



Leigh Layabouts Rugby Football Club



Rachael Burford
(England WRFU Player)
opening the first phase
of the LRFC Clubhouse
development

Planning Application





PLANNING APPLICATION

Leigh Layabouts (“LRFC”) was formed in autumn 2003 during the second half of the Rugby World Cup final. Following a chance remark of “we could do that” by the now Club President in the village pub, the first game took place on the village green six weeks later (we lost). Since then, the Club has steadily grown, drawing its players from Leigh village and the surrounding areas – many returning to Rugby after a number of years. LRFC maintains its strong social rugby ethos, believing that everyone who wants to play should play - regardless of ability

The Field of Dreams has existed as a sports ground for over 25 years. Until 2009 the facility, set in a picturesque rural setting, was used as the home ground of Charcott Football Club. However, following the demise of the football club’s single team, the ground was offered to Leigh Layabouts Rugby Football Club who have used it as their home ground since September 2010.

| Why Extend?

At the last AGM the club recognised that further progress was being hampered due to a lack of facilities to provide food and refreshments to the players and our visitors. Several opposition teams have praised the setting and the spirit of the game and have told us that the only thing letting us down is our inability to offer usual clubhouse facilities. Additionally, as a club we have a strong touring tradition but up until now we have been unable to invite clubs to play us at our ground due to a lack of facilities to host them.

Our inability to offer refreshments has precluded us from offering the facilities to other village clubs (football, Stool-ball) as a training venue or an alternative match ground (e.g. the increasingly poor weather has meant that the football club regularly have to travel 5+ miles to the nearest alternative ground as the Village Green is unplayable).

Success in this application will allow us to establish a safe, attractive and hospitable venue. It will underpin the further growth of the Rugby club by allowing us to attract new players and sponsors, and to provide an enhanced facility available to all village field-sport clubs regardless of weather conditions.

The primary focus of our proposal is to build a member's bar/clubhouse. The rugby club has the lease on the land which has eight years left to run. Prior to the Covid pandemic, we entered into talks with the landlord to extend the lease so that we could begin work on the clubhouse extension. We now have revised Heads of Terms which approve the proposed extension subject to us obtaining the relevant planning consents from Sevenoaks Council.

The new extension will allow the club to grow and continue our philosophy of attracting players back to the game of rugby. The aim of the rugby club within 5 years is to go from 1 men's team to 3. Although this sounds like an ambitious plan we have managed to put out 2 teams on one day on many previous occasions and we believe we have the players and the enthusiasm, we just need the facilities to match.

We have attracted a number of new players to the club in the last few years that used to play rugby at school, college or university who want to get back into regular participation. We have unfortunately lost a few players who we may have retained if we had these better facilities. We will also provide a summer touch rugby, which will attract members and players to the club. We will have weekly sessions open to males and females from the age of 17+. This allows new players to come along and try the sport in a non-contact setting and then have the opportunity to feed into the club.

During the pandemic the club has stayed open, working within Government and RFU guidelines, providing an invaluable opportunity for exercise and to assist anybody with mental health concerns. Players have always had someone to talk to either at training sessions or on the phone. Currently there are two well attended training sessions a week both involving players from other local clubs as well.

A clubhouse would be a fitting way to signal the end of the pandemic and a return to normality. We hope that you'll join us on our journey.



Contact

President: Mark Doherty (07966 132203)

Chairman: Dave Thorpe (07879 640123)

Treasurer: Andrew Wordsworth (07946 519266)

