

Twerton Park pitch FAQ's (March 2018)

Q1	Who wrote the Feasibility Study and why?
A1	The Bath City Board set up a sub-committee to take make an impartial analysis of the pros and cons of installing a 3G pitch. Chris Coles, Ed Tann, Paul Williams, Yuichi Ueba (Bath University) are the authors. The feasibility study was written now because it makes sense to consider 3G as part of the ground re-development. This timing point is covered in detail in the study.
Q2	Who was contacted and consulted to reach the conclusions in the Feasibility Study?
A2	BANES, the Somerset FA, the FA, the University of Bath, the Football Foundation, South Bristol Sports Centre, Bristol and Bath Regional Capital, two experienced 3G installers-one local, one national (Verde Recreo, S&C Slatter), FIFA, three consulting firms (RLF, Max Associates, The Sports Consultancy), [FWP (stadium consultant to BCFC on the ground redevelopment)], Merthyr Town FC, Maidstone United and Sutton United (three non-League clubs pioneering 3G), 3G4US (a football club led lobby group in favour of 3G), and Jerry Gill.
Q3	What are the implications if the members decide not to accept the Board's recommendation?.
A3	There is an urgent need to reduce BCFC's 2016/17 operating loss of £90k, which is not sustainable. The Board are cognisant of the of the 2017 fan survey which informs its priorities and concluded that the Football Club's sustainability was the No. 1 priority. There is no "Plan B" for achieving financial sustainability if the ground redevelopment does not happen and the ground redevelopment project will be less robust in terms of planning consent, BCFC's financial sustainability and its community impact without the 3G pitch. Ultimately individual members of the Board will need to satisfy themselves BCFC will be able to continue to trade, as losses continue and cash headroom runs out. I don't think the projections set out in the Society offer document to achieve break-even can now be assumed to be achievable without 3G investment, as we are well behind on the revenue projections and the losses continue as a result.
Q4	Why do we have to decide now? What if we waited?
A4	The timing of the decision is determined by the Redevelopment timetable. It would clearly be irrational to pursue the ground redevelopment and then decide after that to install 3G as there are clear interdependencies. What is the point in waiting, what new information will we learn?
Q5	Is the decision about the playing surface dependent on the Redevelopment or vice versa?
A5	They are separate initiatives but there are good commercial and logistical reasons for doing them simultaneously.
Q6	Does a non-grass pitch need to be level? The current Twerton Park is clearly not level.
A6	The current thinking is that the Twerton Park pitch will be levelled irrespective of the playing surface decision. Current calculations indicate that relocating some of

Twerton Park pitch FAQ's (March 2018)

	the spoil from the Redevelopment in order to level the pitch make sound economic and environmental sense.
Q7	Are all non-grass pitches the same?
A7	No. The Feasibility Study and the calculations and assumptions within it are based on a "FIFA Quality Pro" surface. We are required to install this high quality FIFA Quality Pro surface to be compliant. There are implications of this on the extent community usage and BCFC's potential Football League aspirations.
Q8	Will installing a FIFA Pro pitch prevent Bath City from being promoted into the Football League?
A8	The short answer is "yes" – unless the rules are changed before BCFC win promotion. Although the FIFA Pro Pitch is FIFA endorsed and suitable for international football, the current position of the EFL is that EFL games are to be played on grass. The EFL are due to vote on this in June 18. Sutton United may well set a precedent here if they qualify for promotion from the National League this season. The earliest Bath City could technically win promotion from the National League is May 2019 - although there would need to be many other significant changes in place for this to happen realistically. If the rules haven't changed before we win promotion to the EFL, we would then have to revert back to grass but the 3G surface may need replacing by then anyway and the club's revenues, supporter base etc should be more robust by then.
Q9	How would we fund the £600K necessary to install the pitch and how long would it take for the 3G profits to pay it off?
A9	Funding has not been considered yet and the Board recommendation remains subject to acceptable funding being secured. The assumption is that the Society would approve with the same condition. If we could secure grant funding then no money would need to be repaid. This needs to be explored in much more detail after we have the necessary conditional approvals.
Q10	Is there sufficient demand in Bath to ensure that we can maintain the income stated in the sample business case in the Feasibility Study?
A10	There is a working assumption that there is sufficient demand. The Somerset FA register currently identifies 17 3G pitches on its website. Most of these, however, are attached to schools. The Lansdown Sports Ground proposal from 2012 also highlighted the need for 3G in the Bath. While Odd Down has been opened since then, evidence from BCFC in relation to securing training facilities, BCYFC and BANES has consistently confirmed there is an ongoing shortage of local 3G capacity. BANES' Leisure and Business Development Officer has confirmed verbally that BANES would welcome the establishment of a 3G pitch at Twerton Park. We may consider asking a third party consultant to verify this-funders may even require this. We have not done this so far to avoid incurring costs we cant afford.
Q11	Are there running costs associated with operating a 3G pitch - eg floodlighting, admin costs, maintaining the changing rooms, etc?
A11	The Feasibility Study indicates that the operating costs of 3G are broadly similar with the operating costs of running a grass pitch at BCFC. Club operating costs at BCFC are currently too high so it is assumed they could absorb the other 3G

Twerton Park pitch FAQ's (March 2018)

	operating costs like admin, though job specs would clearly need to change.
Q12	How would the club ensure that the most disadvantaged in Twerton and the surrounding area are able to use the 3G pitch?
A12	We would work closely with BCFC Foundation and other local charities. Hopefully we could offer subsidised pricing.
Q13	How much space would the changing rooms take up and what alternative use of that space for income generation/community benefit has been considered?
A13	This will be assessed soon, as part of the redevelopment/community engagement and with stadium input from FWP-a specialist consultant. 3G may not necessarily require additional changing rooms.
Q14	Do the current team management and players support 3G? (and would it help to attract the best players?)
A14	Jerry Gill believes 3G would support the style of play he is seeking to achieve with the 1st team, subject to caveats relating to maintenance and watering.
Q15	Why doesn't the Business Case in the Feasibility study include ancillary or knock-on benefits of installing a 3G pitch?
A15	The Business Case is deliberately conservative and in terms of the estimation of utilisation and hiring rates. It is particularly difficult to accurately estimate the additional benefits of people using Twerton Park for 35 - 40 hours pw. One could speculate on additional revenue opportunities (e.g. catering) and the potential 'pull-through' effect on attendances to 1st team games but it is worth noting that the business case works without it. It's realistic to assume that, it should only be positive, based on the case studies. We can't afford consultants to do the work to assess it at this point. We may re-assess doing this later on.
Q16	Is the quality of football likely to be affected by not playing on grass
A16	FIFA Quality Pro is a high quality surface. If it is properly maintained, policed and replaced when needed, we do not think so and FA/FIFA support this view. It is also a more consistent surface than grass, which is impacted by weather.