

## **Groundwork South Trust Ltd.**

### **Stuart Dudley – Sports Development Manager**

#### **Refurbishment of Saltmill Park**

The Saltmill Park all-weather pitch has been in situ for over 12 years, which is beyond the manufacturer's guarantee of usability. It is currently uneven and patchy in areas across the surface, and at present we are only just managing to maintain the surface sufficiently to ensure the pitch is still usable/abiding by health and safety regulations as it reopens following the COVID-19 enforced closure. It currently requires significant resource to address failures in performance such as gaps appearing where the seams meet, fibres lying flat instead of standing up to imitate grass, and insufficient infill unevenly distributed.

If the site is not refurbished shortly after May 2021 the pitch will become unusable due to unrepairable areas which would result in the pitch being closed to affiliated match play and eventually all activity, forcing the 11 home clubs and many other teams that use the pitch to play elsewhere.

Groundwork South's aim is for the new Saltmill Pitch is to lead the way in carbon neutral pitch design by ensuring that it is able to deliver the CIL's Carbon Neutral programme outcomes and help Cornwall reach its aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 (Carbon neutral Cornwall – 'The Carbon Neutral Challenge' 2020). We can say with 100% certainty that all parts of the refurbishment will be an improvement in respect of Carbon impact on what is currently in place, from pitch, to fencing, to lighting.

Discreet components being improved –

1. Replacement of pitch, shock pad and infill system with latest carbon friendly materials
2. Perimeter fencing and gates being upgraded, improved to add kick boards, boot scrapers, drainage and security/access
3. Floodlights changed to carbon friendly LED, improving sustainability, electricity usage and bills

We will choose the contractor to undertake the work based on their commitment to our aim for carbon neutrality and have already made good progress in identifying like-minded, forward thinking companies.

#### **Minimising Carbon Impact**

We also wish to minimise the carbon impact of the rubber crumb used on many 3G pitches as much as possible by upgrading the fence surrounds so that loose filaments do not migrate outside of the pitch, with the risk of fibres breaking down and further introducing synthetic fragments into surrounding soils and watercourses a known environmental issue.

The ball catch fencing surrounding the pitch is in need of improvements to enable kick boards to be installed preventing loss of infill into the surrounding park area and the security gates require replacing to install fit for purpose locking systems and access.

A negative aspect of local users travelling to sports facilities outside of Saltash is the carbon impact as a result of having to rely on car/bus usage. Cornwall's current carbon footprint is 4.1 million tonnes Co2e (2016 data year). Compared to what is believed to be safe levels of carbon dioxide for everyone in the world by 2050, this is almost seven times where Cornwall needs to be

(cornwall.gov.uk). A single car journey from Saltash to Launceston, for example, emits 8.29kg Co<sub>2</sub>, meaning a return car journey carried out 14 times a season for relocated home games would emit 232.26kg Co<sub>2</sub> per vehicle – enough to power a single house for over a week.

The other alternative for users would be local grass pitches, operated by Cornwall Council. This would see a large increase in usage and therefore maintenance resulting in machinery having transported around the county more frequently, adding to carbon emissions and costs. The peak season for most 3G pitches is the wet/winter months; alternative local authority soggy grass pitches are often closed due to bad weather, therefore the availability of an all-weather surface becomes essential in sustaining sports/physical engagement in this period.

### **Maintaining Local Interest in Sport**

Maintaining local interest in physical activity is also crucial; Saltmill Park is located in the Saltash area, where 16,760 residents face various health, social, economic and environmental issues and fall into groups that have been made more vulnerable by COVID-19; 8.9% live in health deprivation hotspots, 5.4% receive Disability Living Allowance (compared to 4.7% England average) and 11.5% are living with a limiting long-term illness, putting them in the at risk category for COVID-19.

This project will allow us to continue engaging and inspiring local people with all abilities to engage in sports and the facility (as volunteers or players). This will ensure our pitch & sports programme is inclusive, represents all members of society, and is accessible to locals, allowing them to avoid seeking high carbon cost alternatives.

### **Desired Outcomes**

The Saltash Neighbourhood Development plan presents their priorities including: improving access to health facilities, improving access to community facilities, improving quality of life and social cohesion to improved physical health and wellbeing from exercise and relaxation, as well as providing space for recreation and exercise. The renovation of the pitch as a high quality multi-use sports pitch will contribute towards meeting the above targets and addresses local need, along with helping reduce emissions from transportation by reducing travel miles as much as we can.

By resurfacing this pitch we will guarantee an additional 10 years+ (up to 25 years with the right maintenance and early issue recognition, using the newest technologies) delivery of sporting activities, not only serving established regular user groups, with a focus on grassroots football pitch hires and community games, but also attracting interest from new groups of all ages & abilities including those with learning/physical disabilities.

Introducing kickboards around the perimeter of the pitch, along with boot washing stations and drains, will help us significantly reduce the amount of potentially environmentally harmful fibres that are transported outside of the facility.

Improvements to the fencing will also assist in managing the wider site including:

- Meeting Health and safety regulations.
- Allowing the game to run smoothly (reduction in fetching the ball)
- Allowing other sports activities to take place adjacent to the pitch
- Park visitors walking safely around the pitch.

By regenerating this pitch we will be able to continue and expand our wide programme of sporting activities with established and new groups & encourage new individuals (the hardest to reach) to engage in sports/physical activities.

The renovation will also deliver a wide variety of benefits to the communities and individuals living in the area. These benefits will include bringing:

- **OPPORTUNITIES:**  
**TRAINING:** Providing volunteering opportunities for both local youths and adults, which will enable them to gain formal qualifications and valuable on the job training; directly improving their future prospects & creating positive role models for young people & adults.
- **REDUCED CARBON EMISSION:** As the only 3G sports pitch in the local vicinity, Saltmill Park will reduce carbon emission by virtue of remaining open, with local users not needing to seek alternatives further afield. We will also use incentives to encourage users to avoid travelling to the pitch via car, along with installing innovative new facilities that will help reduce carbon emission.
- **SPORTS ACTIVITIES:**  
**LOW COST:** free and/or low cost supervised sports activities after school and during holiday time (meal provided for children on Free School Meals during holiday time).  
**TARGETTED SESSIONS:** Delivering a wide sports programme catering to all members of the community including (not exclusive): Young people. People with disabilities, Girls and women only sports sessions, Young/older men sessions, Older people sports/physical activities programme etc.).
- **LASTING LEGACY:**  
**HEALTH:** Embedding positive healthy lifestyle choices, this will directly reduce the need for doctor visits/call outs, & assist people in being able to manage their mental health, reducing NHS increasing costs after the effects of COVID-19.

### **Beneficiaries of the project?**

There are a wide range of people with various physical and mental needs (young & old) that use the facility, from people who suffer with depression & anxiety to people with physical disabilities and learning difficulties. Over 5.4% of Saltash residents are classed as long term sick or disabled which is on a par with Cornwall. As part of this project we will aim to engage and inspire people with all abilities (people with disabilities, people with learning difficulties & older people) to engage in sports and the facility (as volunteers or players). This will ensure our pitch & sports programme is inclusive & represents all members of society.

Over the last 12 years Groundwork South has been actively engaging members of the Saltash communities in a range of sports programmes, supporting established and new sports groups within the local area. We currently have 20 active groups utilising the space for sporting activities, accounting for over 100 hours usage per week during the dark and wet period of the year: groups such as the Local Youth and Junior Football Clubs offering opportunities for boys and girls, Saltash Youth, Saltash Utd Juniors, training for the local Rugby Club, Local Adult Clubs offering opportunities for men and women, young children's football groups, walking football, exercise classes and many more.

### **Young people**

The nearest community to the pitch are in the 30% most deprived wards according to IMD stats, with low educational attainment compared to regional average, increased risk of all mortality and lower life expectancy being significant factors.

Within Saltash there are 5 local primary schools (within a 1 mile radius) of which 12.5% of pupils are eligible for free schools meals, this equates to around 150 young people aged 8 to 13, many of whom are from single parent families, with multiple siblings and often parents/carers work in unreliable zero hours contracts or low-paid shift based jobs. Many live in cramped conditions in social housing, with little access to private outdoor play space, "Social housing levels are higher in Saltash than across Cornwall".

According to the National Child Measurement Programme (2018), 26% of children living in the most deprived areas were obese compared to 11.4% in the least deprived areas. Within Saltash 14% of children are classed as obese and or at risk of becoming obese.

### **Adults**

There are over 16,000 people in Saltash of which 8,187 are women, higher than the number of men. The Health Survey for England (YEAR) found that women living in more deprived areas are more likely to be obese, regardless of the measure used. In men there is a small decrease in obesity prevalence as income increases, although the relationship between obesity and socioeconomic status varied when different socioeconomic indicators, such as educational attainment, area deprivation and social class, were used. For both men and women obesity prevalence decreases with increasing levels of education.

This highlights the link between deprivation, poor health, lack of opportunities & economic stability, poor social networks & lifestyle choices.

### **Partnerships**

As a predominantly football-based facility our most prevalent partners (and both customers and beneficiaries) are the local clubs who provide opportunities for people of all ages to participate in training and competitive games. Our immediate local clubs are Saltash Utd Juniors and Seniors, Saltash Borough Mens, Ladies and Veterans, Saltash Youth and Saltash Rugby Club, with whom we have a new partnership. We also have clubs using us from further afield, from Marine Academy Plymouth Juniors and Ladies, Ivybridge Town FC in the East to Liskeard and Looe in the West. We also host Plymouth Kurdish FC who play their home games and train on the pitch weekly. PKFC was a originally an informal friends group and with the help and advice from our Sports Development Manager have formed a club and entered a local league, providing activity and social connections for players from BAME backgrounds.

Wider partners bringing value and support are Cornwall FA who use our venue for their Learning Courses for Coaches and Referees and provide advice and evidence of the need for our facility as part of their Local Football Facility Plan which demonstrates that Saltmill Park is a priority site to enable the development and retention of football participation in South East Cornwall.

This support is reflected in gaining an extension to our inclusion on the FA's Pitch Register which allows us to host competitive matches for affiliated clubs (for season 2020/21). Our pitch was due to be removed from this register due to it being at the end of its usable lifespan, but with an updated and intense period of maintenance and the fact we were shut down for several months due to the COVID-19 pandemic we have been allowed one further season before being taken off unless the pitch surface gets replaced.

For the facility upgrade project we have also formed a strong partnership with the Football Foundation, one of the original partners providing funding for the facility when it was first built in 2008. They have provided information and guidance around how to shape our project development and although their policy is to not give further funding to a previously funded project, we have benefitted from their expertise and because of our extenuating circumstances are willing to provide funding to match 1/3rd of what we can raise towards the project ourselves.

As part of the wider area that forms Saltmill Park, we also help manage the skatepark facility. A major partner in supporting us with this, Junkyard CiC, provide youth work interaction, promotion and physical improvements and repairs as needed. We also have strong relationships with our other youth providers, The Core, Livewire, Cornwall College Saltash and the Primary/Secondary schools. We have undertaken valuable partnership work with these organisation in previous school holidays around providing physical activity opportunities for local young people who are eligible for free school meals and this has included providing them with cookery skills and free nutritious self-prepared lunches as part of the activity days.

### **How the project fits with the Cornwall Local Plan/Local Neighbourhood Development Plan**

Our project is in line with item 18.6 under the heading 'Infrastructure' of the [Cornwall Local Plan, PP17 Cornwall Gateway Community Network Area Section](#), which reads 'Fundamental to the delivery of the strategy will be the enhancement of Saltash's infrastructure, including transportation; primary, secondary and post 16 education; utilities; green space; healthcare; **leisure facilities** and burial capacity.

Our aim is to provide a facility that is fully capable of catering to local need and helping Cornwall achieve its carbon neutral target. Without this pitch being renovated a wide range of cohorts will not be able to engage in any form of sporting activities in Saltash due to the sheer costs associated with hiring spaces, forcing them to travel further afield to continue engaging in sports, ramping up levels of carbon emission in Cornwall.

This FA registered pitch is an important space for South East Cornwall and for the young people and others who make use of the space. Once this pitch is renovated we will be able to engage with our primary and secondary groups; our Sport Programme is designed to encourage Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline & Sportsmanship, with Carbon Limitation aiming to be added. We achieve this by delivering bespoke sports & physical activity programmes which cater to a range of needs/abilities for example:

**YOUNG & DISABLED:** We will link with local SEN schools and support groups such as Milford School which caters for pupils with specialism in meeting the needs of children, young people and adults with complex needs, including severe and profound and multiple difficulties, complex medical needs and autistic spectrum conditions.

**AT RISK OF OFFENDING/EX OFFENDERS:** We will utilise sports activities to attract the hardest groups to reach including those who are at risk or offending and ex-offenders and their families. We will achieve this by working with organisations such as the Dorset, Devon and Cornwall Community Rehabilitation Company, the Local Authority and other support groups.

**OLDER PEOPLE:** We will offer "Omph", sit and Be Fit and Walking sessions from our base during the day as part of our partnership with Healthy Cornwall, the Public Health area delivery team. We have recently also started a walking Football group, who are going from strength to strength and include

men as young as 40 and up to 70, who are coming along to make new friends, (reducing social isolation) form new social connections, get fitter and lose weight.

**DISABILITIES:** On the back of the success of our walking football group, we initiated sessions that have received referrals from Healthy Cornwall and aimed at men between 30 and 60 who have a high BMI measurement and are either at risk, or already challenged by Type 2 Diabetes.

**CYCLE FIT:** We aim to introduce new cycle fitness classes, including group cycling to improve cycling technique/fitness, with the aim of actively encouraging our users to make cycling their preferred mode of transport, further limiting carbon emission.

## **How the project fits with the Carbon Neutral programme outcomes**

### **Circular Economy**

In addition to adhering to Groundwork's recycling and reuse policy, including encouraging users to recycle as much as possible, our aim is to repurpose the replaced 3g pitch by donating parts of it to local gardens. This will allow the turf to be reused within the community, staying within the local area and greatly decreasing potential for carbon emissions as a result of resource extraction.

### **Green Travel Plan**

Our Green Travel Plan will encourage local users to travel to Saltmill Park via bicycle rather than by car, offering incentives to those who do, such as reduced booking fees and classes. We aim to greatly reduce the number of users travelling by car in Saltash in order to help Cornwall achieve its carbon neutral goals. Road transport makes up 44% of total emissions in Cornwall and highlights how individual actions and choices have the potential to make a big impact (Carbon neutral Cornwall – 'The Carbon Neutral Challenge' 2020). By installing an area for safe bike locking, we can encourage our users further to opt for cycling rather than driving.

### **Expansion of renewable energy**

We will maintain our commitment to being a fully green energy provider. 96% of our energy is renewable under our current agreement. We can also install an improved system using kick boards to prevent infill leaving the pitch, and a less microplastic heavy material than the current rubber crumb used. We will also install exit scrapers to remove microplastics from boots, with drain/grating for it to be discarded into and re-used on the pitch.

### **Climate resilient communities, landscapes and infrastructure**

the Park is a community-used sports venue which we are looking to adapt to facilitate carbon neutral usage and energy output. These changes will allow us to raise awareness of the importance of carbon neutrality throughout the local community and the climate risks that could be faced if changes are not adhered to. We also have a desire to improve the planting mix around the outside of the pitch through volunteer planting sessions to allow more trees and less invasive, prickly vegetation and intend to seek approval for work with Saltash Environment Agency and our local tree warden from Cornwall Council to undertake this.

### **Increasing carbon drawdown**

We are looking into innovative solutions, recognising the former use of the site as a landfill tip that involves converting methane into a renewable energy source, capturing and removing it from sight

to prevent greenhouse damage. Abundant methane gas can be transferred into more useful synthesis gas, which in turn can be used to power lighting surrounding the pitch in a carbon friendly manner.