

Bonar Bridge Football Club Annual Report

July 2020 – June 2021



Creating togetherness, building dreams &
raising aspiration.

A Grassroots community football Club

with BIG dreams

Registered SCIO SC050022

Our Story

Bonar Bridge Football Club (BBFC) was originally founded in 1968. Registered as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) in 2019, the club is managed by a dedicated voluntary board of trustees with assistance from general volunteers.

The original club ceased in 2010 after 35 years of participating in the North Caledonian league. Providing the villages of the Kyle of Sutherland with a much-loved team to participate in, support, develop friendships and create valuable memories the club's cessation left a void for our remote rural communities.

In 2018 the club was reformed by a group of volunteers with a vision to create a holistic sporting and social opportunity for our communities, that would support all ages and abilities with clear development paths and long-term sustainability as a youth, league club, and community resource.

BBFC is more than just football; health, citizenship and community development are at the core of our aims. In just a few short years of reforming the club, so much has been achieved, and we hope you enjoy reading this snapshot of the past year.



The COVID Year



At the time of producing this annual report the world has suffered at the hands of a global pandemic and our communities have to date experienced over 15 months of restrictions and lockdowns. It has been a time of anxiety, change, insecurity, social isolation, sadness, loss, and loneliness. The effects of this are going to take time to recover from, people's general health and well being has suffered along with the emotional impact that a situation like this has on those across all ages. As a foundation community club and resource, like other community projects we are proud to have provided some level of support to our members throughout to assist with community resilience, maintaining a level of cohesion and connectivity to each other.

As with all sporting clubs during lockdown periods we were unable to offer any club training or matches so we took to online training and fitness challenges. Our most successful was the skipping challenge which engaged whole families, and from the feedback we received created a lot of fun. Each member was provided with a weighted indoor/outdoor skipping rope to hone their skills and reach a target of 100 skips.



As soon as it was permissible, we resumed senior training which as members of the North Caledonian league was the first of our clubs able to do so as part of a professional league.

The challenge of meeting all criteria to train and make this an enjoyable experience was implemented and delivered by the Coaches and Board and accepted admirably by all players. Our Junior club resumed in September 2020 – December and then once again in April 2021 after the second lockdown. We are now hopeful that there will be no more lockdowns so we can all enjoy a sustained period of normality.

Junior Club

The Junior club is for ages 5 -11, split into two sessions every Friday P1-P3 and P4-P7. The club has been running to date for 7 years and has membership of over 70 children with 50 regularly attending the training sessions each week. The Junior club was the starting point for the reforming of the club and the membership is evidence of how wanted and needed this is. The clubs are for all children of all abilities and are gender mixed. The club brings together children from all areas of the Kyle of Sutherland dispersed populations, and our outlying neighbours assisting in the development of cohesion and the formation of friendships between children who attend one of the five small schools in the area. This is also a benefit to the transition of primary children joining those from other primary schools at secondary where friendships have already been formed. Assisting with facilitating a more cohesive younger generation and creating a club identity, as the second lockdown hit in December, we gave our youngsters an early Christmas present, each child was issued with a full training kit which they proudly wear for every training session.



Head Junior Coach David Anderson, with support from the Board, volunteers and with assistance from young adults who participate in the senior team have created a fun, inclusive and consistent Junior club.

In addition to club training, we have been able to organise a few friendly games providing the children with the opportunity to experience competition, team spirit and good sporting practices. In May we were able to enter a junior tournament, and with the growing membership able to field three teams. The tournament was thoroughly enjoyed by all the children and parents alike and was a great way to celebrate moving out of lockdown.



Holly P4 Bonar Bridge

“the competition was hard but lots of fun. That was the first time I have played in a tournament and I liked wearing the kit”

Charlie P6 Ardgay

“I like football and the club a lot. It’s fun, enjoyable and I get to see my friends and keep fit”.

Harry P1 Bonar Bridge

“I like the club because you get football matches and I get to play with my friends, I felt really happy when I scored goals”

Nathan P6 Lairg

I like the football club because it’s friendly and I get to play in matches against other teams. I also enjoy the training drills as they are good fun. I think Davey is good at coaching.

Secondary – New this year



Noticing a gap in the current training age groups, Chair and junior coach David Anderson has been keen to start training for High School age groups (S1-6). These sessions started in April offering fitness and football to young people in that age bracket on a Tuesday evening 6-7.30pm. They have been a huge success, already supporting nearly 20 young people, keeping their fitness up and hopefully preparing them for the time they will be able to join the Senior team. We are delighted with the turnout every week and they have already experienced a friendly game against another club. We are aiming to enter this group into the North of Scotland league in the Autumn.



Engaging with young people is at the heart of the BBFC. Providing young people with clear pathways to continue in sport and fitness has clear links to their continued engagement with sport as adults. The provision of a secondary club now provides full club pathways, junior to secondary, secondary to senior.

At a time when young people are developing into young adults the club is assisting them into understanding citizenship, good health & well-being, and providing them with transferable skills. This year we have become members of Youth Highland which will provide us with support and guidance and a youth network.

Senior Club

In 2019 the club successfully re-entered the North Caledonian League. With a squad of 25 players ranging in age from 16 to 47 the team entered the league with gusto and commitment and in the 2020-21 season we have even had some wins 😊 The Senior team have shown a big improvement over the period with the managers, even during this difficult time, providing a solid foundation and stability for the club to continue to build and move the attainment of the team forward. The senior team have signed up again for the upcoming 2021/22 North Caledonian league which starts in August. Managers Rob Mitchell and Scott Macgruer are looking forward to building on the foundations laid and hopefully a full season of training and matches. The club is delighted that they have agreed to stay on and take the first team forward into the 2021-22 season.



MACLEOD & MACCALLUM NORTH CALEDONIAN LEAGUE
21st November 2020

NORTH CALEDONIAN CUP	LEAGUE 1
Invergordon 4-1 Inverness Ath	Halkirk Utd P-P Orkney
Golspie Suth 6-0 Nairn County	
Loch Ness 3-2 St Duthus	LEAGUE 2
Thurso P-P Alness Utd	Bonar Bridge 5-0 Scourie

Senior Players of the Season

Stan Keith: Joint Players Player of the year and top scorer



Tommy McClenaghan: Supporters Player of the year



Andrew Gow: Joint Players player of the year and Managers Player



Senior Club Managers: Rob Mitchell and Scott Macgruer, with Chair David Anderson and Board Trustee Caroline Munro

Club Developments

The club received extremely exciting news in February that we had been successful in securing funds of £64k to refurbish our clubhouse, bringing the facility up to modern standards and maintaining a community asset for years to come. The clubhouse was unusable, so this is a real bonus to us and a step closer to our ambition of transforming the whole area. Work is currently being undertaken and the committee expect works to be completed late summer 2021.



Sharing the news of our funding award, some committee and club members



We would like to thank RWE Rosehall windfarm, SSE Achany Windfarm, The National Lottery xxx fund, Criech and Ardgay Beinn Tharsuin windfarm fund for providing the funds for us to deal with the above mess which will have such a positive impact on our club, the members and supporters.

We would also like to thank all those who kindly donated to our Christmas raffle and those who purchased tickets helping to raise xxxxx towards the refurbishment.

Prior to submitting our funding applications for the refurbishment, we asked the community to send us a letter or email to support our efforts and the response we received was phenomenal. Over 150 letters from young to old were sent in all telling us what the club meant to them and our communities. And we loved reading every one of them. Some telling us of what the club meant to them during their younger years and what it means to them now as their own children participate, how the club provides a social opportunity for older spectators and the pure joy expressed by the youngest at being part of a club. Thank you all for supporting the club's efforts and letting us know we were pursuing something the community wanted and needed.

Committee Development



This year we have assisted two more committee members to achieve a certificate in Emergency First Aid and have continued to meet all requirements for the North Caledonian League. In addition to this has been the mountain of paperwork to deal with for Covid compliance which we have fully met and implemented at all clubs.

In addition to becoming members of Youth Highland we have also taken membership with Voluntary Groups Sutherland which will support our connections and partnership work.

It has been necessary for the club to change its constitution from a single tier SCIO charity to a two tier SCIO charity to enable us to achieve our future ambitions, and this process has been successfully completed with the Scottish Charities regulator OSCR.

Community Development

The football club recently had its first ever golf day - to raise funds - This was generously sponsored by Caldar Electric. The club was honoured to have Ross County Football Club CEO Steven Ferguson attend having overseen yet another successful season for the Staggies, in the Scottish Premier League. The day was a huge success in raising vital funds for the club and everybody in attendance thoroughly enjoyed them selves.



Throughout the year we encourage our members to take pride in their playing field and surroundings, arranging litter picks and highlighting to dog users the importance of cleaning up after their pets. The area is a community resource which we are raising awareness of, as to the importance of looking after it.



The latest addition to our training schedule is Geriatric Football for over 30s! The committee constantly strives to have the club reach out and provide benefits to the whole community so decided to start an informal (and fun!) over 30s kickabout on a Tuesday at 7.30pm (after High School training) This light hearted session is open to all community members of all abilities and fitness levels.

Future Plans

The club remains in dialogue with the Highland Council pertaining to the community buy out of Migdale Park and has applied for a transfer. If successful we will then embark on a programme to remedy the issues of poor drainage, pitch quality, lighting and other resources to make this a fit for purpose community recreational area.



As owners of the car park area we are still continuing with our efforts to improve this aspect of the club, in winter it becomes an ice rink and the lighting is very poor.

Finance

The club currently achieves a small income through player donations and small sponsorship from businesses. Financially the Football club is secure and meeting statutory financial obligations. The club can enter the new football season in the knowledge that day to day running costs and equipment needs can be covered over the next year as required.

Our Funders

Thank you for your support, encouragement and belief 😊



Board of Trustees

David Anderson (Chair), Carrie Veters (Secretary) Gavin Ryder (Treasurer)

Scott Veters, Caroline Munro, Nene Maclean, Ryan Maclean, Doris Calder, Aldi Calder, Steven Christie.

Chairs Message

Despite this being a year of start, stop, start, stop reading this report I am amazed and proud of how much the club and its community has achieved. The refurbished clubhouse is going to be a major improvement for the club and will really assist us with creating an identity for the players, supporters and broader community helping with cohesion and resilience. This year particularly has shown us how important it is to be supportive and the difference that can make to us all in how we can manage our health and well-being, not just during times of crisis but in our everyday lives. The club has been brilliant in its response to the covid situation and made real efforts to keep connected. I would like to say a huge thankyou to the Board of Trustees for all their hard work and commitment, the coaches who give the club such a tremendous amount of their own time and energy, our players and supporters who show us volunteers week in week out the positive difference our efforts are making.

I would also like to add that I am now a happy geriatric footballer 😊

David Anderson

