Woodbridge Town Football Club - Ground move Policy Statement and Club Key Facts.

This document is intended to provide background information on the football club and the position regarding the ground move.

Mission – to provide an opportunity for any person in Woodbridge and surrounding area to play football in an encouraging and rewarding environment that emphasises fun, teamwork and skills development at a level that fits his/her abilities.

Vision – to be regarded in the community as a club known for developing players and having quality coaching staff.

Values – Fun, the game should be fun! Inclusiveness, welcome all who wish to participate. Excellence, strive to support the highest level of achievement for our players. Fair play, fairness on and off the field of play.

History

The club was founded in 1885 and eventually moved to the current venue at Notcutts Park, Fynn Road, Woodbridge in 1990. Woodbridge Town Football Club is a community club with FA (Football Association) charter status. The club are members of the Eastern Counties League (Thurlow Nunn League). The first team won promotion to the Premier Division in 2017-18 and also won the Suffolk Senior Cup the same season.

The club had an original 25 year lease, to 2014 and are currently finalising an extension to 2023/4. At the current time it is indicated that there will be no further lease extension for Notcutts Park, so the club needs to find a new home in the Woodbridge and surrounding area.

Structure

The Football Club is a members club, currently with 450 plus members. The club is run predominantly by volunteers with currently a total of 97 volunteer roles.

The club runs in excess of 20 teams from a young age through to the first team and veterans. The Wildcats girls section and ladies team are also in place. Early years football introduction is provided by our ‘Woodpeckers’ section.
Facilities

The ground at Notcutts Park includes a clubhouse, floodlights, seated and standing covered stands, and passed the non league Step 5 ground rating inspection in 2018. With the number of teams run by the club, it is not possible for most of them to play at Notcutts Park, so pitches are also hired at Kingston Field, Melton Recreation Ground and Melton St Audrys. In addition, training facilities are hired at Kesgrave High School, Ipswich Town FC, Woodbridge School and Inspire.

Ground Move

The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan draft (Jan 19) details the land at Notcutts Park for housing development (12.348). Whilst this local plan is designed for a 10 year time frame, the proposed lease at Notcutts Park expires in 2023/4, so the urgency for a new home to be identified and planned for increases. Ideally, the club needs a site with a multiple pitch facility to bring all the clubs teams to the one site. Training facilities could be provided by a 3G/4G pitch for which grants could be sought. This training facility would also have a community benefit since it would be made available to other teams and clubs in the area.
Woodbridge Town Football club response to specific points as follows;

12.350

> The lease for the existing site is due to expire in 2024 with no extension likely. Therefore a new site needs to be identified with some urgency.

> The statement that the club would need to be relocated to a suitable location within the town should be amended to ‘and surrounding area’, since no suitable site can be identified within the town.

> The statement ‘which is accessible by non-car modes of transport’ is to be commended, although the club is currently multi sited both for training and matches. Please refer to other submission document regarding background to the club. Ideally, the club would like to move to a facility that removes the multi site aspect, so a facility to an equivalent or better quantity and quality is preferred. Highways access should be provided together with non-car modes of transport for pedestrians and cyclists. Additionally bus route site options should be considered.

The club plays league matches against teams from Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. Additionally, last season the club played cup matches against sides from as far away as Lincolnshire and Wiltshire.

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