



## Newsletter No 4 - November 2011

**Dear Parents, Guardians and Carers,**

We can't believe it's almost Christmas. It feels as if the football season has only just begun. A Merry Christmas to you all from the Committee at AFC Henley.

### **A new beginning at Jubilee Park**

We have now started training on the new artificial surface, technically known as Rhino Turf, but which is now part of what will from now on be called Jubilee Park.

Even though the new Rhino Turf is basically a hockey pitch, its surface has a softer pad underneath, so there is more give and a better bounce of the ball. There are also enough brand new goals for up to four simultaneous mini-games. The players and coaches are already really enjoying the experience.

### **Capital programme**

We have quite a major capital programme planned for the next two years, details of which are listed below:

Drainage, water and electricity to Tesco site	Approx £5000 (tied in with the Tesco pavilion below )
New Pavilion for Harpsden	Approx £15,000 (50% to finance)
New Pavilion for Tesco	Approx £70,000
Refurbish Tesco Pitches	Approx £15,000
Repair water damaged changing rooms	Approx £2000
Kit Sponsorship (shirts or rain jackets)	Approx £500 per team

As we have no on-site toilet facilities at our ground, items 1 and 3 are becoming urgent.

We will be looking for funding for these projects. If anyone is prepared to help, either with donations, expert help or fundraising, please email [dtrinke@transcom.net](mailto:dtrinke@transcom.net).

We are at last able to start looking at these projects because we have finally achieved our first major objective of putting an excellent football training programme together for all players and coaches. This has taken about three years.

### **Charter Standard obligations**

As an FA Chartered Standard Community Club (the highest award a voluntary club can achieve) we have to agree, and maintain, standards set by the FA. This is why our approach to the development of our players is so deliberately child-centred and our ethos built around fairness and learning skills. The Mini-Soccer Centre framework continues to work very well as preparation for entry to league football at U9.

What has also worked is our equal play and rotation policy within the younger teams. This has led to our having some excellent 11-a-side teams at U12 and U13. For example, the U12 Hammers are currently 5th in EBYFL Div.1 (of five divisions) while the U13 Stars are 2nd in Div.2 (of seven divisions).

We always make an effort to improve the players in the less experienced teams in these older age groups so that they all have the opportunity to be upgraded and play at a higher level, if that is what is best for them.

### **Transition from Mini-Soccer Centre to league football**

This year, for the first time, we are trialling an extension of the role of our senior Mini-Soccer Centre coach (Shelley Strange) to include the U9s. The aim is to soften the transition to league football for both players and volunteer coaches, by giving them professional coaching support during training while in their first year of competitive football. We will evaluate how well it has worked at the end of the season.

If you have any questions about mini-soccer, or the Saturday morning Mini-Soccer Centre itself, please speak to the relevant managers below (contact details on [www.afchenley.com](http://www.afchenley.com)).

- U9: Neil Hudson
- U10: Matt Jones
- U11: Andy Oldham
- Mini-Soccer Centre: Trevor Howell

### **When do we start streaming players?**

Our policy hitherto has been to grade players at U12, when they go to secondary school and move up to 11-a-side.

From next season the EBYFL are introducing 9-a-side football for U11s and U12s. However we will still continue to grade the players at U12, i.e. when they go to secondary school.

The assessment process for the current U11s (via mini matches) will begin immediately after the end of the season, and the appointment of coaches for the teams will be announced after the new teams have been confirmed.

The assessment will be carried out by our Head Coach, Andy McIntosh, and Coach Development Manager, Andy Homent.

Whatever the changes we ask of your child, we will always continue to provide league football for all children at whatever standard is applicable.

We are not an 'elitist' club. Our aim is to offer football for everyone, supported by a good standard of coaching, and to ensure that all our members receive an equal share of playing time and can play to the best of their ability.

### **The older age groups**

Our U14s, U15s and U16s continue to play at our Harpsden pitch (although the pavilion is now unusable and will have to be refurbished or replaced). After Christmas the U16s will be assessed by Henley Town FC, one of our associated Henley Football Partnership clubs, with a view to some players being of the standard to play for Henley Town's Allied Counties Youth League team at U17.

The intention of Henley Town FC and ourselves is to integrate more local players into the Henley adult teams, providing a great opportunity for them to eventually play in the Hellenic League.

Other options include retaining an U17 team at AFC Henley (numbers permitting) or moving to teams run by our other Henley Football Partnership member, Henley YMCA FC.

## Club Principles

Finally, we have copied below our club philosophy and ethos for 5-11 year olds. We will concentrate on the older age groups in the next newsletter.

We are aware that some parents do not agree with all we do, but we stand by our beliefs and, as a committee, have agreed that we will continue in this way. We have had advice from the FA and top coaches as to the content of our philosophy.

Whilst we are happy for our coaches to update parents on the objectives for both the team and the individual players, we would ask you not to ask them to move away from our core beliefs. We don't have individual team policies but a single club ethos that applies to all.

Best regards,

**ClIr Dieter Hinke**

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### Summary of club principles (ages 5-11)

If parents and coaches focus solely on winning and being the best, then young players are likely to also share these views. As a result, some will think less of themselves in terms of ability and develop fewer friendships with team members.

If coaches provide more support and make individual players feel they are valued, then they are more likely to enjoy playing football. This will lead them to having a more positive belief about their ability and they will develop more friendships with team members.

Of the following two coaching behaviours, we are totally committed to B.

A: 'Play to win'	B: 'Play to master'
The score-line is the most important thing.	Learning the skills of the game as the most important thing.
Being critical of mistakes.	Encouraging and supporting players when they make mistakes.
Promoting a <i>play for your place</i> mentality.	Giving every player a fair chance, regardless of ability, and encouraging an <i>it's ok to lose</i> mind-set.
Expecting high standards from players or giving special attention to elite players.	Treating all players as equals.

The approach above is supported and endorsed by the Football Association and based on modern research into *young player development*.

Players mostly learn by doing – practising, learning from mistakes, watching and copying.

Hence equal playing time and rotation of playing positions is the most conducive way of learning, and therefore improving, *game awareness and understanding*.

In order for players to develop, they must have experience.