lionel Road South location apart as an ideal home for Brentford FC.

We wish to move to Lionel Road South as opposed to anywhere else, because this alone offers us the opportunity to be much more than just a professional football club. By moving to Lionel Road South, Brentford FC can remain in the community it has served for over 100 years, moving back home to within a few hundred yards of where it was founded in 1889, and effectively promote sport, education, fitness and healthy living.

We can engage with people, we can make a real difference in ways that simply would not be possible if we were forced to find another site somewhere outside the Borough.

Brentford FC has been seeking a new home for over 15 years now, focusing since 2002 on Lionel Road South as the stand-out location and meeting prospective partners for the past ten years. The reality in professional football is that clubs who move to new purpose built stadia are the clubs who make the most progress towards commercial viability.

Above all, the Brentford Community Stadium will be a true community hub, providing links with local leisure, education, health and community services and facilities throughout Hounslow and neighbouring boroughs.

The Football Club, the supporters' trust and the Brentford FC Community Sports Trust have worked tirelessly together under the banner of One Brentford. The community in the town is proud and strong. The physical environment is undergoing major regeneration. Social capital and interaction are just as important. Together we can all work for a better future in One Brentford.

Donald Kerr

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