

Huntly Rugby Club (HRC)

Business Plan

2026-2032

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1. Brief history and context

Huntly RFC was founded in 1967 and fixtures commenced in the 1967–68 season. The club is a vibrant hub for rugby union in central North East Scotland. The club plays in the Arnold Clark Caledonia North Region League Division 3 (Men's) and is recognised by the Scottish Rugby Football Union. Men and women participate with teams representing different age ranges. The club currently plays on pitches hired from the Huntly Sports Trust and teams use the pavilion at the Meadows, Huntly. The club has no current 'home' site.

The next step to develop the club is to lease its own site with a pavilion operating as an effective, minimal cost and secure site. After an assessment was undertaken of three possible locations (Cooper Park, Meadows, Market Muir) the two most viable (Market Muir, Meadows) were evaluated and Market Muir was deemed most suitable (see appendix 5 for the assessment outcomes).

2. Objectives enabling future growth

The following objectives for HRC are important to address;

- **Lease Market Muir to act as a 'home' for the club**
- **Re-develop fit for purpose pitches and a pavilion**
- **Balanced (wider) use of the site for revenue generation**
- **The financial sustainability of HRC needs close monitoring if new assets are acquired.**
- **Refurbishment needs funding support.**

The overall re-development of Market Muir requires more money than the very small charity holds in its reserves. There is an order of magnitude difference between the refurbishment cost and current capacity to complete the required work. Support from outside funders will be mandatory, albeit there are a number of funders who are keen to help. The support of volunteers can be heavily relied upon, as the club has a central role in the community and generates considerable discretionary support. The following questions arise;

- Is the site in itself sustainable as a revenue generator (at least in the medium term?) Yes. The club will transfer training and playing to Market Muir, and this will create a saving on the hire of the Meadows. The cost of upkeep of the playing surface can be sequenced according to the needs of the pitch, and the cost of this work is a capital outlay which can be more easily met by fundraising.
- Is there is a risk if the Pavilion redevelopment takes too long, or is unaffordable? This is a risk, albeit we mitigate this. The build will be modularised – sections of work will be broken down so the pavilion can still be used, and as funding arises we will progress with the relevant section. There will be six modules – access track and utilities reinstatement, flood light conversion to LED alternative, easterly facing extension build, westerly facing extension build, central section including accessible toilet/referee changing area repurposing, and finally exterior deck/viewing platform. The two leaders of the project (Marc Day, Rachael Ashley) have just fundraised and project managed (incl. design, planning, procurement, contractor management) a £600,000 retrofit of Glass Hall.
- Can the pitch wash its face as well as serve the club's needs? This requires Aberdeenshire Council to continue grass cutting. The club may take over the responsibility for letting the

ground to the travelling fair and car boot sale, albeit the club hasn't been told what the commercials of these lets are. No allowance will be made in the budget until this is known.

3. Re-development plan, phasing and funding acquisition

HRC will use a three phase re-development embodying longevity for the site at Market Muir. The phases will be broken down into detailed drawings/warrant applications/funding applications/procurement requests for quotations/tender evaluations/contacts for services.

The phased re-development requires funding, and the detailed nature of this work & funder alignment is provided below. Enquiries have been made to the funders listed to investigate the likelihood of success in grant applications. This liaison is led by Rachael Ashley who has a demonstrable track record of working with this group of funders on other projects (Glass Hall, Gordon Schools, See Thru Productions Amateur Dramatics Group, Glass School, etc.). Day-to-day sponsorship is led by Jenna Hayden.

Phase	Projects	Cost	Funders	Timing
Leasing Market Muir	CAT process to lease land and pavilion	£12k	Clashindarroch CBF Glens of Foudland CBF William Grant Foundation	2026/2027
Pitch renovation	Renovate the existing 1 ½ pitches to Scottish Rugby Union standard. Replace existing floodlights with more energy efficient alternatives. Originally estimated to be £60-80k but quotations are coming in much lower at £10-20k.	£10-20k	National Lottery AFA Community-led Gordon & Ena Baxter Foundation Clashindarroch CBF Glens of Foundland CBF Robertson Trust Scottish Rugby Union Optional: David & June Gordon Memorial Trust	2027 onwards
Pavilion planning and design finalisation	Current pavilion will either (a) be demolished and an alternative building installed, or (b) existing building will be renovated and extended. Plans will need to be paid for, and site access will need installing. This will require planning permission for the dropped kerb and visual splays from	£30k	National Lottery AFA Community-led Gordon & Ena Baxter Foundation Clashindarroch CBF Glens of Foundland CBF Robertson Trust Scottish Rugby Union	2027/8 onwards

	the entrance /exit meeting Aberdeenshire Roads design principles.			
Pavilion re-development	After the design has been chosen and planning consent awarded the building will then be made suitable for the club's use.	TBA	National Lottery AFA Community-led Gordon & Ena Baxter Foundation Clashindarroch CBF Glens of Foundland CBF Robertson Trust Scottish Rugby Union	September 2027 – September 2030

The following issues will need to be addressed:

Have you had any quotes for the works described? No. Prices are obtained at procurement stage once the exact requirements can be written into a request for quotations. Contractors will only price on warranted drawings with SER overmarks from a structural engineer. The project manager is a very experienced in construction procurement & project management and knows current price per square metre costs for many types of constructional method. He has current on site operational experience in joinery, building retrofit management, building, groundworks, solar farm development, public roads work, and drainage.

What is involved in getting vehicle access? This requires planning permission as the kerb needs dropping and a metalled track digging, following visual splays approved by the council. The same ground will also be excavated to install a new water pipe as the current supply leaks, but this will need checking. The roadside works will be priced from contractors such as Sievewrights, Nicol of Skene, etc. The project manager has done such work before so knows how much this will cost.

Do you know if the Pavilion contains asbestos? Contractors / clients / architects use specialists for asbestos assessment & materials testing, and this part of the planning phase before the rip out starts. It is assumed the building will require asbestos removal and a contingency is added to the build phase.

How much will it cost to cut the grass? If Aberdeenshire Council agree to continue this work then there is no cost to the club.

How often will the pitches need aeration, sand and drainage? The plan is to raise funds for this capital work on a three yearly basis, albeit the cycle time between repeats of this work will be determined by the pitch state. No allowance will therefore be added to the income and expenditure accounts for the club. The total cost for this work using the most expensive price (Highland Groundcare Ltd) is:

	Per unit price	Cost	VAT	Subtotal
2 x fertiliser application	£ 300.00	£ 1,050.00	£ 210.00	£ 1,260.00
2 x aeration	£ 497.00	£ 1,739.50	£ 347.90	£ 2,087.40
1 x seed application	£ 275.00	£ 481.25	£ 96.25	£ 577.50
1 x grass seed	£ 400.00	£ 700.00	£ 140.00	£ 840.00
2 x weed spraying	£ 350.00	£ 1,225.00	£ 245.00	£ 1,470.00
2 x fertiliser cost	£ 550.00	£ 1,100.00	£ 220.00	£ 1,320.00

				Total inc VAT	£ 7,554.90

Planning permission for the track and pavilion is required as it is a public amenity, as is a warrant. The planning authority will be asked to confirm the costs of the application and building warrant using pre-planning assessment. All the construction work will be made under one application.

4. Established management and operational routines

HRC will proceed with the re-development and will need to establish an operational management responsibility for the site and pavilion. The Charity Trustees will be to ensure sufficient skills and expertise amongst the Committee, in order that they have the capacity to undertake all elements of the facility's ongoing management. This most likely means outsourcing the upkeep of the site, and this is reflected in the costs of operating Market Muir in the forecasted profit and loss.

The ongoing maintenance of the facility is, and will continue to be untaken by a committed group of volunteers. Pitch maintenance will be contracted to a specialist as this will reduce the need for purchasing & operating machinery which is non-core to the sporting ethos of the club.

5. Financial assessment

Appendix 1 shows the last financial year's results whilst Appendix 2 shows a forecast income and expenditure analysis.

6. Marketing and promotion

The marketing effort for HRC involves identifying user needs, wants and wishes, and satisfying them. Community leisure services and facilities depend on satisfied users, especially where the local residents support and involvement is fundamental for its on-going success.

In recent consultations (qualitative and quantitative) a range of ways for the club to evolve have been suggested. These address a wide band of age ranges and can leverage the inside & outside of the facility.

	Task Details	Timeframe	Cost/Resources	Responsibility
1	Highlighting new facilities – incorporate user testimonials and photographs, and a corporate sponsor pack.	Year 0 / 1 following re-development	Free, Volunteer time	HRC Committee
2	Use promotional space in partnership with local firms and other organisations to promote awareness of the facilities.	Ongoing, periodic	Free, Volunteer time, Partner engagement	HRC, with agreement of local partners

3	Engage social media & conventional media (local newspaper: Huntly Express) to highlight the new facilities amongst target audiences.	Ongoing	Free, Volunteer time	HRC Committee
4	Press Engagement: Engage with local media to promote the improvements to the facilities and its relevance to the community. Has been used in the past & can be re-used as an outlet.	Periodic	Free, Volunteer time	HRC Committee
7	Create and distribute (via relevant media) a marketing pack for corporate sponsorship of the club.	Year 1	Free, minimal, volunteer time.	HRC Committee.

7. Recommendations

It is key for the following initiatives to be pursued to secure a 'home' for Huntly Rugby Club;

- A phased development of the Market Muir site should be executed. It will be necessary for relevant contractors to be appointed as a result of procurement evaluation exercises, and work completed to sequence with funding availability.
- It is recommended that a variety of options will be presented to the club for the re-development of the pavilion. This may require the services of a modular building company, an architect or technician (depending on the complexity of the task).
- The club should continue to self-fundraise towards the strict sequencing of the CAT, but take into consideration the other calls on funding from key funder sources.
- An experienced project manager (already engaged) will assist with support (i.e. costing work) to facilitate procurement and contractor management until the completion of the project.
- It is recommended that the club continues to engage with and lobby for support from Marr Area Partnership, local elected representatives and private donors. It is essential to achieve a 'core' of sponsors for the ongoing costs of the ground.
- If possible Market Muir should be re-developed in such a way that it can still be (part) used for events and services (such as the use by the fairground and car boot sale). This will provide revenue but more importantly continuing engagement with users, albeit the damage to the playing surface will have to be compared to the revenue gained.
- It is recommended that the club be much more proactive about the ways in which it keeps the community informed of the progress of the project through a variety of media channels (not just social media).

Appendix 1 - Latest financial year's profit and loss

HRFC Accounts for period 01/04/2025 to 31/03/2026		
OPENING BALANCE APR 2025	**£31,152.36**	**(opening balance in Acc 10280030)**
RECEIPTS	**£**	
Membership	**10,760.33**	
SRU – Contn/Refunds	**17,916.66**	
Match fees	**905.00**	
Kit Sales	**241.80**	
Fundraising	**4,288.00**	
Donations	**3,274.85**	
Sponsorship		
SRU Ticket sales		
Grants	**1,688.88**	
Refunds	**1,372.00**	
TOTAL RECEIPTS for the year	**£40,447.52**	
EXPENDITURE	**£**	
Development Officer	**4,433.32**	
Facilities Hire	**5,749.78**	
Kit / Equipment	**4,578.43**	
Catering	**734.57**	
Trophies / Engraving	**561.05**	
Subscriptions inc Pitchero, Web Domain & Zoom	**1,626.83**	
Laundry		
SRU Ticket Sales	**1,612.00**	
Travel - Bus hire	**5,292.94**	
Accomodation	**1,340.60**	
Event Costs (festival/coffee morning/awards)	**1,330.61**	
Misc	**1,356.00**	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE for year	**£28,616.13**	
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) for year	**£11,831.39**	
Balance brought forward	**£42,983.75**	
REPRESENTED BY:		
Bank Accounts 31/03/2026	**£43,748.69**	**(+221.06 from second account)**
Cash in hand at 31/03/2026	**£250.00**	
	£43,998.69	

Appendix 2. Forecast income and expenditure

See separate Excel sheets

Appendix 3. Letters of support (local elected officials)

Two letters are provided for the local elected officials covering the catchment area of the club.

Appendix 4. Multi-staged community consultation results

A survey (n≈121) was conducted to assess community views on relocating Huntly Rugby Club to Market Muir and to identify priorities for future facility development. Separate to the survey a community engagment session was held on 13th June where members of the public were invited to see the outline plans for Market Muir and speak to rugby club committee members. The feedback from the community engagement mirrors the survey outcomes.

The following points can be gleaned from the data (with file attachment showing all data).

1. Strong support for relocation

- Among rugby club users, **92% believe the club will have a stronger future at Market Muir**, and **86% see it as the best permanent home**.
- Among the wider public, **95% support the proposal** (67% strongly agree).

There is **overwhelming consensus across all groups** in favour of the move.

2. Current facilities are a constraint

- While user satisfaction with the club overall is very high (**95% positive**), views on current facilities at the Meadows are mixed:

o ~35% positive

o ~33% negative

o 30% neutral

Improving facilities is a **primary driver for relocation**.

3. Market Muir is underutilised

- **57% of respondents do not currently use the site at all**, with others using it only occasionally.
- Existing uses are informal (dog walking, fairs, car boot sales) rather than structured sport.

The site represents a **clear opportunity for regeneration and increased community value**.

4. Strong community benefit potential

- Respondents see the move as:

o Enhancing the town's image and entrance

o Increasing youth and community activity

o Revitalising a neglected space

The proposal is viewed as a **community development project**, not just a sports relocation.

5. Demand for improved, multi-use facilities The tree priorities for a new pavilion include:

- Changing rooms (81%)

- Refreshment facilities (78%)
- Social/communal space (73%)

Rugby Club stakeholders want a **hub for sport and wider community use**.

6. Willingness to support delivery

- **74% of club users would help fundraise**
- ~35–38% willing to volunteer or support events

There is **strong latent volunteer and fundraising capacity**.

Key Considerations

While support is high, several issues must be addressed:

- **Maintaining public access** (supported by 74% of respondents)
- **Balancing uses** (e.g., dog walking vs organised sport)
- **Site maintenance and event impacts** (e.g., fairs damaging pitches)

Conclusion

The survey demonstrates a **clear and compelling mandate** to relocate Huntly Rugby Club to Market Muir. The move is widely seen as an opportunity to:

- Secure the club's long-term future
- Upgrade inadequate facilities
- Revitalise an underused community asset

To succeed, the development must adopt a **community-centred design**, ensuring open access and revitalised infrastructure. The proposal enjoys **exceptionally strong support**, with manageable risks that can be mitigated through inclusive planning and design.

Appendix 5. Potential funders and likelihood of success

FUNDER NAME	FUNDING CATEGORY	MAXIMUM BID	One-Off or Repeat Opportunity?	Likely of Success?	DEADLINES FOR APPLICATION
		£		Low/ Moderate / High	
Vattenfall Clashindarroch Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund (CBF)	Capital & Civils	Depends on Benefit Fund size (>£50,000)	Repeat	High	January, May, September
Gordon & Ena Baxter Foundation	Capital	£ 25,000.00	Repeated	High	May, July, Sept & December
David & June Gordon Memorial Trust	Capital, Ongoing Maintenance	£ 20,000.00	One-Off	Moderate	March & September
National Lottery Awards for All (over 10k grant)	Capital	£ 150,000.00	One-Off	Moderate	September
Cairnie Glass Community Trust	Capital	£ 5,000.00	Repeat	High	February, June, October
Glens of Foudland Windfarm Community Trust	Capital	£ 2,000.00	Repeat	High	None
Robertson Trust	Capital	£ 2,000.00	Repeat	High	Anytime
Scottish Rugby Union	Capital	Varies	Repeat	High	Varies

Appendix 6. Comparative site assessment: Meadows vs. Market Muir

SUMMARY COMPARATIVE SITE ANALYSIS		Client:	By:
Brief:		*Huntly RFC*	*Greener Huntly*
Assessment & comparison of sites for renovation work required before use as high quality rugby pitches on natural turf.			
Aspect		**Relevance**	**Further considerations:**
Market Muir	Sheltered site, trees to South-East, South and North. Elevated 8m above river Deveron (average water level).	Partial shading by trees can affect players.	The Market Muir has floodlights in place facing the pitch (to be assessed if in working order). At the Meadows School Pitch, one of the goals will require moving. Costs of this are not included here. Renovation work to improve at the meadows will have to be done in conjunction with that of the whole area, resulting in higher costs. Neither site has fencing and for both sites fencing could obstruct its use by other current users. Not fencing it could result in issues around dog fouling.
Meadows	Exposed site, open to all directions. Elevated <3m above river Deveron (average water level), within river flood zone.	Wind exposure can affect players. Even with groundworks to improve drainage, there is a risk of superficial flooding of the pitches in wet seasons because the increased hydrostatic pressure results in a rising water table.	
Soil & turf		**Relevance**	
Market Muir	Average sward density, few forbes. Mostly free draining. Top soil depth at least 150mm, largely made up of small to medium sized sand particles. Turf is of poor quality, with bare patches up to 800mm. Damage from use reduced turf health and causes some erosion, however this can be restored by annual top dressing.	Adequate draining of surface water which helps limit damage from use during lasting heavy rainfall. Will require initial aeration, topdressing, and seeding.	
Meadows	High sward density, insignificant presence of forbes. Poor drainage. Top soil depth at least 80mm, largely made up of silty clay. Turf is of poor quality, with bare patches up to 2000mm. Damage from use leads to large clumps of topsoil to dislodge, requiring annual renovation work before topdressing.	High water retention of soil, especially when level of Deveron is high. Aeration, topdressing, and seeding are less successful on clay soil; to increase usability of the pitch top soil amendments are advisable before seeding. Top soil amendment	
Level		**Relevance**	
Market Muir	Existing fall in two directions to North-East corner of pitch. Uneven surface, on average 50mm level differences.	Ideally top up soil to achieve fall to only one direction, improving playing conditions, at the same time levelling.	**Date of assessment:**
Meadows	No existing fall. Uneven surface, on average 150mm level differences.	Requires significant top up of soil to level and in order to create fall to allow water run-off.	06 October 2025

Appendix 7. Risk register

		0-8 Low Risk	9-17 Medium Risk	18-25 High Risk			
Risk Area	Risk Identified (Description of risk to be managed)	Probability (1 = low, 5 = high)	Impact (1 = low, 5=high)	Risk ranking (probability x impact = ranking)	Risk management (how the risk will be managed)	Risk responsibility (description of who will be responsible)	Risk monitoring
1. Strategic							
1.1	Lack of current business plan	1	2	2	The business plan will be continually re-appraised to ensure it is fully reflective of the current status	Chair, Trustees and Committee	Annual, or on significant change of circumstances
1.2	No long-term development strategy	1	4	4	An enhanced development plan for the club will be important to prepare on a periodic basis. The business plan can be the template.	Chair, Trustees and Committee	Annually
1.3	Business continuity planning	2	5	10	It will be essential to integrate into an ongoing business plan the contingencies factored into the use of reserves for the	Chair, Trustees and Committee	Periodic revaluation

					Charity's financial assets.		
1.4	Significant resourcing and re-development funding	4	5	20	It will be key to have a pragmatic assessment of the likehood of funding the re-development of the Hall. Phased work should be completed when funding is secured.	Chair, Trustees and Committee	At key milestones of re-development
2.0 Functional/Operational Risks							
2.1	Marketing strategy	2	4	8	The Committee should identify new ways to promote the club and use the business plan to inform how this should be done.	Chair, Trustees and Committee	Targets and strategy developed in line with business plan.

2.3	Completing the re-development of the pavilion	4	5	20	This will need careful management, and where necessary the cost of external service providers (quantity surveyors, architects) will be factored into the overall re-development cost.	Chair, Trustees and Committee (four members have specific construction expertise and are already a re-developing sub-group)	On-going through the re-development phase
2.4	Retaining a sufficiently motivated committee membership representing a wide spectrum of the community	4	3	12	The trustees will need to ensure there is a good succession plan in place, and specific members do not become overloaded with tasks. Specific groups across age ranges should be encoraged to get involved.	Trustees	On-going (for co-opted members), especially at annual general meetings.
2.5	Facility maintenance plans	2	4	8	The re-developed pavilion and pitches will need less maintenance but there may be a use-case for the retention (on a payment by use basis) for a local handyman. This will reduce the workload burden for maintenance and dilapidations	Committee	On completion of the re-development.

					assessment / remedial works.		
3. Financial Risks							
3.1	Not securing adequate funding in the right phasing	5	4	20	The costs of re-develoment need to be accurately assessed, and then a matching process needs to occur between the funder and club requirements. If funding is phased then the re-development process needs to follow a modular format.	Trustees and Committee	Detailed financial assessment to be prepared for re-deveopment (in consultation with quantity surveyor and archiect)

3.2	Financial viability	4	5	20	The Committee will ensure that all financial obligations are factored into the scope of funding and charity reserves. Contractual obligations will need to be authorised by the Trustees, with absolute certainty that costs will be covered by revenue (with adequate cover for unforeseen costs).	Trustees and Committee	At each stage of re-develoment or contracting phase.
3.3	Financial control and auditing	4	1	4	The Committee will use established financial controls and the existing auditing process to include the re-development phase.	Trustees and Treasurer	Annually, or when there are changes in Treasurer.
3.4	Reductions in income, donations, or funder provided income	3	4	18	Although there has been a steady stream of income at the club the re-development phase will impact income. It will also be important to secure funding first, then re-develop second as a basic operating principle.	Trustees and Committee	Review quarterly (on blocks of event completion) and annually to compare year-on-year performance. Establish tight cost accounting & project mgt.