Newsome Panthers Rugby Club – 5 year Vision

Our Vision for the Future:

At **Newsome Panthers Rugby Club**, our goal is to create a more sustainable, inclusive, and community-centred environment for the people of Huddersfield, particularly for the young people of Newsome. We want to provide a positive outlet for children and young people—especially from disadvantaged backgrounds—by getting them off the streets and involved in rugby. As we have just passed our **30th anniversary** in 2025, we believe now is the time to enhance our facilities, expand our programs, and take a leadership role in promoting sustainability within our community.

Key Objectives:

1. **New Clubhouse with Improved Facilities:** Build a modern, fully accessible clubhouse with separate, high-quality changing rooms for male and female teams, which we currently lack.
2. **Become Self Sustainable:** We currently rely on member subscriptions & sponsorship as our main source on income, which allows us to feed monies back into the club to help just about remain afloat. Our vision is to grow into a self-sustainable club using new facilities to generate revenue to recycle back into the club and community.
3. **Expand Junior Girls' Teams:** Double the number of junior girls' teams from two to four, offering more opportunities for girls to play rugby at all levels.
4. **Reintroduce a Women's Open Age Team:** Bring back our women's team, which folded in 2023 due to inadequate facilities, particularly the lack of changing room space.
5. **Develop PDRL (Physical Disability Rugby League) Teams:** Make our club fully inclusive by providing a dedicated program for players with physical disabilities.
    - **Highlight:** We have two former junior players who now play for **Wakefield Trinity's PDRL team**, one of whom had the honour of representing **England** and was awarded **Man of the Match** in the **PDRL World Cup Final**. This shows the potential and talent we are nurturing at Newsome Panthers and underscores the importance of expanding our PDRL program.
6. **Reduce Our Environmental Impact:** Implement sustainability initiatives, including planting more trees and using energy-efficient power and heating systems in the new clubhouse.
7. **Create a Safe Space for the Community:** Provide a safe, welcoming environment for young people to engage in sport, education, and community activities, especially in light of the growing concern around **knife crime** in the local area.
8. **Improve Community Engagement:** Continue to serve as a hub for local families and residents, fostering a sense of belonging and pride in Newsome.

Newsome - Our Home Community:

Community Overview:

Newsome, a residential area in Huddersfield, faces the challenges common to many deprived communities, including high unemployment rates, limited opportunities for youth engagement, and a lack of access to positive recreational activities. The Newsome are is within the top 7% of most deprived areas of the UK ((Consumer Data Reserch Centre, 2020). Local young people often face barriers to sport, whether due to financial constraints or a lack of nearby facilities. This is where **Newsome Panthers Rugby Club** steps in—providing a positive, supportive environment for the community's youth, and offering them a chance to learn, grow, and play rugby.

However, our current clubhouse and facilities are no longer fit for purpose. The changing rooms are outdated and in need of repair, and we lack a social space to engage with the community outside of training. We also face local parking issues, which have created tension with nearby residents.

Challenges Facing the Area:

- **Youth Disengagement & Knife Crime:** Like many areas, Newsome has seen a worrying rise in **knife crime** and youth violence. Many young people in the area are at risk of falling into harmful activities, and there are limited positive outlets for them.
- **Mental Health:** Our open age team teamed up with Patrick clothing brand in 2023 to promote men's mental health after a number of players highlighted personal issues. This is something we are looking to renew and open out to all genders by running workshops within the community in the coming years.
- **Limited Access to Sport:** Many children and families in Newsome cannot afford to travel to other sports facilities, meaning opportunities for physical activity are limited.
- **Gender Inequality in Rugby:** Girls and women in Newsome have historically had fewer opportunities to participate in rugby, and the club's women's team had to fold in 2023 due to facility limitations.
- **Facility Issues:** Our existing changing rooms are in need of significant repair, and the lack of a social space limits our ability to engage the wider community.
- **Parking Problems:** Local residents have voiced concerns over the parking congestion during match days, which has led to complaints being raised with local councillors.

The Role of Newsome Panthers Rugby Club:

A Safe, Inclusive Space for Young People:

Newsome Panthers Rugby Club has long been a pillar of the community, offering a safe, supportive environment for young people to engage in sport and develop life skills. We are more than just a rugby club—we are a place where young people can come together, build friendships, and find mentorship and guidance in a structured, positive setting.

With the rise in **knife crime** and youth violence in the area, we want to create a facility that acts as a **safe space** for local young people. We aim to provide a space where they can escape negative influences, engage in physical activity, learn valuable life skills, and develop a sense of belonging. In addition to rugby training, the new clubhouse will host **educational workshops**, life skills training, and mental health support services to help young people grow into confident, responsible adults.

As a **Rugby Football League (RFL) Gold Accredited Club**, we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of coaching, player development, and community engagement. This recognition underscores our dedication to creating a structured, safe, and supportive environment for all players, both on and off the field.

Facility Improvements:

1. **Building a New Clubhouse:**
    - **Current Situation:** Our existing clubhouse lacks a social space, meaning we have limited ability to host events or create a space for the community to gather outside of rugby matches. The small kitchen area is insufficient for catering to large groups, and there is no room for families or supporters to socialize and engage with the club.
    - **Solution:** The new clubhouse will have a large, accessible social space for the community, providing a welcoming area where families and supporters can gather, enjoy refreshments, and be part of the club's ongoing activities. This will also improve the club's financial sustainability by providing a space for fundraising events, meetings, and local community activities.
2. **Changing Room Repairs and Upgrades:**
    - **Current Issue:** The current changing rooms are outdated and in urgent need of repair. There is not enough space to accommodate both male and female teams at the same time, which has been a key reason for the folding of our women's team.
    - **Solution:** The new clubhouse will feature separate, modern changing rooms for male and female teams, complete with proper shower facilities, storage, and privacy. This will allow us to accommodate both male and female games simultaneously, which is crucial for the ongoing development of our women's team and the overall inclusivity of the club.
3. **Disability Parking and Accessibility:**
    - **Current Situation:** Currently, the club lacks dedicated parking spaces for people with disabilities, which can make it difficult for those with mobility challenges to access the clubhouse and fields.
    - **Solution:** As part of the new clubhouse development, we will provide **designated disability parking spaces** close to the clubhouse, ensuring easy access for those with mobility difficulties. This is an important part of our commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that all members of the community, regardless of ability, can enjoy the facilities and feel welcomed at Newsome Panthers.
4. **Baby Changing Facilities:**
    - **Current Situation:** Our existing clubhouse does not have baby changing facilities, which limits the comfort and convenience for families with young children.
    - **Solution:** The new clubhouse will feature **dedicated baby changing facilities**, making it more family-friendly and accessible for parents. This addition will ensure that families can comfortably spend time at the club, whether for matches, training sessions, or social events, and create a more welcoming environment for young families.

Developing a Complete Junior Pathway:

At **Newsome Panthers Rugby Club**, we are committed to creating a comprehensive and sustainable junior pathway for all players, ranging from our **Cubs team** (ages 3-6) through to **Under 18's**. This pathway will ensure that young players have the opportunity to develop their skills, progress through the ranks, and eventually feed into the senior men's open-age team. With a focus on long-term player development, we aim to provide a seamless transition from junior rugby to competitive adult rugby and target higher levels of competition, including the **National Conference League (NCL)**.

Junior Development Pathway:

- **Cubs Team (3-6 years old):** The Cubs program introduces young players to rugby in a fun, safe environment. Relaunched in 2024, this program has been very successful, with an average of 23 attendees per session, a significant number of whom are girls. The Cubs team focuses on fundamental skills, basic rugby techniques, teamwork, and physical fitness, setting the foundation for players to advance to the next age groups.
- **Under 7's to Under 16's:** Our club will continue to expand its junior teams across all age groups, allowing young players to progress in their development. These age groups will focus on improving rugby skills, tactical awareness, fitness, and teamwork. By providing structured training sessions and
- competitive opportunities, we aim to ensure that every player has the chance to develop to their full potential.
- **Under 18's (Junior to Senior Transition):** The Under 18's team will be the final stage in our junior pathway before players transition into the senior team's. This team will concentrate on advanced rugby techniques, physical conditioning, and tactical understanding, ensuring players are fully prepared to step up to adult rugby. The Under 18's team will act as a bridge, helping young players make the transition into open-age rugby.

Open-Age Team's and National Conference League Aspirations:

As the junior teams progress, our aim is to feed these players into our **open-age team's.** and ultimately compete at a high level in the **National Conference League (NCL)**. There is currently no Huddersfield-based team in the competition, and we are committed to providing a pathway to the highest levels of amateur rugby league, allowing players to represent Newsome Panthers at the very top of the amateur game.

Timeline and Key Milestones:

Year 1 (2025–2026):

- **30th Anniversary Launch:** Celebrate **30 years of Newsome Panthers Rugby Club** with special events, fundraising campaigns, and community outreach. This will mark the start of an exciting new chapter for the club.
- **Planning and Design Phase:** Finalize plans for the new clubhouse and submit planning applications for approval. This phase will include consulting with local authorities, architects, and community stakeholders to ensure the design meets the club's needs and aligns with local development guidelines.
- **Start Fundraising Campaign:** Begin a targeted fundraising effort to secure the finances needed for the planning application, focusing on club fundraising events, leaving community donations, grants, sponsorships, and partnerships with local businesses untouched until we have planning approval and are looking to fund the build.
- **Pre Planning Submission:** We will aim to have a fully proficient document pack together to support our pre planning application.

Year 2 (2026–2027):

- **Realigning Club Values:** Re-elect a new fully committed and stable committee to refresh the club structure and ensure our members are supported with likeminded people to ensure the club is striving on and off the field.
- **Full Planning Application Submission:** Taking onboard feedback from the pre planning stage, we will be aiming to file a full planning application quarter 1. Prior to submittal, this is the time to share our plans to firstly our member's, then the local community before we share to the wider audience via social media.
- **Fundraising & Grants Acceleration:** This is a key milestone now we have a full planning application in place, as funding is what will bring this project to life. Engagement with local businesses and funding platforms will be vital. Internal club fundraisers to be organise and momentum to be built throughout the club and local community to get behind the project.
- **Build Preparation:** Construction of the building will compromise pre works, like clearing out the existing facility in preparation for replacing and such like.

Year 3 (2027–2028):

- **Construction Begins:** Assuming a successful planning application and relevant funds being in place, we aim to **start construction by early 2027**. The build will be phased to minimize disruption and ensure key facilities (such as changing rooms) are prioritized.
  Removal of existing facilities post season allowing for works to commence throughout the offseason.

Year 4 (2028–2029):

- **Build Acceleration:** Subject to fundraising and successful grants, here is where the build phase really kicks in
- **Sustainability Milestones:** Begin the implementation of our environmental initiatives, including the planting of trees around the club's grounds and installation of energy-efficient power and heating systems in the new clubhouse.

Year 4 (2028–2029):

- **Clubhouse Grand Opening:** Officially open the new clubhouse, celebrating the completion of the project with a community event, tours of the new facilities, and a series of matches to mark the milestone. The aim is to have the clubhouse fully operational before the 2029 season begins so late Q1.

Although optimistic, the 5-year plan has been scrutinised and structured to ensure this project doesn't stand still.
Years of planning, including visiting other new build sports facilities, speaking to contractors and liaising with the RFL have set the foundations for a solid project plan. Newsome Panthers have the right team in place who are passionate to deliver a community hub where the club and local area to grow and prosper – but also be proud of.

Summary:

The **Newsome Panthers Rugby Club Development Plan** represents a critical, long-term investment in the future of our club, our local community, and the young people of Huddersfield, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Our vision is to create a state-of-the-art, sustainable facility that provides a safe, inclusive space for sport, education, and community activities. The planned development is **not a "nice-to-have"**, but rather a **vital necessity** to support the growth of rugby league in the area and to address several pressing issues in our community.

Key Needs:

- **Upgraded Clubhouse and Changing Facilities:** Our current clubhouse and changing rooms are outdated, inadequate, and in urgent need of repair. We cannot currently accommodate both male and female teams simultaneously, which has hindered the development of women's rugby and the ongoing participation of female players. The lack of a social space and parking for disabled members further limits our ability to engage with the wider community. These upgrades are essential to continue offering rugby opportunities at all levels.
- **Expanded Girls' and Women's Rugby:** We are committed to growing the female section of the club, aiming to expand our junior girls' teams from two to five and reintroduce our women's open-age team. The improved facilities will make this possible, helping to increase female participation in rugby and ensure that the women's team has a sustainable future.
- **PDRL and Disability Access:** The development plan also includes providing dedicated facilities for our **Physical Disability Rugby League (PDRL)** teams, expanding our inclusive rugby offering. With two former junior players currently competing at the highest levels, including one who represented **England** in the PDRL World Cup Final, we are committed to growing this program.
- **Community Impact and Safety:** The new clubhouse will serve as a community hub, offering a safe space for young people in Newsome—an area facing increasing concerns around youth violence and knife crime. The facility will offer educational programs, life skills workshops, and youth engagement initiatives, ensuring that young people have a positive outlet and are engaged in sport, rather than becoming involved in anti-social behaviour.
- **Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility:** Our commitment to sustainability will be reflected in the design and operation of the new clubhouse, including **energy-efficient heating**, **reduced carbon emissions**, and the planting of trees to enhance the local environment. We aim to minimize our environmental impact while delivering a facility that can serve the community for decades to come.

The Urgency:

This development is critical to the club's long-term viability and its continued ability to serve the Newsome community. Our current facilities are no longer fit for purpose, and without these upgrades, we risk losing the opportunity to offer rugby to a growing number of players, especially women and girls, and those with physical disabilities. The local community needs these upgraded facilities to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people to thrive, both on and off the field.

Therefore, we strongly urge stakeholders, potential funders, and local authorities to recognize the **necessity** of this development and to support the planning applications and funding efforts that will make these vital improvements a reality.

Bibliography

Consumer Data Reserch Centre. (2020, January 01). *Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)*. Retrieved from Consumer Data Reserch Centre: https://data.cdrc.ac.uk/dataset/index-multiple-deprivation-imd

Revision	Change	Name	Date
0	1st Release	D.Newton	18/12/2024
1	2026 Update	D.Newton	09/02/2026