

# Bonar Bridge Football Club Annual Report

June 2019 – June 2020



Creating togetherness, building dreams & raising aspiration – Small Village BIG dreams

## Our Story

Bonar Bridge Football Club (BBFC) was founded in 1968 and has recently registered as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), managed by a voluntary board of trustees.

The 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 and create valuable memories and friendships.

In 2018 the club was reformed by a group of committed 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 also a community resource.

Bonar Bridge football club is more than just football; health, citizenship and community development are at the core of our aims.



## Junior Club



The committee has taken a phased approach to the resurrection of the club starting with a junior club for ages 5 -15. This club has been running to date for 6 years and has seen membership grow to over 70 children with 50 regularly attending the training sessions each week. 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 assisting in the development of cohesion and the formation of friendships between children who attend one of the five small schools in the area.

Coach David Anderson, with support from the Board and with assistance from young adults who participate in the senior team have created a fun, inclusive youth club consistently delivered over two evenings per week. In addition, friendly games have been organised both home and away allowing the children to experience competition, team spirit and good sporting practices. The club had earmarked several Highland area tournaments to participate in prior to lockdown due to Covid – 19 that were obviously cancelled but we are hopeful that we will be able to participate in next year.

*Magnus P4 Ardgay*

*"it's fun and keeps you fit, and you make new friends as I didn't know some of the people there. I really like playing football matches against other teams as you feel like you are famous"*

*Chloe P7 Bonar*

*"I like how supportive the coaches were with us all and they really boosted my confidence to try it and was good fitness too"*

*Nixie P2*

*"I love it and sometimes if I feel sad it makes me feel happy"*

*Innis P4*

*"It's super fun and makes me feel like a professional footballer, if I couldn't train at Bonar there would be nowhere for me to play and learn"*

## The North Caledonian League Return

In 2019 the club successfully re-entered the North Caledonian League. With a squad of 25 players ranging in age from 16 to 47 the team entered the league with gusto and commitment. As a newly formed team facing ones that were long established, they faced a difficult challenge, despite little success on the score front the success of the squad spirit and camaraderie was a winner. The squad continues to grow with players signed up for next season and the newly appointed coaches Rob Mitchell and assistant Scott Macgruer looking forward to building on the foundations laid.



## Senior Player Awards 2019-20

Following a vote by players and supporters the club announced during lockdown this years' award. Archie Ryder (16) of Bonar Bridge was crowned both the Players player and supporters player of the Year.



*"I love football and have done from an early age but I have always had to rely on my parents taking me to clubs involving a lot of travelling. I played for Ross County but left to concentrate on my education and then played for Brora until their youth programme ceased. BBFC starting up has been brilliant, it is local - enabling football to fit in with my other commitments and I have met more people from the community that I would otherwise have not"*

Allan Maclean was the Managers player of the year, with Miller Mackay and Adam Mackay being the clubs top goal scorers.

## Community Development

- The club hosts a fitness session once a week where anyone of any age can attend and improve their fitness. The sessions have been extremely well attended across all ages and a mix of genders.
- The resurgence of the North League fixtures at the BBFC ground has provided a social opportunity for the community with home games attracting over 45 spectators who all enjoy a half time cuppa and blether. Many of the supporters are from our junior club who are already feeling part of the broader club.
- The club has created several volunteering opportunities out- with being a committee member, including coaching, maintenance, match day café and club house cleaning.
- Over the past year we have seen three senior players and one player moving from junior to senior assist in the coaching of juniors

### Archie Cameron (15)

“I have really enjoyed being able to help out with the junior coaching, its great fun and nice to get to know younger members of my community. I am hoping to be able to get some coaching awards through the club”

- A community initiative coordinated by Nene and Gavin Maclean with herculean contributions from Geordie Ross and Murray Peat, highly skilled machine operators, and volunteers from all areas of the Kyle of Sutherland attended a workday to improve the drainage of the pitch which sits on communal land. This will make a huge difference to the pitch condition and the rating of it by other league teams. It will enable better training and, also improved conditions for the local school who use the pitch for PE and other outdoor learning. As a community resource these remedial works will benefit all residents and other community groups who use the land.
- The club is also working with the community to raise awareness of everyone looking after the resources we have and the environment we live in. There has been an issue with some members of the community not clearing up after their pets. The Board is committed to providing a healthy and safe space for everyone. We have displayed notices, highlighted the health risks and are liaising with the Highland Council to get permanent signage and pet waste bins.

## Future Plans

The trustees are developing plans that look at both the infrastructure of the club and the development of the players and the clubs community involvement.

- BBFC owns the Clubhouse and the clubhouse car park. The clubhouse is a fantastic facility, but in dire need of a complete refurbishment in just about every respect, not just from an aesthetic point of view - but also in the respect of health and safety. The Board have agreed to commence a fund raising drive in order to deal with this going forward - as a priority.
- Lack of day light is another issue for the training and fitness sessions in the short winter days. The club continues to attempt to mitigate this issue by using portable floodlights - acquired via donation over the years. However, this solution remains largely unsatisfactory as it is hugely time consuming to set up/take down/re-charge and battery quality issues are a constant problem.
- The vision of the Board remains to provide a pathway for local youngsters through the age groups up to adult level. This has been secured with the clubs participation in the North Caledonian League - last season. Whilst this represented a massive step and a challenge for the club the Board were pleased to deliver a successful participation at this level. The club honoured all its fixtures prior to lockdown and received many plaudits from league and opposing club officials simply for holding it together. We are looking at developing the coaching skills of our young players through certified courses which will benefit the clubs sustainability long term
- Over the year we will look to hold community events that further encourage ownership and support for the club and its environment
- This year, as well as our senior awards ceremony we will be holding a junior award evening to recognise the efforts of our youngsters who attend 80% of training sessions over the season with a medal

## Finance

The club currently achieves a small income through player donations and small 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, on the basis that the club successfully continues its existing fund raising process's accordingly.

## Board of Trustees

David Anderson (Chair), Anthony Sergeant (Vice Chair), Carrie Veters (Secretary) Gavin Ryder (Treasurer)

Scott Veters, Caroline Munro, Allan Maclean, Ryan Maclean, Doris Calder, Aldi Calder, Kenneth MacNab, Irene MacNab

## Chairs Message

*This has been a great year for the club re-entering the league and the continued rise in the number of junior members. I have immensely enjoyed being part of a growing club that is capturing the desire of our communities to have this local facility and look forward to continuing to support it in its growth. I would like to thank all the players (juniors and seniors) who have turned out no matter what the weather. To the senior team I would like to thank them for keeping a positive attitude when it could have been so easy to have been disheartened. To all the spectators who turn out to support our teams your presence makes a real difference, and to the volunteers both on the committee and off thank you for making it all happen.*

*Finally, to all those who have donated to the club financially thank you for believing in us and our journey.*

David Anderson

Chair