

Passion. Community. Family. Team.  
**The Highland Way**

# Highland Rugby Football Club

Enjoyment. Respect. Integrity. Ambition. Commitment.

"I'm here for Highland because I love being part of the Highland family. The club has always been a big part of my life and it has allowed me to create friendships that will last forever. Highland Rugby Club has helped me grow as a player and a person and provided experiences that I'll never forget."

"Highland Rugby Club has provided me with the opportunity to play at a greater level all around Scotland and has challenged me to take on some of the best players in Scotland."

# 2020

here for highland

# Club Development Plan 1922 - 2020

"The club challenges it's players to be the best version of themselves. Great diligence was paid to help me improve, from both the players and the coaches and for that I will be forever grateful. I would not be the person I am today without Highland Rugby Club."



Highland Club  
The Highland Way

# Contents.

**1** Presidents  
Overview

**2** History  
Structure  
Governance

**3** History

**4** Structure &  
Governance

**5** Structure &  
Governance

**6** Facilities

**7** Facilities

**8** Facilities

**9** Facilities

**10** Club Community  
& Communication  
  
Marketing  
& Business  
Development

**11** Club Community  
& Communication  
  
Marketing  
& Business  
Development

**12** Partnerships

**13** Partnerships

**14** Club  
Members

**15** Player  
Welfare

**16** Rugby  
Performance

**17** Rugby  
Academy

**18** Rugby  
Development

**19** Rugby  
Development

**20** Coach  
Education

**21** Coach  
Education

**22** Community  
Rugby

**23** Finance

**24** Strategic  
Priorities

**25** Strategic  
Priorities

# Vision.

More than a Rugby Club.  
Make a positive contribution to  
the wellbeing of our community.

# Mission.

A vibrant and ambitious club at the  
heart of our community which allows  
people to develop in a safe and positive  
environment through rugby, physical  
activity and social inclusion.

# Values.

Enjoyment.

Respect.

Integrity.

Ambition.

Commitment.



# Presidents Overview -

It is with great pleasure that I present the Highland Rugby Club Development Plan. The purpose of this document is to outline the structure of the club, its facilities, our teams and our progressive Community Development Programme and how this aligns with our vision of making a positive contribution to the well-being of our communities. This Plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Highland Rugby Club are currently in a very strong position, both on and off the field. We have extremely vibrant mini, micro and youth sections. Our senior teams continue to play at the highest level and have been hugely successful in recent years. Our girls' teams are going from strength to strength and we are in the process of developing a senior ladies team.

Our state-of-the-art facilities are the envy of many a club and are a testament to the hard work of key individuals who drove the development forward to ensure that the club benefited as part of significant local infrastructure upgrades. The facilities together with the growth and success of our teams, have encouraged new members to the club, healthy attendances at matches and increased use of the club social facilities.

Central to our success are the relationships we have with some key partners in particular the Scottish Rugby Union (SRU), The Highland Council (HC), University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and Highlife Highland (HLH). Additionally, we are grateful for the support of our many sponsors who contribute so significantly to the running of the club.

We are an amateur club striving to be professional in everything we do. We have invested significantly in our people and now have two full time Development Officers and employ a part time Bar Manager. However, without our volunteers we would be unable to function. They are central to the running of the club and put in a massive amount of effort and time ensuring the smooth running of the club. We are grateful and extremely proud of the work they do.

This plan has been drawn together following extensive consultation including workshops, informal discussion and a member's survey. When considering our Vision and Mission we explored what the club was about and what we want it to stand for. Our Values are more than words, they reflect the very high standards we expect from players and members and should be embedded in everything we do from our youngest to our most senior members.

As we move towards our Centenary year in 2022 the club is in good health. It is the job of the Trustees to oversee the running of the club and ensure that it goes from strength to strength. I am confident that the Strategic Priorities identified in this document will assist us in doing so.

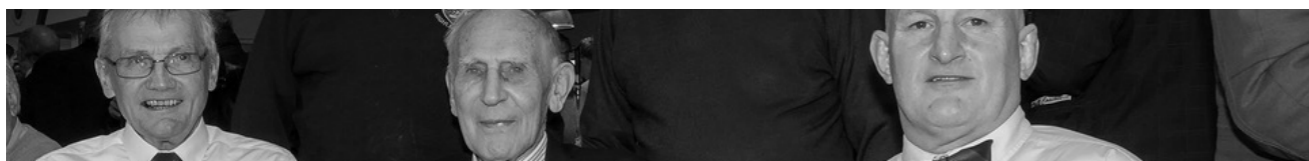
*Since drafting this document the club like so any other areas of life has been significantly affected by Covid 19. These are unprecedented times however this plan remains relevant and can be adjusted accordingly if and when required.*

Graham Findlater  
President  
August 2020





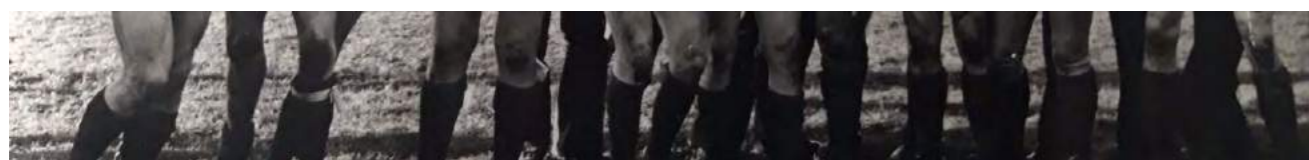
# History.



# Structure.



# Governance.



# History.

# 20 22

Highland Rugby Club has a long and illustrious history and like most clubs has gone through highs and lows. As the centenary year approaches in 2022 the club is again back near the top of Scottish Rugby. This has been a remarkable climb through the Regional Leagues into the National Leagues with a number of back to back promotions, all achieved with a core group of players and led by Head Coach Dave Carson and his coaching team.

Historically the club has always produced good quality players, perhaps most famous of all is Ernie Michie, a Scottish internationalist who toured South Africa with the British Lions in 1955. In 1967 former Highland player John N Frame was selected to play for Scotland against New Zealand and went on to gain a further 22 caps.

During the 70's the club had again moved through the leagues from Regional to National. Central to the success at that time was Scottish internationalist Nairn McEwan, who played and coached at the club. He also guided another of the clubs players, George Mackie to international honours in what was a very successful period. In 1984 former Highland player Gregor McKenzie played for Scotland against Australia to earn his only cap.

Other full internationalist include Jade Konkell, Jenny Alexander, Moray Low and Paddy Kelly (Scotland 7's).

Many players have represented Scotland age grades, the North and Midlands and the Caledonia region at both senior and junior levels.

Currently Bruce Flockhart, Paddy Kelly and James Dobie have professional contracts at Glasgow Warriors, they all came through the junior ranks at Highland. Jamie Gillan, who played junior rugby is playing in the NFL for Cleveland Browns.

Much of the success has come from investment in the mini's/micro's and youth sections over the last 20 years. An enormous resource has been committed to these areas and our Community Development programme resulting in a significant number of our current 1st XV squad having progressed through the junior section.



# Structure & Governance.

**Highland Rugby Football Club is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) which was formed on 10 May 2017. The Charity was previously an unincorporated association but changed its legal form to a SCIO. The assets of the unincorporated association were transferred to the SCIO on 30 June 2017. The charitable objectives and aims of Highland Rugby Football Club are:**

- to advance public participation in the sport of Rugby Union Football and other sports to improve the health and wellbeing of a wide range of participants
- to provide, develop, manage and promote recreational facilities and related recreational activities available to the public generally with the object of improving the conditions of life for the persons whom the facilities or activities are primarily intended
- to advance education with the provision of coaching and training throughout life-long learning in relation to sport, fitness, first aid and related skills to broaden the development of individual capabilities of children, youths, young adults and adults



The structure of the organisation consists of:

The Members, who have the right to attend members meetings (including any annual general meeting) and have important powers under the constitution; in particular the members appoint people to serve on the board and take decisions on changes to the constitution itself.

The Board who hold regular meetings and generally control the activities of the organisation. For example the board is responsible for monitoring and controlling the club's financial position. The people serving on the board are referred to as Charity Trustees.

At each AGM the members may elect any member to be a Charity Trustee. Also the Board may at any time appoint any member to be a Trustee. At each AGM, all of the Trustees must retire from office, but may then be re-elected. The maximum number of Trustees is 12 while the minimum is 8.

There are 5 sub-committees made up of the Charity's Trustees, covering Club Rugby, Community Rugby, Finance, Governance and Canal Park Sports Club 2017 Limited, these sub-committees report to the main board.

The Clubs trading company, 'Canal Park Sports Club 2017' derives its income during the year from the operation of the bar and selling merchandise.

## Key Roles:

**President**  
Graham Findlater

**Vice President**  
Roy Dinnes

**Treasurer**  
Andrew Ward

**Secretary**  
Andrew Russell

**Head Coach**  
Dave Carson

**Director of Rugby**  
Iain Chisholm

**Fixtures Secretary**  
David Hume

**Team Manager**  
John Budge

**Development Officers**  
Iain Chisholm  
Ruaridh McDonald

**Child Protection Officer**  
Ailsa Hart



# Facilities.

Facilities	Current (2019/20)	Development (Y/N)	Target
Number of grass pitches	3	Y	4
Number of artificial pitches	1	N	
Number of floodlit pitches	1	Y	>2
Number of changing rooms	8	N	
Gym facilities	2	Y	>2
Medical/Physio room	1	Y	2
Spectators areas	1	Y	2
Number of bars	1	Y	>2
Number of function rooms	2	N	
Kitchen facilities	1	N	
Toilets	14	N	
Meeting rooms	2	N	
Parking spaces	97, 5 disabled	N	
Score boards (electronic/manual)	2 manual	Y	1 Electronic

The new Canal Park facilities have helped take the club to the next level both on and off the field. The bar facilities in particular are generating additional revenue for the club. This does however come with pressures such as coping with the number of players/spectators in the bar area post match and the popularity of the balcony area. Improving the match day experience for members, fans, corporate guests and players continues to be a priority.

Another pressure point is, due to increased numbers, floodlit training space can be at a premium on specific nights and the provision of additional floodlighting will be considered. All facilities are being well used by the club but their use and the equipment provided requires constant review.

In partnership with HLH, with whom a management agreement exists, the club continues to promote the use of the facilities for non rugby based activities.

**1. Facilities - Annually review how facilities, equipment, processes and procedures can be developed to improve training and playing for players and the match day experience and social enjoyment of all members, guests and corporate users**



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# Club Community & Communication

As part of 'The Highland Way', the club aim to be at the forefront of digital marketing and communications for amateur rugby clubs in Scotland. We will use our platform to grow the HRFC Brand and the game of Rugby across the Highlands.

Highland Rugby will continue to build on recent on-field success by creating exposure for the four pillars of 'The Highland Way' - Commercial, Community, Performance and Wellbeing aspects of our Community Club via our social media channels, website and local and national news vendors. We will look to develop our website to bring it up to a professional standard and increase our reach across all platforms whilst improving internal communications from club to members.

**2. Communication - Develop a Communication Strategy that improves lines of communication internally between Trustees, Players, Coaches, Volunteers and Members and externally with Partners, Sponsors, Supporters, the Media and Wider Community.**

# Marketing & Business Development

The club as a brand is well known and established in the local community and at a national level. Rugby has to compete with other sports in the area, notably football and shinty, and it is important that a robust marketing strategy is developed to build on what is already a solid foundation.

The club is extremely fortunate to have the support of local individuals and businesses whose sponsorship is crucial to the financial wellbeing of the club. It is an area that has grown with the introduction of the new facilities and is an area for further growth as the packages available to sponsors are developed. It is appreciated that to fully explore the opportunities available to the club the appointment of a resource, such as a Business Development Manager, needs to be considered.

**3. Marketing - Develop a Marketing Strategy to explore the options available to develop and improve exposure of the club brand.**

**4. Business Development - Consider the appointment of a Business Development Manager to drive the clubs sponsorship and fundraising activities in support of the Clubs Development Plan objectives.**





# Partnerships.



The club's key partners are our parent body the SRU, Highland Council and Highlife Highland. The SRU and the Council are key contributors to the Community Development budget which allows our Development Officers to deliver rugby throughout the area. The relationship with Highlife Highland is critical in managing the Canal Park facilities. The club acknowledges the support and assistance it gets from these partners and looks forward to working with them in the years ahead.

In September 2019 a Strategic Partnership was signed with Inverness College UHI. This is an exciting development which encourages the two organisations to work closely together to create opportunities for young people to stay in the region and potentially attract talent from elsewhere. There is a particular emphasis on talented rugby players.

There will also be opportunities for work experience and volunteering, player welfare, sports psychology, media training, marketing, nutrition, sports therapy and strength and conditioning. There are many cross over opportunities which will add to the experience of both rugby players and students alike.

**5. UHI Partnership - Develop and grow the Strategic Partnership with Inverness College UHI identifying and progressing opportunities in sharing ideas, assets and people to the benefit of both organisations and young people in the local area.**

# H R F C





# Club Members.

	Current - Baseline	Sustainable	Growth (3-5 Years)
<b>Total number of members</b>	949	1331	40%
<b>Number of adult male members</b>	204	272	33%
<b>Number of adult female members</b>	25	33	33%
<b>Number of male youth members</b>	208	277	33%
<b>Number of female youth members</b>	40	53	33%
<b>Number of micro players</b>	59	89	50%
<b>Number of mini players</b>	205	307	50%
<b>Number of senior playing members</b>	60	90	50%
<b>Number of social members</b>	140	210	50%

# PLAYER



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# FARE

Player welfare is at the heart of everything the club does. In recent years significant improvements have been made in relation to medical cover at senior matches and the treatment of injured players. It is acknowledged that this is an area that can be further developed particularly at age grade level. Of increasing importance is the role the club has to play in improving not only the physical but mental wellbeing of its players and members and this is an area that is currently being explored to establish what resources are available and how these can be accessed and developed.

7. Physical Wellbeing - Improve Physiotherapy and Sports Therapist provision to senior teams and introduce a minimum standard of first aid at age grade levels.

8. Mental Health Wellbeing - Appoint key roles within the club and develop a resource to sign post resources available from other agencies and charities.



# Rugby Performance.

Highland Rugby Club run three senior teams. The First XV play in National League 1 which is the second tier of club rugby in Scotland. The recent club consultation process has highlighted that the players wish to retain amateur status with the ambition to gain promotion to the Premiership with a squad capable of sustaining competitive rugby at that level.

The Second XV, known as 'The Raptors' have won Caledonia North 2 Division for the last two seasons. The club are hopeful that the ongoing SRU league re-structuring consultation will allow the Raptors to progress through the leagues and play at the highest possible standard in support of the First XV.

A Third XV was introduced in season 19/20 playing social fixtures. It has now been successful with an application to play in Division 4 of the Caledonia North League which is further evidence of the growth of the club.

**9. Senior Rugby - To provide the resources and support to facilitate all senior teams playing at the highest level achievable within the SRU league structure, whilst maintaining amateur status.**



# Rugby Academy.

Highland Academy provides opportunities for players from across the region to develop their technical, tactical, physical and mental game beyond what they receive at club squad training.

The Academy is inclusive and accessible to any player looking to better themselves.

Highland Academy's 'Pillars of Performance' are broken down into Game Sense, Core Skills and Athleticism. These pillars make up the content of Academy sessions with a mixture of on field and off field learning supported by a Strength and Conditioning programme that is specific to the player and the game we want to play.

Highland Academy is split into two tiers the Junior Academy and Senior Academy. The junior Academy provides opportunities for U12 to U15 boys and girls to develop tactical understanding on and off the field through Highland's Core Skill Games, match analysis and supported by movement mechanics to prepare the individual for a robust strength and conditioning programme. The Senior Academy is for players from U16 to senior level. The inclusion of senior players allow the U16 and U18 players the opportunity to develop skills alongside role models who they can lean on for advice. The Academy's aims for 2020-2025 are to produce as many players capable of attaining National and Regional level Rugby while preparing them to play senior rugby.

**10. Rugby Academy - Continue to develop the Rugby Academy to provide a platform for player identification and development with a view to player progression to regional and national representation level and senior rugby.**



# Rugby Development.

One of the main objectives of the club is to grow the game of rugby in Inverness and the surrounding area. Our expansive community rugby programme continues to target areas where rugby has the potential to grow. Success can in some ways be measured by the increased playing and participation numbers at the club in all age groups.

An absolute priority is to see a significant expansion of girls/ladies rugby. The introduction of additional age grades will see more girls being involved in competitive rugby. A ladies development team has been introduced which will provide a pathway for the girls coming through the age grades and also actively encourage new players to the game.

The youth boys teams have benefited greatly from being involved in national conferences. This has undoubtedly assisted in player development and prepared them for representative and senior rugby. For this reason it is imperative that our youth teams continue to play on a national stage at the highest level possible.

Over the next five years, Highland Rugby Club aim to grow the Micro's and Mini's section to over 400, continually feeding into our vibrant youth section.

Highland Micro and Mini section is a vibrant and ever growing aspect of club life. This section is an important factor in allowing our children and coaches to fall in love with the game. Over the past 3 years, Highland Rugby's Micro's and Mini section has exploded. We are proud to have nearly 300 children attend training and festivals every weekend during the season. The success of the Micro's and Minis has led to an increased need for volunteers both on the pitch and in the club house. Over the next 5 years, Highland Rugby Club aim to grow the Micro's & Mini's section to 400+, continually feeding into our vibrant youth section.

**11 Rugby Development - continue to grow the girls/ladies game with the introduction of additional age groups and the establishment of a ladies development side.**

**11.1 Rugby Development - Canvas for Highland youth teams to continue to play at national conference level.**

**11.2 Rugby Development - Grow our Mini and Micro section to over 400 in a five year period.**





The Highland Community Coaching Programme is supported by Scottish Rugby's Coach Education Department and delivered by Highland Rugby Club staff and guest coaches.

The Highland Way, linked to the Technical Blueprint, is the Clubs strategy to develop all round skilled performers to ensure a steady flow of players make their way through the Academy system and into Highland's senior teams. The Highland Way puts an emphasis on fun. Through coaching and dedication to The Highland Way we develop skilled performers who understand and are desperate to be part of the club's history and ambitions.

Highland Community Coaching Programme opportunities are not limited to Highland Rugby Club members and staff.

Coaching development is critical to the continued progress of the club. There is a recognition that this cannot be achieved from within the club and full advantage has to be taken of the SRU coaching development programmes and sourcing coaching expertise from further afield. It is important that we identify coaches with potential and structure their development to provide a pathway to high level qualifications and performance.

Closely aligned to our coach development is a recognition that we need to identify and develop match officials. At this time the club is in receipt of the Silver Club Sustainability Award, the main reason being a shortage of the relevant qualified match officials. This will be an area of focus which will assist the club in achieving the Gold Award.

**12. Coach Education - In partnership with the SRU continue to develop The Highland Community Coaching Programme to improve the standard of coaching in the area.**

**12.1 Coach Education - Introduce a targeted programme for identifying and developing coaches with potential providing an opportunity to gain high level qualifications and a progressive pathway to coaching excellence, with clear succession planning in place.**

**13.1 Match Officials - identification and development of match officials in partnership with the SRU.**

Role	Current - Baseline	Sustainable	Growth
UKCC Level 1 Coach	20	30	50%
UKCC Level 2 Coach	20	30	50%
UKCC Level 3 Coach	2	4	100%
Qualified Match Official	5	10	100%
First Aid in Rugby Qualified	15	30	100%

## Match Officials

The club is committed to increasing the number of match officials and by doing so supporting their development. In particular ex players will be targeted with a view to attracting them back into the game as an official. As both player numbers and the number of teams increase it is essential that the number of officials available to cover a busier fixture list increases also. To achieve this we will work closely with the SRU and the Highlands Referees Society.

**13.2 Match Officials - The Club will, in partnership with the SRU and Highlands Referees Society , identify and develop match officials. A particular emphasis will be placed on attracting ex players.**



# Community Rugby.

Highland Rugby Club employ two full time members of development staff to service the club and community across the Inverness and surrounding area. This is financially one of the most significant investments the club makes on a year on year basis. The club is committed to the ongoing professional and personal development of their Club Development Officers and continue to explore learning opportunities for them.

The club works closely with local schools and clubs to ensure that rugby is sustainable and continues to grow. Schools of Rugby (SoR) have been established in a number of local secondary schools and at a primary level the club targets schools feeding into the SoR. This approach is proving to be successful in introducing new players to the game both at a school level and a club age grade level. Additionally our Just Play (The Highland Way) is a programme which encourages schools to promote the playing of small sided informal games at breaks and after school. It is estimated that our Development Programme delivers approximately 500 hours per season to schools in Inverness and the surrounding area.

Community coaches have been introduced to assist with this approach and the introduction of school leagues continues to be a priority. In order to sustain this level of commitment it will be important to develop support packages for schools and Highlife Highland staff to assist them in making rugby sustainable within their schools.

The club is committed to exploring how they can involve children and young people from a disadvantaged background and from recognised areas of deprivation to experience playing rugby and benefit from the wider social aspects of the club environment.

Key to the success of this Community Development Programme is the ongoing partnership with and financial commitment from the SRU and Highland Council.

Highland Rugby Club are proud to work closely with clubs and institutions in the local area providing a pathway for male and female players to progress along their rugby journey.

**14. Community Rugby - Continue to develop the Schools of Rugby and Just Play approach in Inverness and the surrounding area working closely with our partners at the SRU and Highland Council to establish a sustainable model that continues to grow the game in our schools and communities.**

**15. Staff Development - Continually explore opportunities to develop, on both a personal and professional level, the Club Development Officers**

**16. Inclusion - The club is committed to exploring how they can involve children and young people from a disadvantaged background and from recognised areas of deprivation to experience playing rugby and benefit from the wider social aspects of the club environment.**



# Finance.

Highland Rugby Club as a charity is dependent on funding from the Scottish Rugby Union, memberships, subscriptions, sponsors, partners grants and fund raising activities. Profits generated from its trading company, Canal Park Sports Club 2017, are gifted back to the charity when appropriate. This allows the charity to support its charitable aims. The trading subsidiary derives its income from the operation of the bar and selling merchandise.

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

Annual accounts can be found on the club website:  
[www.highlandrugbyclub.org](http://www.highlandrugbyclub.org)

# Strategic Priorities.

## 1. Facilities

Annually review how facilities, equipment, processes and procedures can be developed to improve training and playing for players and the match day experience and social enjoyment of all members, guests and corporate users.

## 2. Communication

Develop a Communication Strategy that improves lines of communication internally between Trustees, Players, Coaches, Volunteers and Members and externally with Partners, Sponsors, Supporters and the Wider Community.

## 3. Marketing

Develop a Marketing Strategy to explore the options available to develop and improve exposure of the Club brand.

## 4. Business Development

Consider the appointment of a Business Development Manager to drive the clubs sponsorship and fundraising activities in support of the Clubs Development Plan objectives.

## 5. UHI Partnership

Develop and grow the Strategic Partnership with Inverness College UHI identifying and progressing opportunities in sharing ideas, assets and people to the benefit of both organisations and young people in the local area.

## 6. Club Membership

Grow the club membership on a year by year basis.

## 7. Physical Wellbeing

Improve Physiotherapy and Sports Therapist provision to senior teams and introduce a minimum standard of first aid at age grade levels.

## 8. Mental Health & Wellbeing

Appoint key roles within the club and develop a resource to sign post resources available from other agencies and charities.

## 9. Senior Rugby

To provide the resources and support to facilitate all senior teams playing at the highest level achievable within the SRU league structure, whilst maintaining amateur status.

## 10. Rugby Academy

Continue to develop the Rugby Academy to provide a platform for player identification and development with a view to player progression to regional level, national level and senior rugby.

## 11.1 Rugby Development

Continue to grow the girls/ladies game with the introduction of additional age groups and the establishment of a ladies development side.

## 11.2 Rugby Development

Canvas for Highland youth teams to continue to play at national conference level.

## 11.3 Rugby Development

Grow our Mini and Micro section to over 400 in a five year period.

## 12.1 Coach Education

In partnership with the SRU continue to develop The Highland Community Coaching Programme to improve the standard of coaching in the area.

## 12.2 Coach Education

Introduce a targeted programme for identifying and developing coaches with potential providing an opportunity to gain high level qualifications and a progressive pathway to coaching excellence, with clear succession planning in place.

## 13.1 Match Officials

Identification and development of match officials in partnership with the SRU.

## 13.2 Match Officials

The Club will, in partnership with the SRU and Highlands Referees Society, identify and develop match officials. A particular emphasis will be placed on attracting ex players.

## 14. Community Rugby

Continue to develop the Schools of Rugby and Just Play approach in Inverness and the surrounding area working closely with our partners at the SRU and Highland Council to establish a sustainable model that continues to grow the game in our schools and communities.

## 15. Staff Development

Continually explore opportunities to develop, on both a personal and professional level, the Club Development Officers

## 16. Inclusion

The club is committed to exploring how they can involve children and young people from a disadvantaged background and from recognised areas of deprivation to experience playing rugby and benefit from the wider social aspects of the club environment.

**HRFC Development Plan**  
Design by Rachael Allan  
Photography by Owen Cochrane & Phil D