

A photograph of the Guernsey women's football team celebrating a victory. The players are wearing green jerseys with "moulin" on the front, and they are holding up a large Guernsey flag (white with a red saltire and yellow cross). They are cheering with their arms raised. In the background, a sign for "JerseyFA @JERSEYFA" is visible.

GUERNSEY FOOTBALL // **STRONGER TOGETHER**

A UNIFIED, WELCOMING AND ACCESSIBLE GAME FOR ALL
THE 2024-25 SEASON REVIEW FOR GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL IN GUERNSEY

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FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

// CHRIS SCHOFIELD

As Chair of the Guernsey Football Association (GFA), I am pleased to be able to look back on this the final year of our 2021-24 strategy, Guernsey Football – Stronger Together, which has been structured around the key aspects of football delivery that will enable us to ensure a unified, welcoming and accessible game for all.

The 23/24 season was particularly busy from the organisational, playing and development standpoints. The Association board and workforce were tasked with the organisation of the male and female football competition within the 2023 Island Games which involved the implementation of a 60-match programme involving sixteen men's and ten women's teams playing over 6 days, together with the co-ordination and management of the 80+ strong volunteer workforce that had been assembled to ensure the smooth running of the programme at the various match venues. Whilst the Guernsey teams may not have achieved medals, the matches involving our teams were attended by over 12,000 during the week, and the Games in general were a great success for the island.

The project to develop the GFA HQ/SG stadia community facility, which was central to this strategy, has been an ongoing priority for the Association throughout the strategy, and this work has been elevated during the 23/24 season with work having commenced on site. Having secured funding support from the Football Association, Football Foundation, and from private sources, this exciting project remains on schedule to be completed in the early part of

2025, providing Guernsey football with a much-needed all-weather facility as well as a hub that will become a focal point for the football community for many years to come.

The 23/24 season has seen further positive growth in both male and female participation and our 2024-28 Strategy will seek to build further on the progress made within female participation. By building on the significant inroads that have already been made, we will be seeking to deliver a comprehensive primary school extra-curricular programme in order to provide an improved pathway to existing initiatives and to ensure retention of the girls football schools partnership. On a national basis, there has been a significant growth in the number of girls teams and clubs that offer a full female pathway, ensuring access to high quality competition opportunities. That now is the ambition for female football in Guernsey, and the continued growth in participation numbers ensures that this is a realistic possibility as we head into the next strategy period. Following the success in the 2024 Women's Muratti, we also now have role models for the many young players to aspire to in the years ahead.

Critical to the successful delivery of our current strategy has been the ongoing commitment of the hundreds of volunteers who constitute the grassroots workforce and ensure that the opportunities highlighted within the current strategy continue. Whilst the volunteers involved with the Vale Recreation Priaux team, and Northerners AC Under 16 team, will rightly receive recognition for their on-

field success during the 2023/24 season, the value and importance of all that constitute the volunteer workforce cannot be understated. The GFA greatly appreciates the time and energy this workforce provides for the greater good of the game and, for this reason, our 2024-28 Strategy will reinforce our commitment to the provision of a high-quality support system in order to maximise initiatives to recruit new volunteers both, to assist the existing club network, and also to attract and encourage new coaches and referees.

The GFA safeguarding team continues to ensure that appropriate and effective safeguards are embedded within the game and that the importance of safeguarding is fully understood by all concerned. Our Youth Council, formed as an integral part of the current strategy, continues to provide an active and important role in raising awareness about safeguarding for young people. During the 23/24 season the GFA has, once again, successfully passed the NSPCC independent assessment of the implementation of FA Safeguarding 365 Standard, having met all of the stated criteria, and with no requirement to provide further evidence. The ongoing requirements of FA Safeguarding 365 will continue to form an integral part of the grassroots football governance risk and our 2024-28 strategy will seek to ensure that the high standards achieved are maintained across all elements of the football governance framework. Having achieved the required Safeguarding Standard, along with the Preliminary Level of the Equality Standard for Sport, the Association is now focussed on achieving the

Code of Governance and the process to achieve this will be completed within the required time frame.

Our 2024-28 Strategy has been developed to build upon the considerable advances made during the period of the current strategy whilst ensuring that it will fully align with the FA Strategic Framework. We recognise that, during the 2024-28 strategy period, the GFA will grow as an organisation with the introduction of a new community facility, which will present new opportunities and challenges for the workforce and volunteers within the organisation. We recognise that it is essential to have the right people, in the right role, and with the right skills to support the work to achieve our strategic objectives. Our new People Plan has been developed in order to guide all that we do in attracting, on boarding, supporting, developing, rewarding, and retaining our workforce to meet our future goals and aspirations.

The key to the success of any strategy is the buy in by all the stakeholders involved and, through the development of our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, we are aiming to ensure that our 2024-28 Strategy continues to embody our belief that football in Guernsey must at all times be inclusive and fully accessible to all within football and the wider Island community, supporting equal opportunities and the promotion of a positive and safe environment. We look forward to working with all of the local football stakeholders as we enter what will be an exciting new era for football in Guernsey.

FOOTBALL IN GUERNSEY SEASON REVIEW // 2023-2024

£10.2M INVESTED INTO
FACILITY PROJECTS

200+
HOURS OF EQUIPMENT
BANK DELIVERY


400+ HOURS OF PRIMARY
& SECONDARY SCHOOL
FOOTBALL DELIVERED

 **2,418**
MALE PLAYERS

449 
FEMALE PLAYERS

115
COACH CPD
INSTANCES

23
SAFEGUARDING
VALIDATION VISITS
COMPLETED

8
ENGLAND
ACCREDITED
CLUBS


CONSTRUCTION OF
STADIUM BEGUN

9
UNDER 18
REFEREES

£100k funding secured to refurbish and retain floodlights at four club grounds

£115k funding secured to introduce an Equipment Bank

£10m funding secured to develop new community hub with GFA HQ & 3G Stadia

FOCUS ONE // FACILITIES

Facilities, and specifically the work to enhance both the quality and quantity of football facilities, including grass pitches, was the priority focus for the Guernsey FA within the 2021-24 strategy for grassroots football in the island. At the time of identifying the strategic objectives, it was recognised, and accepted, that the long-term health and future of the game in the island is intrinsically aligned with the availability, accessibility and affordability of football facilities.

The strategy to enhance facility provision was, therefore, focussed on three specific facilities-based objectives:

- A project to retain existing floodlight provision at four club grounds
- A project to introduce an affordable Equipment Bank for local clubs to access
- A project to build a new Guernsey FA HQ/3G Stadia community facility

Positive progress was made towards achieving these objectives during both the 2021/22 and 2022/23 seasons with the respective success of securing £100k of Football Foundation investment to upgrade existing floodlights at four club grounds, and £115k to establish the Guernsey FA 'Equipment Bank Scheme'. These bespoke funding awards were a direct result of the Guernsey FA working in collaboration with key stakeholders to develop proactive solutions, which would retain floodlight provision for the local game, along with enhancing the quality of grass pitches. Successful delivery of these two projects has provided tangible benefits to the local game, not least in the increased number of grass pitches now assessed as being 'good' in the 2023/24 season, which is despite one of the wettest football seasons on record that has seen almost 300 matches postponed due to weather conditions.

Additionally, the work to secure over £1.5m of funding support from The Football Association and Football Foundation, along with that from other private sources, ensured that the ambitious

GUERNSEY FA GOAL // ENHANCE FACILITIES WITHIN THE ISLAND TO SUPPORT INCREASED PARTICIPATION AND NEW FORMATS OF PLAY

vision to build a new Guernsey FA HQ/3G Stadia community facility became a reality with work having commenced at the start of the 2023/24 season. This £10m project, which will be completed in the early part of 2025, will provide Guernsey football with a much-needed all-weather facility, and a hub that will become a focal point for many generations of football and community stakeholders.

Securing the funding for this project, along with those delivered in the first two seasons of the strategy, has ensured that the Guernsey FA has successfully met the facilities-based objectives identified in 2021. The work to achieve all of these objectives is recognised as being crucial to the future health of the game in Guernsey, along with work of the Guernsey FA to retain, grow and support the game. Investment into facilities underpins the strategic objectives and action plans for other areas of the game, including participation, the volunteer workforce, and the general environment in which the game is played. Successfully meeting these objectives will inevitably impact on the priorities for the new 2024-28 strategy, and the new opportunities the Guernsey FA will be able to support.

QUALITY PITCHES //

2021 BASELINE	2023/24 TARGET	2023/24 MEASURE
6	10	10

FOCUS TWO //

FEMALE PARTICIPATION

8 Wildcat Centres

1 Squad Session

1 Just Play Centre

154 female players ahead of
target


Ravenscroft


The 2023/24 season has seen the introduction of more opportunities for women and girls to participate in football in Guernsey. Following the introduction of a female only 'Just Play' session for players aged 16 and over, the casual recreational pathway for girls aged from five years old up to adulthood is now complete with weekly sessions across 8 Wildcat Centres, 1 Squad Centre and 1 Just Play Centre. These sessions have ensured an overall 43% increase in female participants during the course of the 2021-24 strategy, which illustrates the continued growth in popularity of the female game in Guernsey.

The key engagement with young girls continues to take place within local schools where they are guided to appropriate exit routes by the Guernsey FA Development Team. Local school children benefit from football specific coaches delivering Physical Education in both Primary and Secondary School environments. This partnership with the local schools enables the Guernsey FA to engage with hundreds of girls both in and out of curriculum time and there have been notable highlights this season, including delivery of inter-school Football Festivals for both primary and secondary schools. Additionally, the Guernsey FA workforce has supported all secondary schools with a GSCE Physical Education assessment day, which included facilitating delivery of girls specific football sessions, which allowed teachers to observe and

record the performance of their students. The partnership between the Guernsey FA and schools remains a strength of the local game and provides a range of participation opportunities for young girls.

The Guernsey FA 'Girls Player Development Centre (PDC)' sponsored by Ravenscroft, has also continued to grow in terms of the number of young girls participating. The PDC remains the primary exit route for girls within primary schools to enjoy more consistent football, and continues to produce players for the Girls Academy which is sponsored by Mourant and has now expanded to start from Year 4. This ensures that there is now a sustainable talent pathway from age 9 through to open age football within Guernsey. The opportunities to play open age female football now includes a new team formed within Guernsey FC, along with representing Guernsey in Island Games competitions and the annual Muratti match. The number of active female players, along with success of the Guernsey FA Women's Team in winning the 2024 Muratti, is evidence that the long-term strategy to develop the female game in Guernsey is starting to produce tangible results

The Guernsey FA is also now fortunate to have a 'Community Champion' who will engage and work with local clubs to support the introduction of club-based opportunities specifically. The

GUERNSEY FA GOAL //

SUPPORT & DELIVER SUSTAINABLE EQUAL PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIRLS TO PLAY AND ENJOY THE GAME ACROSS SCHOOL & CLUB ENVIRONMENTS

Community Champion will also work to recruit more female volunteers into the game and a 'Stepping Over the Sidelines' workshop delivered during the 23/24 season was attended by 20 girls aged 14-16. It is through increasing the number of female volunteers that the Guernsey FA will be able to expand on the number of female specific participation opportunities available in Guernsey as we head into the 2024-28 strategy.

With two local clubs having also expressed an interest in establishing girls only sessions within their club environment, the future looks very bright for the female game in Guernsey – more volunteers, more opportunities, and more players is the ambition for the Guernsey FA.

FEMALE PLAYERS //

2021 BASELINE	2023/24 TARGET	2023/24 MEASURE
227	295	423

WILDCAT CENTRES //

2021 BASELINE	2023/24 TARGET	2023/24 MEASURE
7	8	8

140 Minis and Youth Teams with
a Qualified Coach

20 male players ahead of target

FOCUS TWO //

MALE PARTICIPATION

Football remains a key part of community life in Guernsey, and it is the local clubs around the island which are essential in providing male participation opportunities for players of all ages. The club network continues to be a core strength of the game, and this is shown by the number of teams and players within these clubs. Through the hard work and dedication of the numerous volunteers across the club network, who are invaluable in facilitating so many opportunities, the 2023/24 season has once again seen male participation exceed the stated target. That club network is primarily England Accredited, with 100% of youth teams, and 92% of adult teams, playing in 1-star clubs. This provides confidence in the knowledge that clubs are providing the best possible environments for those that want to play the game.

Complementary to the opportunities within local clubs, are the extensive participation opportunities within local primary and secondary schools. The work of the Guernsey FA within these education environments enables positive sign-posting into local clubs, and this remains a positive element

within the overall football structure and pathway in Guernsey. With over 500 hours of delivery in local schools by the Guernsey FA development Team, there are also opportunities for those that prefer to play the game in a recreational environment.

It is recognised that recreational football is becoming more attractive to many people, not least youth male participants. Whilst this presents a challenge to the structured club-based game, the Guernsey FA is committed to ensuring that support is provided across all areas of the game to ensure that the structured and competitive formats are complementary to each other, rather than competing. Understanding and recognising the risks and challenges being faced within the game is crucial in ensuring that support is provided as required, and this will be a key focus of the 2024-28 strategy.

Arguably the biggest challenge to the male game in Guernsey remains the drop-out observed in some youth age groups, which was identified in the 2022/23 Youth Participation Survey undertaken

GUERNSEY FA GOAL //

SUPPORT GROWTH & RETENTION PLANS TO GROW STRUCTURED FOOTBALL IN TRADITIONAL & NEW FORMATS

by the Guernsey FA Youth Council. That survey highlighted a demand for further youth recreational opportunities and, with the opportunities to be provided by the new 3G Stadia community facility, the Guernsey FA is committed to exploring how to facilitate opportunities to meet this demand.

Another issue faced by local football during the 2023/24 season has been the particularly challenging wet winter months experienced this season. The impact of the weather on the pitches, and subsequent fixture scheduling, has highlighted the issues faced in the local game in relation to the availability of facilities, along with whether the current model for the structured game remains fit for purpose. Looking ahead to the 2024-28 strategy, it is hoped, and expected, that the new 3G Stadia community facility will have a positive impact for all participation, whilst there will be a renewed focus to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure football opportunities for all age groups, which are attractive to players and offer football in a variety of formats.

MALE PLAYERS //

2021 BASELINE	2023/24 TARGET	2023/24 MEASURE
2398	2398	2418

FOCUS THREE //

FOOTBALL WORKFORCE

99% referee match coverage

100% of CPD target achieved

100% of Youth Teams with a
Qualified Coach – 10% ahead of
target

The invaluable commitment of the hundreds of volunteers who underpin the game in Guernsey has, once again, been in evidence during the 2023/24 season. Without that commitment, which includes the coaches, referees, administrators, welfare officers, committee members, and grounds staff, there simply would not be the same opportunities across the game. Whilst it is coaching and refereeing that is arguably the most visible, there is so much unseen voluntary work that takes place on a daily and weekly basis to ensure that those who want to play the game can do so. Whether it is organising fixtures, preparing pitches, monitoring safeguarding requirements, supporting young referees, or opening the club canteen and bar, there are so many people who give their time to the game, and this is greatly

appreciated by the Guernsey FA.

The responsibility of the Association is to support, recruit and retain that volunteer workforce and during the 2023/24 season, the Guernsey FA has again coordinated a programme of CPD delivery in partnership with the FA Education Department. This programme, which has seen eight CPD workshops delivered at a number of club facilities, has been well attended by coaches committed to their own ongoing learning and development for the benefit of those playing the game. That commitment has ensured Guernsey FA has exceeded the CPD target for the season, whilst the commitment of volunteer coaches to complete the required coaching courses, has also led to the number of youth teams with a qualified

GUERNSEY FA GOAL //

PROVISION & PROMOTION OF QUALITY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES FOR VOLUNTEERS ACROSS THE GAME

coach exceeding the stated target. Overall, there have been 115 individual learning instances completed during the 2023/24 season, which is an increase from previous seasons and testament to that volunteer commitment.

The commitment that the volunteer workforce has to education and training, is also highlighted in relation to safeguarding the game. The Guernsey FA is pleased that both the youth coaching and refereeing workforces are compliant with safeguarding and DBS training requirements, whilst the extensive work to raise awareness of upcoming safeguarding requirements in open age football has produced positive results with most teams already compliant. Safeguarding, and ensuring the game is played in a positive

REFEREE DEVELOPMENT //

2023/24 RECRUITMENT TARGET	2023/24 RECRUITMENT MEASURE	2023/24 CONVERSION TARGET	2023/24 CONVERSION MEASURE
8	6	60%	7
2023/24 RETENTION TARGET	2023/24 RETENTION MEASURE	2023/24 PROGRESSION TARGET	2023/24 PROGRESSION MEASURE
25	27	3	2

FOCUS THREE //

CONTINUED

environment, is of paramount importance. For that reason, the Guernsey FA will continue to support the volunteer Club Welfare Officers, along with monitoring compliance for safeguarding training and DBS requirements.

Ahead of the 2023/24 season, the Guernsey FA recognised a need to prioritise the work to recruit, retain, convert and progress referees to ensure that football matches continue to be officiated by a qualified referee workforce that is supported with learning and development opportunities, along with appropriate support and mentoring. During the season, the Guernsey FA has delivered a Basic Referees Training Course, which has resulted in an increase in the number of registered referees, which now includes nine referees under the age of 18. Those

new and young referees have been supported by the wider referee workforce, which has benefited from two specific 'Match Observer' training courses. The work to support the referee workforce has seen the overall referee score exceed the stated targets for the season.

Looking ahead to the new 2024/28 strategy, the work to support the volunteer workforce, including plans to recruit the next generation of volunteers, will remain a key strategic priority. With ambitions to grow and evolve the game through the opportunities created by the new 3G Stadia community hub facility, there is an understanding that retaining, recruiting and training volunteers will be an on going part of the process.

COACH DEVELOPMENT //

2021 YOUTH TEAMS BASELINE	2021 YTWAQC BASELINE	2023/24 YTWAQC TARGET	2023/24 YTWAQC MEASURE
170	93.50%	90%	100%

2023/24 CPD TARGET	2023/24 CPD MEASURE	OVERALL SCORE
102	115	100



FOCUS FOUR //

ENVIRONMENT FOR FOOTBALL

**23 Safeguarding Validation
Visits completed**

**100% of Referees are
Safeguarding & DBS compliant**

**100% of Open Age Team
officials with a DBS**

**100% of Youth Team officials
with Safeguarding Course &
DBS compliance**

Football should be a game for All, and throughout the 2023/24 season the Guernsey FA has proudly worked to foster a football environment that is inclusive, respectful, enjoyable for participants, and safe for all in the community.

One of the Guernsey FA's primary responsibilities is to ensure that football continues to be a safe space for All to enjoy. During the 2023/24 season, the Guernsey FA Safeguarding team has diligently monitored and supported safeguarding within club environments, undertaking 23 validation visits across the local clubs, and by once again providing in-service training for the invaluable Club Welfare Officers who are often the first point of contact for safeguarding related matters. That collaborative partnership with local clubs is vital to ensuring that football is safe and enjoyable for all and we are delighted to have all youth team coaches fully compliant with safeguarding and DBS requirements. Additionally, open age football is in a very strong position ahead of new changes to safeguarding requirements, with all club coaches currently involved in this football being compliant with DBS requirements.

The Guernsey FA once again achieved FA Safeguarding 365 compliance during the 2023/24 season, which illustrates that safeguarding good practice remains embedded at all levels of the organisation, along with ensuring that support

is provided across the wider island football community to maintain the required safeguards. That commitment to safeguarding football across the island remains a key strategic objective moving forward, and the Guernsey FA will continue to operate within the Safeguarding Operating Standard framework and ensure policies and procedures are in place to guide all stakeholders.

Some of those stakeholders are the Guernsey FA Youth Council, with those members being both active, and instrumental, in delivering key messages to parents and young people through use of social media channels to promote the FA Respect Codes of Conduct and positive behaviours from all stakeholders. The Youth Council is an invaluable group of committed young people, and has prepared its own four-year action plan to compliment and align with the Guernsey FA 2024-28 strategy.

The upcoming strategy will also see a renewed focus on ensuring equality of opportunity across the game in Guernsey. During the 2023/24 season, the Guernsey FA achieved the Preliminary Level of the Equality Standard for Sport, which is crucial in the work to create an inclusive environment for all to enjoy football. As part of this process the Guernsey FA has recruited an Inclusion Advisory Group, which will have responsibility to focus attention and identify opportunities

GUERNSEY FA GOAL //
**FOSTER A FOOTBALL ENVIRONMENT
THAT IS INCLUSIVE, RESPECTFUL,
ENJOYABLE FOR PARTICIPANTS AND
SAFE FOR ALL IN THE COMMUNITY**

for the Guernsey FA workforce to create more opportunities for the under-represented groups within the community to access football as we move into the new strategy.

The high level of support to the local game when it comes to safeguarding and equal opportunity will continue throughout the course of this strategy – and beyond – because it is rightly regarded as being of the highest importance to ensure that football is appropriately safeguarded, accessible, and played in enjoyable and respectful environments.

FOCUS FIVE //

GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

Effective governance structures across business operations underpin the required service standards provided to the local game by the Guernsey FA. A commitment to retaining and enhancing the Association's governance, along with retention of a motivated, engaged and skilled workforce, is crucial to ensuring the Guernsey FA is consistently in position to best support the grassroots game and work with all stakeholders.

During the 2023/24 season, there have been notable achievements, including having achieved the Preliminary Level of the Equality Standard for Sport, which illustrates the Guernsey FA's commitment to a game that is accessible to All. Additionally, the Guernsey FA has once again retained the Guernsey Sports Commission 'Sports Mark', which is awarded to local sports with the required governance and safeguarding standards in place.

In relation to the Code of Governance, the Guernsey FA Board has continued the process of guiding the work to achieve this important kitemark. Having completed a detailed review of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, which led to various amendments being adopted at a Special General Meeting, the work since that time has continued to progress at a significant pace. This work has focussed on reviewing and updating policies, enhancing relevant content

on the Guernsey FA website, and introducing additional Committees to support the good governance of the Association. Additionally, the Board has undertaken its own internal review, having completed a skills audit, which will be used to support future recruitment and business continuity plans at the highest level of the organisation, along with developing a Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. The process to achieve the Code of Governance will continue into the 2024/25 season, with the Guernsey FA Board aiming to have completed all required actions by the end of the calendar year.

Any organisation is only as good as the staff that work for it and, as an organisation that aims to be an employer of choice, the Guernsey FA has continued to prioritise investment into role specific learning for the workforce with individual training and development opportunities focussed on enhancing the business continuity and operational delivery plans. The supportive workforce culture, in which employee well-being is prioritised, has ensured strong staff retention across the business, and this is crucial to maintain high levels of service standards to support the game in Guernsey. Within that service to the game, the workforce has supported the local club network to ensure that all clubs with youth teams have, once again, successfully renewed the England Accreditation standard. The commitment of the local clubs to

GUERNSEY FA GOAL //

A CULTURE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE & EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING EMBEDDED TO SUPPORT BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AND HIGH QUALITY SERVICE TO THE GAME

maintaining the England Accreditation is further testament to the strength of the club network and its continued focus on maintaining positive playing environments for All players across the game.

The work of the Guernsey FA across the game relies on working collaboratively with stakeholders and both building, and retaining, strong and effective partnerships. This includes working with The FA, Football Foundation, Guernsey Sports Commission, Guernsey Football League, local clubs, Referees Society, and corporate partners. Every partnership and collaboration is important to the current and long-term health of the game, and the Guernsey FA will continue to adopt the same approach in the best interests of all that enjoy and participate in the game in various roles.



FOCUS FIVE //

CONTINUED

GOVERNANCE

CODE OF GOVERNANCE TARGET - JUNE 2024	EQUALITY STANDARD TARGET - JUNE 2024	SAFEGUARDING OPERATING STANDARD
IN PROGRESS	ACHIEVED	ACHIEVED

YOUTH TEAMS IN ACCREDITED CLUBS //

2021 BASELINE	2023/24 TARGET	2023/24 MEASURE
100%	90%	100%

ADULT TEAMS IN ACCREDITED CLUBS //

2021 BASELINE	2023/24 TARGET	2023/24 MEASURE
76%	65%	92%



CEO REFLECTION //

The strategy produced by the Guernsey FA for the 2021-24 period identified key strategic objectives across various areas of the game. As this strategy – Guernsey Football, Stronger Together – progresses into the new 2024-28 strategy, it is an opportune time to reflect on the many successes and challenges faced during the last three seasons.

The start of the strategy, on 1st July 2021, coincided with the day on which Guernsey finally relaxed its borders and life returned to a semblance of normality after the COVID pandemic impacted life around the world. The strategy title – Guernsey Football, Stronger Together – was symbolic in adopting the mantra used by the island during the pandemic, and reflected a commitment from the Guernsey FA to work with all stakeholders across the game to deliver a vision to ensure football in the Bailiwick was a unified, welcoming and accessible game for all.

Whilst the strategy coincided with the relaxation of border controls, COVID-related challenges persisted, and particularly for the game's young participants. Through commitment, collaboration and communication, the game in the island returned to normal during the 2021/22 season and the Guernsey FA was able to begin prioritising work to deliver against the key strategic objectives across five focus areas of the game. Some of the successes achieved during this strategy period have included the significant increase in female participation, supporting all clubs with youth teams to achieve, and retain, England Football accreditation, an increase in the number of

registered referees, and an increased number of coaches completing CPD. Additionally, the Guernsey FA has focussed significant time in ensuring the Association has the highest standard of governance and drives equality across the game so that it is accessible and safe for those that want to participate. In this regard, the Guernsey FA has achieved the Preliminary Level of the Equality Standard for Sport, along with once again meeting the Safeguarding 365 Standard, which illustrates that safeguarding is fully embedded across the game in Guernsey.

However, of the five focus areas, it was the work to enhance football facility provision which was identified as being the priority due to the clear need to ensure that the game in Guernsey had a positive future and with facilities that were fit for purpose. As we reach the end of the third and final year of the strategy it is pleasing to be able to look back on the great progress that has been made in this area, with all objectives having been met. These objectives all required funding support and, through effective project business plans, the Guernsey FA has secured over £10.2m of investment into facility-based projects from The FA, Football Foundation, and private investors. This investment, which has led to the Equipment Bank being established, floodlit provision retained, and realisation of the ambitious plans to build a new GFA HQ and 3G Stadia facility, promises to be transformational for the game in Guernsey.

Guernsey's new 'Home of Football' will be the catalyst for so many exciting opportunities

to develop and grow the game for players, coaches, referees and the hundreds of invaluable volunteers whose commitment is integral to the local game. As always, the Guernsey FA recognises and appreciates the time, commitment and energy of the volunteers who ensure that playing opportunities are supported throughout the season. However, we also recognise that the volunteer workforce needs support, and we will continue to develop plans to recruit the next generation of committed volunteers, including referees, coaches and administrators.

The 2023/24 season, and overall 2021-24 strategy, has illustrated the value and importance of stakeholders working collaboratively and in partnership for the good of the game. This approach, which has ensured tangible success in meeting so many of the strategic objectives, will continue to be adopted by the Guernsey FA as we move forward into the next strategy cycle – one which promises to be the start of an exciting new era for football in Guernsey. It is not an exaggeration when stating that the new 'Home of Guernsey Football' at Victoria Park will be transformational for the game. All of the staff, and Board of Directors, understand the importance of this new facility, one which we truly hope will be used by all the football and wider local community.

It is through the dedication and commitment of all involved with the Association that we can look forward to that exciting new era, and I would like to note my appreciation and gratitude for all of those who have worked and volunteered for the

Guernsey FA over the course of this past season and 2021-24 strategy period. The collective and tireless efforts of those individuals is the cornerstone of all that we have achieved during this period – a unified, welcoming and accessible game for All, with an exciting future.

