



The Field of Dreams

Fully Realising the Dream

Twenty-seven years of community junior football in Whittlesey. A community sports ground, and the case for securing its future.

STONALD FIELD

Forterra owns the land the club plays on. The community did the rest.

Whittlesey Junior Football Club leases Stonald Field from Forterra for a generous nominal rent. Fenland District Council stands as guarantor to the arrangement. It has worked: for the whole of its term the ground has been laid out, marked, fenced, insured and maintained by volunteers, at no cost to the public purse.

6,500+ children through the club since 1999

250

children playing
this season,
under 7 to under 16

24

teams
this season

75

volunteers

11

pitches, three-a-side
to eleven-a-side

4.64 ha

of ground

Everything on the site was created and maintained by the club.



THE CLUB

Twenty-four teams

Whittlesey Junior Football Club is a registered charity, founded in 1999. In 2026/27 it fields 24 teams, two of them girls' teams, for children from under-7 to under-16.

The youngest play three-a-side and five-a-side, moving up through seven and nine-a-side to eleven-a-side at under-16.

Every team has a manager and an assistant, all qualified to FA Level 1. The club holds Chartered Community Club status from the Cambridgeshire Football Association, a child welfare officer sits on the management committee, and the coaching team is DBS checked.

Subscriptions exist to keep the ground maintained. Where a family cannot meet them, the club covers or contributes to the cost.

THE PEOPLE WHO RUN IT

Seventy-five volunteers. One community.



A team talk at the Field of Dreams

The children may be the ones playing, but junior football involves whole families. Parents, grandparents, siblings and friends come together around the teams, while volunteers coach, organise and support them. The result is something much wider than football.

Around 75 people give their time as managers, coaches, committee members and in the tea hut.

The club is introducing a simple standard, FAIR, for coaches and players: Fair, Active, Inclusive and Respect.

WHAT HAPPENS THERE

A ground the league comes to

The Peterborough and District Junior Alliance League holds its cup finals at the Field of Dreams. It does not have to. It chooses the ground because of the quality of the pitches, and the club's ability to host and run events well.

The club also runs its own summer tournament, along with presentation days, car boot sales and a tea hut that is open whenever there is football.

The tournament and the cup finals bring visiting clubs and their families into Whittlesey.



What Whittlesey already has and what it needs

Whittlesey has no dedicated youth centre. The Manor Leisure Centre, on the other side of the town, is reaching the end of its life; if redevelopment is approved the town faces a construction period of around two years. Leisure provision is not a statutory duty of the district council.

Whittlesey is also growing. Hundreds of new homes will bring more families and children, while around 37% of the town's children already live in low-income families.

Through all of that, the Field of Dreams keeps going. Hundreds of children every weekend of the season, at a cost their families can meet.

Generations of children and their families see it as their football home, where dreams can become reality.



THE SITE

From field to football ground

Eleven pitches across five formats, from three-a-side to eleven-a-side, on 4.64 hectares. All of it laid out, marked, fenced and maintained by the club.

The lease placed levelling and reseeding, hard standing for parking, boundary fencing and its repair, insurance and public liability, rates and outgoings and the upkeep of the access track on the club. Fenland District Council stands as guarantor.

**The current lease runs for 21 years.
It expires in May 2029.**

Will the dream end with it?



Stonald Field: 4.64 hectares, alongside the Kings Dyke Nature Reserve

Time is running out

The lease will end in May 2029. It has no right of renewal and nothing has been agreed to replace it. Sport England, the Football Foundation and the Premier League and FA Facilities Fund all invest substantially in grassroots football but major capital funding requires long-term security over the land.

The Field of Dreams is already designated as Local Green Space in the adopted Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan. What that protection cannot do is give the club the security to stay there and invest in it.

A long lease

Twenty-five years is the practical threshold for major capital funding. Thirty-five would let the club keep applying, rather than qualifying once and watching the years count down again.

Purchase

The club has offered to buy the freehold and is open to negotiating.

Gift

The land transferred to the community: no capital changes hands, and the ground is secure permanently.

Much more than a rental value

The land is made available to the club at a generous rate. In return, generations of local children have played there, families have come together around them and volunteers have learned new skills and given thousands of hours to make it possible. Over more than 25 years, the Field of Dreams has become part of the fabric of the town, a familiar name and place to generations of Whittlesey families.

Fenland District Council's Playing Pitch Strategy assessed the Field of Dreams pitches as good quality, said they should be protected, and identified the need for permanent facilities appropriate to the size of the club.

Long-term security could unlock the investment to deliver them. An all-weather pitch, a permanent clubhouse and better facilities could attract funding of the order of £1 million, much of it from national sources.

The club offered to buy the freehold and is open to negotiating.

Settled for the long term, the Field of Dreams could serve the next generation of Whittlesey children and attract significant investment to go with it.



Fully realising the dream



Forterra makes the land available. Fenland District Council stood behind the arrangement. Volunteers turned a field into a football ground that has served thousands of local children.

The arrangement worked. But the 21-year lease that made it possible is now approaching its end, and no long-term future has yet been agreed. Without that security, the club cannot properly plan for the future or unlock the significant outside investment that could improve the ground for the next generation.

These eleven acres are already protected as Local Green Space. The pitches have already been recognised in the council's own strategy. The club and its volunteers have already shown what they can achieve.

The Field of Dreams is already here. What it needs now is a future that allows the dream to be fully realised.

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A report by the Rotary Club of Whittlesey, author Alan Bessant, on behalf of Whittlesey Junior Football Club. September 2026.

THE FIELD OF DREAMS



For today's
under 7s
this is their future.



Security now
enables investment,
facilities and growth.



Your decision today
shapes opportunities
for generations.

33 months

Three playing seasons before the lease ends



SEASON 2026/27

12 months



SEASON 2027/28

12 months



SEASON 2028/29

9 months



Lease ends May 2029

Each block is one month. A decision within this window would let the club secure the ground and pursue investment for the next generation.

Whittlesey Junior Football Club, Stonald Field. As at September 2026.