

# LEISURE AND YOUTH POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Monday, 8th June, 2015 at the Aldershot Town Football Club, Aldershot at 7.00 p.m.

## Voting Members

Cr. Liz Corps (Chairman)  
Cr. Mrs. D.B. Bedford (Vice-Chairman)

Cr. T.D. Bridgeman	Cr. J.H. Marsh	Cr. A.R. Newell
a Cr. P.I.C. Crerar		Cr. M. Staplehurst
Cr. K. Dibble		Cr. B.A. Thomas

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Cr. P.I. C. Crerar.

### 1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN –

**RESOLVED:** That Cr. Liz Corps be appointed Chairman of the Panel for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

### 2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN –

**RESOLVED:** That Cr. Mrs D.B. Bedford be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

### 3. MINUTES –

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th March, 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

### 4. APPOINTMENTS TO PANEL GROUPS –

(1) It was **AGREED** that the membership of the Mid-Cycle meeting for the Municipal Year 2015/16 would be as follows, the Chairman (Cr. Liz Corps), the Vice-Chairman (Cr. Mrs D.B. Bedford), Cr. T.D. Bridgeman and Cr. M. Staplehurst.

(2) It was **AGREED** that the membership of the Aldershot Lido Task and Finish Group for the Municipal Year 2015/16 would be as follows, the Chairman (Cr. Liz Corps) and Crs. D.E. Clifford, A.H. Crawford, A.R. Newell, M. Roberts and B.A. Thomas, with attendance by the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Youth (Cr. Sue Carter) as required.

5. **ALDERSHOT TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB –**

The Panel took a tour of the facility, led by Mr. Bob Green, Club Secretary, before receiving a presentation from Aldershot Town Football Club (ATFC) Chairman, Mr. Shahid Azeem.

Mr. Azeem advised that the current owners had brought the Club in August 2013, but that he had been associated with the Club, as a non-executive member, prior to the acquisition. The aims of the owners included seeking to ensure that football remained in the town and that the Club was kept at the heart of the community. It was noted that the owners had managed to exit administration two years ahead of schedule; within eleven months all the debts inherited from the previous administration had been cleared. The Club endeavoured to live within its means and had made a small profit of around £3,000 in the first year.

The Panel noted the working arrangements with Chelsea Football Club U21's and were advised that realistically the existing arrangements wouldn't last forever, but it was hoped that they would continue for the next 2-3 years. Links with the Military had also been strengthened and the Club had a good relationship with the Garrison Commander.

It was advised that the results on the pitch had been a little disappointing the previous season, but this would hopefully be addressed by the appointment of new manager, Barry Smith, previously of clubs such as Celtic and Dundee United. Mr. Smith had plans to move to Aldershot with his family soon.

Mr. Azeem explained the Club's place in the community and how this particular role had to be respected and understood. It was advised that thousands of residents in the area perceived ATFC as "their Club" and it was important to maintain this perception through work within the community. The Club achieved this in a number of ways through the provision of coaching and training for young people in the area which, in turn, allowed young people to follow their dreams, support for local charities and facilitation of social inclusion and cohesion. It was advised that the players also got involved in the community through visits to schools, hospitals and charities acting as role models for the community.

The Panel were updated on the arrangements of the Youth Academy. Mr. Kevin Knight, of Knights Group Training, who ran the Academy, advised that the Academy sat in its own right, based at ATFC. It currently had 42, 16-19 year olds in full time education from the local area training and 16 part time players. The Academy took youngsters from the age of nine and in total, there were about 120 members at present. The emphasis of the Academy was to breed home-grown talent to move up into the first team when they came of age. It was noted that the new manager, Barry Smith, had a remit to only sign players from within an hour's car journey of the stadium. It was also noted that a player from a neighbouring Academy had joined the ATFC first team to help develop his game further for the future.

Mr. Azeem reported on the aspirations of ATFC and the need for a plan for the future and continued community engagement and inclusion. It was important to the Club that visitors felt welcomed and that the Club was an ambassador for the town. It was noted that sponsors of the Club were all local firms, including Bridges, Reade Signs and Elm Ltd, (sponsors of the new community stand). Sponsorship equated to one third of the Club's turnover and was vital to the continuation of ATFC, as funding from the Football Association (FA) was only in the region of £60,000 per season.

The Club had a mission statement which stated a number of aims and achievements, these included:

- Providing community football to the young, disabled and disadvantaged
- 200 free tickets for young people, per game
- Under 11's free to all games
- Helping the local authority to enhance neighbourhood facilities
- Being proactive in helping local businesses
- Partnership building with a diverse range of stakeholders
- Inspiring the young to grow responsibly
- Increase growth directly and indirectly in the regional economy.

It was noted that through developing interest in the younger generation the Club was creating future paying supporters. Some work was being carried out to target the younger generation by developing a kids' match programme written by their peer group, email promotions for free gifts etc. and acknowledgement of birthdays and Christmas.

It was advised that the Club's work in the community had been recognised locally and nationally. Locally the Club had been awarded the "Hampshire Inspire Community 2014 Business Award" for work in the community, particularly due to projects like "Seats for Soldiers", work with The Source young people's charity, links with Sahara UK and the Nepalese, working with First Wessex to support troubled families, providing roles for the long term unemployed and supporting apprenticeships. The Club had also been awarded the "National League Respect Award". This award had been given for projects such as a trip taken to Nepal with the youth team in February 2015 and their involvement with the 1st World War commemorations, where the Club had hosted a "Truce Game" at the stadium, at which a number of German officials and Sir Bobby Charlton had been present.

Mr. Azeem reported that the Recreation Ground was one of the last remaining traditional football grounds in the country bringing many advantages. The character, history and openness of the Recreation Ground had been a reason why Chelsea had chosen ATFC for their U21's. However, there were also downsides, particularly around compliance to the FA's standards. It was advised that in recent years the Club had spent in excess of £1.5 million updating the facilities, but significantly more investment would

be required to maintain safety standards. This was not sustainable in the Club's current financial position. A strategic plan would be developed over the summer period and a first draft proposal would be ready in the early autumn of 2015, for presentation to the Council. It was noted that the Club would seek support, help and advice in the preparation of the plan from the Council.

In response to a query regarding women's football it was noted that the women's team had left the club some years ago to manage themselves with some support from the ATFC. This had proved unsustainable and the team would be moving back to the Club, where ATFC would endeavour to raise their profile and provide them with more hands on support in the future.

The Panel discussed the relationship with the supporters and were advised that quarterly meetings were held with the fans. These meetings had helped identify skill sets within the fan base which could benefit the Club.

It was advised that the Club employed only four full time members of staff. The rest of the work was done on a part time basis and by volunteers.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Azeem and the other Directors and staff for their hospitality and informative presentation.

6. **WORK PROGRAMME –**

The Panel **NOTED** the current work programme, in particular the proposed item on the Hampshire County Council Youth Consultation for the next meeting. This would be discussed further at the next mid-cycle meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.11 p.m.

CR. LIZ CORPS  
CHAIRMAN

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