



# MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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## BIRMINGHAM COUNTY FA OPENS NEW FUND TO HELP IMPROVE LOCAL PITCHES

*As part of its Pitch Improvement Programme, clubs affiliated to Birmingham County FA can now apply for up to £5,000 in funding to aid the development of playing surfaces with a view to seeing fewer games postponed*

**Birmingham County FA (BCFA) is delighted to announce the launch of its new Pitch Improvement Fund, which will further support affiliated clubs eager to improve their playing surfaces.**

Research carried out by Birmingham County FA shows that the biggest factor affecting a club's ability to improve their pitches is lack of, or inadequate, maintenance kit and equipment, alongside the cost of purchasing recommended items.

Insight gathered nationally by The FA shows that only 1 in 3 football pitches are of adequate quality. It also shows that, since the start of the 2017/18 season, 1 in 6 affiliated games are postponed.

The new fund will support Birmingham County FA clubs involved with its current Pitch Improvement Programme, by accelerating a club's ability to purchase maintenance kit and equipment identified within their bespoke pitch improvement report, enabling them to take quicker ownership of maintaining their pitches and improving quality to enable more matches to be played.

Clubs will be able to apply to the Birmingham County FA Fund for up to £5,000; which they can use as match funding in conjunction with other funding bodies, such as the Football Foundation.

BCFA Facility and Investment Officer, Olly Hitchcox, said: "We're really pleased to be able to announce the launch of the BCFA Pitch Improvement Fund. It demonstrates our commitment to supporting our clubs to improve their pitches. Pitch maintenance is largely carried out by a volunteer workforce, who often don't have the appropriate tools to carry out what is required to effectively maintain their pitches. We're looking forward to seeing the impact this will have on clubs throughout the County FA."

BCFA Chief Executive, Kevin Shoemake added: "The BCFA Directors recognised the need to support clubs who are actively looking to improve their pitches. The new fund is a further £50,000 investment into the grassroots game from the BCFA and the club grants will speed up the ability for clubs to purchase much needed equipment themselves. Recent research indicates that the positive



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health, social and economic impact of football in the region is £1m a week, so better pitches means everybody benefits in the long run.”

Any club wanting to find out more about the new BCFA fund or the Pitch Improvement Programme should contact [oliver.hitchcox@birminghamfa.com](mailto:oliver.hitchcox@birminghamfa.com)

For more information on Birmingham County FA, please visit [www.birminghamfa.com](http://www.birminghamfa.com)

## ENDS

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### **About Birmingham County Football Association**

The Birmingham County Football Association (BCFA) is responsible for governing and developing local grassroots football. For more information on the BCFA please see the contact details below:

**Website:** [www.birminghamfa.com](http://www.birminghamfa.com)

**Telephone:** 0121 357 4278

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/birminghamcfa](http://www.facebook.com/birminghamcfa)

**Twitter:** @BirminghamFA

### **Key Facts – How the Birmingham County FA supports Grassroots Football**

1,200 football clubs

4,600 teams playing all formats

48,000 matches played each season

60 football competitions sanctioned

14 County Cups

45,000 volunteers

320 courses delivered annually

1,500 registered referees

£1.2m invested in facilities

£520m positive social & economic impact

92% customer satisfaction