



# Hereford

## United Supporters Trust

Community Assets Co-ordinator,  
AMPS,  
Herefordshire Council,  
PO Box 4, Plough Lane,  
Hereford HR4 0XH

15<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Dear Ms Fletcher,

### **Edgar Street Athletic Ground: Re-Nomination as an Asset of Community Value**

We are writing to you to re-nominate Edgar Street Athletic Ground (Edgar Street, Hereford, HR4 9JU) as an Asset of Community Value under the Assets of Community Value Regulations of the Localism Act (2011). The football ground was originally listed as an Asset of Community Value on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2013 and listed again on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019. We wish to continue this.

Edgar Street Athletic Ground consists of a football pitch, four spectator stands, an attached bar and function suite, club shop, and a car park.

Below we set out the reasons why Edgar Street Athletic Ground should be considered an Asset of Community Value.

### **Current Occupancy and Ownership of Edgar Street Athletic Ground**

Edgar Street Athletic Ground is currently occupied by Hereford Football Club (HFC), which re-formed out of the old Hereford United in 2015.

The freehold of Edgar Street Athletic Ground is currently held by Herefordshire Council, with leases assigned to Hereford Football Club. At the time of original application Hereford United leased all four sides of the ground. HFC has leased 3 sides pending re-development of the Blackfriars Street End, but we would like to include the Blackfriars Street End as part of the ACV to ensure a four-sided football ground.

### **Current Use of Edgar Street Athletic Ground**

Edgar Street Athletic Ground was originally assigned for use as an athletics stadium, but gradually became the host of football matches and Hereford United played there from 1924. From 2015 Hereford FC football matches remain its principal current use.

Attendances at the football ground since 2015 have been notable with several gates exceeding 4,000. Since then, there have been continued good attendances, and the new Club has already established prowess in the FA Cup, with recent First Round matches v Portsmouth (2022-23 season, attendance 4,912) and Gillingham (2023-24 season, attendance 4,376). These matches were nationally televised. This New Year's Day, the league fixture v Gloucester City attracted 4,516 spectators.

In addition to its principal current use of hosting football matches, The Stadium provides as an ancillary use a function, exhibition, and entertainment business using The Stadium's facilities, including a number of meeting and function rooms, bars, and entertainment facilities. It also includes car parking facilities. The local football finals, Junior and Senior are held here, and there are opportunities for promoting sport in local schools.

## **Community Value**

Hereford FC delivers both social value and community benefit to the city and county of Hereford more broadly as an integral part of the local area. Football has been staged at Edgar Street Athletic Ground since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, following on by Hereford United and now Hereford FC. Its principal activity is the furtherance of local sporting interest, listed by the Localism Act as a social interest that a Community Asset should further. The Club:

- Promotes the enjoyment of sport and exercise to local people throughout the community, particularly young people through its matches (matchday tickets offer a range of concessions to juniors and seniors).
- Serves as a focus for community pride, providing Hereford with a shared history and heritage through the achievements of the Club and the many celebrated players from its history, and regularly celebrating the contribution that the Club's non-player employees, volunteers, and supporters make to the Club's success.
- Helps build a sense of community identity, bringing together diverse elements of Herefordshire, across a range of ages and social and economic backgrounds, on a regular basis for a shared purpose.
- Provides local people with an inclusive social environment open to all members of the community which the Club works to foster, for example through its regular support of such initiatives as the 'Kick it Out' campaign (an equality and inclusion campaign for football and the wider community).
- Engages fans in the support of local charitable causes. For example, a collaboration between HUST and HFC in running a Community Ticket Scheme. Exiled fans pay for match tickets to worthy causes.
- Provides economic benefits to local businesses such as increasing trade for nearby and associated pubs and restaurants on matchdays, as well as working to bring together a network of local businesses for mutual benefit. Increased customer footfall has been very evident on matchdays in both High Town and the Old Market complex. Our own research by Fans Surveys tells us that 40% of those attending a match also patronise those local businesses and over 70% bring others with them for shopping.

- Is the subject of considerable local interest and coverage in the local and national media, having achieved three successive promotions from a regional league to National North, the sixth tier of English football, and playing high profile FA Cup matches.
- Represents the city and county nationally. For instance, Hereford FC's FA Vase Final at Wembley in 2016 watched by over 20,000 Hereford fans, and its FA Trophy Final at Wembley in 2021 (played under Covid restrictions). Both Finals had a national television audience.

As well as acting as a focus for the people of Hereford, Hereford FC is developing its work within the Herefordshire community, aiming to operate a range of sporting, social, and educational activities and programmes. The Edgar Street Athletic Ground is crucial in enabling Hereford FC to deliver this social value and community benefit.

## **Listing**

Listing Edgar Street Athletic Ground as a Community Asset would mean that in any circumstance where The Stadium's current owner were to look to dispose of it, the community would have the opportunity to secure the Football Club's future. This step would:

- Protect the Stadium's viable use as venue for professional football for current and future generations
- Ensure it continues as a site for delivering social benefit and community value, both through the continued hosting of Hereford FC's games, and through the associated community activities Hereford FC undertakes.
- Help ensure a sustainable future for Hereford FC within the community, with the community owning a stake in The Stadium.
- Provide the opportunity to use the non-football revenues generated by The Stadium to support Hereford FC and its sporting and community activities.

## **Nominator**

This nomination is submitted by Hereford United Supporters' Trust, registered as Hereford United Supporters Society Ltd under the Co-operative and Community Benefits Act 2014. It is registered with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) FRN: MS32131R. Registered address: Hereford United Supporters Trust, c/o 47 Stanhope Street, Hereford HR4 0HA.

HUST has 400 members and is open to all supporters of Hereford FC. It promotes supporter and community engagement in Hereford FC and represents the views of supporters. It is the largest shareholder in Hereford FC currently owning 289,000 shares (50% of the Issue) and has the right to appoint three Directors to the football club. The Trust is owned by its members, and run by an elected committee of members on a voluntary basis. It has a written constitution, available on its web site.

Please do let me know if you require any more information to support this nomination.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

***R G Tomkins***

Richard Tomkins

Chairman

Hereford United Supporters' Trust