

Readstone United Junior Football Club
Club Development Plan 2023/24

1. PURPOSE

Our principal purpose is to provide **a safe and inclusive place** to enjoy the game, have fun, and make some great memories along the way. We aim to create **a positive environment** where our members can make new friends, learn and develop new skills and grow individually and collectively.

2. CLUB MANAGEMENT

We believe that the enjoyment of the game does not depend on winning and this is key to our club philosophy. We will do our best to work out how to be successful but win or lose we will teach our players to do so with humility and respect.

We welcome children regardless of their ability, experience, or life difficulties because we believe that the game, especially in the primary school years, should be accessible to everyone and not just those with a gift or good fortune.

We are very mindful, however, that our ability to welcome children to the club is unavoidably rate limited by our ability to recruit and train volunteers to work with those children.

We work to appropriate standards in the management and operation of the club in line with relevant government regulations and FA guidelines and aim to provide tangible support to our volunteers without whom the club would not exist.

Action:

- A strong team of volunteers is key to the effective and efficient operation of the club and its future development, and each year we will review our volunteer **structure** and work to ensure that all necessary functions are effectively managed and supported.

We will also create a suitable volunteer **induction** to ensure the club's ethos and philosophy is properly understood and implemented.

- **Communicating positively** with all stakeholders is very important to us and we will do this through our newly developed website and social media platforms.

To encourage **better engagement** with the club we will correspond formally and directly with volunteers and parents at the beginning of the season and at the end of the season, prior to our annual awards presentation and annual general meeting.

During the football season, Team Managers and Coaches will communicate with Parents using their own messaging applications.

We will also introduce a short annual **survey** seeking feedback from volunteers, parents and playing members so that we can better understand the experience of everyone associated with the club.

3. GROWTH

We currently have a little over 200 members playing across 14 teams with just a single team in each age group from U11 onwards. Almost half (45%) of our members are drawn from outside of the local community and neither live nor go to school in Read or Simonstone.

Our long-term ambition is to recruit enough players and volunteers to support multiple teams in every age group in the primary school years, aiming to establish two teams in each of the U11 and U12 age groups. We believe this will help us to provide a better experience for those with different skill levels and capabilities and give us a better chance of sustaining a healthy squad in every age group in the secondary school years.

We also want to increase **female participation** and in the long term, our aim is to establish **a girls' team in every age group**.

Action:

- To expand the number of teams, we will need to be **more pro-active in our recruitment** and all teams, particularly in the lower age groups, will need to be accessible to new members.
- We understand that **additional volunteers** will need to be recruited to support an expansion and this will require a targeted approach to the parents and immediate family of our members.
- The club will hold a **tournament** for U7s and U8s on the Read School field and in future years explore the possibility of holding its own **Summer Camp** as a flagship event to promote the club and attract new members.
- An **Events & Fundraising Sub-Committee** is to be formed to help us create and manage club events and fundraising activities.
- Funding is central to our ambition to improve the quality of the experience enjoyed by players and volunteers alike. We will therefore need to **explore all possible funding sources** that will enable special projects to be delivered.
- The club enjoys **the support of local business**, and it is recognised that every opportunity should be taken to reinforce these relationships through our own website communications and social media and explore opportunities to attract further support.

4. COACH & PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

To help our playing members develop their skills and enjoy the sport, we will focus on providing additional support to our coaches. This will not only help us to improve the quality of the work that we do on the field but may in time help us to attract **new volunteers**, which in turn will allow us to welcome more children to the club.

Action:

- we will provide Team Managers and Coaches with an opportunity to upskill using an **online coaching platform** and a **coach mentoring programme**
- the club will aim to adopt a more **structured approach** to football coaching and help the Coach to create coaching sessions and season plans to meet the needs of their team.

5. FACILITIES

The club serves the villages of Read and Simonstone and draws its members from these communities and the surrounding area. For those aged 11 and under, we enjoy the use of the Read St John's Primary School field, although drainage is an issue, and its use is therefore restricted mainly to the Spring and Summer months.

All age groups compete for space with other clubs in the area and finding suitable facilities for training is very challenging with our teams travelling extensively to train and practice each week. For most of the season we hire facilities at various locations in Burnley, Accrington and Clitheroe.

Our grand ambition is to **secure a location** that we can call **home**, which we believe would provide a greater sense of club and help us to recruit new members. In the short term, we will aim to consolidate the number of venues that we use.

The shortage of suitable training facilities in the area inhibits our ability to grow our membership and increase the number of teams that we manage.

Action:

All possibilities will need to be explored in the long term and **relationships** formed with organisations who may be able to help us achieve our objectives.

End.