



YOUTH FORUM

GETTING STARTED GUIDE

Helping to kick off youth participation in decision making at your club

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF FOOTBALL IN HERTFORDSHIRE

If we are to build a bright future for football in our county, we need to ensure the voice of young players, coaches, referees and volunteers is reflected in our work

Hertfordshire Football Association is the not-for-profit, governing body of football in the county. We want everyone to have the opportunity to play and develop their love of the game.

We do this by working to create an environment in which football can flourish, supporting the delivery of quality provision, promoting diversity and regulating the sport for everyone to enjoy.

We are proud to support football for all and are here to help the thousands of players and volunteers who make up the game in our county.

The Value of Youth Engagement

Our figures indicate that youth football continues to thrive with well over 2,000 teams affiliated in Hertfordshire. However the health of grassroots football is dependent on its volunteers and there are real concerns around the renewal of an ageing (and retiring) volunteer workforce.

There is a need to encourage and embed an ethos of community volunteering in a younger generation and bring these young people through into leadership positions in the community football structures of clubs and leagues.

This generation of young people emerging are more connected to each other and to information than previous generations. They have new skills and approaches that have the potential to transform the way in which the game is run, organised and developed.

As such Hertfordshire FA are fully committed to ensuring young people are actively involved in the development of the game.

- We will continue to deliver opportunities to develop youth leaders
- We will support young people to be part of shaping their club's development
- We will ensure young people's views are fully integrated into decision making

We hope that this document gives you a starting point to increase youth engagement at your club and by taking these first steps to create a Youth Forum you can join us in working to secure a healthy future for football in Hertfordshire.

Karl Lingham
CEO, Hertfordshire FA

WHY HAVE A YOUTH FORUM?

The voice of young people can help create powerful change at your club

You can begin to shape the activities and services you provide to meet the needs of your young players, coaches, referees and volunteers.

Creating a Youth Forum also strengthens safeguarding processes and gives young people an opportunity to share issues they have faced.

With a Youth Forum in place your club will be more attractive to parents, young people and even sponsors and other sources of funding, as you are able to demonstrate you offer an experience that has been shaped by young people.

Having a Youth Forum also creates a culture of innovation, improvement and change, which will serve your club well as it helps ensure you continue to meet the needs of young people.

Finally it's worth remembering that the young people playing at your club today are likely to become the workforce of your club in the future.

A positive experience of engagement from a younger age will keep them involved for longer and help you find a steady stream of willing volunteers for many years to come.



"It has made me feel not only can my voice be heard but as if what I say matters. Even though we are young I have been inspired by others in the forum and I have been able to feel proud of what we can achieve"

Amy, Youth Forum Member, Bedwell Rangers FC



OUR YOUTH FORUM

What are we here to achieve? What is our Mission Statement?

Why do I want to be part of a Youth Forum? What difference can I make?

WHO’S WHO AT OUR CLUB?

Your club is run by a team of volunteers who give up their free time to help others be able to enjoy playing football

This would include a committee whose role is to make the big decisions that affect the whole club, as well as managers, coaches, and administrators who help run individual teams.

Have you seen members of the committee around the club? Do you know who they are and what roles they have? How often do they meet and how do they decide what's best? How do their decisions affect you?

Here is a list of key roles in a club (although the exact names may vary). What do you know about these roles at your club?



Chair

Club Secretary

Club Welfare Officer

Treasurer

MATCH DAY

Match day is an important part of the week and there is a lot of work that goes into making it a positive experience

Think about a match day at your club. What does it look like? What are the things that people need to do so that your team is able to play matches?

If you could change something about match day at your club what would it be? Do you have a 'dream' match day in mind? What would that look like?

Think about all aspects of the day, from facilities, kit, and equipment, through to pre/post match activities and more. Be creative!

Describe your dream match day here...



WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT YOUR CLUB?

What do you enjoy about being part of the club?

What do you get out of playing football for your club? How has it changed you?

What do you look forward to each week?

How would you promote the club to your friends so they would join too?

WHAT WOULD MAKE IT EVEN BETTER?

What would improve the experience at your club for young players, coaches and referees?

How long will it take to launch the ideas?

Who can help us put these into place?

Will there be extra resources needed? (money, equipment, facilities etc.)

VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

*What does it mean to be part of our club?
What do we expect from players, coaches,
parents, referees and volunteers?*

It is important to have clear and positive values and behaviours as this can give the club an identity, ensure people feel welcome and help everyone involved know what is expected of them.

Values are things that an individual or organisation consider to be important and use to guide what they do and how they do it. These could be things like honesty, respect, equality or teamwork.

Behaviours are things that people do and often these can express their values as they carry out their roles. So if you value respect, you would behave in a way that takes consideration of others and makes sure they feel included.

Unfortunately not all behaviours are positive. Sometimes people can behave in a negative way that is damaging to others. They could be greedy or rude, disrespectful or disruptive.

Have a think about positive and negative behaviours you have experienced in football. How have they made you feel? What environment would you like to play football in?



What values and behaviours do you most want coaches to demonstrate?

What values and behaviours would you expect from members of our Club Youth Forum?

LEADERSHIP

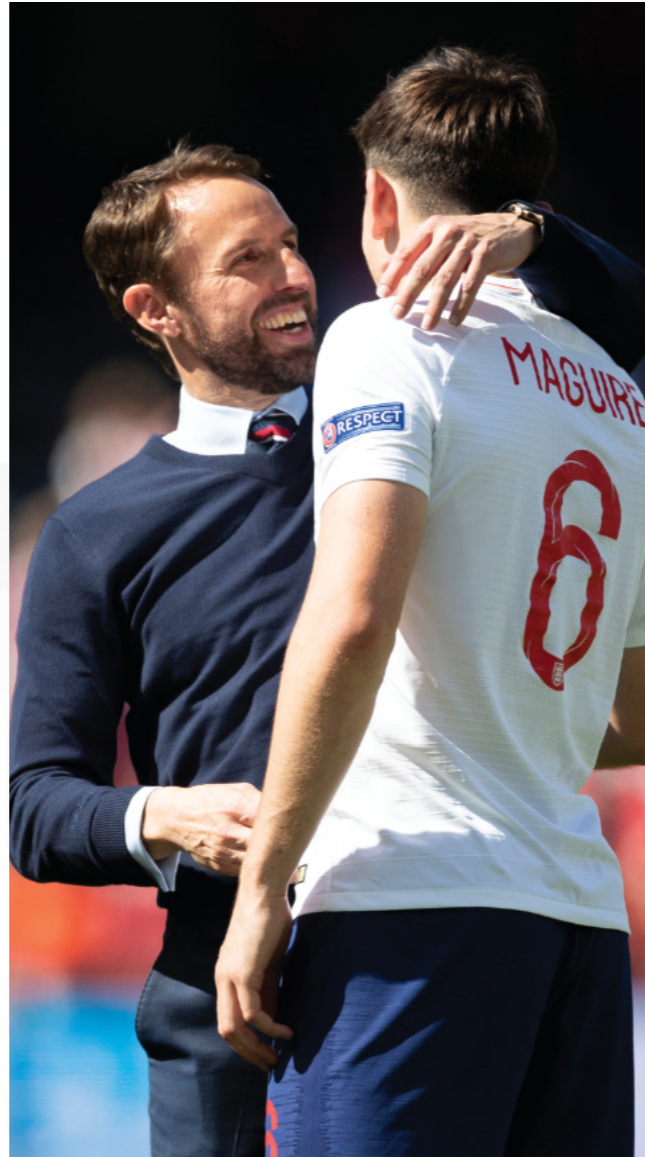
Do you have someone you look up to as a leader? What is it about them that you think makes them good at inspiring others?

We will all have different ideas of what is a good leader and no two leaders are the same.

Leaders can really be anyone in any role. It might be a parent or carer, a manager or coach, a teacher or friend, a player from the Premier League or somebody completely different.

They may not even have a position that marks them out as a leader. For example it could just be a member of your team that sets a good example for others to follow.

It may also only be a temporary thing, so for example while you may have a captain in a football team, you'll know every player on the pitch will need to be a leader at some point in the game.



What are the qualities of a good leader?

How do you show leadership?

SETTING GOALS

Goals are really important as they keep you focussed on what matters

When you have a goal in mind it helps you concentrate your effort where it will make the most difference and avoid those things that will get in the way of what you want to achieve.

Having a goal also helps you to celebrate success, just like on the pitch. When you work hard to meet your goals you get a great sense of satisfaction.

Think about some goals you may have:

What do you want to achieve on the pitch?

What would you like to contribute to your club by being part of the Youth Forum?

What are your goals outside of football, for example at school or college?



ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS

Now that you have your goals in mind, how will you achieve them?

We can sometimes be distracted when other tasks or activities come along, which takes us away from achieving our goals. It can feel overwhelming and as if the goal is impossible to achieve.

The Personal Improvement Grid (or PIG) is a helpful tool to help you achieve a goal. The grid is one step on from a 'to do' list, as it helps you break down and categorise tasks.

This grid will enable you to focus on your goals and

PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT GRID

Start doing...

Stop doing...

Do more of...

Do less of...

COMMUNICATION

It's not only about what we say, the way we say it can be just as important

There are now more ways than ever for us to communicate and this will continue to change as new technology is developed.

How many different ways do you connect with others? Which do you consider to be more important? Think about how different forms of communication suit different types of message.

How could the club communicate with its young players, coaches and volunteers to make them feel more included and ensure their voices are heard?

What type of communication do you want to have with your club?



SAFEGUARDING

We want football to be a safe, fun and inclusive experience for all

The first priority of any youth club should be the wellbeing of the young people taking part. If you or those around you are not having a positive experience, you need to tell someone about it.

There are a number of people within your club and outside of it that could help if you have a concern. Whoever you speak to, they should listen and take your issue seriously.

You'd probably want to speak to a parent or coach first although sometimes you might prefer to tell someone not directly involved in your team, particularly if it's a sensitive matter.

Your Club Welfare Officer is there to deal with any concerns and works to ensure that all those involved at your club are protected.

You could also contact your County FA who have a Designated Safeguarding Officer whose job it is to help ensure anyone with a concern gets the help and support that they need.

Do you know who these people are and how you would contact them if you needed to?



Can you find details of safeguarding contacts at your club or local County FA?

WHY GET INVOLVED?

A young volunteer describes their journey in football, the impact it has had on them and the opportunities it has opened up

Before I became involved in football, I got to write a small 'Kids Sport' section in my newspaper and during this time I interviewed Phil Sharp (a former FIFA World Cup match official from Hertfordshire) who advised me to take a referee course.

I loved football but had never really played, so I took the course to be a part of the game, receiving my qualification in 2017. Since then I have refereed regularly and this is where my love for being involved in the football community began.

I did struggle at first as unlike most referees I had never really experienced matches as a player, but with the help of my mentor I became more confident and over time I feel I have improved greatly and now really enjoy it.

For my Duke of Edinburgh Award I volunteered at my brother's football club and later the coach there asked me to help with Pirton Wildcats, a scheme to get girls aged 5-11 into football.

Being involved in running Wildcats was a chance to give young girls an opportunity to get started in football and fall in love with the game that just wasn't available even a few years ago.

As part of the Wildcats programme our centre was chosen out of over 900 others to play on the pitch at Wembley. It was an incredible experience which truly inspired the girls and myself.

Since then I have taken my FA Level 1 course to become qualified as a coach and I am continuing to take the girls, hoping to have enough players to create a team in the near future and get involved in playing regularly in a league.

This year I was nominated for the Hertfordshire FA Rising Star of the Year Award for my volunteering in football and still can't quite believe that I won!

Since then I have gone on to join the FA Youth Leadership Academy. This fantastic programme focuses on developing young leaders to help them create a voice in football and improve their leadership skills. Recently I had the privilege of attending the four day event at St George's Park and I am working towards graduating next year.

Overall I can say volunteering in football has made a big difference in my personal development, allowing me to learn a range of skills and build confidence all while doing something that I love.

Whether or not I end up working in football I know that being involved as a volunteer has given me knowledge and experience that will help my future career and I would recommend it to anyone.



DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS

It's not just about what you can do with a ball. Being involved in football can help you develop many valuable life skills

Think about the sort of things people need to do within a football club to make it run well. How could being involved with football help you to learn new skills and develop as a person?

This might be practical things like organisation skills from helping to manage a group of players or interpersonal skills from having to deal with coaches and referees on a matchday.

List some skills you could get from volunteering in football and how they might be useful elsewhere...

NOTES

Use this space to write down any ideas or questions you may have for future Youth Forum meetings, reminders of things to go away and investigate before next time...

"We are very proud of the positive impact the Youth Forum has had, with young players using their voice and contributing to the club development plan. They told us what they wanted and now they are delivering it!"

Nicky, Club Welfare Officer, Bedwell Rangers FC



Hertfordshire FA

The County Ground,
Baldock Road,
Letchworth,
Hertfordshire,
SG6 2EN

01462 677622

contactus@hertfordshirefa.com

@HertfordshireFA