

Grass Pitch Improvement Programme



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Essex County Football Association are working in partnership with the FA, Football Foundation and the Grounds Management Association (GMA); formerly the Institute of Groundsmanship, to deliver the Grass Pitch Improvement Programme. This service can be utilised by grassroots football pitch operators, with the aim of improving the quality of grass pitches across Essex.

The key principles behind the programme are to provide members with advice and practical solutions via a Grass Pitch Assessment Report. The report will identify required grass pitch maintenance work and any maintenance equipment needs, with the aim to improve and sustain grass football pitches.

In Essex we are working with the GMA Regional Pitch Advisor (RPA); Phil Jeggo and a local support network to provide visits to grass pitch sites across the County.

Programme Process

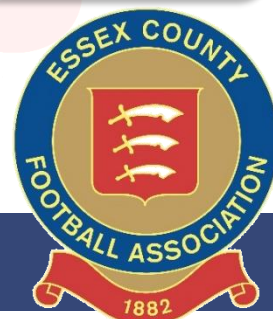
- Pitch operator submits a request form to beth.morrell@essexfa.com (form downloadable below)
- Essex FA will acknowledge receipt of request form and then raise an invoice. If requested by a club the invoice will be raised on the Whole Game system, if requested by an external organisation, it will be raised by our finance team and sent to the pitch operator directly.
- Once payment has been received; Essex FA will contact RPA to share details of the request.

- RPA will contact pitch operator directly to arrange a suitable day/time to visit.
- We recommend that individuals involved in pitch maintenance at the site are present during the visit if possible
- Once the visit has taken place, the pitch assessment will be produced by the RPA within 28 days with a copy sent to the pitch operator and Essex County FA

- On receipt of the report the pitch operator should review thoroughly considering how they can implement the recommendations. At this point they can contact Nick Emery, County Development Manager, to discuss potential funding avenues depending on the site grading and recommendations made.

- Pitch operator to follow the recommendations given by RPA.
- After a minimum 12 months Essex FA will contact the Pitch Operator to review and discuss potential of a second visit by the RPA

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Cost & Payments

The cost of the Pitch Assessment Visit and Report is £100 which covers the RPA's associated costs. Payment of the raised invoice needs to be paid in full in advance of the visit being booked and completed. The cost of a second visit and production of updated report is £50.

Pitch Improvement Workshops

As part of the Pitch Improvement Programme, the Regional Pitch Advisor will deliver a number of workshops throughout the season on a variety of topics, which we will circulate to any pitch operator that has engaged in the Pitch Improvement Programme. All these events will be free of charge and delivered either in person or via Webinar format.

As well as the workshops, you will be invited to join the Football Foundation Groundskeeping Community on the HIVE app we have.

The App has been developed in partnership with the FA and GMA to support volunteers and qualified groundskeepers to maintain pitches. The app is in its early stages of operation and is already providing an online network that will:

- build your knowledge and understanding on key operations of pitch maintenance throughout the year
- connect you with fellow groundskeepers and share experiences
- seek expert advice on getting the most from your pitches that you manage

To sign up to the community please use this link: <https://thefa.hivelearning.com/groundskeeping/>

For more information or further support surrounding the Grass Pitch Improvement Programme, please contact Nick Emery, Football Development Manager on **01245 393077** or via e-mail on nick.emery@essexfa.com.

