

Colchester Gladiators

American Football Club

Mission Statement and Development Plan

Updated March 2013

Mission Statement

- *To provide the highest standard of "sport for all", regardless of age, gender and ability for all members of Colchester Gladiators American Football Club and the local community.*

Support for this plan

Internal Communication and Ownership

The writing of our club development plan is managed by the Club Chairman, who will be responsible for overseeing Club development, and the Management Committee. The Committee retain the right to appoint small working groups to monitor and drive development outside of the day-to-day management responsibilities of the Management Committee.

The Management Committee is obliged to communicate any changes and updates of the development plan with the membership, and actively seek input and ideas from all sections of the Club's membership. The final drafts of the development plan are agreed and rubber stamped by the Chairman and the Management Committee.

Once agreed a summary copy of the plan is posted on the clubs website, emailed to each member (where e:mail addresses exist) and is communicated via the Club's newsletter. In addition to this, the full club development plan is available upon request to any member and spectator at the Club.

The junior co-ordinator is specifically requested to distribute the summary version of the plan to all parents / carers, spectators, members and young people involved in the junior section.

The development plan will be reviewed annually by the Management Committee after consultation with the Club Members.

External Communication and Ownership

The Club will communicate our development plan to local teachers in the primary and secondary schools we work in partnership with and will communicate our plan to our local Sports Development Officer through our regular personal meetings.

The Management Committee conveys the support and resources available to us through the British American Football Association (BAFA).

Moving forward, the Club will not only circulate copies of the development plan to teachers/coaches at local schools, but will also actively seek their involvement in the updates and evolution of the plan in order for the Club to achieve all its aims with regard to youth development. This will be especially evident through the progression of the Colchester Academy of American Football (CAAF)

Self Help

The Management Committee group have a number of talents between them that support the writing, editing, and updating of our club development plan.

The Club actively encourages members to help contribute to the Club's development and the fulfilment of the development plan through volunteering their time and skills in many different spheres. The Club regularly invites work parties to sign up and contribute to the club, as well as using contacts and links to local business to further contribute, by financial means, or by donating their time.

In future the Club will look to survey the professions of their membership in order to approach members/parents who might be interested in applying their specific skills towards the Club's development.

American Football Development Groups

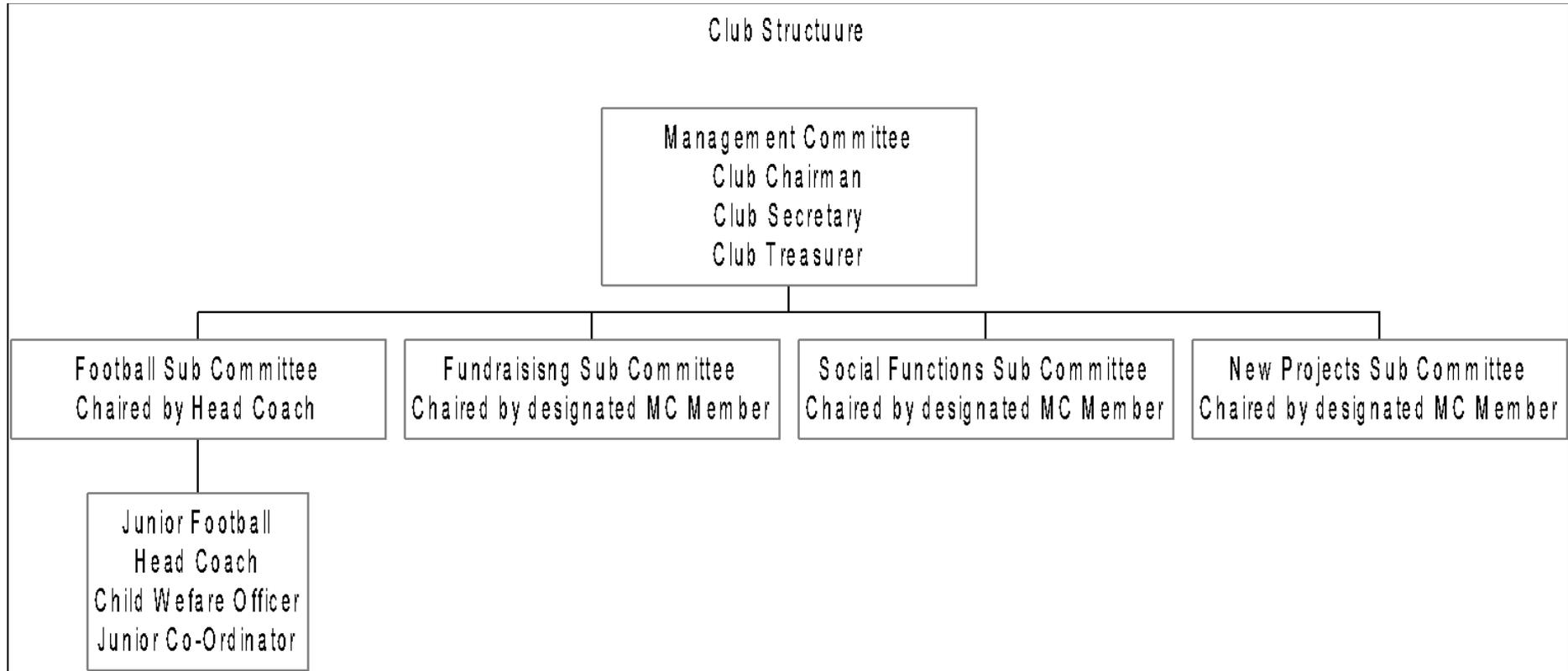
The Club intends to forge stronger links with BAFA and sends at least two representatives to all American Football development meetings on behalf of the Club. This has given us a much more established relationship with our National Governing Body, who will, in turn, provide a valuable resource for the Club in achieving all its goals in the future.

A summary of each meeting will be given to the Club's Management Committee and, where relevant, the Club Chairman devolves actions and information to the Club's sub-committees and membership

One to One Club Meetings

We have had a number of individual meetings with our Sport Essex Development Manager to inform and update them as regards the progression of the CAAF and to seek advice regarding funding and development of the Club's long-term objectives. We have also met on a number of occasions with Colchester Borough Council to discuss our development opportunities, with a particular emphasis on locating a permanent home venue for the Gladiators.

Structure



Objectives - 2008-2011

1. Improve community awareness to diversify and increase Club membership
2. Launch and develop structured American Football youth program
3. Implement and publish structured path for player development
4. Implement and publish structured path for development of football coaches and club officials
5. Improve equipment, training and game day facilities to enhance the end user experience

Improve community awareness to diversify and increase Club membership

| Action Required | Success Criteria | | Achieved? |
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| Build on existing links with the Sports Development Officer and Sportcolchester to promote awareness in schools, sports and social clubs and at community events. | Senior playing members increased by 20% to 55+ by May 2008. Junior playing members increased by 50 % to 38+ by May 2008. Coaching, helpers and ordinary membership increased by 10% overall by May 2008. | | Ongoing - participation in 2010 was 48 senior registrations, Junior members sits at 32 for 2011. |
| Build on existing links with the Partnership Development Manager to promote American Football demonstrations and non-contact lessons in 12 secondary schools. | As above. | | Yes - close links with SSCOs to encourage sessions in schools, and has afforded the club use of the SSP minibuses |
| Embrace the 'Get into American Football ' promotional literature, website and guidance notes produced by British American Football's NGB, the BAFA, and offer volunteering opportunities to the wider community. | As above. | | Yes - however <i>Get Into American Football</i> now cancelled |
| Implement and develop further opportunities for female participation in all aspects of American Football and it's support program. | Increase in the number of registered female members across the club to ten by season end (September 2008) | | Yes - instituted the <i>Gladiators' Dance</i> team, with 12 current members. |
| Set up a group to research, report and implement measures to improve | Improved retention % of club members, especially players, to aid | | No - this has been removed from scope due to lack of resources. |

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| retention of club members season on season. | stability. Target is 80% retained. | | |
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Launch and develop structured American Football youth program

| Action Required | Success Criteria | | Achieved? |
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| Recruit and appoint a British American Football Coaches Association (BAFCA) qualified Head Coach to oversee the junior program. | Level 2 qualified Coach, Matt Roberts was appointed in February 2007. | | Yes - Matt Roberts since promoted to Senior Programme Head Coach. BAFCA Level 1 qualified Dave Hogarth has taken on the junior programme. |
| Meet all the statutory requirements laid down by the British Youth American Football League (BYAFL) to qualify as affiliate members for 2007. | Colchester Gladiators Youth Team was affiliated in May 2007. | | Yes - BYAFA disbanded in 2008, but the Gladiators Juniors were admitted to BAFL in 2009, and into the new BAFA Community League in 2010 for league competition. |
| Apply to the National Football League (NFL) to provide a free coaching clinic as part of it's Junior Player Development (JPD) program. | The JPD program was run in August 2007 attracting over 30 participants including two girls. | | Yes - Currently discussing with the NFL the possibility of repeating the scheme. |
| Apply for an 'Awards for All' lottery grant for 10k to facilitate the purchase of playing and safety equipment, flag football equipment, training equipment, uniforms and all necessary training and coaching expenses. | A 10k grant was awarded in August 2007 and received in September. Orders for equipment have now been placed. | | Yes - Lottery grant awarded in 2007. This was followed in recent times by a variety of grants, including a further £8,000 from Sport England in 2010. Grants over the past 5 years have now totaled in excess of £24k in financial contributions and in kind. |
| Approach 12 local secondary schools with plans for inclusive, after school, non-contact flag football programs culminating in inter school tournaments or a short league. | All schools participating with well supported, inclusive sessions and tournament. 5% of players try out kitted version of game at junior training session. | | Ongoing - the club has attended many schools to host singular sessions, which have been very popular. As yet the resource hasn't been available to offer any sustained programmes or inter-school competition. |

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| <p>Meet all the statutory requirements laid down by the BYAFL to qualify as full members for 2008 and take part in the league program.</p> | <p>Colchester Gladiators Youth team playing competitive kitted league football in 2008.</p> | | <p>Yes - as above.</p> |
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Implement and publish structured path for player development

| Action Required | Success Criteria | | Achieved? |
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| Publish safety and 'basic skills of American Football' self-assessment and make this available to all new members and as a download on the Club's website. | All players of all levels of experience are able to understand and demonstrate safe best practices for blocking and tackling on the field. | | Yes - all relevant material published on the Gladiators' website and all players made aware of this and encouraged to read and digest the information. |
| Publish 'rules of American Football' document and make this available to all new members and as a download on the Club's website. | All players of all levels of experience are able to understand the rules and how they are applied to game situations | | Yes - an introduction to the sport is published on the Gladiators' website and is available for all members to read. |
| Improve weekly Coaches chalkboard sessions to include video footage of training sessions and games to facilitate understanding of strategy and game planning. | All players of all levels of experience are able to understand the role they play in the plan of each play and the game, helping to develop a strong team ethic. | | Yes - all senior sessions now filmed and footage made available to players and coaches. Junior sessions will soon be filmed in more detail. |
| Publish recommendations for diet, cardiovascular exercise, weightlifting and other conditioning specifically relating to the AF skill set. | All players are able to understand how physical well-being and fitness relate to player safety and performance on the field of play. | | Yes - BAFA approved documentation published on the website for players to download. |
| Give each playing member an equal opportunity to develop, refine and demonstrate their acquired skills allowing each to challenge for a place on the field. | Steady improvement of individual and team performance and results. Target is to be Conference Champions in 2008. | | Ongoing - Seniors were 2009 Division champions and national finalists. 2010 - Juniors were division champions. |

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| <p>Make recommendations to 'representative' team scouts where players have demonstrated above average ability or potential to play at a higher level.</p> | <p>Gladiators' players are selected for Great British teams at youth and senior level.</p> | | <p>Ongoing - So far 8 Gladiators Juniors selected for GB Youth, and two coaches involved with the national programme.</p> |
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Implement and publish structured path for development of football Coaches and Club officials

| Action Required | Success Criteria | | Achieved? |
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| Ensure all appointed Gladiators' Coaches are members of the BAFCA and registered with the BAFL in accordance with league rules. | All Coaches registered and able to take the field. | | Yes - Gladiators' constitution now states that all coaches must be BAFCA qualified and BAFCA members. |
| Ensure all appointed Gladiators' Coaches are qualified to minimum Level 1 and are personally insured to coach in the UK. | All Coaches qualified and insured to take the field. | | Yes - As above. |
| Ensure that retired players or other Club members are aware of, and have the opportunity to attend, BAFCA sanctioned coaching clinics and workshops. | The MC is able to promote and appoint coaches from within the membership with a 60% internal to 40% external ratio. | | Yes - Currently ratio sits at 79% internal to 21% external. |
| Ensure that all training and field equipment is fit for purpose and available to aid coaching sessions. | Coaching staff always has the correct equipment in the correct quantity to enable safe and productive sessions. | | Ongoing - current equipment is regularly maintained and audited, and the MC continues to invest in new and additional equipment to encourage player development. |
| Recruit Club officials and game day volunteers by advertising specific mini job descriptions and handing down training and instruction tailored to the needs of the individual. | Recruit 10 new volunteers, recognising their individual qualities and how they can contribute to the Club. | | Ongoing - a number of volunteers have stepped forward to assist with the club in specific roles. |

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| <p>Encourage members to understand and 'get involved' with the Club management to ensure a robust succession plan can be developed.</p> | <p>Immediate succession plan in place for Club Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, Marketing Manager, Game Day Manager and Equipment Manager.</p> | | <p>Ongoing - no firm succession plan in place, but club members are getting more involved in the club's management and administration.</p> |
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Improve game day facilities to enhance the end user experience and facilitate growth of American Football

| Action Required | Success Criteria | Achieved? |
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| Start the search for a permanent American Football home field and training facility in conjunction with the Local authority, Sports Development Officer and Sportsex | Home facility bought or leased for American Football games and training and the continued development of the Colchester Gladiators. | Ongoing - the club is currently working with Colchester Borough Council to investigate possible facilities and locations within the borough. |
| Ensure spectators have the basic facilities of toilets, refreshments, food and seating in an enclosed stadium. | Achieved through agreement with WTFC. Excellent supporter feedback. | Yes - Club has since moved away from WTFC to Harwich & Parkeston Football Club. Spectator facilities here match what was offered at WTFC. |
| Recruit an inclusive cheerleading/gymnastic/entertainment group and DJ to provide pre-game and half time entertainment. | All spectators are able to enjoy the natural breaks in the game and vocalize their support for the team. | Yes - Gladiators' Dance Team are able to contribute to the gameday experience. Club has also invested in DJ/PA equipment for use on gameday. |
| Further enhance the spectator experience by providing game program, commentary, scoreboard and referee's ability to vocally communicate decisions made. | All spectators are able to understand and enjoy the game with all the necessary information available. Excellent supporter feedback. | Yes - Gladiators offer full colour programmes, miked referees, live commentary and a scoreboard facility. |
| Further enhance the spectator experience by providing game clock and play clocks. | All spectators are able to understand the timing of the game with all the necessary information available. | Ongoing - the mechanics of using game/play clocks make them awkward to use without a devoted manager during games. |

Objectives - 2011-2016

1. Continue developing a community presence to grow Club membership by 25% across all areas.
2. Develop Youth/Junior programmes to introduce structured development path through to Seniors and beyond.
3. Improve current gameday product and market the leading gameday in British Football.
4. Reduce barriers to entry for participation at all levels.
5. Work to obtain and develop a permanent facility for the *Gladiators'* entire organisation.

Continue developing a community presence to grow Club membership by 25% across all areas

| Action Required | By Whom | When | Success Criteria |
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| Wholesale and cohesive promotion through local media outlets to publicise Club activity and fixtures through the year. | Management Committee through the Club's marketing outlet and press liaison officer. | Ongoing - the club will need a presence in the media as we build to the 2011 season. | Senior playing members increased by 25% to 60+ by May 2014. Junior playing members increased by 25 % to 40+ by May 2014. Coaching, helpers and ordinary membership increased by 25% overall by May 2014. |
| Use major events (e.g. Great British Tailgate Party) to cultivate the public image of the Club. | Management Committee and other volunteers to assist in event organising. | NFL International Series - up to 3 games each year | Attendance at GBTP >3,000 over the two days. Fundraising in excess of £1,500. Positive public feedback. |
| Develop a Youth (5-on-5) kitted programme suitable for league tournament entry in 2011. | Management Committee and the Youth/Junior programme head coach | Immediate - look to appoint coaching staff in accordance with the Club constitution. | Level 1 coaches Alex Robinson and Adam Burrows appointed in February 2011. Neil O'Hare appointed January 2014. |
| Review and redevelop the Colchester Gladiators' online presence to include mobile web browsing and improved web navigation and accessibility | Management Committee and the Gladiators' webmaster | Throughout 2013 | New website implemented. Through 2014 develop as primary portal for communication with the club |
| Look to local schools to foster participation at Youth and Junior level. This should include regular | Management Committee and the Youth/Junior programme head coach | Ongoing - schools can be contacted at any time, but emphasis on the pre-season period. | Increase Youth/Junior participation as above. Significant rise in the number of |

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| sessions both within curriculum time and outside of the school. | | | people in Essex who have the opportunity to participate in American Football. |
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Develop Youth/Junior programmes to introduce structured development path through to Seniors and beyond

| Action Required | By Whom | When | Success Criteria |
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| Invest in at least 20 sets of Youth equipment, and 10 further sets of Junior equipment. | Management Committee through the Youth/Junior programme Head Coach and the Equipment manager | February 2012 prior to the 2012 season. | 10 sets of Youth equipment acquired through BAFA Equipment Loan Programme for Beacon Clubs. A further 10 set of Youth and 10 sets of Junior equipment to be acquired. Achieved - May 2012. |
| Formulate transition plans for young athletes as they graduate from Youth to Junior, and then Junior to Senior. | Management Committee and Head Coaches of three sections. | Ongoing - to start in late 2011, ready for the first transition from Youth. | Retention of 80% of players eligible for transition from Youth to Junior, and from Junior to Senior. |
| Appoint youth and junior coaching staff to foster development into teams able to compete in the BAFACL. | Management Committee and the Youth/Junior programme head coach | Immediate - look to appoint coaching staff in accordance with the Club constitution. | Youth - Level 1 coaches Alex Robinson and Adam Burrows appointed in February 2011. Neil O'Hare appointed January 2014 Junior - Level 1 Coach Tim Rowe appointed January 2014. |
| Implement a plan for social events to encourage all sections of the club to socialize and bond with each other. | Management Committee and the Social Events organizer. | Immediate - look to bring new Youth players into Gladiators' family | At least four social events over the course of each year, including the Youth and junior players. This will be ongoing for future years. |

Improve current gameday product and market the leading gameday in British Football

| Action Required | By Whom | When | Success Criteria |
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| Further enhance the spectator experience by providing game clock and play clocks as part of a larger, electronic scoreboard. | Management Committee through Game Day Manager. | By April 2013 | All spectators are able to understand the timing of the game with all the necessary information available, and the board is managed correctly by club staff. |
| Ensure spectators have the opportunity to purchase programmes, refreshments, and merchandise, and they find themselves engaged by the sport. | Management Committee through Game Day Manager. | By April 2013 | All spectators are able to understand and enjoy the game with all the necessary information and facilities available. Excellent supporter feedback. |
| Provide a more genuine look and feel experience through Y-shaped posts, detailed pitch marking to include numbering and potential advertising. | Management Committee through Game Day Manager. | By April 2015 | Invest in stencils and goalposts. Provide a genuine American football experience for all. Player and supporter feedback. |
| Attract more sponsorship and investment into the Gladiators' gameday to enhance ground and programme advertising. | Management Committee through Sponsorship officer and Game Day Manager | Ongoing - commencing immediately. | Gameday revenue increased by 40% over a 4 year period. |

Reduce barriers to entry for participation at all levels

| Action Required | By Whom | When | Success Criteria |
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| Reduce the cost imposed upon players/coaches by cultivating private investment through sponsorship arrangements. | Management Committee through the Head Coaches and the Sponsorship coordinator. | From 2011 onwards. | By April 2014 50% of players across the club sponsored by private companies. By February 2015 cut club membership subscription fees by 25% across the club. |
| Provide all playing equipment (pads, helmets, shirts, pants) to players at all levels as part of their subscription. | Management Committee through the Equipment Manager | By April 2015 | Provision of equipment to all players at all levels, reducing the need for individuals to make an initial outlay. |
| Club coordinated CRB checks for all coaches across the club. | Management Committee through the Child Welfare Officer. | By April 2012 | 100% of Club Coaches with full CRB checks through the CWO. |
| Promote Coach Education and Coach development by offering funding to subsidise coaches' personal development. | Management Committee through the Club Head Coaches. | By April 2015 | Club offering up to 75% funding for coaches involved in coach development activities for the benefit of the Club. |

Work to obtain and develop a permanent facility for the Gladiators' entire organisation

| Action Required | By Whom | When | Success Criteria |
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| Work closely with Colchester Borough Council to find a suitable location to lease/buy to develop a permanent home venue. | Management Committee and New Projects Sub Committee | By December 2015 | An area suitable for development for which the Gladiators can cultivate all facilities needed for a home ground, in line with BAFA regulations. |
| Contact both Sportessex and Sport England to investigate and obtain funding for the project to assist with lease and development costs. | Management Committee and New Projects Sub Committee | Ongoing - once a site is acquired this will need to be a continuing process. | A minimum of 80% of total costs funded through grant income, and private investment through the club's fundraising. |
| Develop any plans for a facility to incorporate multi-sports. | Management Committee and New Projects Sub Committee | Ongoing - once a site is acquired this will need to be a continuing process. | Contact with at least 4 other clubs to utilize the facilities on offer, and adapt the facilities to suit their needs. |
| Cultivate an American Football Centre of Excellence at the facility, as a centre for the Great Britain programmes. | Management Committee and New Projects Sub Committee, through BAFA | By December 2018 | Develop a facility suitable as the home of the GB Lions at all levels, and a venue suitable for National Championship games, and as a venue for elite player development programmes. |