

# Harborough Town FC



Following last weekend's details about our Harborough Town FC Community Cohesion Project we have received such positive comments from local and regional schools and hope we can inspire other sports clubs to tackle community issues. We appreciate the donations received so far and definitely ask them to keep coming! Thank You!

This week we are highlighting female football, and in particular the player pathway. Now; we have a wide range of age groups playing at Harborough Town with an ever-expanding male section with academy, youth and senior teams, however, tackling the development of the female pathway is not as easy. We are very fortunate at Harborough Town to have Maz Hayton (Club Development and Commercial Executive), who is not only a former International player herself but someone who is certainly not going to be deterred by a challenge or two, and is overseeing a female revolution...

Our club has 4 girls' teams, and the focus is to develop at both ends of these existing teams; so at under 9 and a senior female team. At the younger age groups the newly formed Wildcats Development Centre for 5-11 year olds is taking shape and welcoming new members all the time. The greater challenge is to overcome some of the barriers at older age groups, so we introduced mums to playing football. By using football as a tool, we can deliver sessions in a safe environment for females to learn the game and have fun in a relaxed manner. From that perspective we can then continue to draw in the interest of the younger players.

Pre-Covid-19, Maz organised a come-and-play session for the female parents of the club, and the interest was immediate with 18 players attending the first three sessions earlier this year. Once the group resumed training in July those numbers swelled to 28, most of which are parents of players at the club, and even now the players are having a weekly exercise session via video conferencing. The joy and positivity that has come from the training sessions is truly remarkable and a welcome relief in these most trying of times!

Maz, said: *'It is a joy to see so many females wanting to learn and understand the game of football, and at the same time, wanting to find a way to stay fit. The atmosphere is relaxed, and learning is through fun and enjoyable sessions. The group wanted their own name and selected the Harborough Town Queen Bees - certainly a suitable name for this group of female players. The Queen Bees have already secured a sponsor, Muntun Roofing Contractors Ltd, so they are able to purchase rain jackets and training tops. Women need some time to themselves from their busy work and family life to be able to relax, re-charge their batteries, and football can provide them with all of this.'*

Susie Munton who recently joined the group said: *'I absolutely enjoy the footy training sessions. Over the years I have spent so much time on the sidelines watching my husband, son and daughter play, so it is good to have a better understanding about the game myself. The sessions are fun but also very educational - there is a lot to learn! We have an excellent coach, and the girls are all so lovely and made me very welcome. We are getting to know each other and most importantly have such a laugh! Love it!'*

Louise Twentyman-Clark: *'I love attending the football sessions as it is great for fitness and really challenges me. I have to say playing with such a great group of ladies absolutely makes the training fun. I look forward to the laughs and infectious enthusiasm as we all enjoy ourselves. Each session we are learning, improving, as well as building new friendships. Having an excellent, experienced and supportive coach ensures that each session is well planned and pitches at the right level to help us build confidence and execute the skills. I am so proud of where we have come from, from that first meeting back in February.'*

The Queen Bees have two objectives:

- 🐝 Playing competitive 7-a-side games in 2021 (for the social players)
- 🐝 Developing an 11-a-side team who will play in the Leicestershire Women's Football League next season

The Queen Bees train on Wednesday evening from 8-9:30pm. Anyone wishing to join whether a novice, beginner or advanced player can come along, and you don't need to be a parent of a playing member at the club.

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