

Alresford RUFC – LDF Submission 2010

Management Summary

Please find below the Business Plan for Alresford Rugby Club which, after 19 years of participation in senior rugby, is now aiming to expand and develop its position in the local community as well as grow within the Hampshire rugby playing fraternity.

The club is fortunate in having, for its size, a number of competent volunteers, team coach's, first aid personnel and a clear management structure. Financially the club is in a sound position and although it has no 'bar' income it is well backed by local sponsors and some key fund raising activities.

The club is fast approaching a cross roads where it cannot guarantee to continue playing on an outside town, grace and favour pitch, whilst in the meantime it has attracted more and more young players who have left the Perins School, the majority who live within the town.

The club requires a pitch in the town boundary and with the support of the local council, and a piece of suitable land available next to Arlebury Park, it has a golden opportunity to relocate its playing base to the centre of town. This will enhance the opportunity for young players to train and play, for the club, deepen relations with Perins School (which is over the road from Arlebury Park) and provide an improved match day experience for players, opponents and supporters.

The Town Council is prepared to assist in this vital initiative by sponsoring a Compulsory Purchase Order for the land adjacent to Arlebury Park. The land is sufficient to provide 2 pitches, and a training area, whilst the rugby club already enjoys the changing, showering and match day entertainment facilities at Arlebury Park.

The cost of the CPO is estimated at £250,000 (tbc) and the club is looking to fund part of this on an interest free loan basis, from the Rugby Football Union. The remainder is available in a fund set aside where housing developments have paid a fee to the local council. The club and council are still pursuing other funding opportunities such as 'Open planning spaces' and 'Land infill/set aside' as well as opportunities with a local developer.

Alresford Town is currently below the required recreational spaces target set by this government and is therefore looking to assist with projects such as this. If Alresford Rugby Club is unable to take advantage of this offer it may never have the opportunity again.

**ARUFC Senior Management Committee
October 2010**

1) History & Heritage

Playing - The club was formed during the summer of 1991, following the entering of a team in the Winchester Easter Sevens Tournament, and played its first full XV a side match in the September of that year. Following a very encouraging first season and the recruitment of additional players the club entered the recently created Hampshire Division 3, in 1992.

After completing its first season in Hampshire 3 the club formed a 2nd XV and has continued to field 2 adult teams throughout the last 13 years.

Following promotion and then relegation from Division 2, on a couple of occasions, the 1st XV finally reached Hampshire 1 in 2004. Also in this season the club managed to reach the semi-finals of the Hampshire Plate, our best performance to date.

The 2nd XV has gone from strength to strength, with greater numbers of players coming to the club, and entered the Hampshire Merit Table 3 three years ago.

Administration – Upon formation the club was run by a committee of volunteers many who were retired rugby players living in the town. The club has continued to rely on volunteers and avoided paying wages to any personnel.

Facilities – Initially the club secured usage of the pitch at Perins Secondary School, situated in the centre of town, and received within the same rental use of showers and changing rooms. Following the relaying of the school pitches, with the overfill from the M3 extension; the club had to move to Bighton village where it secured use of an old cricket pitch.

Social - The club has always maintained very close links with the Alresford community especially with the need to increase numbers of local players and youth coming through the education system. Originally the after match food and hospitality were provided in the Horse + Groom PH, whose landlords were keen members, before taking up new facilities at the Arlebury Park recreation facilities. Club members have continued to build positive relations with the town by providing general assistance and parking attendants for local events such as the Watercross Festival and Alresford Agricultural Show.

Finance – Starting on a borrowed school pitch and entertaining in the local public house the club has been engaged in fund raising activities, such as assisting local town events, as well as developing relations with local sponsors. With the growth in members and team players, albeit many are studying or only just starting work, the financial position has improved and is set to continue.

2) Current Position

Playing – Two adult XV's playing throughout the season. At the close of the 2006/7 season the 1st XV were relegated to Hampshire 3 whilst the 2nd XV recorded their highest placing of third in the Hampshire Merit Table 3. Numbers of players have increased over the past couple of years, with an influx from the local secondary school leavers, and although numbers are high the club has suffered from a number of retirements and serious injuries to some of the older more established 1st XV players.

At the beginning of 2010 a new 'mini's' section was established with almost 100 players aged from 4 – 14. Unfortunately they are having to use the astro-turf at Perins School because there is no centrally located rugby training area to play on.

The club has a number of coaches who have been sponsored through the various coaching level courses and is currently operating with a head coach, supported by a group of coaches who spread the responsibilities over the season. Training is every Tuesday night at Bighton although this season, due to increased numbers, training was on Thursday evenings as well.

Administration – The club operates under its constitution (Appendix 1) and has a fully functioning 'Senior' management committee, for 2006/7, consisting of:

President – Hugh Ogus
Chairman – Christopher Day
Secretary – Sue Bell
Treasurer – Gareth Thomas
Head Coach – John Weston

This operates with the 'playing' committee consisting of a 1st XV Captain + Vice Captain, 2nd XV Captain + Vice Captain, plus team managers of each team. The 'Club Captain' acts as a figurehead whilst there are positions concerned with Sponsorship, Membership, Fixtures and a Social Committee.

The club's purpose has been to promote, provide and encourage the 'Game' throughout Alresford Town and its surrounding villages and has the administrative support in place to follow this through.

Facilities – One pitch provided at the old cricket ground, in Bighton, on a 'grace and favour' arrangement with the landowner Simon McCowen. Bighton is situated 3 miles from Alresford town centre and provides the following facilities:

- Single pitch, with emergency access
- Floodlit training area with five raised lights

- Old cricket pavilion which is in a poor state of repair and cannot provide washing/changing facilities although there is electricity and running water

Please see attached letter from Simon McCowen (Appendix 2) which clearly states his position on our long term use of the Bighton facilities.

Arlebury Park Recreation Ground has recently completed its renovations and now provides the following facilities for the rugby club:

- Two changing rooms (new this year) with showers + toilets, as well as separate facilities provided for match officials
- Club house/bar facilities and a separate bar + meeting rooms for the rugby club
- Kitchen, providing hot cooked after match refreshments
- Paved car and coach parking

Perins School is situated directly opposite Arlebury Park and can still offer changing and shower facilities if more than two teams are playing at home. Likewise there are two pitches at the school although these are heavily overused at present and are not suitable for senior rugby or training purposes.

Although the match day situation has improved from previous seasons where players changed at one location, played at another (3 miles away) and then, following changing and showering enjoyed refreshments in a third location. At least pre and post match requirements are within Arlebury Park but there is still the ongoing issue with playing and training outside the town.

Social – The club enjoys a vibrant social climate with a balance of past players and a large number of youth coming through the ranks. As well as 62 paid up members, including some social members, the club has a number of Honary ‘Life’ Vice Presidents. Although the club has only just recently signed an agreement to have access to the new and improved facilities at Arlebury Park it has maintained a tradition of providing a number of events, each year, which cover the needs of all ages. These include:

- Summer Bar-b-Que (helps prepare for start of training)
- Annual Ball (part of profit donated to a local charity)
- Xmas Dinner + Disco (January fund raiser held at Alresford golf club)
- Autumn Race Night or similar fund raising event

These functions are used to invite sponsors, as well as other important guests, who support the club. Currently we have a strong involvement with the Perins Secondary School who, although there is no sixth form, provides the majority of our nucleus of young players. To maintain and develop this relationship we have assisted, where possible, with providing additional coaches, organising ‘coaching afternoons’ and sponsored one of their overseas tours by paying for a set of rugby shirts. We are currently in discussions to provide another set of shirts for their forthcoming South Africa tour.

The club has built up an excellent working relationship with the local community and is now automatically requested to provide general assistance, complete car parking duties and collect monies at large events such as the Watercress Festival and Alresford Agricultural Show.

As these links develop we attract more players + members and receive further offers from the local community with sponsorship and support.

Finance – Annual statement of accounts attached (Appendix 3) which shows the club in a healthy financial position. This is improving although the club has no income from bar takings or similar ventures. It relies on fund raising events, donations for tasks completed in the local community and match fees. Currently the club is receiving sponsorship from larger local companies, such as Zurich, Prospect Fencing and the Itchen Valley Brewery as well as local smaller businesses.

With regards to equipment the club owns the following:

- Six training lights
- Four sets of rugby posts
- A Rhino Scrummaging Machine
- Three full size tackle bags
- Ten smaller tackle bags
- Three sets of shirts (less than 12 months old)
- Two first aid kits

Legal – The club has a solicitor who is on call to handle any personal incidents such as accusations of foul play and basic criminal matters.

3) '*SWOT*' Analysis

Strengths:

- Numbers of players, increasing over past 3 seasons
- Age of players, currently we have one of the lowest average ages in 1st XV, we have ever seen
- Strength in depth with 2nd XV performing well in Merit Tables
- Strong links with Perins Secondary School
- Positive profile across local groups + societies
- Offer of assistance from local Town Council
- Number of sponsors willing to support club
- Use of Arlebury Park facilities for changing + entertaining
- Well drained pitch at Bighton, hardly ever had a game cancelled
- Training ground at Bighton, with floodlights for winter usage
- Club in healthy financial position with no debts

Weaknesses:

- Low average age of players has led to lack of experience in play
- No pitch available, at Arlebury Park, for either playing or training at Rugby
- Perins School pitches are heavily overused and not suitable for senior rugby
- Bighton Pitch only available on a 'grace and favour' arrangement
- No changing rooms or washing facilities available at Bighton
- Matches completed 3 miles from town centre causing issues with transport for players and supporters
- Changing at Arlebury Park, driving to Bighton, and then returning by car in muddy kit is not helpful for either team
- As above for training with issues for young players with no access to a vehicle
- Club does not own a 'Bar' so has to depend upon other revenue opportunities

Opportunities:

- Piece of land adjacent to Arlebury Park suitable in size and shape for rugby playing facilities
- Support from local Town Council in funding senior rugby facilities
- Arlebury Park facilities are underused by the local community and the rugby club is an important source of funding for the centre
- Playing + training facilities in town centre will provide a boost to numbers attending/available for both
- Closer links with Perins School which is situated across the road from Arlebury Park
- For future youth development i.e. under 18 junior rugby, in the long term future, will require facilities in town centre

Threats:

- Two neighbouring Clubs (Alton + Winchester) playing in higher leagues will 'poach' players if we cannot provide town centre facilities
- Pitch facilities removed at Bighton due to the 'grace and favour' arrangement ending
- Sponsorship from Town Council may not always be available if the club does not take advantage of it now
- Facilities at Arlebury Park may be reduced/removed if their revenues (bookings, bar + food) are not increased with greater use by their members and the Alresford townspeople

4) *The Club 'Vision'*

Short Term (Immediate) – To provide a playing and training area within the Alresford Town boundary. This land must be sufficiently close to Arlebury Park to enable the players, and other club members, to use the Park facilities and not have to drive to and from the pitch, either on a match day with opposition or for evening training.

To fully utilise and support Arlebury Park through players, members and our match day opposition eating and drinking in the clubhouse, throughout the season.

To continue developing the relationship with Perins School and feed through as many new players, from that school, as possible. As older players retire, etc, the numbers of younger players coming through should ensure we continue with a minimum of two XV's playing every week. The 1st XV will participate in the Hampshire Leagues whilst the 2nd XV will continue to participate in the Hampshire Merit Tables.

To continue forging working relationships with the local community and potential sponsors within the local area. The target being the club raises sufficient funds for its working capital from sponsorship and assisting at events such as the Alresford Agricultural Show. Also provide at least four 'major' social functions a year, three of which will cover partners and families, and not just the players and existing members.

Medium Term (Two to Three Years) – Through the development of our younger players and encouragement of further players, from Perins School, the club will aim to earn promotion to Hampshire Division 2. Similarly the club will aim to earn the right for promotion i.e. finishing in 1st or 2nd position, from Merit League 3.

To provide coaching and playing facilities for under 18's at Perins School. For example this may be through one evening session a week or support at weekends, during term time.

Following the provision of a playing and training area, within the town boundary, the club would aim to convert part of their land for a second rugby pitch.

Long Term (Three Years plus) – Through the development of our younger players and encouragement of further players, from Perins School and the surrounding area, the club will aim to earn promotion to Hampshire Division One. Similarly the club will aim to strengthen its position in the Merit League.

The club will aim to provide coaching, playing facilities and the necessary support for an under 18 Colts Team.

The club is aiming for at least 100 paid up members and will be an integral pillar in the ongoing development and survival of the Arlebury Park facilities.

5) Club Development Plan

The club has a number of short and medium term objectives which will aim to complete our stated vision and goals. However these are all linked to the providing of a pitch at Arlebury Park.

Objective	Actions	Timescale	Responsibility	Cost	Success
Provide a playing and training area within Town boundary	Through the Compulsory Purchase of land next to Arlebury Pk	1 – 5 yrs	Chairman and President supported by Alresford Town Council	£138,000	A pitch suitable for senior rugby is ready at Arlebury Pk
Develop the relationship with Perins in order we can generate additional players for 2 XV teams	Sponsor junior tour to S. Africa. Offer coaching and playing/pitch support to the school	Immediate	Club Treasurer Club coaches and Captain	£700 Time for coaching staff to prepare and roll out full support	New set of shirts for tour. Players who leave Perins will choose to join us.
Provide the facilities and support to gain new players and strengthen club teams	Build up relations with local town initiatives and ex-players from neighbouring clubs	Immediate	Senior Club Committee – Chairman, President, Hon Sec and Treasurer, supported by coaching staff	Time for all involved to plan and roll out recruitment strategies plus other events	Additional players will provide the base to gain promotion for both XVs to next division
Sufficient funding for the ongoing club running costs	Work with sponsors to provide necessary finance. Offer our services to local institutions with income earning potential	Immediate	Club Treasurer supported by Membership and the Sponsorship Secretary. Social Secretary through contacts in local area such as the Alresford ‘Pigs’ and Rotary etc.	Club has already produced a short marketing document to use with potential sponsors. Club has built good relations with these societies.	When we have sufficient funds in place to consider providing a second pitch, alongside the pitch and training area at Arlebury Pk
Provide the facilities and support to run an under 18 ‘Colts’ Team	Having established 2 senior teams the club will expand with support into a	3 – 5 yrs	Coaching and administration support from Senior Committee plus liaison with	Provide equipment, kit and insurance is at least £1000, and	An Alresford Colts team is up and running with

	team for those leaving Perins		school or community rugby coach	time costs for all those assisting	fixtures throughout the season
Support Arlebury Pk (inc council) via club members spending income in the bar etc	Playing at least 1 home match a week and training at least once a week with drinks/food to follow in A.P.	Immediate	Every club member and encouraged via Captains, Coach and the Senior Committee	Other than costs of advertising in match day programme, very few costs due	Income from the club covers the costs of opening Arlebury Pk for 2 nights a week

6) *Monitoring and Evaluation*

Once the above objectives have been agreed and the club is following the action plan it is important to review and update on a regular basis, either quarterly or half yearly.

This document will form part of the Senior Committee agenda and, similar to the present playing and social committees will ensure any sub-committees report on their specific progress in their areas of responsibility.

The Senior Committee will own this process and adopt the plan accordingly to ensure delivery of our vision and various objectives.

Christopher Day
Chairman ARUFC