

## Pitch Improvement Boost for Abbots Bromley Sports Association



Staffordshire Football Association were delighted to support Abbots Bromley Sports Association (ABSA) with the ongoing development of a new sports facility in the village, which will include two new football pitches for the local adult and junior football clubs.

Having first embraced the Staffordshire FA pitch improvement programme in 2016, when the football pitches were still farmland, the ABSA Trustees have worked incredibly hard on various fundraising initiatives to turn the site into a multi-sport hub for the local community.

With the two football pitches and cricket field now in place and ready for action in 2021, ABSA have invested in the grass maintenance equipment recommended in their pitch improvement report – a compact tractor and rotary roller mower – supported by a 75% grant from the Football Foundation.

The Sports Association will now be able to maintain the grass surfaces to a high standard having invested in suitable machinery for the site, via Staffordshire FA partner and recommended pitch maintenance equipment supplier, Campey Turf Care.

Gareth Thomas, Partnerships & Communications Officer at Staffordshire FA, said: “We were delighted to be able to support ABSA with a funding application to the Football Foundation, via our pitch improvement programme which provides grassroots football clubs with advice, guidance and support to improve their natural turf surfaces. In addition to general maintenance advice and guidance, the programme also recommends the most suitable equipment for the site, which grassroots football clubs are then able to invest in with the support of a 75% grant from the Football Foundation. Part of the funding criteria also includes club officials undertaking training provided by the Grounds Management Association (GMA), which the ABSA Trustees have fully embraced to hold them in good stead for the future.”

John Campey, Director at Campey Turf Care, said: “Campey Turf Care are proud to support grassroots football clubs in supplying the right machinery that will help deliver a high-quality playing surface for many years to come. Choosing good quality machinery makes the groundsman’s job much easier in delivering playing surfaces the community can be proud of. Many groundsman at grassroots level have limited time and resources, so investing in the right machinery is very important, thus making the game safer and more enjoyable for all.”

Andy Kirkland, Trustee at Abbots Bromley Sports Association, said: “We became aware of the 75% grant opportunity via the Football Foundation when attending a Staffordshire FA pitch improvement programme seminar, and a subsequent practical demonstration of equipment by Campey Turf Care. After commendable effort by organisations in our community – in particular, CBVC Vehicle Management, the Bingo Committee of the Royal British Legion Abbots Bromley, and numerous individual donations from local residents – we were able to proceed with our application for the funding. As part of the funding package, further training and information is provided through the Football Foundation’s online Groundskeeping Community and a GMA Level 1 Football Grounds Maintenance course. All the information you need to prepare and maintain football pitches is here, so we found this very useful.”

Andy added: “The compact tractor is versatile and robust; our aim now will be to work – over time – towards acquiring additional equipment that can be utilised with the tractor e.g. slitter aerator, to further enhance the quality and playing surface of the pitches. The mower has a range of height adjustments, presents pitches very well with a striped effect, and is low maintenance compared with other machines. The combination of the new tractor and mower will allow us to maintain our two new pitches to the highest standards cost-effectively and allow football to be enjoyed by players and supporters of all ages, well into our future.”

For further information on the Staffordshire FA Grass Pitch Improvement Strategy or Football Foundation funding, please contact: [support@staffordshirefa.com](mailto:support@staffordshirefa.com)

For further information on useful educational resources to support volunteer groundskeepers who maintain grassroots football pitches, please visit the links below.

**GMA Football Toolkit:** <https://resources.thegma.org.uk/football/football-groundsman-ship>

**GMA Online Courses:** <https://portal.thegma.org.uk/education/course/379868>

**FF Groundskeeping Community:** <https://footballfoundation.hivelearning.com/join>