



NEWSLETTER 01 – DECEMBER 2011

Background to Herbert's Farm Saffron Walden Partnership (HFSWP)

HFSWP is a very recently formed committee of volunteers who are effectively "Trustees" from Plantation YFC and Spartak 78 YSC, and who are named as Guarantors for the two Clubs. HFSWP has been set up solely to serve the two football Clubs and is run equally by the Clubs. The overriding purpose of HFSWP is to provide, maintain and improve the football facilities at Herbert's Farm for the benefit of the 300+ boys and girls playing for both Clubs.

The Lease on Herbert's Farm

In November 2011, after almost four years of negotiation and hard work by various people, HFSWP finally signed a Lease on the football pitches and Pavilion at Herbert's Farm. The lease runs to 2050, which means that we have secured low-cost football for both Plantation and Spartak '78 in Saffron Walden for the next 39 years at least.

There was a real threat to the continuing use of Herbert's Farm by the Clubs. The lack of funds available to our Landlord, Saffron Walden Town Council, meant that no maintenance had been carried out for several years. The Pavilion had been slowly rotting (literally) over many years and was liable to become unsafe and unusable.

Also, if we had not agreed the Lease, there were other local Football Clubs waiting in the wings who would have stepped in. We faced the genuine risk of Plantation and Spartak 78 being homeless. This is no longer the case.

We have a small annual rent to pay and we are responsible now for all maintenance, repairs and insurance going forward, which means that both Clubs will need to contribute funds to HFSWP one way or another to cover this.

What HFSWP will do for the two Clubs

HFSWP will be responsible for the pitches and equipment. This includes mowing the grass, line marking, providing goals, nets, flags, respect barriers and the like. HFSWP will be responsible for pitch allocation and will draw up and publish rotas as needed. HFSWP will ultimately be responsible for deciding when the pitches are unplayable and will notify both Clubs of the need for postponement of matches when required.

HFSWP has drawn up a programme for repair and improvement for all the pitches, and this work has already been started. This will include aerating to break up the top surface of the soil and promote grass growth and improved drainage. Over the next year, and ongoing thereafter, we will arrange for the weeds to be killed, grass seed and feed to be applied, continuing aeration, top dressing and, where possible, infilling of hollows and levelling of bumps.

Subject to Grant funding, we will look to introduce drainage across the pitches and to improve levels wherever possible. This is at least a two year programme and we expect that the end result will mean that we have significantly improved playing facilities for everyone.

Very soon, we will be taking delivery of three pairs of metal fold-away mini-league goals. These are higher quality than the plastic goals we currently use and they come complete with nets attached and take seconds to put up.

The new goals will be kept safe in a new metal lock up storage container that we will place next to the Pavilion, and this will also house most of our other pitch equipment (flags, barriers, line markers etc) meaning that the changing rooms will be kept clean and tidy with plenty of space for changing!

As more funding becomes available we will buy more metal goals for the older age groups, as well as replacing any old or damaged equipment.

The Pavilion

In the longer term, we plan to extend and extensively refurbish the Pavilion. This will involve “filling in” the veranda/terrace area to gain additional space. We will form two FA compliant changing rooms with toilets and showers, and a plentiful supply of hot water! There will be a Referee’s changing room with shower and toilet, and storage areas.

An important part of the plan is to create a new “Club Room” which will be available for use for just about anything we can fit in it – team or Club meetings, training courses and, at weekends, it will be a cafe with tables and chairs for people to sit at with food and drink bought from our new kitchen (more about that in a moment). The Club Room will also be flexible so that it can become a third changing room on days when two are not enough.

We intend to put a 2.4m high security fence around the entire Pavilion, with the ATC paying for half of this. The purpose of the fence is to stop the vandalism that has blighted the Pavilion and Herbert’s Farm generally over the last few years. There will be large gates that we open up on match days, to ensure that we still have good views of the pitches from the Pavilion and kitchen.

The kitchen

Many of you will have noticed subtle changes in the Kitchen at Herbert’s Farm already. Since the start of this football season in September and in anticipation of the new Lease being signed, the running of the kitchen has been shared between both Clubs, and every fifth Saturday it has been run by HFSWP, i.e. jointly with volunteers from both Clubs working together.

On the days when HFSWP run the kitchen, all the proceeds will go towards the running of Herbert’s Farm, paying the various outgoings which are required (rent, rates, insurance, maintenance etc) and, whenever possible, we will buy new equipment – for football purposes and also improving the Pavilion and the kitchen.

On Sundays, the kitchen will continue to be run on an ad-hoc basis, to be agreed between whichever Colts teams happen to be “at home”.

There may be slight price differences depending upon which Club is running the kitchen and on HFSWP days especially, as the Partnership is VAT Registered and therefore is liable to charge and pay VAT on income and outgoings.

We are currently in a transitional period for the kitchen and it is understood that any changes need to be properly communicated and explained in advance, and that changes should happen gradually. The income generated from the kitchen, which is after all run by volunteers no matter which Club is taking its turn, is important to both Clubs and specifically to HFSWP. Without the kitchen, the financial pressure on both Clubs resulting from the Lease would be far greater than it is.

The future

Both the day to day running and particularly the longer term improvements that HFSWP is planning to deliver will cost significant sums of money over a long period of time. It would be safe to assume that you will see an increase in fundraising activity by both Clubs and by HFSWP - and we are looking for new ways to generate income, so if anyone has any ideas, we would love to hear from you.

We have applications running for funding assistance from numerous sources – some are for modest amounts for equipment, whereas some are for very sizeable grants. We will give you more information about our exciting plans as they develop over the next few weeks and months. For starters, the plans for the Pavilion are issued with this Newsletter.

Any questions?

If anyone has any questions or requires any further information, please feel free to contact any of the four Trustees – there are two from each Club:

Ian O’Sullivan	(Spartak ’78)	Trustee and Chairman	ian@hfswp.co.uk
James Broughall	(Plantation)	Trustee	james@hfswp.co.uk
Matt Clare	(Spartak ’78)	Trustee and Secretary	matt@hfswp.co.uk
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We will also be setting up a website in the near future – www.hfswp.co.uk