

Bonar Bridge Football Club Annual Report

July 2021 – June 2022



Creating togetherness, building dreams &
raising aspiration

A Grassroots community football Club
with BIG dreams

Registered SCIO SC050022

Our Story

Bonar Bridge Football Club (BBFC) was originally founded in 1968. Registered as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) in 2019, the club is managed by a dedicated voluntary board of trustees with assistance from community volunteers.

The original club ceased in 2010 after 35 years of participating in the North Caledonian league. Providing the villages of the Kyle of Sutherland with a much-loved team to participate in, support, develop friendships and create valuable memories the club's cessation left a void for our remote rural communities.

In 2018 the club was reformed by a group of volunteers with a vision to create a holistic sporting and social opportunity for our communities, that would support all ages and abilities with clear development paths and long-term sustainability as a youth, league club, and community resource.

BBFC is more than just football; health, citizenship and community development are at the core of our aims. Since reforming the club so much has been achieved, and we hope you enjoy reading this snapshot of the past year.

The Club is based at the Migdale Park playing fields.



Anthony Sergeant



Anthony (Tony) Sergeant sadly passed away in July 2021. Tony had played an active role in the reformation of the club and as Deputy Head teacher at the local school was intrinsically connected to our young people. Husband to Erica and Dad to three young children, Edward, Amelia, and Henry, Tony is very much missed by the BBFC community. Tony had a great love of football and embraced his local team with gusto, commitment, fun and passion.

In August the Senior team played a friendly against Golspie where a minute's silence from both teams, younger members and spectators was honoured to remember Tony and think of his family at this truly sad time.



Club refurbishment

This year the committee has successfully overseen the refurbishment of the Clubhouse. Prior to the amazing transformation that has taken place the clubhouse was in very poor condition. With unusable facilities making it difficult for the club to provide the basic necessities required to support all members and visiting teams, the Clubhouse became the top priority for our ambitions to modernise and improve the whole Migdale Park area as a fit for purpose modern recreational facility for the whole community.

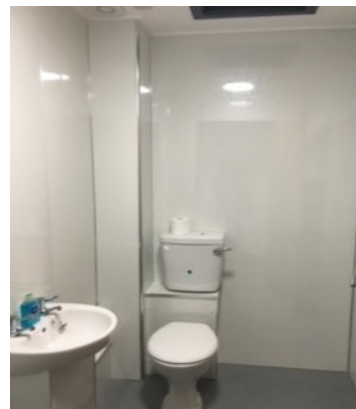
The effects of this refurbishment have been far reaching, the community has a protected asset saved from falling into disrepair, the club is able to offer appropriate facilities that support health and wellbeing in a safe and comfortable environment, but the best is the tangible feeling of togetherness, pride, and club identity that has been directly enhanced by this project. Coming back to a normal season of football following the pandemic to a new clubhouse was a real boost. The senior team walking into the home changing room with kit laid out and speaker at the ready to assist in the pre-game motivators and post-game celebrations, the juniors running into their clubhouse every Friday to sign in and to “own” the home room on tournament and game days, the supporters who clap them out on match days and then grab a coffee before cheering on from the side line, the community spirit and increased involvement in the running of the club and the cohesion it has created between different people from different villages who all identify with BBFC is phenomenal.



From this



To This



Junior Club

The Junior club is for ages 5 -11, split into two sessions every Friday P1-P3 and P4-P7. The club has been running to date for 7 years and has membership of over 70 children with 50 regularly attending the training sessions each week. The Junior club was the starting point for the reforming of the club and the membership is evidence of how wanted and needed this is. The clubs are for all children of all abilities and are gender mixed. The club brings together children from all areas of the Kyle of Sutherland and Lairg dispersed populations, and our outlying neighbours assisting in the development of cohesion and the formation of friendships between children who attend one of the five small schools in the area. This is also a benefit to the transition of primary children joining those from other primary schools at secondary where friendships have already been formed. Assisting with facilitating a more cohesive younger generation and creating a club identity thanks to the sponsors of our senior team HPVD who extended their support to the juniors, each child is issued with a full training kit which they proudly wear for each training session and matches.





In addition to club training, we have been able to organise a few friendly games providing the children with the opportunity to experience competition, team spirit and good sporting practices. This year BBFC Juniors hosted its first football tournament with teams from across Sutherland and Ross Shire competing in a P1-3 and P4-7 tournament with 160 youngsters participating. The day was hailed a true sporting success with all children who participated receiving a medal and cups presented to the two winning teams Brora P4-7 and Tain A for P1-3





Secondary



Our secondary squad formed in 2021 and continues grow with over 10 members moving from the junior to secondary squad this year. Training takes place every Tuesday evening with the first half focused on fitness and again this year we have been able to enjoy some matches against other clubs. This group has created a clear pathway from junior to

secondary to senior, it is not that far off that we will see our first secondary club members take up their place in the Senior squad.



Engaging with young people is at the heart of the BBFC. Providing young people with clear pathways to continue in sport and fitness has clear links to their continued engagement with sport as adults. At a time when young people are developing into young adults the club is assisting them into understanding citizenship, good health & well-being, and providing them with transferable skills. We continue to be members of Youth Highland who provide us with support, guidance, and a youth network.

Senior Club



The Senior team compete in the North Caledonian league with 20 fixtures played in the season. They have enjoyed several wins and far fewer losses than they did the previous full season. This has been the first full season since the start of the pandemic. Manager Rob Mitchell and assistant Scott Macgruer continued to train the squad weekly building on the foundations laid prior to the pandemic and the hard work paid off. They finished the league better than the previous seasons and have laid great foundations for the next commencing in August 2022.



Rob and Scott will not be returning to the club this year, we would like to thank them for their commitment, enthusiasm and loyalty during their time, the huge impact they have had on developing the squad and the club.

Taking over the reins as manager for the 2022/23 season is Fraser Heath. Fraser, a former player at the club understands the journey the club and the team have been on and is looking forward to managing the team to further success. Fraser will be assisted by former first team Vice Captain and our previous supporters player of the year Tommy McClenaghan.



Senior Players of the Season



Bruce Urquhart:

Top Scorer



Adam Mackay:

Supporters Player of the Year



Nat Valente:

Players Player of the Year



Liam Flett:

Managers Player of the Year

Club Developments

This year with income raised through the clubs own fundraising efforts new training equipment was purchased to support the Junior and secondary squads. This included training accessories, floodlights, pod goals, bibs, two secondary goals and bins which have provided great fun to our junior weekly top bins Champion



We were extremely excited this year to purchase two new senior goals adding to the quality of our home ground and the experience visiting teams enjoy when they come to BBFC.



The Committee has welcomed several new members to the Board this year who have all worked tirelessly to ensure the club runs smoothly behind the scenes, and with the face-to-face operations. A special mention to our coaches who volunteer week in week out to deliver quality training sessions and the Club secretary who oversees all senior match legalities and the junior admissions weekly. It is a commitment that is really appreciated by the community evidenced in some of the feedback shared further on in this report.

The committee has also been working hard on improving the safe delivery of sport through developing policies and practices that ensure safe, inclusive, and accessible membership, with 8 of the BBFC committee now qualified in first aid.



Community Development

Home matches continue to draw a good crowd and there is a great community feel at the games where people young and old come along to support their local team in all weathers.



The presence of the club at the playing fields has also encouraged the wider community to look after it and we are pleased to report that we have to do a lot less of this now 😊



We have installed a new, welcoming sign at the entrance to the playing field which supports the development of BBFC identity and also reminds the community and visitors that the area is used and to play a role in keeping it tidy.



The club has been heavily supported by the community and its members and this year over £2,000 has been raised through donations, a Christmas raffle and a junior sponsored dribble in the direst weather conditions. Thank you so much for all your support.



This year we have also raised funds through sponsorship boards located at the perimeter of the playing field. Local businesses and those further afield have been delighted to support BBFC and its growth into a key community football club.



We understand the importance of involving the community, and with all major developments past and present consultation is the first step in any process. We also encourage feedback that keeps us on track, delivering a service that is wanted and needed and above all enjoyed. Below are some of the comments we have received.

Club members

“I like the matches and the training drills are good fun. I like being part of a team” Eddie 11

“I love it all, especially the matches” Adam 6

“I love playing football its fun and the coaches are very nice” Seraphina 7

“I love going to football training every week. The best part is when we play matches against other teams” Harry 7

“I really enjoy football training it keeps us fit and active and prepares us for games and tournaments, which are great fun” Charlie 12

“It’s great fun I like being part of a team and playing in tournaments” Donnie 12

“I love playing football, it’s fun” Ella 7

“I really enjoy football club because it keeps me going and motivates me more. I also like being part of a team and encouraging each other” Charlie 12

“I love playing at Bonar Bridge and its something we look forward to on a Friday night. We have met some new friends” Charlie 10 & Freya 9

“I like being part of BBFC because it keeps me active, is fun and I get to see and make new friends” Rebekah 11

“I like BBFC because I get to make new friends and I like when we play tournaments” Holly 9

“I like BBFC because it keeps me active, and I get to see and play with my friends” Lee 12

“I love football and I love playing for Bonar Bridge. I like the tournaments and seeing my friends” Innis 10

“I like doing the training and seeing my friends” Nixie 8

“I like playing football with my friends and it keeps me fit” Shea 9

“I like football because I like working together as a team. It’s a lot of fun and being part of BBFC has really built up my confidence” Eyra 8

“I love playing football with my friends and the matches we play” Ruby7

"I like running about with my friends because it keeps you fit and its good fun" Cora 6

Community/parents

"BBFC is just brilliant both my sons 11 & 19 love being part of it. My Dad in his 80's enjoys watching home games and there is always such a positive happy atmosphere at everything you do> Very grateful to have it and to all those involved in the running of it." Hayley.

"BBFC is a really lovely welcoming club. Very hard working and approachable committee who organised a cracking kids tournament this year, encouraging and fun coaches...Just a great set up we are lucky to have and genuinely feel part of in our home village. My wee boy loves going to training" Marianne

"BBFC is brilliant the kids have such a good time and its great for them to meet other kids and learn to play in a team. It's a really friendly club the coaches are so good with the kids it's a lovely thing to be part of. It's really well run, and I know how much work the committee puts in which is hugely appreciated- thank you" Elaena

"Thanks for all your hard work" Angus

"As a parent I feel the club is friendly and inclusive. There is a lovely atmosphere, and everyone is helpful and supportive of others" Sheila

"BBFC is a fantastic wee club and all 3 of my boys aged 15,6 and 7 absolutely love it and cannot wait for the training sessions every week. Its great to have this club in our village and its all thanks to the hard work of the coaches and the committee so thank you all very much" Linsay

"BBFC is a fantastic club, very inclusive and welcoming. They give all ages the opportunity to train and play matches and also against other teams which is great for the children. They keep parents well informed and get the players involved in fundraising which is important. So grateful for the voluntary coaches and committee who run the club." Elissa

"We're very grateful to have the club on our doorstep and to all the opportunities they provide for young people in the area. My daughter loves going and enjoys meeting her friends and making new ones. The coaches are brilliant and make training really good fun" Lisa

Future Plans

The club remains in dialogue with the Highland Council pertaining to the community transfer of Migdale Park and our application is still being considered. If successful we will then embark on a programme to remedy the issues of poor drainage, pitch quality, lighting, and other resources to make this a fit for purpose community recreational area.

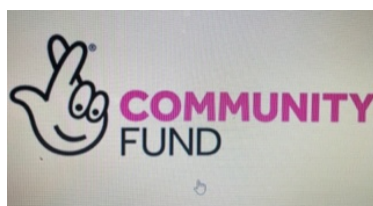


Finance

The club currently achieves a small income through player donations, fundraising campaigns undertaken by the Committee and Volunteers and sponsorship from businesses. Financially the Football club is secure and meeting statutory financial obligations. The club can enter the new football season in the knowledge that day to day running costs and equipment requirements can be covered over the next year as required.

Our Funders

Thank you for your support, encouragement, and belief 😊 for travelling this journey with us and for supporting so many people to be active, together and included in the remote rural location.



Beinn Thaurisinn windfarm



Committee

Nene Maclean (Chair), Kenny Macnab (Vice Chair), Carrie Veters (Secretary) Gavin Ryder (Treasurer) Ann-Maree Branaghan (Child Protection Officer), Scott Veters, Caroline Munro, Ryan Maclean, Doris Calder, Michael Baird, Gail Munro, Irene Macnab, Sammy Allen.

Coaches

Rob Mitchell, Scott Macgruer, David Anderson (Resigned), Steven Christie (Head Youth coach), Sammy Allen, Keith Sutherland, Nene Maclean, Kenny Macnab, Caroline Munro, Irene Macnab, Carrie Veters.

Volunteers

Kay Smart, Grant Morrison, Archie Ryder, Hayley Bangs, Archie Cameron, Geordie Ross, Sheila Lall, Lysay Macleod.

Chairs Message

This has been a great year for BBFC and all that has been achieved is amazing for a small club in a rural village. The dedication of the Coaches, Members and Committee is really something that makes this club special, and that is clearly evident in the comments included in this report. Recovering from the pandemic was going to be tough for the whole community and BBFC has definitely played its role in the community's ability to be resilient in the face of adversity.

The club is engaging, inclusive and above all fun and I feel privileged to be part of it. I am looking forward to another year with BBFC watching the new Senior coach develop the team further, the new P1's joining our junior team and the P7's moving into the secondary squad.



A special thankyou to the coaches who turn out in all weathers..... hats off to you 😊 to the committee who give up their own time to make sure everything runs smoothly, and all the fantastic developments happen, to our members and their families who make it all worthwhile turning up each week ready to be part of BBFC.

Thank you

