



**England
Rugby**

Rugby Football Union
Rugby House, Twickenham Stadium
200 Whitton Road, Twickenham, TW2 7BA

T: [REDACTED]

englandrugby.com

Ref: Netherhampton Sports Association CAT
Mr Daniel Geeson
Leisure Strategy and Play Officer
Wiltshire Council

7th September 2023

Dear Mr Geeson

The RFU would strongly recommend and support Wheatsheaf Cabin Crew RFC, via the Netherhampton Sports Association, in seeking a new 25 year lease term for the sports facilities at Netherhampton.

The vast majority of large grant and loan funding partners, including the RFU and Sport England, will require the rugby club to evidence 'security of tenure' of at least 25 years to be eligible to make an application. Funding programmes are very fluid therefore a club with 25 years security of tenure will afford themselves the strongest opportunity to make robust applications.

Funding criteria heavily favour those applications that are looking to deliver sustainable and long-term interventions/solutions – the easiest way for a club to evidence this within their application would be via security of tenure. This would also enable the club to consider how they would future proof themselves, both strategically and operationally. Those high performing clubs are those that plan and deliver for the 'next generation' of their membership and local community rather than concerning themselves week to week, it is only those clubs with a long security of tenure who can attune themselves to this approach.

The respective club's primary objective is to provide sport and physical wellbeing opportunities for the benefit of the local community. Having the constant reassurance the lease is at a 'peppercorn rate' will enable the Sports Association to focus on providing this offer to the best of their ability whilst prioritising all reinvestment into the pitches and built facilities, rather than costly rent, to maximise community experience.

Another factor to consider would be the high time and resource the club will need to afford to the lease renewal process. The RFU would not want the club to dedicate a large amount of volunteer time and club monies to this process to sign a lease term that, as per the above, the club would need to immediately (or very soon after) need to re-negotiate again.

Yours Sincerely

Matt Bray

RFU Facility Development Executive

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