



Mersham
Sports Club
Business
Development
Plan

2016-2020



MERSHAM SPORTS CLUB BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PLAN **2016 TO 2020**

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1. Executive Summary:-

The purpose of this Development Plan is to give a detailed account of where our club is at the moment, where we are hoping to go in future, and how we will try to get there. It is to be used as the basis for our funding applications to secure the finances required, in particular, towards the provision of a new entrance to the club ground, the building of a new club house, and to look towards obtaining additional land in order to provide an increased area for both Football and Cricket pitches.

We are a thriving and progressive village club providing excellent sports facilities for both members and the wider community in a welcoming, positive, safe and inclusive environment. We have bold ambitions for the future to provide an improved safer entrance and exit to our ground, replace our existing clubhouse to provide an improved facility that meets modern standards, and also obtain additional land to create additional playing area for our sports for use by our members and the community at large.

This 4 year Development Plan outlines where we are as a club at this present time, where we would like to be in 4 years' time, and a plan of how we intend to get to that position.

Within the plan each club section has identified the role it expects to play within the overall Sports Club development.

The Development Plan is to be used as a live and working document from which the Management Committee will steer the club into its future development.

2. Vision:-

A thriving and progressive club, that provides excellent sports and social facilities for both members and the wider community in a welcoming, positive, safe and inclusive environment.

3. Mission Statement:-

Mersham Sports Club promotes and encourages the playing of a wide range of sports amongst people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities, providing opportunities for them to develop their playing abilities and progress to fulfil their full potential in their chosen sport.

4. Club Background:-

4.1. History:-

We have been a sports club on our Flood Street ground since 1949. For many years up to the 1970's we were a small village club with one adult football team and one adult cricket team.

During early 1970's the cricket club nearly folded but was held together by a few village stalwarts and the season of 1970 saw the club only play 10 cricket matches in total. From that low point, the club has ever since been growing to where we find ourselves today, with very successful junior sections in both cricket and football, with approximately 120 junior football members, from age 6 through to 13, playing in 10 age group teams, and 80 junior cricket members from age 6 through to 16 playing in 8 age group teams.



As a cricket club we hold Clubmark accreditation (awarded in 2009), and are nominated as a Focus Community cluster club for the Ashford Area. From the club we run a Chance to Shine cricket coaching project in 10 local primary schools, and we also run cricket section for juniors, as well as regular coaching programs for disabled adults in partnership with Ashford Leisure Trust. With regards to Adult membership we currently run 5 adult cricket teams and 3 adult football teams and have an adult membership of some 50 playing cricketers and 35 playing footballers.

4.2. Who we are:-

Mersham Sports Club is a friendly, not-for-profit Community Amateur Sports Club providing sports and social facilities to the local community.

The club is run by members on a voluntary basis.

Mersham Sports Cricket Club is Clubmark accredited, and Mersham Sports Football Club is Chartermark accredited.

4.3. The Facilities we offer:-

The club offers the following facilities which are all set on our picturesque 7.5 acre sports ground in Flood Street, Mersham (TN25 7NX):-

Summer Season:- 1 x adult cricket pitch with a cricket square which contains 11 wickets, with a large outfield.

1 x Double bay Cricket net facility set on concrete with matting wickets

Large Area for general cricket practice

Winter Season:- 1 x adult size football pitch, 3 x junior size football pitches with appropriate sized goals

Club House Facility:- Our current Sports clubhouse was built in 1968 with a projected life of 25 years. It started originally as a "Colt type" wooden pavilion containing a central area and 2 changing rooms. Toilets were originally separate from the clubhouse. Over the years the clubhouse has been extended to what we have today which has 2 x changing rooms with shower rooms containing 2 showers in each, a club house area, a small bar /kitchen area, and single Ladies Toilet and a single Men's Toilet with 1 x Urinal. The Clubhouse at present cannot provide the current numbers of members with adequate facilities especially toilet and changing facilities and does not meet the current disability regulations. Mersham Sports Club really needs a new modern Sports & Leisure Centre facility in order to continue to progress and develop.

Club Entrance / Car Park Facility:- Our current Club entrance is set close to a sharp bend on Flood Street, and the ground is accessed over a single lane bridge less than 2.5 metres wide. This is not a safe means of access and egress and needs moving and improving as soon as possible. Over the years there has been several vehicle accidents at the entrance, luckily so far no one has been seriously hurt but the club has identified that an improved access is essential as the club moves forward with increased numbers of members and visitors to our club. I would also reference that the current entrance is a significant factor on the club risk assessment which we have to make all users aware of. However the new access would not only provide a safe route into the club, it will allow access to additional currently unused land. Similarly the present car parking space is totally inadequate for the current club membership and frequently on busy days cars have to park on the roads, and when weather permits on the sports ground playing areas.



Equipment Garage:-The club built a new equipment shed to house its ground keeping in 1996 this is a metal framed and clad building that is still in good condition and adequate for the club needs.

4.4.The local community and catchment area:-

Mersham is a small village (taken from 2011 census village population was 1,124) and is positioned approximately 3 miles from the growing market town of Ashford. With the local town's population growing the current projection from Ashford Borough Council shows that the population will reach 141,100 by the year 2021. This will be an increase of 20% against the recorded figure of 117956 in the 2011 census. This considerable growth with local housing developments such as the Finberry estate with some 1200 and Bridgefield with almost 1100 new houses planned to be built will result in the town suburbs spreading ever closer to Mersham village and will therefore provide an ever greater catchment population and increased demand on the facilities that Mersham Sports Club already does, and wants to, provide.

With Mersham Sports Club already actively encouraging youth sports for all ages we are a well-established community club that reaches out into local schools through coaching projects for both cricket and football. The club has gone to great lengths to secure use of a field nearby belonging to the community owned pub The Farriers Arms. Over several years the 7v7 pitch is now well established and goalposts purchased by the club are available for village children and customers from April to July. This facility has proved invaluable extending the season and has acted as an overflow for training. Both of our Junior Football and Junior Cricket memberships thriving, and with the predicted growth in overall population and the new local housing developments these are projected to continue to increase over the coming years.

4.5.Competitors:-

There are numerous local village and town sports clubs that run junior sections for football, cricket and other sports, but surprisingly there are very few that can offer year round sport of football in the winter, and cricket in the summer at a single club and venue, as we do at Mersham Sports Club. The success of our current arrangements mean that many of our junior members play their sport all year round at our club.

With many of the local village sports clubs struggling for numbers of playing members, and also volunteers and coaches, very few run junior sections, and the very fact that we already have a well-established coaching and volunteer infrastructure bodes well for the future development of the club in the light of other local competition.

4.6.Clubmark and Chartermark:-

ECB Clubmark

Mersham Sports Cricket Club (MSCC) gained the ECB accreditation of Clubmark in 2009. The ECB awards this kite mark to Club's that meet or exceed national guidelines in 4 key areas:-

1. **Club Action Planning** – MSCC has developed an action plan as endorsed by the Board that keeps our development goals in focus.
2. **Cricket Programs** –MSCC has a comprehensive program offering players from age 5 upwards coaching, social and competitive play.



3. **Policies and Procedures** – MSCC has stated policies and procedures in the areas of child protection, equality and diversity, health and safety and volunteering.
4. **Club Management** –MSCC is managed and promoted in line with good practice as identified by the ECB

A significant amount of work has gone into the accreditation process, and this work is ongoing. The maintenance of our Clubmark status is key to our Cricket club's ongoing success and future development.

FA Chartermark

Although not yet officially accredited, Merham Sports Football Club (MSFC) is currently actively working towards the FA Chartermark, and we are confident that we will receive official accreditation within the 2016/17 season.

A significant amount of work has gone into the accreditation process, and this work is ongoing. The maintenance of the FA Chartermark status is key to our football club's ongoing success and future development.

5. Cricket Section:-

5.1 Where we are:-

Merham Sports Cricket Club is a well-established club that has grown significantly through the past 30 years from a small village club running a single Adult team, to where we are today a thriving ECB Clubmark accredited village club running 4 Adult teams - 2 x Saturday League teams, 1 x Sunday league team, 1 x Midweek T/20 team and Junior teams at U9, 2 x U11 teams, 2 x U13 teams, 1 x U15 and 1 x U17 teams making the club the largest Junior set up in the Ashford Area. Last season we had 46 adult playing members and 80 junior members.

The club also currently has 7 Level 2 Coaches, and 2 Level 1 Assistant Coaches.

The club is affiliated to Kent Community Cricket, the Kent Regional League, Kent Village League, and the Ashford and District Junior League.

5.2 Where we want to be:-

MSCC plans to continue to grow its junior section by our Coaches continuing to be involved actively with Kent Community Cricket, and Chance to Shine coaching projects in Local Schools, thus promoting the Club to new members joining.

The club is also planning to get a specific Girls / Ladies section set up with all female teams representing the club. This is a long term development plan and we hope to get the first all ladies team together this 2016 season, and develop things from there.

Through partnerships with Kent Community Cricket, Chance to Shine and Ashford Leisure Trust the club already provides regular coaching sessions throughout the year for disabled Adults and Children attending the SEN schools of Wyvern, Highview and Foxwood. We would like to encourage more disabled activities at our Club venue however currently this is not possible due to our present Clubhouse not meeting the current disability regulations with regards to access and toilet facilities.

If continuing growth is to be maintained then we will need to look at increasing the playing area to incorporate a second cricket Pitch and indeed the club is looking at acquiring



additional land (approx. 4 -5 acres) at the rear of the current venue in Flood Street. With a new entrance and access to additional land we predict that within 2 years we will have a further 2 junior teams playing cricket, 2 junior football teams, and 1 senior football team. (See more details about this in Section 10 - Other Developments)

5.3 Action Plan:-

1. Continue to work in partnership with Kent Community Cricket, Chance to Shine, Local Schools and Ashford Leisure Trust.
2. Maintain Clubmark accreditation
3. Increase Junior Membership through activities in schools. We estimate that this activity is likely to give us a 5% growth in junior members year on year during the period of this Development Plan
4. Maintain and Increase numbers in the club Coaching team, encourage former junior members to get involved in Coaching at the Club. Our target is to increase the number of qualified coaches by one each during the period of this Development Plan.
5. Encourage and facilitate junior members to play in Adult cricket from U15 age group.
6. Provide a suitable standard of Competitive and Social Cricket to meet our members' needs.

6. Football Section:-

6.1 Where we are:-

Mersham Sports Football club provides Adult football (11v11 format) for 2 sides. Our First team plays Premier Division in the Ashford & District Sunday league and our Reserves have successfully been promoted to Division 2 after winning their league in the Ashford & District Sunday League Division 3.

In addition, we currently have 8 junior sides who play in the Ashford & District Youth Football League. We have 4 mini soccer squad's u7/u8/u9/10 and 5 Youth football squads u11/u12/u13/u14.

In addition, we have a Development squad for u6 (Reception & Year 1 children) and are one of a few clubs to provide this at such an early age.

Each of our junior football coaches are minimum FA Level 1 qualified with 1 FA Level 2 coach The club is affiliated to the KCFA

6.2 Where we want to be:-

Mersham Sports Football club has started a football pathway for our junior members through all the age groups and continue into Adult football, the youth players have started playing in friendly matches between the two adult teams. The U6's reception group has proved very successful and has necessitated splitting the group and preparing for two U7's for 2017/18 season. Sponsors have come forward and kits have been ordered for these two new teams.

To do this the Club follows the FA Standard Code of Rules which outlines team and pitch sizes.



6.3 **Action plan:-**

With the natural growth of the section 120 playing youth members increasing by approximately 20 year on year. This growth is within the starter teams and where age groups will take on new players as the age group progresses to larger formats. We do need at least one more full size pitch to continue to take on a new U7's each season and fill the U15 and U16 age groups. There will be six teams playing on a full size pitch by 2018. We currently have to carefully manage numbers and are forced to only take one team forward at the U11's 9v9 format, due to lack of car parking and pitches.

Season 2017/18 we will have 3 Youth teams requiring a full size pitch

Season 2018/2019 we will have 4 Youth teams requiring a full size pitch

As the age groups "go up" each year we will add a new u7 age group which adds further pressure to our mini soccer pitches. Therefore, additional and suitable playing pitches are urgently required for the club to continue its expansion.

The club is committed to Coaches development and recruitment and work closely with KCFA for course availability. We are exploring the possibility of hosting a level one course, with 7 members currently awaiting a course, this surge in trained coaches will give the section huge resilience moving forward. First Aid training has been centralized by the committee and 12 coaches and assistants have recently been updated by the club hosting an FA run course at the club house.

1. Achieve & maintain FA Chartered Status.
2. Increase Junior members by actively promoting our u6 Development squad
3. Develop & Support our coaching team with continuous professional development, (this will take the form of all coaches becoming part of the FA Licensed Coaches Club)
4. Provide a suitable standard of competitive and social football to meet our members' needs.

7. **Social / Bar Section:-**

7.1 **Where we are:-**

The bar contributes to the ambiance of the club house and gives a place to meet, wait and relax before, during and after the sporting activity taking place.

The licensed bar aims to serve members, parents/guardians and visitors with alcoholic drinks, tea, coffee and other soft drinks.

It also has available basic snacks such as crisps, nuts and chocolate bars.

The social committee aim to provide a social event at least once per month as a way of bringing members from all sporting sections together to enjoy the club house facilities and raise funds for club improvements.

These include themed quiz evenings, ladies pamper afternoon, Burns' Night supper, Halloween bonfire night and children's Christmas party.

A dinner party is held annually to which our President, Vice-Presidents and sponsors are invited.



In May the club has a “Summer Fair” which doubles as our Club Open Day promoting the Club within the village and surrounding area and providing a platform to recruit new members.

In August the Club has its major fund raising event when a concert by local musicians is held at the ground.

7.2 Where we want to be:-

In the future, in the new club house, we aim to continue to offer a licensed bar but with separate café area to serve members and visitors of all ages all year round.

Comfortable seating, ambient décor and lighting, central heating, TV, Wi-Fi and direct access to a viewing area, terrace or patio will provide a welcoming club focus regardless of whether the bar is open or not.

When the bar/café is open we shall sell alcohol, hot drinks, soft drinks and snacks and when the bar is shut members should still have access to the lounge and kitchen facilities to make their own refreshments.

In the future the social committee would aim to organize a weekly social evening in addition to the current annual fund raising events.

7.3 Action plan:-

Within the constraints offered by the present club house, we aim to continue and improve on current bar opening times and social events. With a new club house offering a much more attractive and practical bar and social area we would aim to be open every day/evening and have an area set aside for watching TV, playing darts, pool etc. but also offering space for a quiet relaxing drink with friends. With improved facilities there will be more scope for social events to suit all members and space to accommodate greater numbers.

8 Club house development

8.1 Where we are:-

The main part of the club house was built in 1968 in a colt format this had a life expectancy of 25 years. Since then, in 1994, we have added an extension to the main building to give us changing rooms, showers, kitchen/bar area and toilets. The main part of the building is a timber construction with no insulation and set on a block base. The timber floor, although having had many repairs, has started to give way due to timber decay. The felt roof has had extensive repair at a cost of £10,000 and the windows are beginning to part company with the frames as the timber around them begins to rot. The toilets were built in 1994 with the gents having one WC and urinal and the ladies one WC. There is no disability access as there are steps in and out. This makes wheel chair access impossible. With the numbers now using the club the toilets are not only in a poor state of repair but they are totally inadequate and not fit for purpose. We have 2 changing rooms, home and away, they are a reasonable size but do not comply with FA guidelines for children usage. The showers which adjoin the changing rooms were put in in 1994 along with the extension, they have 2 shower heads allowing a maximum of two persons showing at any time. Due to the steps in and out there is no disability access. The showers are run by a storage hot water system which does not hold enough or heat enough water for the volume of use and the result is cold showers for most. The waste water from the showers runs into the cesspit which also has the



kitchen and toilet waste running into it. This cesspit was put in in 1968 and was designed to hold waste for a single WC and is totally inadequate for the demands placed on it which results in regular emptying and constant overflow issues. The kitchen/bar area was originally designed to provide teas for cricket and social drinking for after the game. This area now gets regular and increased use due to the demand of numbers now actively using the facilities and does not comply with health and hygiene requirements. Access to the club house has steps at each entrance therefor making it very if not impossible for wheel chairs. The outside of the building is getting very tired. Constant repair and decorating can no longer hide the fact that the club house has seen better days.

8.2 Where we want to be:-

The new Sports & leisure Centre should be a modern and inviting place, used by members as well as the wider community, which is open on a more regular basis, particularly during the day. Replacing the existing club house is a must for us and we have had plans drawn up for a complete new building which caters for the needs of our fast growing member base. The new building will be built to the side of the existing club house causing the least disruption to sporting and social activity whilst in construction. The new design will give us an energy saving, cost saving building which will be by far more efficient and economical to run than the existing building. Access to all areas for all our disabled users has been our main priority. The social area will be spacious, allowing us to hold club functions yet keeping an inviting area for members to relax and enjoy a drink after the match, read the papers while waiting for a game to start or where parents with children having coaching can wait in pleasant surroundings. We expect to attract greater use from the community by creating a user friendly building with all the facilities to make their visit enjoyable. The design of the kitchen bar area is of major importance complying with all the required health and hygiene directives for a modern building. The changing rooms and showers will be spacious and meet with all the required standards of the governing bodies. New toilets and disabled toilets are an essential part of this development making sure we have adequate facilities for any event. We have had an estimated cost for the build based on the drawings prepared, the figure being in the region of £300,000, although a more accurate figure will be obtained once the final planning consent is obtained. Draft plans attached.

8.3 Action plan:

We have already taken the first step and commissioned drawings which we are in the process of submitting as an application to planning. Although the club has some funds they will only cover the initial costs and the main funding will need to be raised by various means. We have begun to investigate the various routes for funding and we have the full backing of the Parish Council, Kent Cricket Board, Ashford Borough Council. Letters of support attached. The social committee has organized fund raising events for the coming year and a 200 club which has been running for some time has raised over a £1000. Although in the big picture these fund raising events will leave us with a huge short fall for the final total but momentum is gathering speed and we have set ourselves a target to complete this project in 3 years , ambitious - but we think achievable.



9. Other Club developments:-

9.1 Where we are:-

As a progressive and developing club one of the main problems that we are facing, and one that will continue to get worse in the future is the over use and size of our current sports playing areas.

With our Cricket and Football seasons overlapping at both end of seasons, the playing areas are constantly in use throughout the year with no rest periods for repairs or major renovations, and with our ever growing membership this situation will worsen over time. Already we are suffering from fairly severe “puddling” caused by compaction of the playing areas following heavy rain and this is causing us to cancel both Cricket and Football fixtures during wet periods, and with all of the current ground being used we have no alternatives i.e. we cannot move pitches. In addition due to lack of land available and facilities to cope with demand we are unfortunately having to turn away requests to use or join the club.

9.2 Where we want to be:-

We currently are looking at methods to relieve the compaction of the playing areas but as previously stated this very difficult due to the ground being in use year round.

In order to try to alleviate the problems we are actively looking to lease or rent an additional parcel of

Agricultural land (Approx. 4 – 5 acres), that lies to the rear of our current Sports Ground. This land is owned by the Church Commissioners and we have been in negotiations for the past 4 years to try to obtain the extra land in order to provide additional Football Pitches and a Cricket Pitch.

If we get into a position where the current owners do lease us the land then there will be requirements on the club to effect the change of use from Agricultural to Sports Ground and Finance grants will be needed to provide Drainage, Fencing, Preparation and Seeding of the additional land. We are tirelessly working towards increasing sporting and social activities for anyone who wants to take part whatever their race, religion age or ability. As identified in the Kent sport strategic framework, we are currently within a golden decade for sport. After the England cricket team reaching the finals of the world T20 in 2016 and then the Cricket World cup to be hosted in England in 2019 we expect that cricket will be at the forefront of people’s minds and that will drive their desire to play. In 2016 we signed an agreement with Kent Cricket and Chance to Shine in order to develop two key areas of our junior section, under 9s and girls cricket. Also we will be watching our young England footballers performing in Europe this summer, this again will drive the desire to play and become the next Harry Kane and where better to do it, Mersham. We want to be ready and it is vital that we achieve the targets set out by this plan, new entrance, new club house, more playing surfaces.

We have estimated that if we can achieve these targets then we expect the membership grow by a minimum of 15 new adult members and 35 new junior members. With an increase in social events and the introduction of new sports we predict this figure will be much higher. Our estimated increase in footfall will treble from just over 3000 at present to 9000 in 10 years.

9.3 Action Plan:-

Safe, Enjoyable, Child friendly Sport at Mersham Sports Club
For all club info please go to www.mershamsportsclub.com.
Join our facebook group & follow us on twitter



We have already got the ball rolling with plans for the new entrance agreed and awaiting the last funding to be put in place before work can commence. Plans for the new club house have been completed and are awaiting final touches before being put forward for planning consent.

To continue with negotiations with land owners, at present we have given them our Terms of Agreement and they have replied with their suggestions. Further discussions are being arranged to continue our quest for additional Sports area's and once obtained this will hopefully be a major part of the continued development and growth of Mersham Sports Club.