



New Ground Development Report 2018

First and most importantly a very big thank you to all the volunteers, supporters and businesses who have contributed and helped with our ambitious project to create a new Home for Spalding Rugby Club, throughout the year.

Having decamped from Tyrrells in May 2017 and with the New Ground not ready for September 2017, the Grammar School kindly accommodated the Minis and Juniors for one last season. Consequently it was imperative that the New Ground had to be available for the Minis/Juniors from the start of their 2018 rugby season on Sunday 2nd September as well as midweek evening training for the Senior and Junior squads.

And, by the skin of our teeth we achieved the opening of the New Ground for that first Sunday in September, even though the Clubhouse Facilities were not complete and despite the main pitch and main training area not being ready to play on.

So, here is the story of 2018 and our plans going forward:

At the end of January with the Club having trenched and laid ducting to the adjoining field, Western Power, after 7 months of haggling and legal difficulties, finally connected us to the national grid. With our electric meter being connected the following day our first utility was on site, but it did cost us an arm and a leg, well over £40,000.



Convoy of Western Power vehicles parked in car park as the cabling was laid and connected

We now started to proceed with the connection of all the changing and clubhouse units to our electric supply.

Having already researched and obtained various quotes from floodlighting companies we were fortunate to be offered a very good set of second-hand lighting equipment and columns, that were being removed from a leisure facility in Bedfordshire. With a grant of £20,000 from the Rugby Football Foundation, trenching was undertaken by Carl Rushby and CER Groundworks and volunteers undertook laying ducting and backfilling, so by mid-April the column foundations were concreted in (18 cubic metres) and the floodlights installed by the end of April.

As many of you will be aware we now have full floodlighting on two pitches with lighting standards suitable for matches. New floodlighting, fully installed by contractors, would normally cost in the region of £40K to £50K per pitch. With the help of the £20K grant and thanks to the contribution of time and equipment by club members our costs were reduced to around £12K, a fantastic achievement,

Also back in January, a new fibre glass roofing system that had come from Tyrells was installed on the Clubhouse unit, making it completely watertight. The costs for this were covered by a grant from Sport England and the roofing should last several decades.

On the inside, Aron Moyses very generously installed units from two kitchens displays, which he had surplus to requirement, in our kitchen and food prep room. With the addition of a Stove cooker in the kitchen and a fridge freezer in the prep room, we now have some excellent facilities for preparing, cooking and serving food on training / match days and for potential functions.



Peppa Saunders using the kitchen in Dec 18

Minis and parents being served at kitchen counter Dec18

The next challenge was bringing water supplies on-site near the entrance gate. This again presented a number of challenges, this time dealing with Anglian Water. Club volunteers had already trenched and laid pipework from the entrance gate to our utilities block, and then further pipework to all the changing units, toilet block and clubhouse. The first inspection passed and guidance was given on the installation of double-check valves - which we duly followed. Frustratingly, at the next inspection contra information meant we had to reposition valves inside the units. Then, finally in July, following pipework chlorination tests (two of them!!!) we had the go ahead to connect. As a precaution against the risk of Legionnaires disease, all the changing unit pipework and showers were also chlorinated as they had not been in use for some considerable time.

Whilst all this work was going on, but yet unfinished, we took the brave and rather rash decision to hold a couple of events at the ground in May:

First, was Chelmsford RFC Minis on tour. Six coach loads of players, coaches, parents and siblings, together with home players and parents, one visiting Kesteven team and club volunteers, flooded into the ground on a glorious Saturday morning (thankfully) and a great time was had by all and appreciated by the visitors.



Arial view of ground courtesy of Andy Branton

Next up was the Marquee Party on the Saturday night, followed by the Mini and Junior End-of Season Awards on the Sunday, in the marquee erected on the Ground, for the party the night before. The social committee pulled out all the stops to ensure a great time was had by everyone attending both events despite the atrocious weather during the party. Also, Martyn Lakey and his team worked wonders to have the toilet block up and running in time.

Then, towards the end of May, the arrival of the additional Clubhouse unit, generously donated through Jeremy Chew, would transform our Clubhouse facilities. Again, with invaluable support from Pete Issitt and his team from Crowland Cranes, the six units were lifted from the car park area, into position, alongside the existing clubhouse helped by club volunteers and all supervised by Martyn Lakey.



Crowland Cranes lifting the next Clubhouse bay into position with volunteers completing the foundations

On the weekend of 23rd and 24th June we held another successful Nat West Rugby Force Weekend with the focus being on moving and spreading of 60 tonnes of hardcore into the Changing Room Quad, sorting and reorganising the contents of the three containers located in their new permanent position behind the

Clubhouse, further Clubhouse and changing room cleaning and the challenging task of infilling all the sunken drainage lines on the main pitch.

The machinery lent to the Club and operated on the day was a godsend (thanks to Richard Stevenson and Rod West), as without it, the tasks done manually would never have been completed.

By the end of October, with the waste water and sewage disposal system now fully installed, all toilets working and the changing rooms finally connected to LPG, at long last, players had full use of changing rooms.

Hopefully you are still reading with interest, as perhaps one of the biggest tasks now lay ahead with the full refurbishment of the additional Clubhouse unit

Thankfully the Sport England grant now stretched to cover the complete reroofing of the new unit, which was essential, as it had been transported as six separate bays. Inside it was a blank canvas with loads of space and refurbishment ideas!!



Additional Clubhouse above external, below internal



Under the guidance of Andy Delay a refurbishment plan took shape. The first job was to create an opening to join the two units, then the removal of the outer layer of plasterboard and joining strips, replacing it with 36 new boards that butted together to create smooth walls. Other volunteers (Paul Carnell) spent Sunday mornings and weekday evenings carrying out the challenging task of installing the fire resistant ceiling plasterboards as well as the ceiling insulation. Suddenly as players and parents started to walk through to the café area, progress could be seen and the future becoming a reality!

With a doorway removed, and new one inserted, the first fix electrics completed, the walls were plastered and before you know it along came the Minis Xmas party and new paint on the walls was drying just in time!



The New Clubhouse finally taking shape, views from either end and through the link corridor to the café/bar/club shop area in adjoining unit



The Pitches

The pitches and training areas have been a problem at the New Ground, particularly affected by the extremely dry summer.

With the soil type being Grade 2 with a substantial clay base, it has shrunk and cracked badly effecting the training areas and pitches 2 and 3. Additionally the drainage lines on the main pitch and training pitch have continued to sink making them unsafe for playing on.

Richard Stevenson has been a star lead, with the provision of tons after tons of prepared soil for repairs. In late 2017 all the drainage lines on the main training/floodlight area were fully repaired, but have sunk and plans are in hand to repair them in the New Year

Again Richard led the way with the repairs to the Main Pitch on the Nat West Rugby Force Weekend in June, but with the hot dry summer seeding was pointless and although it was completed in early October further growth will be required before full games can be accommodated.

Chairman, Martin Beecham, led the way at the start of the new season along with the efforts by volunteers to repair the deep cracks on pitches 2 and 3 and although seeming to be an endless task as the soil kept disappearing down endless gullies etc we got there in the end help by some long awaited rainfall.

You may have noticed that most of our goalposts were either leaning, bent or not level. Well the posts on pitches 2 and 3 have now been straightened up, levelled and concreted. We also have replacement posts for the main pitch stored away (strong and sturdy steel, rather than weak aluminium) and we are aiming to replace them in the New Year.

So, what's next?

Planning application has now been submitted for the construction of a corridor joining the new clubhouse to the toilet block, including a storage room for the new Bar, together with an enclosed entrance lobby on the front of the Clubhouse, to help keep wind and rain at bay on entry. Buildings Regulation application will also be submitted shortly.

Internally, the all-important Bar, which has been partly constructed, will be installed shortly in the new Clubhouse area, followed by the fitting of the suspended ceiling and the second fix electrics. And, our plumbing contractor is standing by ready to extend the existing central heating system.

It will also be full steam ahead with the internal décor, including finishing the painting and completing the fixtures and fittings together with new flooring and lighting.

Outside Rob Allen is lined up to install a paved walkway in the Changing room quad and later around the Clubhouse once the additional building work has been completed.

Can you help?

Numerous jobs (large and small) still remain to be completed before the end of the season.

If you think to can make a contribution please do not hesitate to come forward and talk to either, Andy Delay, Martin Beecham, Peter Jullien or the Mini and Junior coordinators Peppa Saunders and Paul Wilks on Sunday mornings or via text or email (all details are on the website). Also keep your eye out on our Facebook pages and website for the call to arms as when we need helpers to complete projects.

Funding

You may be wondering how we have funded this Phase Three stage of the New Ground Development, which includes the access roadway and car park, utilities and Clubhouse Facilities. Phase One being the initial acquisition of the land and Phase Two the development of the pitches and ground.

To date, for Phase Three, we have raised just over **£200,000** and we believe we have a further **£35,000** in the pipeline. The amounts raised excludes all the voluntary time by club members, and the considerable benefits from our supporters with their 'free of charge (FOC)' contributions of labour, equipment and supplies and, although we have not put a value on these contributions, at the moment, they are considerable and very much appreciated.

We also very much appreciate the level of donations received (included in the £200.000) which now exceeds £70,000 and through grants and loans, some of which are interest free we have raised a further £85,000 with the balance from Club resources as well as fundraising events and HMRC repayments/contributions.

Some recent example of Club member fundraising include:

Adrian Dunbar (U14 parent) with Matt Craven took part in the annual Winter Wolf Run (a 10k with obstacles) raising over £900 for the Club. Tremendous effort.

One of our Vice President (VPs) regularly puts aside £2 coins from his change and we have recently received yet another donation.

The Ladies members, recently held their first afternoon tea, washed down with Prosecco, before a First Team Match. Proceeds from the tickets and raffle were donated to the Club.

Another supporter applies to his employer every year for them to match (financially) his volunteering contribution to the Club. (Something you may be able to do).

You too can make a difference too!

We also have schemes such as the **Club Lotto** and **Donate A Brick** to generate funding. Application forms are available in either Clubhouses or on our website. Alternatively contact Peter Jullien on Mobile 07958 340517 or e-mail peter.jullien@btinternet.com for further information

Many thanks to everyone that has got involved in the continuing development of the Club and for your continuing support as we look forward to an excellent 2019.

Peter Jullien

New Ground Development Co-ordinator