

The Killie Community

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030



2025
2026
2027
2028
2029
2030



The Killie Community

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2030

FIVE
YEAR
PLAN



WE ARE KILLIE

CHAIR'S INTRO

Ten years on from its origins as the community arm of Kilmarnock Football Club, the charity has evolved to become The Killie Community.

Our unique partnership with Kilmarnock Football Club has already helped us reach thousands of people of all ages, giving access to a wide range of programmes and activities.

With our Community Hub and new Community Pitch now in place, Trustees who have a wide range of knowledge and experience, and an energetic staff team, we are ready to do more to improve the lives of people in our local area, making memories and building futures.

Our Strategic Plan sets out what we aim to achieve over the next five years and how we aim to do it. This plan has been shaped by our vision, mission and values with input from a wide range of people connected with The Killie Community.

Creating a community is not just about what we do. It's about how people feel – belonging, connected, safe, trusted, supported and valued. It means we work together to share resources in a fair way, helping one another and learning together through shared interests. It also means reaching out to include people who may be lonely, isolated, or who need a bit of help to join in with activities.

Our focus will be on the key priorities, but we will also be open to new ideas and meeting new challenges.

I am grateful for the support The Killie Community has received from Trustees, staff, funders, supporters and participants who have done so much to get us to this point. I look forward to continuing those positive relationships and forging new partnerships in the years ahead.

Cathy Jamieson

Chair, The Killie Community Trustees



STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

OUR AMBITION

***FIVE
YEAR
PLAN***

Our Strategic Plan sets out what we aim to achieve over the next five years and how we aim to do it.

OUR AMBITION

By 2030, we want The Killie Community to be a leading edge, sustainable charity which uses the power of football to provide opportunities for, and improve the lives of, thousands of people of all ages, backgrounds and circumstances in our local area.

Our Strategic Plan sets out what we aim to achieve over the next five years and how we aim to do it. This plan has been shaped by our vision, mission and values with input from a wide range of people connected with The Killie Community.



OUR VISION MISSION AND VALUES

Our vision is for an Ayrshire where positive physical and mental health, opportunities, a sense of belonging and access to football, are available to all - regardless of age, background or circumstances.

Our mission is that The Killie Community is a sustainable charity which uses the power of football for the good of the local community, supporting health and wellbeing, positive mental health, tackling poverty and disadvantage, providing education and employment opportunities, promoting safer communities, and creating a sense of pride and belonging, recognising our unique role using the power of Kilmarnock Football Club and its heritage to find new ways of helping people fulfil their potential.

Our values

Respect and dignity: We believe everyone has the right to be treated with respect, dignity and empathy. We will always work in a way that removes stigma and challenges prejudice.

Inclusive: We value the experiences of our local communities and seek to engage and involve people of all ages and backgrounds in our programmes and activities.

Creative and transparent: We are actively trying new and creative ways of working and aim for excellence and best quality in everything we do. We value transparency and so clear and open communication is central to how we work.

WHO ARE WE?



The Killie Community is a charity which was initially set up in 2015 as The Kilmarnock Community Sports Trust, to promote participation in sport and recreational activity and to use football and other sports to support education, including literacy and numeracy.

Over the years, the range of activities has expanded to include programmes across all ages which support physical and mental health, employability, youth diversion, dementia and helping disadvantaged communities.

In 2023, we rebranded as The Killie Community, to better reflect what we do and our vision for the future. We added new Trustees to our Board, so that we have a wider range of knowledge and experience.

The charity was born out of Kilmarnock FC and, while we are an independent charity, we work in very close co-operation with the football club, and organisations such as the Killie Trust, the Kilmarnock Football Club Supporters Association (KFCSA) and Kilmarnock Football Club Disabled Supporters Association (KFCDSA)

Our unique relationship with the football club gives access to a wide range of supporters and sponsors who share and support our aims. For some people, it is easier to be part of programmes run by The Killie Community than those run by other services.

“Our unique relationship with the football club gives access to a wide range of supporters and sponsors who share and support our aims.”

CREATING OUR PLAN

To help us create our plan for the next five years, we held a number of sessions with our stakeholders including people who have participated in our programmes as well as local groups and organisations.

What they told us we do well:

- ✓ We are family oriented
- ✓ We have strong community links
- ✓ We have created an identity that encourages a sense of belonging
- ✓ We are inclusive
- ✓ We have good accessibility and support for people with Additional Support Needs
- ✓ Our links with Kilmarnock FC, players and stadium is positive
- ✓ We are good at involving volunteers
- ✓ Our programmes are for everyone
- ✓ Our new community hub is exciting
- ✓ Our trustees have a lot of experience

What they told us we could do better:

- ✗ Raise more awareness about our programmes and what we do
- ✗ Develop community hub to maximise its potential
- ✗ Have more facilities
- ✗ Improve links with local councils and health services
- ✗ Find new funding opportunities
- ✗ Ensure viability for long term
- ✗ Transport/outreach for people at a distance
- ✗ More programmes
- ✗ Be clear about target groups and priorities

CHALLENGES WE FACE LOCALLY



Health and economic inequality significantly impact on wellbeing. Ayrshire has a high number of disadvantaged communities, and an ageing population. General health in East Ayrshire for over 50s is lower than the Scottish average, and North Ayrshire has the lowest healthy life expectancy in Scotland.



Factors such as economic hardship, social isolation, and health inequalities contribute to higher rates of mental health issues in adults, more so than many other areas of the UK (The Health Foundation, 2023).

According to East Ayrshire Council's Suicide Prevention Lead, in 2023, there were 18 probable suicides, which rose to 24 in 2024. Despite a multitude of third sector and council run services being advertised as mental health support, we still encounter many people who do not see these services as 'for them' or feel they will be stigmatised if asking for help.

East Ayrshire also has a higher rate of people with no qualifications, and a higher unemployment rate across all age groups than Scottish average.

Understanding that the power of football can engage the hardest to reach groups in vital support services and programmes, empowering individuals to acknowledge and address their mental wellbeing challenges will be crucial to creating a healthier, more resilient community.

“General health in East Ayrshire for over 50s is lower than Scottish average”

Access to suitable sports facilities is essential to promoting physical activity and social engagement among all ages, backgrounds and circumstances. However, many communities in Ayrshire face limitations in available sports infrastructure, contributing to lower participation rates in sport and exercise, particularly in rural and low-income areas where transport and cost barriers exist. *(SportScotland, 2023).*

AFFORDABILITY, AND LACK OF SPORTS FACILITIES AND CLUBS

Where there are facilities, these are often booked out by private sector groups offering 'free trials' followed by high membership fees. Most other times these facilities have physical barriers around the perimeters, hindering efforts to encourage active lifestyles, community cohesion and in reducing obesity and preventable health conditions *(Knight, Kavanagh & Page, 2024).*



POSITIVE LOCAL ASSETS

While there are undoubtedly many challenges, our local area does have many positive local assets. Local authorities and health services are committed to community wealth building, regeneration, and wellbeing. We have Ayrshire College and University of West of Scotland on our doorsteps, a wide range of voluntary organisations, grassroots football and sports clubs, and supportive local businesses. We have a wealth of history, heritage and culture which can be creatively used in programmes and activities.

We have seen the positive impact made by Kilmarnock FC's 2023/24 away strip design, based on the structure of penicillin, which has been used to successfully promote STEM education and inspire jobs in science among hundreds of pupils in local schools. We believe that these unique, creative approaches can be used to further engage people across generations.



“We have a wealth of history, heritage and culture”

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Based on what we know about our area and what our community tell us, we will prioritise the following strategic objectives

1. Programme Delivery
2. Good Governance
3. Income Generation and Financial Sustainability
4. Infrastructure development

1. Our Programme delivery will focus on:

Physical health and wellbeing

- become key delivery partner of preventative healthcare, increasing the number of programmes and range of participants involved in activities to promote fitness and healthy lifestyles, including those living with health conditions

Mental health

- increased outreach and support for individuals and groups who are experiencing/ at risk of experiencing mental health problems, including those in recovery

Education and employability

- collaborating with teachers to use the power of football to inspire interest in curricular and extra-curricular education, delivering targeted interventions and support in schools in areas of highest multiple deprivation
- aim to deliver programmes in every school in our partner local authority areas
- engaging young people, at risk of exclusion, in positive activities to deter from anti-social and criminal behaviour
- deliver employability programmes equipping young adults with the tools to achieve positive destinations





Sense of belonging

- running groups that foster social inclusion
- combatting loneliness and isolation with programmes such as our Football Memories and Get Togethers, making use of our rich local history, culture and heritage

Helping tackle poverty and disadvantage

- providing free, healthy meals during school holidays, after schools and breakfast clubs
- by providing a safe space for individuals and families to acquire and donate preloved football clothing and equipment,
- providing and distributing essentials hampers, as well as gifts for care leavers at Christmas and birthdays

Football for all

- breaking down barriers to experiencing and participating in football, by providing access to football experiences for individuals, families, local grassroots clubs and organisations,
- offering matchday mascot experiences for those on low incomes or with additional health or support needs

OUR STRATEGY

2. Good Governance

- ✓ aiming to achieve good practice standards as identified by SPFL Trust and OSCR
- ✓ reviewing and updating our Articles of Association
- ✓ creating a Co-operation Agreement with Kilmarnock FC

3. Income generation and financial sustainability

To ensure we can work effectively as a charity we will work on

- ✓ securing strong and sustainable finances
- ✓ seeking a broader range of funders, and partnerships with local councils, health service and businesses





4. Infrastructure development

Over the next five years, The Killie Community aims to develop the Rugby Park Community Campus — a welcoming, inclusive hub for wellbeing, sport and community development. This will transform the areas around Rugby Park with high-quality community facilities and a place where people of all ages can improve their fitness, health, develop new skills, and connect with others.

- ✓ complete the renovation of the Community Hub
- ✓ completion of community pitch within the Rugby Park campus
- ✓ work with Kilmarnock FC to support community use of pitches at new training facility
- ✓ seek use of land adjacent to community hub to create additional opportunities
- ✓ work with local partners to make best use of local facilities

In everything we do we aim to:

• communicate clearly

- creating an engaging online presence and regular updates to stakeholders
- ensuring opportunities for participants to give their views and shape future activity

• Invest in our staff and volunteers

- our staff and volunteers are at the heart of everything The Killie Community does. We will therefore give opportunities for training and progression, as well as rewarding and celebrating their commitment

• Protect our environment

- in all of our work and activities we will pay attention to the need to protect our environment and use energy efficiently.

The Board of Trustees and staff team will keep the plan under review, and make changes where needed to meet new challenges and best fulfil our mission.

PERSONAL IMPACT



“The Killie Community honestly changed my life. When I first came here, I was broken after losing my son — physically and mentally, I was in crisis. But this charity gave me purpose again. It wasn’t just the fitness or the football... it was the people, the kindness, and their belief in me. Now, I help with things like renovations to the Hub, I lead the Walk & Talk and our Get Together groups, and I get to give back the same support that helped turn my life around.”

Scott



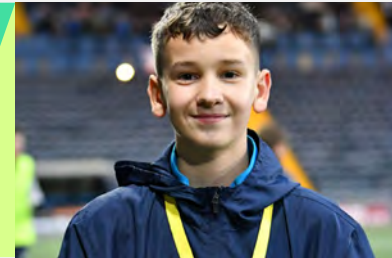
“The Killie Community has definitely helped me in ways I thought weren’t possible. I joined as I’ve had complications in the last few years that have resulted in ectopic pregnancies. I lost both fallopian tubes, and in order to start a family I need to get the weight down. With The Killie Community, I’ve found not just fitness, but connection. I feel this is what I need to give me the encouragement to look to my future.”

Lori



“I was diagnosed with lymphoma, which turned my world upside down. Not only did I find belonging, and people who understand at The Killie Community, the programmes became a cornerstone to my recovery. I really enjoy Tuesday nights with The Killie Community. You get to meet other people the same as yourself, and we’ve ended up staying friends. Having that network and encouragement made all the difference on my long journey to remission.”

Catherine



“Volunteering at Killie has really boosted my confidence—I used to be pretty shy, but now I feel comfortable leading activities and chatting with everyone. It’s helped me get better at organising stuff and working with kids younger than me, and older people. It’s made me realise I want to do something like this when I’m older — something where I can help others and keep making people smile.”

Finn

OUR COMMUNITY



I feel privileged to be one of the trustees for The Killie Community. I volunteered for the role as I strongly believe in the potential of sport to make a difference to individuals and communities. I've been around football all my life, with my dad and grandad playing and managing professionally.

Unfortunately, I did not inherit their playing talent so my own involvement in the game has been more administrative. I'm a lecturer in law at the University of Strathclyde, specialising in child protection. I was previously the Head of Wellbeing and Protection for the Scottish FA where I established wellbeing and protection policies and procedures in Scotland and abroad. I bring this knowledge and experience to The Killie Community to help ensure everyone has a fantastic time in a safe and inclusive way.

Alyson Evans

Through its partnership with Kilmarnock FC, the charity distributes about 150 free tickets for Men's and Women's First Team matches each matchday. Over the past three years, 9,625 people have attended their first game at no cost, helping to remove barriers to entry.

Each year, The Killie Community co-ordinates the sourcing, packing and delivery of around 500 care hampers for individuals and families identified as most in need across Ayrshire.

Well over 100 gifts are also bought or made, and then wrapped and delivered to care experienced young people, and care leavers with young families, in time for Christmas day.

TRUSTEE QUOTES

Cathy Jamieson

“Bringing my experience from parliament, co-operative movement and third sector organisations, as well as my love for all things related to Killie, I’m delighted to play a part in guiding the charity through the next stage of development. Killie Community has a major role to play in improving life for people across our local area.”

Morean Hamilton

“I’m pleased that I’ve been able to bring business and fundraising expertise to help the charity become sustainable and ready to further expand its activities, creating new partnerships with local companies.”

Phyllis Carroll

“As one of the founding Trustees, it is exciting to see the way Killie Community has grown and expanded its reach. I’m looking forward to seeing new programmes and more people becoming involved.”

Iain Greer

“I am a local business owner and resident and am pleased to be involved with Killie Community as the charity’s ethos fits with my own values of giving something back to the local area.”

Alyson Evans

"I was previously Head of Wellbeing and Protection at the Scottish FA before becoming a lecturer in Law at University of Strathclyde. I became a Trustee as I've been around football all of my life and strongly believe in the potential of sport to make a difference to individuals and communities."

Mandy Bowie

"As a Founding Trustee I've seen huge changes in the community programmes over the past 10 years. I have a background in fundraising and I am pleased to be supporting that aspect of the charity."

Jennifer Anderson

"In my role as Assistant Principal Skills and Innovation at Ayrshire College I'm very aware of the value of strong community organisations and am pleased to be part of the next steps in the Killie Community journey"

Key sponsors/supporters





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