Business Plan 2014 - 2017

Preparing for success in the next 40 years.

March 2014
1. Introduction

Fort William Football Club (FWFC) was formed in 1974 and the then committee fought a long and difficult battle for the team to gain entry to the Highland League - a pinnacle which was reached in 1985. The club's performance has been mixed with success in the 1990’s and early 2000’s but significantly poorer results and financial situation since then. Today in its 40th year, FWFC remains the only west coast club in the Highland League.

The club has operated with unincorporated status since its inception but, in 2013, that situation became untenable with the club’s finances in a parlous state. In May 2013 a group of local business people joined the committee at its AGM and encouraged club members to become a Community Interest Company (CIC). This company was formed on 27th June 2013 and its Directors are:

Ronald Maclean - Chairman
Stewart Leitch
Michael MacEachen
Gerald McIntyre
Marie McMillan
Stewart Maclean

The Directors see the following benefits accruing from the creation of the Community Interest Company:

- Financial sustainability, providing security for the long-term future of the Club
- Real community benefit, meaning the Club will work more closely and in partnership with the local community
- Access to community grants, giving a potential source of funding for one-off schemes
- An increase in volunteers, reducing ongoing costs and increasing community involvement
- Increased attendance, resulting from increased community ‘buy in’
- Increased transparency of the club’s operations
- Attractiveness to sponsors, with increased prestige from involvement in a real community club.
This business plan, covering the period 2014 – 2017, states the vision for the club and details the aims and objectives to achieve that vision. It is a transformational vision and it will take time to make it all happen. However, the club’s ambitions are not just for major items and big projects, but also for lots of small steps which in themselves will bring about positive change.

2. Club Structure

FWFC is a Community Interest Company (CIC), currently with 6 Directors. Membership of the CIC is open to any resident of Lochaber for a fee of £10 per annum and, at present, there are 38 members of the company. The Directors are supported by a committee.

The Directors have an early aim of increasing the number of people involved with the club. The aims and objectives in section four highlight particular skills required in the areas of marketing and communications, youth football and fundraising but there is a general need for more willing bodies to help with the club’s development. Attracting people to help with the club will be addressed through a focused community campaign and personal approaches by the Directors. The company is a member of Voluntary Action Lochaber (VAL) and has a close relationship with Lochaber Sports Association.

3. Current situation (February 2014)

Scottish Football Association (SFA) licence

FWFC urgently needs to secure its SFA licence. Key to this is a new lease from Highland Council for Claggan Park, demonstrating that FWFC has exclusive use of the park. Significant progress has been made on this in recent months and the lease, providing terms satisfactory to the SFA and FWFC, is now in the process of being finalised. In addition, the Directors have recently secured a ground capacity certificate for Claggan Park.
Finance

Since incorporation, the Directors of FWFC CIC have raised over £35,000 towards the club’s turnover of approximately £65,000 in 2013/14. There has also been a modest increase in company membership and marginal growth in gate receipts. The Directors are now focused on raising sufficient capital through sponsorship and fundraising for the 2014/15 season.

Membership

There are currently 160 members of the 300 club and 38 company members.

Players

The coach and manager are currently reviewing the players they wish to have signed up for next season. These agreements will be in place by the end of March. There is a desire to be able to attract more players and to pay the team at a higher rate. This is wholly dependent on the ability to fundraise and increase memberships over the coming months.

Facilities

The Directors are conscious that the facilities at Claggan Park fall below what is required of a modern and appealing football club. They are aware of progress by Lochaber Sports Association to take over pitch maintenance in the area, and of plans to develop an indoor resource and replace the current outdoor pitch with a 3G facility at Lochaber High School. These investments will assist with team training and encourage the growth of youth football. However, for the long term, the facilities at Claggan Park, in particular the pitch, must be upgraded and is an aim of this plan.

Networking

Accepting the serious competition of football, the Directors recognise that, in recent years, several clubs have made progress regarding their facilities and community engagement. The Directors have already started to identify clubs and individuals who will be willing to share their experiences and potentially offer advice in the coming months and years.
4. Our Vision & Values

Our Vision

A financially sustainable, community-focused club, playing at the highest possible level in Scottish football.

Our Values

- Respect for the individual
- A passion and commitment to football for all and at all ages
- The promotion of the benefits of sport
- Working with our community
- Working in an honest, open and transparent environment
5. Aims & Objectives

FWFC has seven stated aims supported by specific, timetabled objectives to achieve these aims. None of these aims are mutually exclusive and the interdependencies between them can be seen in the tables on pages 7-12. In addition to the company’s aims, the club promotes three overarching themes which perpetuate throughout our plan. These are:

1. Community – becoming recognised as an important part of our community, being clear about what we contribute to the community and supporting that community wherever we can

2. Quality – Building quality into everything we do and achieving recognition for that wherever possible

3. Equality – we are fair and impartial offering opportunities for all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Equality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ø To improve on-the-field performance</td>
<td>Ø To raise the profile of FWFC through improved and increased communications</td>
<td>Ø To encompass the development of youth football</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ø To raise the profile of FWFC through improved and increased communications</td>
<td>Ø To increase the number of people committed to helping the club</td>
<td>Ø To improve facilities at Claggan Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ø To increase the number of Committee members and Directors</td>
<td>Ø To increase the number of Committee members and Directors</td>
<td>Ø To improve financial sustainability</td>
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**Aim: To improve on-the-field performance**

Engaging in the development of youth football provides the long-term ability to increase quality player numbers. However, it is recognised that in the short term, improving team performance will attract community support and raise the profile of the club with associated financial and social benefits. Attracting three or four new team members, preferably with the experience of properly coached playing, would provide a bridge and potentially harness people who could contribute to the club long term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Target/Timescale</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Clarify team membership for 2014/15</td>
<td>By end March 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2  | Increase numbers training locally  
   - attract from employer communications  
   - attract new talent  
   - word of mouth | 20 players by 2014/15 season  
   Target 3/4 new players | Lower % of p/t players  
   Greater pool of choice  
   Increase in numbers training |
| 3  | Increase coaching knowledge | Coaches to undertake CPD each year | Better squad performance |
| 4  | Training  
   Confirm timescale for upgrade of LHS pitch  
   Review training schedule  
   Attract additional coaching staff  
   Negotiate on cost of training with LHS | All squad players training twice per week  
   1 additional coach for 2014/15 season | Better squad performance |
| 5  | Improve pitch facilities at Claggan Park | See aim |         |
**Aim:** To raise the profile of FWFC through improved and increased communications

The current profile of FWFC is focused on match results. While positive change has been happening in the club over the past eight months, there is little or no knowledge of these changes out-with the close network in which the club operates. The club competes for community interest with all other sports and must raise its profile significantly if it is to change community perception and participation.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Increase communications reach through use of community newspapers, e-newsletters and networks</td>
<td>Monthly insert to VAL e-newsletter Use of West Highland College internal communications At least 1 insert into each of the community newspapers each year Commencing March 2014</td>
<td>Increased information spread Potential to attract volunteers Sponsors see more interaction with community Demonstration of community support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ensure regular communication with sponsors</td>
<td>Match with sponsor invites once per year. Hospitality, match etc. Ensure sponsors get all comms updates as above</td>
<td>Sustain sponsor support Potential to increase sponsor support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ensure FWFC website links to relevant websites</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
<td>Coverage for visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ensure all pubs/clubs/schools have poster with fixtures</td>
<td>For 2014/15 season</td>
<td>Increased gate numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Contact employers: ensure that staff rooms have fixture lists</td>
<td>For 2014/15 season</td>
<td>Increased gate numbers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aim: To increase the number of people committed to helping the club

The business plan contains a significant number of actions and, while several of them require financial investment, the most urgent resource required is a number of enthusiastic and competent people to move actions forward. It is expected that the objectives detailed in this aim will also lead to the achievement of increasing the number of committee members and Directors (see aim page 6).

<table>
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<th>Target/Timescale</th>
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</tr>
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</table>
| 11  | Increase community knowledge and interest | Prepare press release around signing of new ground lease, 40th anniversary and business plan  
- To local press  
- Circulate via VAL and all local newspapers - Nevis Radio  
Within one month lease being signed and business plan finalised. | Community awareness increased |
| 12  | Attract community support and more people to help | Agree open day date  
Circulate via all avenues above  
Produce a list of tasks to be undertaken and roles to be filled. Issue to everyone there  
Arrange a social event for interested parties  
During 2014/15 season | More people at Claggan Park  
Clarity of support needed  
Volunteers signed up  
Suggestions received  
Increase in attendances |
| 13  | Increase numbers attending games who might help | From start of 2014/15 season, offer free entry to under 16’s accompanied by an adult | Increase in number of young people attending |
| 14  | Increase number of company members | Directors to make list of people they will approach and aim for 10 new company members each | Consistency of support  
Increase in revenue  
Greater pool of support to call from |
**Aim: To encompass the development of youth football**

At present, FWFC has links, through common personnel, with under 10’s, under 13’s and under 16’s football. Successful and vibrant youth football provides the feedstock for future first team players. In its past, FWFC enjoyed the benefits of such success but the structure has waned in recent years and needs to be rebuilt.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Identify a Director with responsibility to take this forward</td>
<td>By March 2014</td>
<td>Firmly on agenda of FWFC CIC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Identify a champion to take this forward</td>
<td>Review options for paid/unpaid support by August 2014</td>
<td>Additional resource with skills and experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 17  | Produce plan for youth football  
- full array of youth teams  
- increased number of coaches  
- better communications  
- links with schools/ college/girls’ football | During 2014/15 season | Full array of youth football ages playing  
More young people involved  
More adults involved in youth football  
Increased support |
| 18  | Develop a reserve team for 17+ | To be determined | |
**Aim: To improve facilities at Claggan Park**

The current state of club facilities - the pitch and changing/refreshment building - significantly detracts from the club’s ability to improve its performance and attract community support. The poorly maintained pitch means that training is difficult and its condition in the winter consistently leads to matches being postponed. The Directors’ aim is to raise funds for facilities of which the club, its players and community supporters can be proud.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Target/Timescale</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Undertake minor repairs/improvements to existing changing facilities</td>
<td>Plan by end Feb 2014</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Implement by end March 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Replace existing changing/toilet &amp; refreshment facilities</td>
<td>Year 1: undertake feasibility</td>
<td>Satisfies SFA requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Outcome: outline plans, costs, etc.</td>
<td>Provides quality facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Potential to increase size for increased pitch use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Potential to increase refreshments offered = increased turnover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Include medical/therapy facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Pitch replacement:</td>
<td>Year 1: undertake feasibility</td>
<td>Provides opportunity for multiple training at the same time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree standard and size to be replaced</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increases first team training = improves performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confirm SFA priority of Fort William</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increase in income – more users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confirm HC lease implication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undertake feasibility or business case: cost/VAT/ funding/benefit/income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Increase stand capacity</td>
<td>Feasibility during 2015/16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Review operation and ownership of social club</td>
<td>Secure sustainable management model by 2014/15 season</td>
<td>Provides income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negotiate lease by 2016</td>
<td>Ensures hospitality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Aim:** To improve financial sustainability.

Achieving financial stability is key to the future of the club and the Directors recognise this priority. The club has a number of income streams, each of which needs to be maximised in the short term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Timescale/target</th>
<th>Outcomes (per year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 24  | Increase CIC membership to 300 | By June 2014 = 100  
By June 2015 = 200  
By June 2016 = 300 | Increase in turnover  
Increase in community engagement  
More choice for committee/directors |
| 25  | Increase membership of 300 club and grow to 400 club | By June 2014 = 200  
By June 2015 = 300  
By June 2016 = 400 | Increase in turnover  
Increase in community involvement |
| 26  | Increase attendance | By June 2014 = 100  
By June 2015 = 150  
By June 2016 = 250 | Increase in turnover  
Increase in community involvement  
Improved communications  
Leads to increase in sponsorship |
| 27  | Sponsorship and fundraising | 2014/15 season = + 20% on previous year  
2015/16 season = + 30% on previous year  
2016/17 season = + 40% on previous year | Increase in turnover  
Raised profile |
| 28  | Club products – sold through 3rd party | By June 2014 = £150  
By June 2015 = £300  
By June 2016 = £1000 | Increase in turnover  
Raised community profile |
6. Finance

The table below shows the forecast income and expenditure for FWFC over the next three years. This excludes any project income and spend for which one-off grants may be available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Income £’000</th>
<th>Expenditure £’000</th>
<th>Surplus/Loss £’000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>81.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Staff

FWFC employs a team manager, coach and between 25-30 players under contract. The club is committed to ensuring that its employees receive the training and development required to deliver improved performance. This business plan demonstrates the Directors’ ambitions to provide a new pitch at Claggan Park and to take advantage of the new training pitch at Lochaber High school providing staff with environments conducive to excellent performance.
8. Supporters

FWFC enjoys the encouragement of an increasing number of supporters. The club is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all supporters, to increase the numbers attending games and appreciates feedback from supporters on how the club can continue to improve.

9. Summary

There are many community and economic benefits to be realised from maintaining the presence of an improved Fort William Football Club in the Highland League. In its 40th year, the Directors of the club are committed to its transformation in a number of ways. Improved team performance is the key aim and its achievement will increase community awareness and involvement.

The business plan details a significant number of actions, many of which require to be undertaken in the short term if the club’s longer-term ambitions are to be realised. While there is confidence in the implementation of this business plan, its success is more likely to be achieved by increasing the number of people prepared to support the club in a variety of ways.

Significant progress has already been achieved in the first eight months operation of the Community Interest Company – the club will shortly have a lease which satisfies SFA requirements, attendance is up, performance has improved and there is more interest from players wishing to join the squad.

There remains a task of scale in front of the club and all associated with it, but we are confident that success can be achieved through determined effort and a sustained focus on:

COMMUNITY  QUALITY  EQUALITY
A financially sustainable, community-focused club,
playing at the highest possible level in Scottish football.