



ABERDEEN FC COMMUNITY TRUST

STRATEGY 2020 – 2025



ABERDEEN FC
COMMUNITY
TRUST

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER SC044720.

OUR MISSION: TO PROVIDE SUPPORT & OPPORTUNITY TO CHANGE LIVES FOR THE BETTER.

BACKGROUND

Aberdeen Football Club (“AFC”) has been an integral part of the City of Aberdeen and the surrounding region since it was founded in 1903. Recognising the significance of its role as one of the city’s institutions, it understood the need for dedicated resources to provide focussed support in the community. Hence, the AFC Community Trust (“AFCCT” or “the Trust”) was established in 2014 and has seen a rapid rise in its activities and profile during its first eight years that has been recognised at the highest level, including UEFA Best Grassroots Football Club (2019/20) and Queens Award (2019). The work of the Trust feeds into local, national and international strategies with the founding principles derived from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> and the World Health Organisation Global Action Plan on Physical Activity <https://www.who.int/news-room/initiatives/gappa/action-plan>.

AFCCT is an independent charity (SC044720) with a board of trustees. The board comprises a range of skills and backgrounds from financial, legal, commercial, public sector and education. All trustees are committed to upholding the charitable purposes outlined in the Trust’s founding deed and to ensuring that best practice is applied to all its activities and operations.

Our trustees: <https://www.afccommunitytrust.org/about-us/trustees/>

The Trust’s current portfolio of programmes is grouped under two main themes:

- **Education and positive destinations** – working in primary and secondary schools across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Working with children and young people to address the poverty related attainment gap through a range of interventions addressing educational, behavioural, physical and mental well being needs. Working to develop life skills that equip participants beyond school e.g into the workplace and/or higher and further education
- **Football, Health and Wellbeing** – Working across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire to provide a wide range of grass roots, mass participation football programming including coaching, holiday camps, festivals and development work. In addition, providing physical and mental wellbeing interventions aimed at multigenerational audiences e.g active ageing programmes; mental wellbeing programming.

The Trust operates with a combination of full-time staff, sessional staff and volunteers. We are indebted to the generous support of a range of volunteers who give their time and efforts to support our work in a range of programmes across the City and Aberdeenshire.

The Scottish FA and UEFA commissioned a report in 2018 to uncover the “unique tangible evidence” that participation in football has on the city and region’s economic, social and health benefits. It determined that grassroots football throughout the region has a value of £97M to society. Indeed, for every £1 invested in AFCCT and football participation in the northeast, the Trust delivers a £10 cumulative return in conjunction with its partners.

AFC and AFCCT opened the new training and community facility, Cormack Park, in November 2019. The facility provides state-of-the art training facilities for the AFC first team and Youth Academy in addition to providing facilities for the Trust to work in the community. Cormack Park activities include coaching, festivals, holiday camps and support for the primary school football leagues and girls festivals.

As Aberdeen FC’s partner charity, AFCCT enjoys a close working relationship with the football club which is of mutual benefit. Participants in AFCCT’s programmes benefit from the affinity to the AFC brand and the history of the club. Equally AFC’s commitment to being a club at the heart of the community affords the opportunity for it to support initiatives – this was exemplified in the success of the #StillStandingFree Campaign during the first 6 months of the COVID 19 crisis in 2020.

#STILLSTANDINGFREE CAMPAIGN

Throughout its eight years, the Trust has demonstrated **energy and enthusiasm**, seizing **new opportunities** and **embracing challenge**. Never has this been evidenced more significantly than the **#StillStandingFree** campaign during the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020. Quickly identifying a significant need for the vulnerable children and their families already working with the Trust, a food delivery service was established supporting **over 15,000 people**. In addition, a telephone campaign reaching over **15,000 fans** to provide welfare check-in calls was undertaken to alleviate social isolation. A fundraising campaign harnessed over **£500,000** of support from AFC fans ("the Red Army"), companies, trusts and foundations and the personal support of

Directors at AFC. Working hand-in-hand with Aberdeen Football Club, the profile and recognition of the work of the Trust have dramatically increased in the region, providing a strong platform for the future.

Following Aberdeen's famous defeat of Real Madrid in the 1983 European Cup Winners Cup, Alfredo Di Stefano famously said "**Aberdeen have what money can't buy; a soul, a team spirit built in a family tradition.**" The relationship between AFC and the Trust is symbiotic with the **community at its heart** – a genuine Aberdeen family that supports one another.

**DELIVERIES
MADE**
FROM PETERHEAD
TO TORRY!



3,300+



500,000+
DONATED

Thank you!



**9,000+ CHILDREN
SUPPORTED**
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CFINE



15,800+
PEOPLE
SUPPORTED
BY A FOOD
DROP

**15,000+ CALLS
MADE TO THOSE
WHO MAY BE
SOCIALY ISOLATED**



EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

In common with every local charity, AFCCT operates among a strong pool of competition when attracting financial support. Unlike many of our competitors, AFCCT has the distinct advantage of its affiliation to AFC with its brand loyalty and lifelong supporter base.

Prior to the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the political and economic environment was uncertain due to the UK's decision to leave the European Union and the future political ramifications of a potential second Independence Referendum. Furthermore, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire were impacted by the protracted oil and gas downturn.

The global economy has been and continues to be impacted by the pandemic both financially and through adaptations required to meet new expectations of ways of working. The transition into endemic, rising cost of living and increased energy costs brings continued uncertainty for many businesses.



FUTURE

Our way of life has been deeply impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic and adaptations to the way we work and live. Whilst challenging, these changes will offer opportunities for those organisations who are innovative and resourceful. These words embody the spirit of the Trust. The desire to make transformational change in our communities is what drives us forward. As an organisation we demonstrate flexibility which will stand us in good stead in the evolving "new normal", affording chances to be creative and ground-breaking.

The experience of the #StillStandingFree campaign in 2020 had an acute effect on all involved within AFC and the Trust. Its legacy is a genuine appreciation of the fact that an intrinsically linked AFC and AFCCT can be a powerful force for good. AFC and AFCCT are positioned firmly at the heart of the community with the opportunity to play a meaningful civic role. Maintaining that inter-linked working relationship between the two organisations will be increasingly important in the years to come.

Our aim is to maximise the potential of our communities and every participant with whom we are involved. Through providing creative, engaging and empowering programming we work to improve both the physical and mental wellbeing of those with whom we work. We are proud of our achievements to date but are never complacent, realising that ongoing reflection, improvement and innovation will be key to future success.

Faced with an ever-changing environment, long term planning remains challenging. **With that in mind, we have revised our 2020-25 strategy to address the coming 3 years as we transition to a post pandemic world.** We are optimistic about the future for the Trust, our staff and the communities we support.

OUR VISION:
WE WILL WORK
TO MAXIMISE
THE POTENTIAL
OF OUR
COMMUNITIES
BY IMPROVING
PHYSICAL
& MENTAL
WELLBEING.



THE TRUST INSPIRES OUR COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING. OUR VISION AND MISSION ARE DELIVERED THROUGH TWO KEY THEMES:

EDUCATION AND POSITIVE DESTINATIONS

The Trust follows the Scottish Government's "Getting it right for every child" (GIRFEC) approach www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/ which supports families by making sure children and young people can receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people. The aim is to help them to grow up feeling loved, safe and respected so that they can realise their full potential.

We will encourage and support our young people through our education programmes, working in both primary and secondary schools. We will work to support both the physical and emotional needs of our young people including pre/post school activities that provide meals. We will deliver the MINDSET programme which addresses adolescent wellbeing through a play based approach. We strive to be diverse and inclusive in our work encouraging those of all backgrounds, ethnicities and gender to be involved. We will help to prepare our young people for opportunities after leaving school, be that higher/further education, apprenticeships or into employment. We will embrace technology to deliver our programmes in changing environments.

We will demonstrate our social impact by benchmarking against local, national and international standards. Such credibility will enable us to expand and diversify our funding sources to facilitate growth. We will remain flexible in our approach matching funding opportunities to programming and encouraging innovative approaches to be developed. In tandem and in order to maintain our high standards and reputation,

we will continue to work to attract and develop high quality staff providing training and pathways for career advancement.

FOOTBALL, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We work closely with partners such as the Scottish Football Association, local authorities and Sport Aberdeen to support and encourage increased grass roots football participation. Beyond our long-standing experience of football coaching and associated festivals, holiday camps and leagues, we will use the power of football to address mental health and wellbeing through programmes such as the Changing Room – a mental wellbeing programme targeted at men.

We are mindful of gender equality and will seek to support the development of women in football – as exemplified by our growing Girls Festivals.

We will work to develop sustainable programming in support of our multi-generational communities through age specific programmes e.g. active ageing activities that are inclusive to those with additional needs such as dementia, autism. Activities include: health walks; Football Memories, working with those with Alzheimers; menopause support. We work in partnership with other community organisations to support community needs e.g. CFINE (Community Food Initiative North East) helping to address the ongoing food poverty challenge.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

1. RECOGNISE THAT PEOPLE ARE OUR COMMUNITY'S

GREATEST ASSET

The Trust works to support all its people – staff, participants, supporters and volunteers. It seeks to ensure a safe and supportive environment that enables its people to be "the best they can be". It embraces HR policies that support the wellbeing and retention of its staff and volunteers and seeks to replicate these practices in its interaction with all its stakeholders. Central to the Trust's activities is the safety and wellbeing of its staff, volunteers and participants. The safeguarding of our participants is embedded in all activity. Through our culture, governance, policies, procedures and behaviours the Trust is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of everyone with whom we work.

2. INSPIRE & EMPOWER THE NEXT GENERATION OF

YOUNG PEOPLE

The Trust's activities place emphasis on both physical and mental health with tailored programming for varying age groups. We have extensive educational experience working in partnership with both primary and secondary schools across Aberdeen City and Shire. These partner schools use health and well-being interventions to improve young people's health, wellbeing and increase educational equity. Our work in academies in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire enables smaller group settings to support young people who may underachieve at school due to behavioural, emotional or social barriers. These school programmes seek to address the health and wellbeing of our young people in a supportive and engaging format to gain skills for life, learning and work.

3. ACTIVATE & ENERGISE PARTICIPATION & SUPPORT

The Trust encourages individuals and groups of all ages to participate and support its activities. We work with AFC supporters, the famous "Red Army", and the wider community to highlight the benefits of health and wellbeing and to encourage their involvement – whether through active programme engagement; volunteering or fundraising for the work of the Trust.

Through marketing and media we will work to encourage engagement of all ages in the community regardless of interest in football or AFC. Highlighting the work of the Trust in the community will be key to engaging more widely to address those needs which align to this strategy.

We are supported by an enthusiastic team of volunteers who generously give their time in support of our activities, particularly around football, mental wellbeing and active ageing programming. Their support is invaluable enabling many more to be supported across the Northeast of Scotland. We will support our volunteers through thorough induction, appropriate training and regular communication.

Recognising the Trust is financially independent, diverse income streams will be developed to encompass both philanthropic and commercial support for our activities. The Trust's current funding model is heavily dependent upon targeted support for individual projects and the need for unrestricted income to support a sustainable long-term business is evident. Fundraising from individuals, companies, trusts & foundations will be developed in addition to more traditional mass participation activities. Opportunities for the commercialisation of activities/programmes will be sought. We will continue to innovate providing programmes that match our funders interests provided they are strategically aligned.

4. DEVELOP STRONG PARTNERSHIPS TO CREATE

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

The Trust will build strong partnerships to widen opportunities for our participants, staff and volunteers. Recognising that collaboration is a strength, the Trust will work to bring different parties together to deliver greatest impact and to share best practice. The Trust will build upon its existing strong partnerships with charities, business, sports associations, football clubs, funding bodies, local authorities, government and international partners.

The Trust will build upon the international recognition, achieved through the UEFA Best Grassroots Professional Club, to forge strong partnerships regionally, nationally and internationally. The Trust has an existing relationship with GrassrootSoccer, a US adolescent health "not for profit" organisation that leverages the power of football to educate, inspire, and mobilize at-risk youth in developing countries. This collaboration has led to the development of the MINDSET programme which addresses adolescent mental wellbeing through play-based activities.

The Trust will use the power of its partnerships, including that of Atlanta United, to learn from others and share experience. It is a member of the European Football Development Network (EFDN) and regularly delivers programming e.g. STEM and participates in events to share best practice with peers.

5. PROVIDE A "FIRST IN CLASS" FOOTBALL ENVIRONMENT

FOR THE REGION

Recognising differing age groups and abilities, the Trust will build opportunities through the development of a community wide engagement programme that is both encouraging and inclusive. Working closely with partners such as the Scottish Football Association, the Trust encourages boys and girls through a variety of mechanisms from holiday camps, festivals, coaching, development squads and primary school leagues to provide opportunities for all and clear pathways for advancement for those who wish. The Trust works in a variety of settings including AFC's Cormack Park training facility. This is used by the AFC First Team and Youth Academy, and provides a safe and modern environment for young people to enjoy football at all levels.

6. CREATE A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The Trust operates robust business processes which are reflected in all policies and procedures to ensure its longterm sustainability. The business processes underpin the delivery of its programmes and fulfilment of its charitable purposes. It seeks to innovate and constantly explores efficiencies that can be adopted. It operates under the governance of a Board of Trustees and is mindful of the need to ensure a mix of skill sets, diversity and, in so doing, always have a succession plan to reflect the evolving needs of the Trust. Further the Trust operates a risk management system that identifies and mitigates key risks to the business.

The Trust seeks to ensure that its work demonstrates significant social impact. It measures its activities against local, national and international standards to measure performance and to strive for continual improvement.



OUR PROMISE:

WE COMMIT TO WORK TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS AND, IN THE DELIVERY OF

OUR ACTIVITIES, WE WILL:

- PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT OFFERING SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO EVERYONE WE WORK WITH – STAFF, PARTICIPANTS, SUPPORTERS AND VOLUNTEERS
- PROMOTE DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY AND STRIVE TO INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.
- ENSURE THAT SAFEGUARDING IS CENTRAL TO ALL OF OUR ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES
- EMBRACE DIVERSITY AND PROVIDE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT MAXIMISES POTENTIAL
- SEEK TO SUPPORT THE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF OUR TEAM
- ENCOURAGE THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF GIRLS/WOMEN'S FOOTBALL
- SHARE OUR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES WITH OTHERS – LOCALLY, NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY
- MEASURE THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF OUR PROGRAMMES BY BENCHMARKING AGAINST NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS
- HARNESS THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP COLLABORATING CLOSELY WITH ABERDEEN FOOTBALL CLUB AND ITS SISTER CLUB, ATLANTA UNITED (USA) TO SEEK POSITIVE CHANGE AND SUPPORT FOR OUR PARTICIPANTS.
- CELEBRATE THE GENEROSITY AND SPIRIT OF OUR VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.
- DEMONSTRATE IMPACT IN OUR COMMUNITY AND DEVELOP LONG TERM, TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL OF THOSE WHO HAVE INVESTED IN US.
- COMMUNICATE WIDELY ACROSS ALL CHANNELS, RAISING THE PROFILE OF OUR WORK AND IMPORTANTLY RECOGNISE THOSE WHO ENABLE OUR ACTIVITY THROUGH THEIR GENEROSITY
- SEEK TO SECURE A LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE FUNDING BASE BY DIVERSIFYING OUR INCOME STREAMS TO INCLUDE COMMERCIAL AND PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT.
- IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE COMMERCIALISATION OF ACTIVITIES/ PROGRAMMES, WHERE APPROPRIATE
- DEMONSTRATE BEST PRACTICE AND VALUE FOR MONEY.
- CONTINUALLY REVIEW AND MODIFY OUR BUSINESS SYSTEMS AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS TO ENSURE THAT WE OPERATE OPTIMALLY AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH OSCR REQUIREMENTS.

OUR VALUES:
THE TRUST IS A COLLECTION OF INDIVIDUALS WORKING TOGETHER IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS ACROSS THE NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND.

COLLECTIVELY WE ARE GREATER THAN THE SUM OF OUR INDIVIDUAL PARTS, SHARING A COMMON SET OF VALUES.

AT THE HEART OF OUR ACTIVITIES, WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE HEALTH & WELLBEING OF ALL OUR STAFF, VOLUNTEERS & PARTICIPANTS.

WE AIM TO BE INCLUSIVE OF ALL REGARDLESS OF BACKGROUND, ETHNICITY OR BELIEF.



TOGETHER WE ARE:

DYNAMIC

We are flexible, positive in attitude, full of energy and new ideas to support a diverse range of people and projects.

COLLABORATIVE

Our ability to build relationships, break-down barriers and connect with a wide range of people inclusive of all backgrounds, means that, together, we can maximise potential and opportunity

NURTURING

We are a supportive organisation where people encourage and care for each other emotionally and physically, providing a safe and equitable environment for all within our community.

EMPOWERING

Working with our community to help improve the lives of each other, taking leadership in shaping a better future and inspiring everyone to help make a difference.

TRUSTWORTHY

We are sincere and honest with integrity embedded in our behaviour, practices and financial responsibilities.



CONCLUSION

AFC Community Trust has achieved much in its first eight years, most notably its UEFA Best Grassroots Football Award in 2019 in recognition of its work in the community. In recent times, it has shown how passionate people, coming together in a crisis, can deliver for the community through the award winning #StillStandingFree campaign. This campaign embodied the Trust's values: dynamism, collaboration, nurturing, empowerment and trustworthiness. Through living these values so much has been achieved for so many in the community.

As we move forward, maximising the potential of our communities and improving the physical and mental wellbeing of those we work with will be our focus for the next three years. Our ability to plan and be adept at directing our resources to areas of most need will be critical to our future success.

We are incredibly grateful to everyone for their support in all its forms and believe that collectively we will create sustainable, transformational programmes for the future.



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