



Herefordshire Football Association Strategy 2021-2024



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Introduction

CHAIR

When we presented our previous strategy to the FA in June 2018, the HFA was a very different organisation.

In December 2018, permission was granted for the Association to develop a 3G pitch to replace its existing grass pitch. Shortly afterwards we lost our CEO and two replacements in short succession.

We were delighted to welcome Alan Darfi as our new CEO in March 2020, who arrived a week before the Covid pandemic hit the whole country.

Despite the suspension of football, Alan was able to commence building key local partnerships and has launched a number of exciting initiatives. These are regarded as essential in terms of ensuring that the Association can be financially stable and less reliant on grants from the FA, which will be reducing over the next few years.

The entire HFA team works extremely hard and is passionate about football. I often think that the range of work completed by the team goes unnoticed with specific examples being veterans, disability, walking, small-sided and schools and further education football. More recently, the HFA has also launched a range of projects to benefit parts of the community.

It is pleasing that, despite the difficulties of the past 18 months, there are so many men, women, boys and girls enjoying their football experience on a weekly basis.

It is also pleasing that we have been able to recruit two new Independent Board members who have brought a different focus to our meetings and considerably benefitted the Association and built on the ongoing transformation of our corporate governance structure.

We have also obtained planning permission to extend our facilities. This will not only improve user-experience but will also assist in making the Association more self-sufficient, enabling it to continue to invest into football.

Under the guidance of Alan and the excellent and dedicated staff team the Association is certainly moving forward. I would particularly like to thank all the Board members for their hard work and contribution together with all Council members for their ongoing support.

I would also like to thank the hundreds of volunteers who spend so much time and energy running their local teams throughout the county.

I believe that the foundations are now in place for a successful period for grassroots football across all areas of the county and I am looking forward to the next 3 years as we work together to deliver this strategy.

Steve Willmot

CEO

Having weathered the storm of the Covid pandemic, it is an exciting moment for football in Herefordshire.

With participation numbers strong and an excellent volunteer network, there are a range of opportunities ahead. As the County Football Association, the HFA recognises that its role is to lead the way, working with volunteers, participants, clubs, leagues, match officials and partners to ensure that, as a community, we are best-placed to ensure that football continues to prosper in the county, for the benefit of all.

As is evidenced within this strategy, the HFA has a clear plan for the next 3 years to achieve this. Recognising the fact that the HFA is the custodian of the game, rather than the owner, it was felt important to ensure that the football community played a role in developing this strategy. Many thanks go to those from across the game who have contributed to what it is hoped will be viewed as a clear and concise approach. In developing this strategy, the HFA has also been mindful to ensure

that it supports the respective strategies of its key partners the Football Association, the Football Foundation, Active Herefordshire & Worcestershire and Herefordshire Council.

The HFA has changed a huge amount in recent years, and this is only going to continue. Given changes to the way in which the HFA is funded, this will ensure that the HFA remains financially secure and continues to invest significantly into grassroots football, for the benefit of both the game and wider Herefordshire community. It is crucially important that, given the fact that football is at the heart of all communities in the region, the HFA uses its position as the governing body to maximise the power of football, for the benefit of all society. Like everyone involved in the game across the county, the Board, Council and HFA team are passionate about football. It is a privilege to work with such a committed workforce and I know all are looking forward to working with the football network and all of our partners over the next 3 years, to deliver this strategy.

Alan Darfi



Steve Willmot
Chair



Alan Darfi
CEO

About Herefordshire

Herefordshire is a predominantly rural county, with the **fourth lowest population density** in England (88 people per square kilometre).

The resident population is estimated to be **192,800**, with over a third (76,700) living in Hereford City. Just under a fifth (33,700) live in one of the three largest market towns, with the remainder (82,400) living in areas defined as 'rural'.

Herefordshire has a strong farming heritage, with **95%** of the county's **842 square miles** land area being classed as 'rural'. In general, the county has a relatively large proportion of employment in sectors such as 'wholesale and retail' and 'agriculture'. Self-employment is more common than nationally, particularly in 'agriculture', 'arts, entertainment and recreation, and other service activities' and 'construction'.

The split between male and female is **49:51**. The population of Herefordshire is **98.2%** white, with **93.7%** defining themselves as white British. Persons under the age of 18 account for **18.9%**, lower than the national average. Persons aged 65 and over account for **23.7%**, higher than the national average.

Herefordshire is in the seventh most deprived decile of upper tier (county or shire council) authorities, being ranked **97th** most deprived out of a total of 151 such bodies. Certain areas of Herefordshire are also in the top **10-25%** most deprived areas nationally.





Herefordshire Football Association

Herefordshire Football Association

Limited (HFA) is a not-for-profit limited company and one of 50 regional football associations, responsible for **developing, supporting and regulating** the game of football across the County of Herefordshire.

Founded in **1893**, the HFA has been based at its offices next to Widemarsh Common since 1985. Whilst one of the smallest County Football Associations, it serves a membership of over **340 affiliated teams**, nearly **6,000 players**, over **100 match officials** and a wide volunteer support network.

The HFA has a **board of directors consisting of 10**, including 2 independent

non-executive directors and the CEO. The HFA also has a Council consisting of **23 representatives** from the game. The HFA employs a team of **5 full-time and 4 part-time members of staff**. In addition, the HFA operates its own **3G pitch**, which opened in 2019 following an investment of circa £800,000, the HFA Super Sixes small-sided competition and the HFA Player Development Centre.

At the AGM in June 2021, the HFA Members unanimously voted to change the HFA's Articles of Association to adopt the **Football Association's Code of Governance for County Football Associations**. These changes will come into

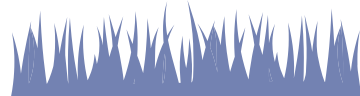
effect from the AGM in 2022 and, following a transitional period, will result in a number of changes across the organisation, including the membership of the Board changing to consist of no less than 1/3 independent members and no more than 1/3 Council representatives, all with set term limits. The structure of Council will also change to ensure that all areas of the game are represented, with gender and diversity targets also coming into force.

Strategy 2018 - 2021

HOW WE DID



REGISTERED MALE PLAYERS
31% INCREASE



ADDITIONAL
24 'GOOD'
QUALITY
GRASS PITCHES

VETS
FOOTBALL LEAGUE
EXPANDED



**WALKING
FOOTBALL**
SESSIONS INCREASED



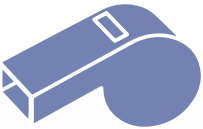
SAFEGUARDING
OPERATING STANDARD — MET*
* 2020-2021 AUDIT OUTCOME PENDING



REGISTERED FEMALE PLAYERS
19% INCREASE



REGISTERED DISABLED PLAYERS
8% INCREASE (pre-covid)



REGISTERED MATCH OFFICIALS
10% INCREASE

**COMMERCIAL
INCOME**
INCREASED BY
10%



FA FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
OPERATING MANUAL COMPLIANT



**WOMEN'S
DEVELOPMENT**
LEAGUE EXPANDED

YOUTH TEAMS
WITH A QUALIFIED COACH
95%

**3G FACILITIES
OPENED**
AT HFA COUNTY GROUND
AND HEREFORD PEGASUS FC

SUPER 6
LEAGUE EXPANDED

**COUNTY LEAGUE
STEP 7** STATUS



EQUALITY STANDARD
FOUNDATION LEVEL ACHIEVED

**HFA PLAYER DEVELOPMENT
CENTRE LAUNCHED INVOLVING
180 BOYS & GIRLS**



Herefordshire Football Association

Strategy 2021-2024

Strategy 2021 - 2024

VISION

**“A community united by
the power of football,
with football opportunities For All”**

MISSION

**“To develop, promote and support positive,
safe and inclusive football opportunities for
the benefit of our community.”**

VALUES

**We are Welcoming • We act with Integrity
We are Open • We strive for Excellence
We are Progressive**

Goals

- 1 ▶ Developing, growing, supporting and administering the game**
- 2 ▶ Creating, championing and facilitating safe and inclusive football environments**
- 3 ▶ Managing the investment into and development of facilities**
- 4 ▶ Strengthening the CFA business to be an inspirational, sustainable and trusted leader**



GOAL 1 ➤ Developing, growing, supporting and administering the game

- **Retaining** existing registered male players
- Increasing registered female players by **30%**
- Increasing registered disabled players by **25%**
- **95%** youth teams with a qualified coach, with **40%** of all coaches completing CPD

It hopefully goes without saying that a key function of the HFA is to ensure that the nearly 6,000 regular players in the county are provided with opportunities and support to ensure they continue to play the game they love.

As the world has changed, so has the way in which people want to play their football. While the adult 11 v 11 game will always receive the full support of the HFA, it is important now more than ever

that the full spectrum of football is developed and supported, to ensure it continues to flourish in the county.

In keeping with the key strategic aims of the FA, the HFA is aiming to ensure that registered male players will remain at the current level and female players will increase by 30%. In addition, the HFA is aiming to increase registered disabled players by 25%. As above, the HFA will ensure that a range

of opportunities are available, to ensure these targets are met.

Just as important to the game as players, are coaches. Research and feedback demonstrates that qualified coaches who commit to ongoing development not only develop better players, but ensure better experiences. The HFA is committed to ensuring that all those connected to the game are supported and is therefore committing to ensure that 95% of youth teams will have a qualified coach, with 40% of coaches completing ongoing formal development.

GOAL 2 ➤ Creating, championing and facilitating safe and inclusive football environments

- Ongoing compliance with the **FA Safeguarding** operating standard
- Successfully obtaining the **preliminary equality standard**
- Suitably qualified referee to **every game**
- Successfully operating an **Inclusion Advisory Group**

To ensure those connected to the game continue to want to be in this position, it is essential that safe and inclusive environments are the norm across the county.

The welfare of children, young people and adults at risk must always be paramount. The FA's Safeguarding Operating Standard (soon becoming 'Safeguarding 365') provides a wide range of measures that must be adhered to, ensuring this

is the case both within the HFA itself and across the county.

In 2020, the HFA was awarded the 'foundation' equality standard. This demonstrated that the HFA was committed to equality, had a clear equality policy in place and was aware of its profile and position in this area. To ensure the HFA is a leader in this area, it is committing to achieving the preliminary standard, which will

further embed this work across the business.

To ensure the above aim is met, the HFA is committing to continue to operate its Inclusion Advisory Group. This group consists of external representatives from across the county, each representing a different part of the inclusion and equality landscape. This group is of paramount importance in ensuring that an external voice has oversight of this crucial area.

The role of a qualified referee on a match day cannot be understated. Whilst numbers of qualified match referees across the county are good, the HFA recognises that matches do regularly proceed without a qualified match official. Whilst an ambitious target, the HFA is aiming that, by 2024, every match will have a qualified match referee.

GOAL 3 ➤ Managing the investment into and development of facilities

- Successful refurbishment of the **HFA HQ facilities**
- **41 ‘good’ quality** grass pitches
- Additional two **3G pitches**
- Delivery of an **annual programme** to assist Clubs with the **refurbishment of facilities**

Another key part of ensuring that the game continues to flourish, is to ensure that the environments in which the game takes place are as good as they can be.

Linked to the FA's national aim of developing an additional 5,000 ‘good quality’ grass pitches, the HFA is committing to develop 41 of these within Herefordshire.

Whilst the development of grass pitches is of fundamental importance, research and feedback demonstrates that the experience and increased opportunities provided by 3G pitches cannot be matched by grass, without levels of investment available within the grassroots game. Accordingly, the HFA is aiming to ensure that a further two 3G pitches are built in the county.

Creating an excellent environment is not just limited to pitches however. The HFA recognises that the development of off-field facilities is of equal importance and is therefore committing to ensure that an annual programme is delivered to ensure that the maximum number of off-field facilities are developed, through a range of opportunities.

Finally, as most will be aware the HFA has recently opened a 3G pitch at its Widemarsh Common base. This has increased usage significantly and feedback has been excellent. To ensure this continues to be the case, the HFA will (subject to funding) be redeveloping its existing office facilities to create changing rooms and external meeting rooms. These will not only ensure the local football family consistently receives an excellent experience at the County Ground, but also that the HFA remains financially sustainable, allowing it to continue to invest into grassroots football, as is its purpose.

GOAL 4 ➤ Strengthening the CFA business to be an inspirational, sustainable & trusted leader

- Adopting the FA’s **Governance Code**
- Successfully setting up a **charitable arm**
- **75%** of respondents to an annual survey to rate service of CFA to be ‘good’ or above
- Successful delivery of a portfolio of projects for the benefit of the **Herefordshire community**

It is fair to say that the HFA has been through a period of change in recent years. Now more than ever, it is essential that the HFA operates as a modern, efficient business, that truly represents and supports the Herefordshire community.

At the AGM ahead of the 2021 season, the HFA Members voted to bring in new Articles of Association, that will adopt the FA's Code of

Governance for County Football Associations. This will have a fundamental impact on the governance of HFA and the HFA is committing to head towards full compliance with the Code.

The HFA exists to better the lives of the Herefordshire football community, which, given the fact that football is the nation’s game, naturally extends across the whole of society in the county.

The HFA recognises the importance of this function and is committing to deliver a portfolio of projects to better lives through a range of football-related activities.

Linked to this, the HFA is also committing to set up a charitable arm. This will enable the HFA to access more opportunities, enabling it to deliver more projects and, therefore, improve more lives.

The HFA fully recognises the fact that it is the custodian of the game, not the owner. All at the HFA feel privileged to be able to impact the game they love and it is essential that excellent customer service is given, particularly given the fact that the game relies entirely on a wide range of excellent and committed volunteers. The HFA is committing to seek annual feedback on customer satisfaction and is aiming for 75% of all respondents to rate the service received as ‘good’ or above.

Summary

As we recover from the Covid pandemic, football is emerging into a different world.

With alternative activities more available than ever and decreasing central funding levels confirmed, it is essential that the HFA continues to develop and evolve.

As set out in this strategy, the HFA is committing to a range of ambitious targets, to ensure that both the HFA and the game continues to flourish. There are sure to be some challenges ahead, but together as one football family, the HFA is positive that these targets will be achieved and football in the county will be stronger than ever, come the end of this strategic period.

The HFA Board.

