



### Helping to Tackle Unemployment

Community Jobs Scotland Programme

The Academy continues to engage with Government Job schemes and runs a full Community Jobs Scotland Programme which was delivered throughout the year. The programme is aimed at 16 to 24 year olds and allows the Academy to offer work experience to all participants over a six month period. The roles in the programme include assisting staff with the delivery of Academy community projects and the promotion of the Academy in the local community, assisting staff with washing and cleaning of kit and equipment and assisting staff with the maintenance of the pitch and stadium. Participants are assisted with their search for permanent employment and we have successfully placed the majority of participants in positive destinations after the end of the programme.

### Supporting the Development of Talented Young Footballers

One of the Academy's headline activities has been that of supporting the development of talented young footballers, and with Robbie Crawford and Allan Forrest now established as Ayr United Football Club first team regulars as well as other Academy graduates, such as Kyle McAusland, Jackson Longridge and David Mitchell, turning out for other SPFL teams, you can see the success achieved.

In Year 9 we continued to improve the standards around the Talented Young Footballer's programme, and were accepted into the Scottish FA's Club Academy Scotland Programme, at Silver Star status. The Academy is one of only 14 Academies throughout Scotland to attain this status. We fielded 6 Professional Youth teams in the Club Academy Scotland Programme and 1 team in the Scottish Professional Football League's Development League. In addition, the Junior Academy Groups continue to offer talented young footballers, between the ages of 7, 8, 9 and 10, coaching sessions delivered by experienced, SFA qualified Academy Coaches, whilst the players play for their local teams.

### Future priorities

Our future priorities will be to continue to concentrate on building and strengthening the two main programme areas, namely, the Football in the Community and Talented Young Footballer's programmes.

We aim to build the Football in the Community programme in a strategic manner, seeking medium to long term partnerships and funding streams which will allow it to deliver sustainable programmes of activity, to benefit the large range of people in the local community, who are currently excluded or disadvantaged from satisfying their desire to participate in healthy, football based activity.

In the Talented Young Footballer's programme, the Academy has focussed on strengthening its coaching staff, improving its facilities and raising its standards in such a way that its young players will be presented with the best opportunity to achieve their ambition to play professional football. The SFA has embarked on a rapid restructuring of its Youth Development Programme, involving an elevation of the standards surrounding the programmes and we worked hard to meet the criteria which allowed entry to the Elite section of the Club Academy Scotland. We are strong supporters of The SFA's strategy and are determined to raise our own standards in line with the Association's drive, to allow us to continue to compete at the highest level of the Club Academy Programme.

### Financial Summary

Despite a national reduction in the availability of funding, the Community Programme remains strong and attendances have increased by around 3% on last year. The Talented Young Footballer's Programme continues to improve in quality and scope, having attained Silver Star status within the SFA's Club Academy Scotland programme. These two strands of our Academy give us great confidence for the future, however fiscal vigilance has brought us here and shall be the key to keeping us here.

The directors shown here have held office during the whole of the period from 1 June 2014 to the date of this report: EJ Bulik, L Cameron, A McGregor, J Maxwell, JG Peterkin, JM Welsh, PC White

Other changes in directors holding office are as follows:  
DJ Watson (resigned 23/01/15), D Stewart (resigned 19/03/15),  
A Gunning (appointed 20/08/15), L R Stobie (appointed 20/08/15)

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# Annual Report 2015/16

*To promote lifelong learning, health and wellbeing primarily in South Ayrshire through football*





## Chair's Comments

The Academy has two main activities.

- We encourage participation in sport for people of all ages, regardless of background or ability
- We pursue a model of sporting excellence to allow talented young people a platform from which to reach their individual goals and play the sport at the highest level

In each of the last 10 years Ayr United Football Academy has continued to make significant progress in each of these areas.

- Our partnership with South Ayrshire Council, the Scottish Football Association and Ayr United Football Club to manage the South Ayrshire Football Development Programme has continued to build on the firm foundations we have developed over the years
- Our partnership with the South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership and Alzheimer Scotland has been particularly fruitful through the Integrated Care Fund which has supported the Walking Football/Gentle Exercise and Reminiscence Groups across South Ayrshire
- Our activities, particularly over the last few years, have continued to expand and grow in line with our aims and the objectives of promoting lifelong learning, health and wellbeing, primarily in South Ayrshire through football

As ever we are grateful for the unstinting efforts of our volunteers, now in three figures, who are involved in service provision and fundraising. Without their support and assistance, we would not be able to make such a significantly valuable contribution to our local communities.

**Ian Welsh**, Chair,  
Ayr United Football Academy

## Board statement

Ayr United Football Academy is incorporated as a not for profit company limited by guarantee and is a Scottish charity. Our members are Ayrshire and Arran NHS, Ayrshire College, South Ayrshire Council, Ayr United Football Club and Ayr United Community Initiative (The Honest Men's Trust), each of which may be represented by a Board Director. In addition, there are four independent Directors and an independent Chair.



### Providing for Football in the Community

The Academy manages its extensive number of programmes and activities for disadvantaged groups for all, young and old, in our local communities through the Community Projects Group.

**This has included the following milestones:-**

An astonishing 111,000 participant attendances at various targeted events throughout 2015/16.

**This has included a multi platform delivery method including:**

- A wide range of physical activity programmes for all skill levels;
- Targeting children and school aged populations;
- Education programmes that are broader than just football and which are linked to the football coaching (such as climate change awareness);

An overall health promotion ethos.

With the range of activities experienced during 2015/16 returning 111,052 participant visits, we have refused to sit back and not develop new projects. as well as developing new ones.

We estimate that these highly impressive figures have come from intense and consistent work with around 8,200 individuals. The new programmes have widened the scope of our programmes in the community, with more attention being turned towards supporting adults, whether it be by way of our newly introduced Walking Football Programme, encouraging older adults back to football activity or through other programmes which encourage adults of all ages and abilities to take up football activity to improve their overall fitness and wellbeing.

### Making Football Accessible

The Academy have always striven to make football accessible to young people and adults in all areas of the local community, as well as using the sport as a means to encourage a healthy lifestyle and promote education. The year 9 programme has included: -

**The Climate Challenge Project:**

This project is wholly funded by the Climate Challenge Fund, and has been launched successfully in all Primary 5 classes, in every primary school in South Ayrshire. Each school gains access to 8 x one hour long sessions that include an educational activity focused on Climate Change which is then followed by fun football sessions. The course is delivered by AUFA's FreshAYR, CleanAYR, GreenAYR sessional coaches. The project visited every primary school across South Ayrshire – 42, with over 2,000 children in the local community involved.

**Learning Disability and Health Inequality:**

Having been part of our programme for an exceptional 7 years out of our 9 years, the Academy's Everybody Active Programme delivers weekly football activity classes at Southcraig campus Invergarven and Queen Margaret Schools in South Ayrshire. We involve an average of 55 participants per week. The

key target of the programme, delivered with a very strong partnership within the schools and with the young people, is to increase the number of players playing football in Special Schools. We are not content with stopping there - The Academy is developing programmes for adults with learning difficulties and physical disability as a pathway from the Everybody Active Programme and has secured funding from Children in Need to set up the Honest Kids Football Club for its school aged participants.

**Walking Football:**

Pilot Walking Football programmes are being introduced around South Ayrshire with a view to building a group of ongoing weekly sessions. AUFA was a partner in the highly successful "Fitba Maybole" programme, which resulted in a total weight loss of 9 stone 5 pounds from the 15 participants over a 12 week period. Participants enjoy an introductory programme of health assessments, lifestyle advice and exercise, followed by footballing activities.

**Alzheimer's Scotland:**

The Academy's work on supporting older people with dementia through Football reminiscence programmes has also been an important element in our local community work. The Academy was pleased to provide the minibus and driver for outings and trips to Somerset Park for the local Alzheimer's Group and is seeking to secure funding to hold Reminiscence meetings throughout South Ayrshire. We have also partnered the Little Art School which has enhanced our curriculum offer to the community to one of health and wellbeing within the area of dementia and loneliness.

**Expanding Participation in Community Football Centres**

The Academy works hard to increase player participation, by developing and sustaining its Community Football Centre and Holiday Programme activity, and ensuring that the programmes are stimulating, fun, safe and accessible to age groups from three years to adult.

**This has included the provision of:**

- Kinder Kicks Soccer Centres for a weekly average of 77 children aged 3 to 4;
- Out of school and curriculum time soccer classes for around 202 primary age children per week;
- Football classes with social and development objectives for groups aged 13 to 24 years of age;
- Scottish Football Association (SFA) national initiatives delivered in South Ayrshire, including:
- A Night Leagues programme, at one centre attracting around 55 players per session;
- The Tesco Bank funded football programme, an SFA programme, involving 10 primary schools and reaching 476 pupils. Each school received 6 weeks of football and were treated to an end of programme festival which took place at Somerset Park.

### Supporting Development of Local Youth Football Clubs

The Academy offers support to all recreational football clubs in South Ayrshire thus strengthening links between us. In 2015/16, the main activities included:

Supporting local clubs to sustain and achieve SFA Quality Mark accreditation.

An increased number of players and number of teams.

Club visits to Somerset to watch Ayr United 1st team organised by the Academy before the club playing and then participating in a football coaching session on Somerset Park.

This reached: -

- Over 80 young players;
- Over 300 club coaches, college students and Academy volunteers taking part in coach education courses and SFA in-service days throughout the year.
- The Academy also encourages volunteer club coaches to raise their skill levels by joining SFA Coaching courses and manages the delivery of these courses to facilitate this. We have delivered the following courses during the year: -
- 2 x Level 1.1 – Early touches course - 35 participants (Children Pathway);
- 3 x Level 1.2 – Coaching young footballers - 65 participants (Children Pathway);
- 1 x Level 1.1 SC+ – (Developing Activities) - 16 participants (Youth/Adult Pathway);
- 2 x Level 1.2 – Coaching youth footballers - 31 participants (Youth/Adult Pathway);
- 2 x Level 1.3 – Coaching in the game - 39 participants (Youth/Adult Pathway);
- 1st Aid – 12 participants.

### Creating Football Opportunities for Girls

The Academy, in 2015/16, continued towards the target of establishing a Women's and Girls' Football Club by creating football opportunities for girls and young women through our Women's and Girls' Football Development Programme and are building the coaching and volunteer resource to allow us to sustain the Club. Key achievements in 2015/16 have been:

- Retaining Scottish FA Quality Mark status for the Girls Club;
- Fielding age 7's, 9's, 11's, 13's and 15's adding a Ladies team which competed throughout the 2016 season.
- Recruiting community coaches and volunteers who are dedicated to building participation by girls and in building girls' teams to ensure sustainability;
- Organising fundraising events and commercial sponsorship to contribute towards equipment and other costs.