

PITCH TOGETHER FUND

Gillingham Anchorians HC utilises the Pitch Together Fund to install new sports lighting



THE NEED

Based in Gillingham, Kent, Gillingham Anchorians (GAHC) is a long-standing hockey club supporting over 150 juniors and multiple adult teams within a busy community multi-sport hub. The club's growth was recently threatened by an aging floodlighting system reaching the end of its life. Frequent failures and the scarcity of obsolete replacement bulbs made maintenance increasingly expensive and difficult to source.

Without reliable lighting, the pitch was at risk of becoming unusable for evening sessions. This would have directly reduced the club's capacity to accommodate current members and prospective new participants. To secure the facility's future, the club secured a £40,000 investment from the Pitch Together Fund to install energy-efficient LED sports lighting, ensuring the pitch remains available year-round while reducing ongoing operational costs.

THE PROCESS

Gillingham Anchorians expressed an interest in being a pilot club, in early 2025, and worked with Sporting Assets and England Hockey to develop their application over a number of months.

THE DETAILS

The project involved retrofitting existing sports lighting columns with modern LED bulbs. Following a competitive tender process, the Pitch Together Fund provided a blended support package including:

- £40,000 loan at 6% interest to fund the new lighting system.
- 5-year repayment period to ensure manageable financial commitments.
- Ongoing guidance and expert support throughout the application and due-diligence phases.
- Independent review of GAHC's financial forecasts conducted by Sporting Assets.

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If any other clubs out there have capital projects in the pipeline, we can only recommend that you look into the Pitch Together Fund as a source of finance. Everyone we dealt with at Sporting Assets and England Hockey were incredibly supportive, encouraging and knowledgeable which made the whole process so much easier and straightforward.

Trevor Shave
Chair
Gillingham Anchorians HC

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THE IMPACT

Working with England Hockey, GAHC developed an Impact Plan to safeguard existing hockey use and drive long-term community engagement. The project is expected to deliver:

- Sustainable Facilities: Modern lighting ensures the pitch remains a viable community asset for evening and winter use.
- Increased Opportunity: Expanded programming designed to increase overall pitch usage and physical activity.
- Community Wellbeing: Improved local health outcomes through social participation and a more diverse user base.

Key social impact objectives include:

- Youth Outreach: Engaging local schools currently not participating in hockey through data-led outreach.
- Broadening Participation: Re-introducing 'Back to Hockey' and establishing Veteran teams to re-engage senior players.
- Mental Health Partnership: Partnering with a Youth Mental Health charity to promote the benefits of social sport.

Together, these improvements position GAHC as a vital community anchor, committed to inclusion and lifelong participation.