



Bath City FC Club Strategy: 2021-2024

Future Direction of the Club

Our vision is to succeed, on and off the pitch, as a sustainable, community owned and engaged Football Club in Bath.

Our plan is to connect with more people in Bath and beyond and to grow into a bigger, more successful Club (i.e. financially and through promotion) without losing our authenticity and community focus and roots as a local football and social club.

This vision is captured in our “credo” (the beliefs and aims which guide our actions) which was created by a wide-ranging team from across the Club shortly after we became community owned in 2017:

“We want to achieve success on and off the pitch, as an authentic and progressive Club, which is owned by the community and predominantly run by a dedicated team of volunteers.

We aim to be successful, professional and efficient and to achieve long-term financial sustainability, whilst being open, inclusive, considerate and diverse.

We will bring people together by hosting exciting, entertaining football matches, played with a good spirit, and in a great atmosphere. We will organise other events to contribute to the wider community, so that Twerton Park becomes a hub for activities, organisations and services for people of the surrounding area.

We intend to be an integral part of city life, not only in Twerton, but of the whole of Bath, owned by hundreds of supporters, and followed by many more. We are truly the people’s club.”

As we grow and become more successful, we also expect to attract more paid, professional employees alongside our vital and able volunteers.

Our long-term objectives are to:

- Achieve and maintain financial sustainability
- Have men's and women's football teams that can compete at the highest possible level
- Increase opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the benefits of playing and coaching football, including through strong relationships with the Bath City Foundation and Bath City Youth
- Promote democratic, co-operative and volunteer involvement with the Club, the game and wider society, with the Club Board, Bath City Supporters Society and Bath City Supporters Club working alongside each other
- Play an active and constructive role in community life
- Reach out and attract new audiences whilst staying connected to and nurturing our relationships with existing supporters

Among these objectives, members and supporters identified **financial sustainability** as the Club's top priority. Achieving this sustainability will depend on our active engagement with people from all parts of the city. All the Club's other objectives either support, or are supported by, the key objective of long-term financial sustainability.

Within the objective of financial sustainability, the Club has two key priorities for the period of 2021-24:

- Clear the Club's debt: We aim to clear the Club's existing debt (£1,055k) and become debt-free by 2024.
- Trade at profit: We aim to achieve a break even or profitable trading position by FY2023.

The Club has already made significant progress by reducing the losses from £88k in 2017 to £20k in 2020.

Key Objectives for 2021-24

1. Football - Achieve promotion to the National League Premier for the Men's First Team and re-establish a competitive Women's First Team

What we aim to achieve

Our ultimate aim for the men's first team is to achieve Football League status. Over the next three seasons, we aim to achieve promotion to the National League Premier and then consolidate our position in that league, as a stepping stone to future promotion to the EFL.

We aim to re-establish a competitive women's first team to better represent our community and complement the existing strength of the Bath City FC brand and men's first team, and fully benefit from the sporting pathways available through Bath City Youth and the Bath City Foundation.

How we aim to achieve it

Men's team

- Maintain the football budget at the right level to allow us to compete effectively as contenders in National League South
- Spend appropriately on training and matchday facilities, support staff and technology to help evolve and improve the team/squad
- Play ambitious and attractive football and embed the "Bath City Way" at all levels

Women's team

- Explore the opportunities, feasibility and viability of creating a women's team
- Decide on the most appropriate delivery model and develop a business case including financial modelling of potential grant funding, revenue and sponsorship potential
- Find or recruit a women's team manager
- Ensure we have the right partnerships to benefit from a pipeline of talent that will enable us to compete sustainably

2. Complete a redevelopment that delivers for Club and community

What we aim to achieve

To deliver a redevelopment of Twerton Park as soon as practicably possible that clears the Club's debt and creates a Club that has fit-for-purpose facilities to meet our long-term ambitions of entering the Football League while achieving financial success (e.g. trading profitably long-term), and allows the Club to play a significant role in community life.

How we aim to achieve it

- Explore redevelopment options with a range of possible investors, developers and community partners
- Stay engaged with the council, planning executives, politicians, local communities and our supporters as ideas and plans evolve
- Consider different potential investment and development models to maximise the chance of success and that meet the financial criteria for success (ie including social investment partners and different ownership models if necessary)
- All options need to be explored and researched, including relocation

3. Finance - Continue to grow revenue and profitability to achieve long-term financial sustainability

What we aim to achieve

The Club seeks to achieve a profitable annual trading position by FY2023. To do this, we will continue to increase revenue and control costs, whilst keeping our football expenditure at the right level to compete for promotion to the National League Premier.

How we aim to achieve it

- Continue to look for new income streams while also growing already existing income streams
- **Football:** maintain the football budget at a level to keep the Club competitive and in the playoff positions
- **Matchday:** continue to build good retail and food & beverage offers to improve revenues and spend/profit per head
- **Commercial:** create more longer term commercial partnerships with companies and organisations that bolster the Club's income and image locally, drawing on our credentials as a community-owned and community-focused Club; continue to

develop existing commercial relationships with longstanding sponsors; develop joint advertising opportunities with partners

- **Stadium:** attract long-term business tenants to provide steady rental income
- **Stadium:** over the longer term, install a quality artificial pitch (FIFA Quality Pro) to keep both the standard of the pitch and the football high whilst creating a new revenue stream and allowing us to offer it to commercial and charity partners. This is subject to the conditions in the Club's 2018 feasibility study being met, including a clear and sustainable plan to secure capital funding.

4. Sales & Marketing: Reach and bring new audiences to the Club (for both our matches and other events) whilst keeping our current supporters engaged and happy

What we aim to achieve

Attract new people to the Club who didn't necessarily know about the Club before, and do this both on matchdays and non-matchdays - eg all the other events we hold at Twerton Park. We have already raised the average attendance from around 600 per game in 2016/17 to around 1100 per game in 2018/19. And at the same time, we will keep our loyal supporters engaged and happy through regular news and updates about what is going on at the Club and seek their thoughts and feedback.

How we aim to achieve it

- Keep building a better commercial and marketing understanding of supporters through meetings, surveys and customer relationship management (CRM)
- Proactively communicate and engage with a wide audience in and around Bath and beyond via Club representatives continuing to attend key events, use of PR, digital and social media
- Use creative and cost-effective marketing campaigns where budgets allow
- Keep supporter interest high through professional, engaging and regular communications across a range of channels
- Create and develop mutually beneficial, long-term and sustainable partnerships with the business community of Bath
- Recruit skilled and talented staff and volunteers to support sales and marketing efforts

5. Community: Play a central role in community life

What we aim to achieve

Our communities include the Club's member-owners, local residents of Twerton and Bath, supporters who come from further afield, and local charities, schools and businesses. We will listen to, be guided by and work with these wider communities to help all to thrive: through meaningful connections, conversations and action that empowers people to build strong and resilient lives.

How we aim to achieve it

- Be a welcoming, friendly, family club for all
- Provide structured volunteer opportunities at the Club on matchdays and beyond - eg health and wellbeing, education, employment, social inclusion and sports participation
- Work closely with and primarily support the Bath City Foundation and look to help other specific local causes
- Offer resources (such as rooms and facilities) to local charities, businesses, families and individuals, and providing a home to businesses, charities and good causes
- Building strategic relationships with community anchor organisations in Bath, such as educational institutions and health services, as well as Bath and North East Somerset Council
- Play a lead role in the Twerton and Whiteway Community Network for local good causes who have combined efforts to strengthen the local community (first Twerton, then Bath and beyond).
- Empower marginalised members of our community through support of the Bath City Foundation as well as local initiatives that meet particular needs such as the local Foodbank
- Increasingly measure, track and improve our social and community impact

6. Operations and Facilities: Maintain the ground, operations and Health & Safety standards to a consistently high level

What we aim to achieve

Ensure we operate and deliver all aspects of the Club's events and activities, both matchday and non-matchday, safely, professionally and with good customer service.

How we aim to achieve it

- Have a properly structured, appropriately qualified and organised team
- Blend our paid and volunteer staff to work together effectively
- Establish a strong facility management process
- Ensure a good customer service approach across the teams
- Be proactive in ensuring our players, staff, volunteers, partners and fans all operate in a safe environment, complying with all relevant legislation and regulations
- Manage risks effectively - financial, legal and operational risks

7. Culture: Create a truly welcoming, open, diverse and inclusive Club

What we aim to achieve

A positive, inclusive culture based on teamwork; an open and honest atmosphere; and supportive and welcoming behaviours between our employees, volunteers, supporters, guests and customers.

How we aim to achieve it

- Nurturing, training and developing our teams
- Build a consistently high customer service attitude and approach
- Co-opting an HR professional to help establish and maintain good people practices and succession planning, to ensure we always have resource in our key areas
- Agreeing a code of conduct to ensure respectful, considerate and appropriate behaviour
- Regularly reviewing and refreshing our culture based on a shared set of values
- Recruiting a broader and more diverse team at all levels of the organisation
- Encouraging more supporters to volunteer at the Club to lighten the load for all